

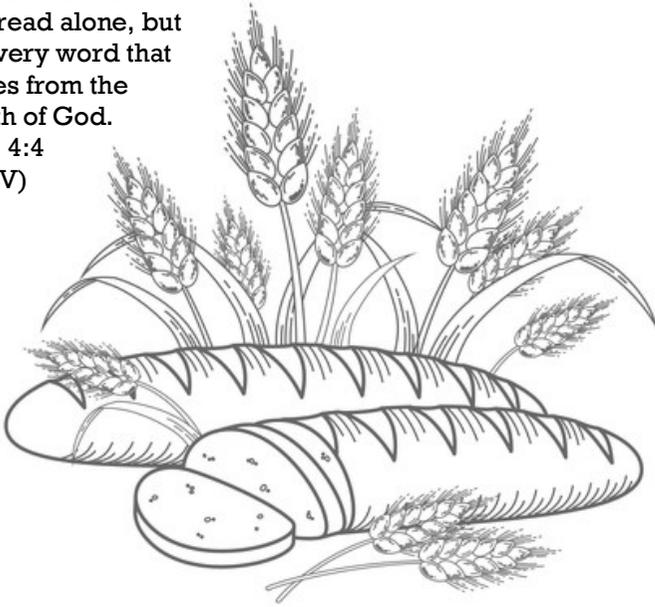
# BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

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One does not live  
by bread alone, but  
by every word that  
comes from the  
mouth of God.

Matt. 4:4  
(NRSV)



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# BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

FOUNDED 1924

The Bible Study Monthly, published to promote knowledge of the Bible, sees the Scriptures as a true record of God's dealings with the human race, needing to be understood in our generation. It looks for the advent of our Lord, and His reign of peace and justice on the earth.

*"Speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ"* (Ephesians 4:15 NRSV)

The Bible Study Monthly is sent free of charge on request to all who are genuinely interested.

(Please renew your request each year.)

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Secretary & Treasurer: Nicholas Charcharos

## THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

*"Man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD"*. These are the words from Deuteronomy 8: 3 (NKJV) that Jesus quotes in answer to Satan, when Satan was trying to tempt him in the period after his baptism. Food is one of the basics of life with water and shelter. 100 years ago in the U.K. there was bread rationing during World War 1 from 2 February 1917. It is a reminder of the times during two world wars when food was rationed, in order to feed the populace over an extended period of conflict.

In the Old Testament the account in Genesis records the place Joseph had in storing food during the seven years of plenty, to survive the seven years of famine that were to follow. In so doing he saved Egypt, his family and presumably other families outside of Egypt.

Following their disobedience the Hebrews wandered the wilderness between Egypt and the 'promised land'. During this time God provided manna so that they did not starve in those forty years. This manna was miraculous even though it is suggested that this was a natural phenomenon in that ecosystem. It definitely was a miracle that sufficient

was produced for such a large body of men, women and children. But miracle it was.

In the New Testament the Lord's prayer says 'Give us this day our daily bread'. Thankfulness for that which we eat is still part of the daily routine for people all around the world, but one appreciates this all the more if we have known a lack of food. But what the Christian also requires is spiritual food and nourishment, and that is also an essential of life for the Christian every day. Therefore we search the scriptures.

Our Lord did many miracles during his first advent. Two of the most well-known, are the feeding of the five thousand and the feeding of the four thousand. These miracles and other miracles of Jesus showed us plainly that Jesus was sent from God and that he was the Messiah, the Son of God to whom we should listen and believe in and have life through his name. After this miracle in John 6: 35 Jesus said 'I am the bread of life' and describes himself as the living bread from heaven that anyone can eat and live forever while reminding them that their forefathers were given manna in the desert as a picture of what would happen to the world.



The ordinary 'loaf' is like a large thin pancake, having been cooked first on one side and then turned over and cooked on the other, on a circular domed metal plate, which is placed over the fire, but often small barley 'loaves' are made also, about the size of a flat scone.

Bread is never cut, always broken, and it is a wonderful type of the Lord Jesus, who called Himself the Bread of Life, and whose body was broken for us, that he might be the spiritual food for believers in all generations.

*Customs and Costumes in Bible Days*  
*I. E. D. Gollmick*

Magazine content. What is published is believed to have a wide interest, but everything printed may not necessarily be the opinion of the editor and his colleagues.

## THE GIVING OF THE MANNA

The giving of manna to serve the children of Israel for food was an outstanding feature of the Exodus. The imagination of generation upon generation, first of Hebrews and then of Christians, has been stirred by this inexplicable provision of food for a multitude in the otherwise barren wilderness. It is true that modern discovery has established that Sinai in the days of the Exodus was by no means so barren and desolate as the popular expositors conceived it, or as it is now; but even so the marvelous story has lost none of its appeal, and the wonder of it has passed into the language of every day so that “manna from heaven” has become an expression denoting any unexpected and beneficial gift. It was no less so in Old Testament days, for the Psalmist (78. 23-25) sings exultantly “He... rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven. Man did eat angels’ food: he sent them meat to the full”. The language is poetic; the Psalmist did not mean to convey that this white substance like “hoar frost upon the ground” is literally eaten in heaven by the glorious angels who in their perfection of spiritual life do always behold the face of the Father. Rather does the Psalmist, in a flight of poetic fervour, attribute the provision and the qualities of the manna to the direct intervention of Heaven at a time of sore necessity, and quite naturally speaks of God as sending down food from His own table to meet the need of His people on earth.

Let the narrative be examined in the light of all that the last century can tell us regarding the district in which this thing happened, and the circumstances under which it took place. The wonder of the story will be by no means lessened and our reverence for the Divine power which brought this about just at the time when it was needed will be immeasurably increased.

*“And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, ‘It is manna’: for they wist not what it was...And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted...and it was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.” (Exod. 16. 14,15,21,31).*

It was after Elim and after the passage of the Red Sea, that the manna first appeared (Exod. 16. 1) and at Gilgal, following the crossing of Jordan, forty years later, that it ceased (Josh. 5 12). During the whole of the intervening period, throughout the length and breadth of Sinai, wherever the people wandered, there was the manna, ready for gathering, fresh every morning, *except on the Sabbath*. When they dwelt in Egypt, manna was unknown; after they settled in Canaan it was seen no more; the phenomenon was confined entirely to the Sinai peninsula and the green hills of Edom and Moab, but so integral a part of the whole account is this story of the manna that unless we accept the fact that this thing really did happen, we must reject the historical trustworthiness of the entire Exodus narrative.

The story never died. Long after the strings of the Psalmist's harp were stilled Nehemiah encouraged his brethren by telling them of the "bread from heaven" (Neh. 9.15). Jesus, in His teaching, reminded His hearers that their fathers did eat manna in the wilderness. (John 6. 49). The Psalmist's "angels' food" was not able to arrest the processes of death at work in the bodies of the Israelites, and their daily gathering sufficed only to sustain life for another day. Jesus turned their minds to Himself, "the living bread which came down from heaven" (John 6. 51) and talked to them about those things without which no man can enter into life. So, in words intended for His disciples of this Age, the consecrated members of the Church of Christ on earth, the resurrected Lord promises (Rev. 2. 17) to give to "him that overcometh...to eat of the hidden manna"—that spiritual quality, immortality, the Divine nature—of which the earthly manna of the Exodus was but a symbol.

The same truth is taught in the fact that a vessel of the literal manna, miraculously preserved, was laid up and preserved in the Most Holy of the Tabernacle throughout Israel's national existence (Exod. 16. 32-34; Heb. 9. 4). There, where the supernatural Shekinah glory blazed out over the mercy-seat, where the presence of God in His Heaven was symbolised, stood the sacred vessel, century after century, its contents the incorruptible symbol of that "life-in-itself" which is to be the inheritance of those who are "faithful unto death" (Rev. 2. 10).

Now what is there known about this manna? Can it be identified today? Did Sinai's hills and valleys no more receive the "bread from heaven"?

after Israel's hosts had travelled that way and departed? Or was it that God did take hold of something in Nature to meet the needs of the occasion?

Through the centuries it has been commonly reported that the manna of the Exodus is still to be seen in Sinai. The Jewish historian Josephus, writing in the first century, said that it never disappeared but was even then to be found in the places where Israel gathered it. In the fifteenth century, a traveller, Breidenbach, declared that manna was common in the valleys surrounding Mount Sinai, hanging in drops on twigs and grass and stones, sweet as honey, and sticky. Since then various travellers have reported finding this substance and have hazarded various theories as to its origin. It is established that the Sinai Arabs have known and collected it for centuries, and in the sixteenth century it could be found on sale in Cairo. In the eighteenth century it was observed that the substance is connected with, and found upon the tamarisk tree, and Burckhardt, the nineteenth century traveller, describes it thus:—

“In the month of June it drops from the thorns of the tamarisk upon the fallen twigs, leaves and stones which always cover the ground beneath that tree in its natural state. The manna is collected before sunrise, when it is coagulated, but it dissolves as soon as the sun shines upon it. The Arabs clear away the leaves and dirt which adhere to it, boil it, strain it through a coarse piece of cloth, and put it into leathern skins. In this way they preserve it until the following year, and use it as they do honey, to pour over their unleavened bread, or to dip their bread into. I could not learn that they ever make it into cakes and loaves. The manna is found only in years when copious rains have fallen, sometimes it is not produced at all.”

The Arabic name for this substance is “*manu*” and this has been its name so far back as it can be traced. The writer of Exodus says that the children of Israel called it “*manna*” “*for they wist not what it was*”. The Hebrew word is *man hu*—“What is this?”

Appropriately enough, however, it is the glory of the Hebrew University at Jerusalem finally to have cleared up the question of manna. Dr. Bodenheimer, of that University, has investigated the problem upon the spot and published a book on the subject, illustrated by photographs. The manna, it is definitely established, is produced by two insects which feed

upon the tamarisk tree. They bear the somewhat terrifying names of *Trabutina mannipara* and *naiacoccus serpentinus minor*. Just as bees visit flowers to produce honey, so do these insects live on the tree and from its sweet juices manufacture manna. Dr. Bodenheimer has photographed them in actual process of producing manna in beads varying in size from pinheads to peas (“like coriander seed, white”). At first the beads are transparent as glass and later they crystallise, becoming milk-white to yellow-brown. They are found all over the leaves and twigs on the ground, and are soon carried off by ants. The modern counterpart of Moses’ golden vessel of manna is now in the University, where glass vials of the “bread from heaven” are preserved.

But in thus identifying the manna we have not disposed of Divine intervention and reduced this wonderful story to the mere level of a commonplace happening which might be repeated any day. The scanty amount of manna which Sinai produces at the present time would not feed a hundredth part of Israel’s multitudes. We need the fruits of research in other directions fully to illuminate this wonderful story.

The first chapter of Numbers gives the number of men of twenty years and upwards, able to go to war, as being 603,550. The twenty-sixth chapter gives the number entering into the land, forty years later, as 601,730. These figures are confirmed by the numbers accredited to each tribe and it makes nonsense of the record to assert, as do some modern scholars, that the word translated “thousands” properly means “families” and that actually there were merely six hundred families that went out of Egypt. According to a leading economist, Colin Clark, in “*The Economics of 1960*” (1942), the proportion of males between the ages of 20 and 60 to the whole population can be taken as averaging 1 to 4. On this basis, and allowing for the tribe of Levi, there would be about two and a half millions of men, women and children in that long trek through the wilderness. One might say, hastily, that all of Sinai would not produce manna enough for such a multitude.

The Scripture itself gives us the data necessary for a calculation. The ration for each person was to be one omer per day (Exod. 16. 16-18). An omer is roughly equivalent to three pints, as far as Hebrew measures are at present understood. A little less than a million gallons or 150,000 cubic feet of manna therefore, would be required daily to satisfy the terms of

the Bible account. It has been shown that the manna, or rather the insects producing it, depend upon rainy years and the presence of the tamarisk tree. It is known that in former times Sinai was thickly forested with tamarisk and acacia (the latter is the “shittim wood” of which the Tabernacle was constructed). Much of this forest lingered until the nineteenth century, but during that century there was a great burning of the trees by the Arabs for the sake of producing charcoal, which was carried into Egypt, a great trade in this being conducted resulting in Sinai becoming almost completely deforested, and transformed into the sterile barren waste that it is now. It was only in 1944 that the Egyptian Government decided to undertake the systematic afforestation of Sinai to restore its ancient productiveness.

It was shown, some years ago, in a paper “*Climatic changes since the Ice Age*” read before the Victoria Institute, that the world in general experienced a period of intense wet weather round about the time of the Exodus and on to the ninth century B.C. Several features of the ten plagues on the Egyptians confirm the thought that the time of Moses was one of plenteous rainfall. We have evidence therefore that the two factors necessary to the production of manna, viz., trees and rainfall, were present to an unusual degree and with the assurance we have that Divine control over the powers of nature is constantly being exercised in the interests of God’s Plan we may be certain that this was of design. Given the climatic conditions indicated above, the quantity of manna just mentioned could be produced, and gathered, over an area of no more than two square miles. The host of Israel, with all the tents and impedimenta (equipment) required for camping would be spread, at any one time, over an area of fifteen square miles, the size of a British city such as Coventry. It need not be thought incredible then, that such a vast host should be able to find a sufficiency of manna for their needs, gathered day by day on either side of the line of march.

But the wonder of the miracle remains. Men of science may reveal to us the nature of this mystic food, showing that God laid hold of that which the wilderness already brought forth. They can bear unwitting witness to the unerring foresight of God for His people’s needs and His control of natural forces when they tell us that the climatic conditions at that period were unusually favourable to the satisfaction of those needs. But they cannot explain why it is that for forty long years those myriads of busy

insects worked unceasingly for six days in every week—and *rested on the remaining day!* For when the Israelites looked out of their tents on every Sabbath morning, there was no manna on the ground! They must needs gather on the sixth day enough for two days. That mysterious cessation of the natural course on one day in every week has a regularity which is not of Nature unaided—it is of God. Only the One who rules the universe from above could so command and restrain the labours of His creatures that they rested every sixth day so that there might be no manna on the seventh. Therein is the hand of God revealed, as it is revealed throughout the whole of this wonderful account, taking up the ordinary, insignificant things of earth, bending them to His purpose, and in that totally unexplainable fashion which men call “miraculous” using them to fulfil a vital need in the execution of His Plans.

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## MANNA

John 6:31-35 “Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”

## HIDDEN MANNA

Revelation 2:17 (NKJV) “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.”



## GOD'S PRECIOUS JEWELS

Part 4. "His truth shall be thy shield."



It is remarkable how responsive to reasoning are the sacred types and symbols. They corroborate so beautifully the plain teachings of God's Word. This we especially observe with regard to the jewels on the breastplate of the High Priest. They testify of the elect, whose preparation has been secretly progressing during two millenniums. Extracted from the "dark seams of earth," they, after being shaped, polished and beautified, will scintillate the wisdom, power and lovingkindness of the glorious Omnipotent throughout the ages of eternity. True the words of the poet—

"Deep in unfathomable mines  
Of never failing skill,  
He treasures up His bright designs,  
And works His sovereign will."

### Crystal-Beryl.

We now come to the sixth stone of the Breastplate, *yahalom*, the crystal which has been translated diamond in the authorised version. While a true diamond is likewise transparent, yet there is a marked difference in the two substances. The modern diamond is of organic origin, while the crystal here indicated is a mineral, and was one time largely used in the manufacture of optical lenses.

The ancients supposed the transparent rock crystal to be ice, which had been congealed through intense cold (*krustalloss*=ice). To lend emphasis to this supposition, the mineral has been found in the clefts of granite rock, which rise to sharp peaks above the snowline, in the Alps. So clear, so ice-like, were these prismatic crystals that they seemed fair enough to be considered frozen water. Howbeit, while it may well serve as a goodly reminder of water, yet its actual substance is silica or flint.

The word used in the New Testament, which stands for the same substance, is Beryl, one of the foundation-stones of the New Jerusalem. The true Beryl has a pale greenish-blue colour, and is composed of silica, with the addition of colouring matter. This resembles sea-water, while the white rock crystal takes after the pure water from a brook.

In Rev. 15: 2 the saints are depicted as standing on "the sea of glass, having the harps of God." This pictures a possession of lucid truths, which

make them happy and confident in the love of God at this awe-inspiring time. Our Lord Jesus is truth personified—"I am the way, the truth and the life." For a striking symbolism we go to the wilderness of Sinai, where the Israelites wandered forty years. We read of One "who brought...forth water out of the rock of flint" (Deut. 8: 15). Modern research testifies that many of these rocks are composed of the same materials as the Rock Crystal under examination, and which formed one of the jewels of the Breastplate. St. Paul makes mention of the wilderness experience thus: "They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed (went with) them: and that Rock was Christ" (1 Cor. 10: 4). Thus is brought to light a stone which represents truth. The jewel class are made pure, holy and strong in the Lord through this very means.

### **Ligure.**

The seventh stone was the Ligure (Heb., *Leshem*), which appears to be the jacinth of the New Testament (Rev. 21: 20). Commentators vary so much with regard to its colour—red, blue, orange, purple, etc.—that we must needs look for other tokens to denote it's symbolic meaning.

It is distinguished from other gems on account of its possession of a strong double refraction after the order of the tourmaline. The optical properties of such crystals are of exceptional interest. A single ray of light is split up into two rays. If, for instance, the stone is placed on a single line, it will appear as two distinct lines. Thus the jewel class have their blessings doubled because they have pursued a righteous course under adverse circumstances.

The world of mankind will have their portion in the earth. A glorious portion indeed, for they will live for ever in perfect peace, health and happiness. The Little Flock will not only have peace, life and happiness, but they will be like God and possess immortality. Words are inadequate to express the inheritance awaiting the Church—"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor. 2: 9).

### **Agate.**

The eighth stone was the Agate (Heb., *sheboo*). The stone is capable of a high and beautiful polish, and it is for this reason that it is so largely used for ornamentation. It is composed of sand, which has been subjected to

the strange fierce heats of subterranean fires. During its formation, gases, chemicals and vapours enter into the substance, which result in agates of goodly variety and colour. There is the Moss Agate, Tree Agate, and Star Agate, besides those which are striped, banded and cloudy. Originally they were found by the River Achates in the volcanic region of Sicily. The word *Accho* means “heated sand.”

Issachar’s name appeared in the stone, and it is significant to note that Moses alludes to the tribe as “treasures hid in the sand,” which so aptly fits the production of the agate (Deut. 33: 19).

The jewels all tell their story, and this one speaks of “treasure (hid) in earthen vessels” (2 Cor. 4: 7). It brings to light strange and extraordinary fiery experiences, which changes “sand into gems” of real worth. The world of mankind are likened to the sand by the sea shore (Gen. 22: 17). They themselves will not be called upon to undergo what the saints have undergone during their preparation for eternal life. The saints lose their identity as human beings in order to dwell with God. No wonder they are spoken of as jewels! They have endured much, and great is their reward in heaven.

### **Amethyst.**

The ninth stone of the Breastplate is agreed by all as being the correctly named Amethyst. It has a beautiful violet colour due to a minute proportion of oxide of manganese. Violet or purple is a symbol of royalty. The colour is due to a mixture of blue and red, which means faithful unto death. When mocked by the soldiers, our Master was clad in the purple robe. He alone proved His worthiness as King of earth! Likewise the Royal Priesthood all share in that privilege. The message to each and all is, “be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev. 2: 10).

The Greek word for amethyst is *amethystos*, which means “not to intoxicate.” The ancients believed that wine from an amethyst cup would not inebriate. The stone is the colour of wine, and memory goes back to the Last Supper, when our Master passed the cup of wine to His disciples, saying, “Drink ye all of it.” That cup represents the cup of experience, the cup of sorrow, the cup of joy, which each follower of our blessed Lord

must drink. It is a cup which does not cause one to lose their senses as intoxication suggests, but it brings the spirit of a sound mind (2 Tim. 1: 7). This precious stone in the Breastplate indicates the honoured title and office of royalty for the overcomer (1 Peter 2: 9).

### **Chrysolite.**

The tenth stone has been mistranslated Beryl in the authorised version. The word comes from *Tarshish*, which most ancient historians translate Chrysolite. The word literally means gold-stone. It is transparent, and when cut and polished, reminds one of a yellow diamond.

Gold represents things Divine, and the additional thought of transparency suggests an understanding of spiritual truths resulting in Heavenly Wisdom. This is wonderfully borne out in several of the visions observed by the prophet Ezekiel. Cherubic forms surrounded by wheels—wheels within wheels, in appearance like unto a chrysolite (Ezek. 1: 16; 10: 9). The wisdom from above is always manifold in character. It takes in all things and works harmoniously like the wheels of an intricate watch (Eph. 3: 10, 11, Diag.).

It will be noted that there is a similarity between the topaz and chrysolite in appearance. The distinguishing difference, as before indicated, is the electrical energy of the topaz. Divine Love and Divine Wisdom, as revealed in the Scriptures, bears a striking relationship. One is impossible without the other (1 Cor. 13; Gal. 5: 22, 23; James 3: 17). Divine Love has this difference: it is warm, fervent and extremely pleasant in its drawing power. It is the sum-total of God's character—"For God is love." This is aptly illustrated by the inherent electrical energy of the topaz. Divine Wisdom, on the other hand, is calm and reflective. It must needs take all things in consideration, and will even govern love's warm affection—"The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way" (Prov. 8: 22). How marvellously appropriate to portray this by the tranquil Chrysolite, which compares so well in appearance with the Topaz.

### **Onyx.**

The eleventh stone was the Onyx. There were also a pair which adorned the shoulders of the High Priest (Exodus 28: 9-14). The onyx is a striped stone which may be white, black and red. The ruddy variety is usually

termed the sardonyx, owing to its appearance of flesh and blood. It has always been much valued for cameo engravings. The layers appear like separate stones, though actually and absolutely they are one.

They represent the basic truths which, while distinct from each other, are nevertheless inseparable. Wonderfully, therefore, does the onyx proclaim the taking away of the sin of the world (black) through the blood of Christ, (red). Thus all peoples of the earth will become pure, holy and righteous, as shown by the emblem of white (Rev. 20: 11,12). Thus God's precious jewels will have the privilege of restoring mankind to original perfection (Rev. 21: 19,20; Psalm 145).

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### SPARKLE AND SHINE

*Not all can be of the Kingdom,  
Not all can be the bride,  
Not all can be of the jewels;  
Who sparkle and shine by his side.*

*Only a little flock can be,  
All chosen, all faithful, all true,  
Only a few are invited;  
Those who are creatures so new.*

*Every one is consecrated,  
Every one does give their all;  
Their sacrifice it must be wholehearted,  
When the Lord God, he does call...*

*To be a joint heir with the Master,  
To be a joint heir with the Lord;  
One must be brimful of the spirit,  
The sign must be there, of it poured.*

*So if you would be of the Kingdom,  
If you would be of the bride;  
If you would be of the jewels,  
You must sparkle and shine by his side.*

*Where Eagles Gather  
Rosemary Page*

## THE STORY OF NEHEMIAH

Lessons from the life of a stalwart man of God

### Part 1. The King's Cupbearer

This story opens in the imperial palace of Artaxerxes, Persian Emperor in the fifth century B.C. He was a wise and tolerant king, giving his subjects as much freedom as possible. He had inherited the great empire of Babylon together with other conquered lands, hence the land of Israel was included in his vast domain. In his service at Shushan, capital of Persia, was a Jew named Nehemiah. Like many of his fellow nationals, he was part of Israel's exiled nobility. His position in the royal household would carry many privileges, providing him with every comfort and giving little cause for complaint. Yet Nehemiah's heart was in far off Jerusalem and he eagerly sought information from travellers concerning his brethren in Judea. News from his homeland was bad, and the plight of God's people was truly an unhappy one. The stories he heard made him long more than ever to return to the land of "the Promise", to see the rugged hills of Judah and to help to restore to Israel her ancient heritage and national prestige.

The King was an observant man and he readily detected the sorrow reflected in the face of one who served him at table. Enquiry soon revealed the cause of Nehemiah's distress, and permission was given to him to go to Jerusalem as governor of the city. Artaxerxes also supplied military protection for the long and hazardous journey, and requisitions to obtain building materials to restore the walls of Jerusalem, which were in ruins.

Two very important principles emerge from this first episode in the story of Nehemiah. His first reaction was to pray about his great trouble. He had learned to trust the King of Heaven rather than the kings of the earth and thereby God opened the way for Nehemiah's successful audience with the King.

Israel as a nation had sinned, and according to the prophecy of Moses, recorded in Deuteronomy 4. 25-31, they had been scattered and exiled by a foreign power. Nehemiah does not blame someone else for this situation but links his own name with those who had sinned. His prayer, found in Neh. 1. 4-11, is remarkably like that in Daniel 9. Daniel and Nehemiah exhibit a wonderful spirit of humility and express to God their repentance

for sins which they have not committed. Neither of them were responsible for Judah's exile, because the fate of the children of Israel was sealed by their idolatry and general disobedience to their covenant with God, long before Daniel and Nehemiah were born. It was not their fault that Jerusalem had been sacked and God's holy temple thrown down.

It is an important lesson for us because we so readily blame other people for the distress in the world and for the lack of spirituality in the Church. This was the beginning of Nehemiah's success. He went before Almighty God with a repentant heart and thus the floodgates of God's mercy and mighty power were opened to him. It is to be noticed that this was not the repentance of a flagrant sinner who forsook a wicked life for the first time. This was a fine upright child of Abraham who realised that he constantly fell from grace and was in need of Divine forgiveness. To those who have come into Christ the same principle applies, as in 1 John 1. 7,8; *"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."*

Throughout his great work, Nehemiah constantly resorted to prayer, particularly in any special crisis. His prayers were not vague, abstract sermons about the plan of God, but earnest, practical entreaties for help, guidance and strength. Such is the example given by all true servants of God from the time of the Patriarchs until the present day. Like Daniel, Nehemiah probably practised the Jewish custom of special hours of prayer, of which we read in our Lord's day.

Regular, frequent prayer is the solution to many of the difficult problems which beset the Church of God in the last century. The hindrances to our unity and to our preaching of the Word of God to unbelievers would vanish if prayer meetings became a regular feature in the worship of God's people.

We in England, where complete religious freedom has been protected by the government for more than a hundred years, enjoy the same privilege that Nehemiah experienced while living in Persia and Palestine. He was guarded on his journey from Shushan to Jerusalem. He did not obstinately refuse Gentile assistance, but gladly accepted the credentials given to him

by Artaxerxes. God does not expect us to make ourselves odious in the sight of the world merely for the sake of it. Godly men have frequently throughout the ages acknowledged and received the help which this world has given to the Divine purpose. Jesus never showed antagonism towards the civil powers, and Paul solicited the aid of pagan Rome in order that he might further his missionary work. Provided that righteous principles are not jeopardised, we ought to take advantage of civil liberties to advance, not our own interests, but the interests of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Another essential aspect of serving the Lord is to be willing to sacrifice the comfort and security of a fine career in secular life. Nehemiah is a wonderful example of this. We must be ready to give up those things which we hold dear according to the flesh in order that our spiritual life may develop, and make our service more effective. There are many things around us in our everyday lives which hinder our service for God. Our daily occupation, worldly wealth, a comfortable home, entertaining pleasures, the accumulation of knowledge, all of which might be beneficial and given to us by Divine providence, yet they can, and frequently do, distract God's servants from fulfilling their duty. When the voice of the Lord calls us from the things of this life, let us relinquish our grasp upon them and cling more surely to the unseen, eternal things which will never perish, as mentioned in Hebrews 12. 27-28.

These two principles, a repentant and prayerful heart and a willingness to deny self of earthly comfort and ambition, are essential if we would embark upon any great work for God. We must recognise that we can do nothing alone, but be fully devoted to the will and purpose of God, and live in an attitude of prayer and communion with our Heavenly Father.

*To be continued*

AOH

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#### EZRA—NEHEMIAH—ESTHER

These three books form the closing section of Old Testament History. They tell the story of the Jews' Return from Babylon, the Rebuilding of the Temple and of Jerusalem, and the Reestablishment of the Jews' National Life in their Home Land. They cover about 100 years (536-432 B.C.).

The last three of the Prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, lived and wrought in this era of the Jews' Restoration.

*Halley's Bible Handbook*

## BREAK THOU THE BREAD OF LIFE

### **BREAK Thou the Bread of Life,**

Dear Lord, to me  
 As Thou didst break the loaves  
 Beside the sea;  
 Beyond the sacred page  
 I seek Thee, Lord;  
 My spirit pants for Thee,  
 O living word!



Bless Thou the truth, dear Lord,  
 To me, to me;  
 As Thou didst bless the bread  
 By Galilee;  
 Then shall all bondage cease,  
 All fetters fall,  
 And I shall find my peace,  
 My All in All.



This hymn was originally written by Mary A. Lathbury in 1880. She was an American born in 1841 in Manchester in New York state to a Methodist minister and his wife. She penned over 60 hymns but this is one of two well-known ones.

The hymn often appears in hymnals in three or four stanzas, but the earlier hymnals come with only two verses as it appears above. The main focus of this hymn was a desire to focus and learn from God's word, The Bible. She is reckoned to have called it a 'study song'.

There are two tunes for this hymn called 'Lathbury', sometimes called 'Bread of Life' and 'Manna'.

The following verses are thought to have inspired the writer;  
 Matthew 14:13-21 (NKJV) He departed by boat to a deserted place...But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot...And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them... When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food." But Jesus

said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." And they said, "We have here only five loaves and two fish." He said, "Bring them here to Me." And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples....Now those who had eaten were about five thousand.

Deuteronomy 8:3 (NKJV) He...fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every *word* that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD. (Matthew 4:4)

Psalms 42:1-2 (NKJV) As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.

2 Timothy 3:15-16 The holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

Isaiah 26:9 (NKJV) With my soul I have desired You in the night, Yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early; For when Your judgments are in the earth, The inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

John 5:39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

John 8:36 (NKJV) If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

John 16:13 When...the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.

Rom. 8:15 Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but...the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

John 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer.

Ephesians 2:14-17 He is our peace,...and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances;...so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

1 Corinthians 15:28 When all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

## PRAYER AND THE BIBLE

### Part 1

ALL CHRISTIANS believe in prayer. But belief in prayer is not confined to Christians; the heathen believe in prayer. In times of dire distress even ungodly sceptics will fall on their knees and pray fervently. Like the Samaritans of old, however, the heathen worship they know not what (John 4:22), while the sceptic, moved by fear, yielding to the natural human instinct, appeals to a higher power for help (Isa. 26:16). The Christian on the contrary knows whom he worships, and understands that he prays to God in the name of Christ. Yet how many can satisfactorily explain the philosophy of prayer?

Nothing should deter us from an investigation into this important feature of the Bible, as even a little knowledge of the underlying reason governing the necessity of prayer opens up its possibilities. Such knowledge is useful to the man of God; it enables him to more intelligently co-operate with the Lord in the outworking of the Plan of Salvation. For we must clearly recognise that when the Apostle says that consecrated believers are “labourers together with God,” he is giving expression to a significant truth (1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 6:1).

### **What is Effective Prayer?**

Effective prayer is that which invokes God’s aid in bringing into effect the many details of his glorious Plan of Salvation; because this is the work in which Jehovah is engaged since the fall of Adam, and in which we are privileged to be co-labourers with him. No other work is of importance. If the world did not get life, of what avail would their works be? (John 10: 10).

As we know that God will not incline his ear to any except they pray according to his will, we therefore conclude that every prayer, to be effective, must be offered with His glorious Plan of Salvation in view, the details of which are contained in the Bible. This is the reason why we speak of these two connectedly: “Prayer and the Bible.” Thus the prayers of the heathen, long and often repeated, cannot be in line with God’s will, as they have nothing in common with the Bible. The prayers throughout Christendom, while offered in Christ’s name, are often contrary to the mind of Jehovah through ignorance of the Bible’s teachings, and are therefore not heeded by God. We may venture further and say that some

prayers of God's consecrated children are ineffective, because they are not offered in strict accordance with the Father's will. James indicates this when he declares: "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss." (Jas. 4:3)

### **The reason why Prayer is Necessary.**

When Adam was created he was perfect mentally, morally, and physically. He had perfect communion with his Maker whom he loved naturally, as the Divine law, the sum of which is love for God and neighbour, was written in his heart. There was no need for the great Jehovah to say to Adam: "My Son, give me thine heart," for He had already all the love and devotion of Adam's heart.

But when the tempter succeeded in his endeavour to deceive Eve, and through this means caused Adam to wilfully take away his heart's loyalty to his heavenly Creator, everything was changed. The sweet communion was broken. By disobeying the Lord and obeying Satan in eating the forbidden fruit, Adam wilfully cast the loving God out of his rightful place, and allowed the usurping prince of this world to step in. From that time onward the whole world has lain in the wicked one.

The Almighty never changes. He is the Unchangeable One. Though Adam had withdrawn from God he was still loved; but his sin of disobedience had raised a barrier; and it is written that the Lord shall by no means clear the guilty. Nevertheless, God's perfect love triumphed. His mercy endureth forever. He had already formulated a plan by which he would re-establish communion with the alienated earth—by means of another man on whose heart-loyalty he could depend.

After a lapse of over four thousand years during which it was demonstrated that there was "none righteous, no, not one", for all came short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:10, 23), the Man Christ Jesus was sent into the world to plead on behalf of the fallen race. During that long dark period, Jehovah dealt with specially chosen men to whom he intimated that a Saviour would one day come and reclaim mankind. Those who exercised faith in this promise pleased God, and were accounted righteous (Rom. 4:3). These favoured few were not actually free from sin, therefore none could pay to God a "ransom for his brother" and so lay the foundation for lasting heart-union between God and men. Not one of them had the unblemished law of love written in his heart, and thus the Almighty was

unable to transmit through them that power which alone can save the world from sin and death. It was necessary that the one who would have the honour of establishing this great work should be lovable, holy, in every respect; and such was Jesus. Jesus was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners” (Heb. 7:26). He was able to accomplish for the fallen world what the world could not do for itself.

Notice how the Scriptures distinguish between Jesus and other men. Our Lord said that of all born of women none had been greater than John the Baptist; and he also speaks of John as a “burning and a shining light” (Matt. 11:11; John 5:35). It is apparent from these declarations of Jesus that none of the holy prophets excelled John the Baptist. And yet John himself acknowledged that he was not able to abolish sin and reunite the hearts of men with God. He constantly directed attention to Jesus as the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world (John 1:29). The Apostle tell us that the Baptist, great though he was, was not *that* light. As a forerunner he was sent to bear witness and testify that Jesus was the true light which will yet lighten every man that comes into the world (John 1:6-9). It is quite evident from the Scriptures that vital communion between God and the earth, broken by Adam, was re-established by Jesus Christ. Prayers offered previous to Christ’s advent accomplished a preparatory work only.

### **Jesus Christ the “Light” of the world.**

But perfect relations between the Creator and his earthly domain was not re-established without a challenge. Satan, the “prince of this world,” chief among the “rulers of darkness,” tried his utmost to sever the connection again (Luke 4:1-13). The Adversary, however, could not succeed this time, for with the aid of the mighty power of God Jesus was more than a match for him. The Scriptures are clear that Jesus could do nothing of himself (John 5:19; 8:28). Therefore he was in constant communion with his Father by prayer. He prayed to Jehovah for strength to resist Satan. He asked for wisdom to direct the affairs of his ministry among men that the message of the coming Kingdom might find root in the hearts of some, and extend through them to all on earth. Jesus prayed for power to work miracles, so as to manifest the authority conferred on him and foreshow the great power of his future Kingdom. He also prayed for discernment to understand the deep things of his Father’s Word, that he might work in harmony therewith and fulfil the heavenly will.

Jesus passed on the light to his disciples, and God found response in them also (John 15:16; 17:18). These were sent forth into the world among whom they shone as lights, in order that they might enlighten us who believe in the Saviour through their word (John 12:35,36; Matt. 5:14,16; Acts 26:18; Eph.5:8; Phil. 2:15). As soon as we, like all who had the “hearing ear” during the Gospel Age, believed in the life-giving words, God’s will then began to be done in us; and letting our light shine we are empowered to enkindle still others (John 17:20; 2 Cor. 4:6). Thus that single Light which God sent into the world about twenty centuries ago has caused many lights to shine throughout all these years (Luke 2:27-32; Acts 13:44-48). And just as the darkness did not comprehend the first great light, neither has it understood the succeeding lights (John 3:19-21; 15:18-20; 17:13,14; 1 John 3:1). But when God merges all these “lights” into the one great Sun of Righteousness in the Age of Restitution spoken of by the prophets, when the human race will return from its captivity in death (Matt. 13:43; Mal. 4:2; Acts 3:19-24), every man that has come into the world from the beginning will be lightened up, and every trace of darkness will be chased away (Eph. 5:14). This earth will then become a dazzling planet, the will of the Lord being done on it once more as in heaven; and God, who dwells in light, and in whom is no darkness at all, will tabernacle with men (1 Tim. 6:16; Rev. 21:3). There will be perfect communion between the Creator and all his human creatures; Satan, the prince of darkness, will be destroyed (Eph. 6:12; John 12:31).

ME

*Next time***Salvation is Impossible without Prayer.**

*Take time for prayer!  
Take time to behold him!*

*songs of the nightingale*

Prayer should always be followed by praise.

**JANUARY****Prayer of the Righteous!**

Dear Heavenly Father, I thank thee for thy Grace and Truth which has come to me in the name of thy dear Son, who died and rose that I may live to thine eternal praise. Deeply do I appreciate a knowledge which is needful to intelligence. Thy Kingdom Come! I am grateful to behold a Day when all the world will be granted an opportunity to tread paths of peace and righteousness during the fast approaching kingdom of thy dear Son.

Meanwhile I, with all who sincerely love thee, would please thee now! Continue to lead and to bless. Remove every tendency which is contrary to thy holy will. I would be dealt with as one of thy dear children, and, arrayed in that spirit, be free from anxiety, kindly and patient towards all, friendly and forgiving, quiet in bearing, thoughtful in speech, approachable, full of hope and joy, as well as strong and courageous, and ever courteous in expressing the ways of truth.

Dear Father, I breathe this prayer whilst the world is in pain and stress. Be with and prepare me as an instrument to uplift them in that glad sweet day, when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings. Meanwhile I commit my way to thee, believing that thou wilt answer this prayer because it is centred not in my own merit, but in that which belongs to Christ Jesus. Praise be to thee, O Father, from whom all blessings flow!

FL

**Prayer**

The purpose of prayer is not to change the Divine will, but to adjust oneself to it. As is your "Amen" so is your prayer.

God's answers are wiser than our prayers.

Prayer is not conquering God's reluctance, but taking hold of God's willingness.

*Deep Waters and a Bubbling Brook*

## FEBRUARY

### This mighty universe.

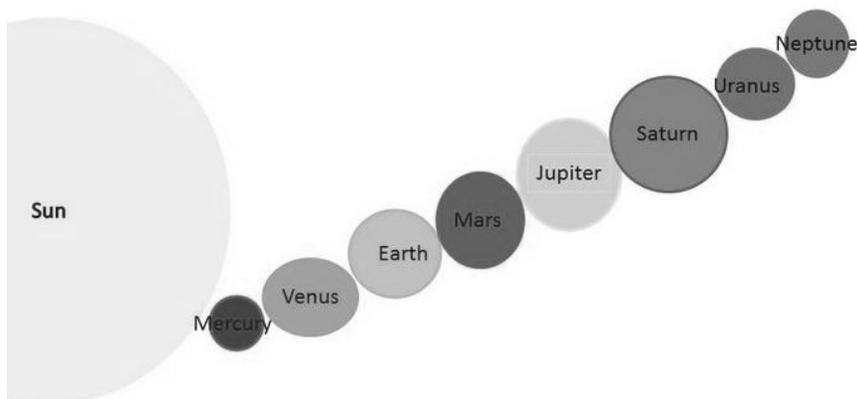
*When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and stars,  
which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him.*

Psalm 8. 3-4

**This mighty universe.** When we look up at the stars by night, we are given to understand that they are practically all gigantic suns, somewhat similar to the one which we see by day. They are, however, so far away that they appear to be mere points of light. There are millions of them travelling in well-defined orbits and in perfect rhythm around one grand centre wherein dwells Almighty God. We gather some idea of their speed, when it is learnt that the planet upon which we dwell, is moving at the rate of about eighteen miles per second or some 67,000 miles per hour. This baffles our imagination, for it is about 150 times faster than an aeroplane.

There are some nine major planets\*, of which the earth is one, circulating around the sun. Whilst the other planets are as yet uninhabited, we are led to wonder concerning their future use. We wait upon the Lord for the answer. Meanwhile he would have us “lay hold of eternal life!” Then we shall be prepared to appreciate to the full, the wonderful things which God has in reservation for them that love him and who conform to his glorious character. This yearning has been finely expressed in the words of David: “As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness!” Psalm 17: 15.

\*Pluto was reclassified as a dwarf planet in 2006.



## TIMES AND SEASONS

### Part 1. The Antediluvian Era

The study of Biblical time periods makes it possible to relate Bible history to the “secular” histories of ancient nations, thus assisting in establishing the veracity of Bible writers and the times at which they lived and wrote. Many an Old Testament story has been dubbed mythical and unhistorical until the researches of archaeologists revealed that such men did live and such things did happen, and the Scripture was right all the time. Whereas present secular historical chronology, built up from the records of ancient nations such as Greeks, Egyptians, Babylonians and so on, goes back with tolerable certainty to about fifteen centuries before Christ, and with considerable uncertainty before that only another thousand years, the Bible alone gives a definite time-scale right to the beginning, a time-scale which is more and more coming to be accepted by historians as accurate. Particularly is this true for the period prior to King David. Whereas so little as about a hundred years ago the known history of Egypt, Babylon and Sumer, recognised as being the earliest nations, was held to have commenced a thousand years before the Bible indicates it did, the leading historical chronologists of the present day advocate dates which are more or less in line with those implied by the Old Testament.

Jewish chronologists have used the time periods of the Bible to determine the date of the coming of Messiah, and their Christian counterparts to fix the time of the Second Advent. This has been going on since the 2nd century B.C. and the results have often been instrumental in awaking the people of God, Jews or Christians, in certain generations, to the significance of the times in which they were living. This series will not make any such prognostications although some of the data presented may be of use to those engaged in that kind of research.

The first era to be considered is naturally that from Eden to the Flood, the “world that then was” as \*St. Peter calls it. The calculation has the merit of simplicity in that its span of years is made up by adding together the ages of the patriarchs at the births of the respective sons who carried on the family line, finishing with the age of Noah when the Flood came. The whole of the necessary data is given in the 5th chapter of Genesis, but right here a difficulty presents itself. The three great texts of the early Old

Testaments, the Masoretic, (from which the A.V. and most modern translations are derived), the Septuagint and the Samaritan, present three different sets of figures, resulting in totals of 1656, 2262 and 1307 years respectively. The vital question; which is correct?

The answer is of importance to chronologists and historians but it does not affect the validity of the Bible or the Divine oversight of its contents. The ethical teaching of the Bible, its doctrinal and prophetic expositions, its revelation of God in and through Christ, are all under the inspiration and control of the Holy Spirit and are accepted as inviolate. In regard to the historical narratives of the Old Testament, their accuracy depends upon the integrity of their writers and the care with which they have been preserved. It can be taken as certain that the over-ruling power of the Holy Spirit has seen to it that all that ought to be recorded for future generations has been so recorded and that matters having no conceivable use have been left out. Which of these three periods is the true one is immaterial so far as soundness in the Faith or the conditions of the Christian life are concerned.

The books of the Hebrew Old Testament began to be brought together in what is called the “canon” over a period of several centuries commencing from the days of Ezra. By about 400 B.C. the Old Testament was complete. There was no printing; copies of the books were made by copying existing manuscripts. This was normally done with scrupulous care, so that errors and omissions were rare although they did sometimes occur. Thus a certain amount of difference between various copies began to appear but usually in quite unimportant details. By the 3rd century B.C., however, Hebrew had ceased to be the spoken language and was replaced by Aramaic and particularly Greek. Hence the Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek (270-230 B.C.) for general use and this is what is called the Septuagint (LXX for short). The Hebrew Bible remained in use by priests and rabbis and in the synagogues but the Greek was the one in general use. Hence the many quotations from the Septuagint by Jesus and the Apostles in the New Testament.

At an earlier period, probably about 400 B.C. the Samaritans built a Temple on Mount Gerizim in opposition to Nehemiah’s Temple at Jerusalem, and at about the same time produced what is called the

Samaritan Pentateuch, a Hebrew text containing only the Five Books of Moses, differing in many minor respects from the other texts but inclining in the main more towards the Septuagint than the Hebrew.

These were the three Bibles, all descended from the original Hebrew of the time of Ezra, which were in use at the time of Christ. Most of the early translations into European languages up to the 16th century were made from the Septuagint, but when the Authorised Version of 1611 was produced the Palestinian Hebrew text—known by then as the Masoretic—was brought into consideration and in consequence the A.V. chronology in Genesis is that found in the Masoretic. To this day, however, the Eastern European and Asiatic translations—Greek, Armenian, Arabic, Coptic, Ethiopic, and so on, are from the Septuagint.

This “Masoretic” text upon which the A.V. is based was fixed about the 8th century A.D. About A.D. 100 Jewish scholars had begun to rationalise the many varied Hebrew texts which existed in order to produce a standard text. This process went on for several centuries, the scholars who conducted this work being known as the Masoretes, hence the name of the resultant text, which since the 8th century has been the “Received Text” of Judaism and has not since been changed.

With all this in mind the question of which text contains the original time periods can be approached. The original manuscripts are of course no longer in existence. The oldest Mss of the Septuagint still surviving was made about A.D. 350; the oldest Masoretic A.D. 916; and the oldest Samaritan A.D. 1149. The differences in the time periods arose prior to these dates, at sometime between them and the original divergence from the correct text of Ezra, which could have been as early as the time of Christ.

The solution to the conundrum has been well established and attested by a number of historians and theologians during the early part of the Christian era. For several centuries prior to the First Advent the fixed conviction of Judaism was that Messiah would appear at or about the close of six thousand years of human history, and would then inaugurate his earthly kingdom, the seventh thousand. According to the then Hebrew Bible chronology this period had nearly expired when Jesus was born. Naturally

enough, the early Christians seized on this as an indisputable proof of his Messiahship. It is well established that, in consequence of this, the rabbis, endeavouring to refute the claim, consistently altered the text of Genesis whenever new copies were made, by reducing the ages of six of the patriarchs at the birth of their sons by a hundred years each. The effect of this was to postpone the end of the six thousand years to a date six hundred years later. It was the invariable practice that when new copies of the Hebrew Scriptures were made to replace old ones, the old copies were withdrawn from use and eventually destroyed. Hence, over a lapse of time, the new scale of years became universal in the Hebrew manuscripts.

The Samaritan Jews, at the same time or probably a little earlier, also began to alter their texts, but they deducted a century from each of all the nine patriarchs so that their postponement was that much longer and their figure for the length of the antediluvian era the shortest of the three.

The Septuagint copies in circulation, not being under the control of the rabbis and being much more widely diffused, were not affected and retained the original time-spans.

The first witness is the Jewish historian Josephus. Writing about A.D. 90, he says in his work "*Contr. Apion*" 1-1, "*The Antiquities contain the history of 5000 years and are taken out of our sacred books, but are translated by me into the Greek tongue*". In this latter work, "*Antiquities of the Jews*", he gives the ages of the patriarchs and the chronology from Creation to Abraham as it is now presented in the Septuagint but by his own assertion he translated from the Hebrew, which infers that in his day the Hebrew was identical with the Septuagint. And there is one interesting point which clinches this fact. Lamech in the Hebrew (Masoretic) is given 777 years of life with Noah born to him at 182. The Septuagint gives him 753 years with Noah born at 188. Josephus, *in this one instance*, follows the Hebrew. It seems evident that in Josephus' time this one difference between the two versions existed and that Josephus, following the Hebrew, had thus adopted the figure he did.

Thirty years after Josephus came Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, who produced the first Christian chronology, which agreed with the Septuagint. About this time the rabbis began their work of standardising the text

and here the alterations apparently begin to be made. In A.D. 148 Justin Martyr, notable Palestinian Christian, accused the rabbis of tampering with the Scriptures; Origen in A.D. 230 gave a number of instances in which alterations had been made. Eusebius of Caesarea, A.D. 320, says in his writings that in various Hebrew Bibles to which he had access he found differing accounts of the chronology, some following the longer and others the shorter. He himself advocated the longer. Another famous Christian scholar, Ephrem Syrius\* of Nisibis, at about the same time said *“The Jews have subtracted 600 years from the generations of Adam, Seth and so on, in order that their own books might not convict them concerning the coming of Christ, he having been predicted to appear for the deliverance of mankind after 5500 years.”* The celebrated theologian, St. Augustine, 4th century, refers in his work *“The City of God”* to *“the great discrepancy between the Hebrew Mss and our Bible”* (i.e. the Septuagint) *“especially on the matter of the ages of the patriarchs, which savours not of accident but design”*. Georges Syncellus, A.D. 800, Greek writer, remarks *“it is with reason that in our chronology we follow the version of the Septuagint, which was made, as it appears, from an ancient and uncorrupted copy.”*

There are plenty of evidences that the Church during the early centuries of this present era held to the Septuagint chronology. One of the most notable is the so-called *“Gospel of Nicodemus”*, produced at some time between the 2nd and 4th centuries. This work contains statements on chronology which are in line with the Septuagint. Hippolytus, Bishop of Rome A.D. 220, Ambrose of Milan A.D. 370, Lactantius, tutor to the son of the Emperor Constantine A.D. 300, all said that since 5500 years had elapsed at the birth of Christ—which the Septuagint chronology indicates approximately—the Second Advent could be expected in A.D. 500. Louis Golding, in his book *“In the steps of Moses the Lawgiver”* (1937) tells of his visit to the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai, where he saw, fixed to the Monastery wall, a marble plaque commemorating its founding. The plaque states that it was placed there by the Emperor Justinian and bears the date *“in the year 6021 after Adam, the 577th year after Christ”* which again is in accord with the Septuagint chronology.

In making the alterations, the perpetrators created some anomalies which had to be put right. One may ask why, in the case of the Masoretic text,

only six patriarchs were made subject to the hundred years' deduction; the apparent reason is that if Methuselah and Lamech were thus treated they would then have been shown surviving the Flood. In the case of Jared the answer probably lies in Jewish legend. It was believed that, with the exception of Abel, Adam was the first man to die and this is consistent with the Septuagint chronology. Had 100 years been taken from Jared as from the others, the effect would be that his son Enoch was "translated" 43 years before Adam's death, which was not acceptable and so Jared was left untouched.

The Samaritan text, in deducting 100 years from each of the nine patriarchs, were faced with the result that Jared, Methuselah and Lamech all survived the Flood. They overcame this difficulty by altering the total lengths of these three lives from 962,969 and 753 to 847, 720 and 653 respectively, so making each of these three to die in the actual year of the Flood.

It is for these reasons that the Septuagint chronology for the period before the Flood is now generally accepted as representing the original Hebrew text of the O.T. One edition of the Septuagint, the Sixtine, made in Latin in the 17th century, has 167 for Methuselah instead of 187, but the Sixtine was made from the Greek Vaticanus Mss which has no Genesis. This figure must have been obtained from some other late Mss and is probably a copyist's error. It may therefore reasonably be taken that the length of the antediluvian era as given in the original Bible of Ezra is 2262 years.

There are, of course, no independent histories of that era which could be used to check the figure. It is of interest, though, that some Babylonian tablets, written in the 17th century B.C., which have been in the British Museum for the past hundred years, were deciphered in 1967 and found to comprise an account of legendary events between the creation of man and the great Flood. According to the story the antediluvian era comprised two periods, each enduring "*a little less than 1200 years*", terminated, the first by a great plague, and the second by the Flood. That this legend, written several centuries after Abraham's departure from Ur but probably derived from histories current in his time or earlier, should give "just under" 2400 years for the period stated in Genesis as 2262 years is at least an intriguing coincidence and could suggest a common origin.

The following table compares the relevant figures from the Masoretic, Samaritan, Septuagint, and Josephus.

## AGE AT BIRTH OF SON

	Mas.*	Sam.	LXX	Jos.
Adam	130	130	230	230
Seth	105	105	205	205
Enos	90	90	190	190
Cainan	70	70	170	170
Mahaleleel	65	65	165	165
Jared	162	62	162	162
Enoch	65	65	165	165
Methuselah	187	67	187**	187
Lamech	182	53	188	182
Noah (to Flood)	600	600	600	600
Total	1656	1307	2262	2256

## TOTAL LENGTH OF LIFE

Adam	930	930	930	930
Seth	912	912	912	912
Enos	905	905	905	905
Cainan	910	910	910	910
Mahalaleel	895	895	895	895
Jared	962	847	962	962
Enoch	365	365	365	365
Methuselah	969	720	969	969
Lamech	777	653	753	777
Noah	950	950	950	950

\* Mas. used for A.V.

\*\* Septuagint Gen. 5.25 states 167 years, not 187 years, see note Alexandrine text

AOH

Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,  
 Pilgrim through this barren land;  
 I am weak, but Thou art mighty;  
 Hold me with Thy powerful hand.  
 Bread of heaven,  
 Feed me till I want no more.

---

## THE MIRACLES OF JESUS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Our Lord was “A minister of the circumcision, for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers” so the underlying key to a good understanding of the Parables is to see them in their Dispensational setting. The same theme is strongly borne out also in the miracles which our Lord performed. In fact it might be said that his miracles were mighty works performed by him as the Son of God, to confirm his teaching as Heb. 2.3-4. says in order to bring about repentance. This is clear from Matt.11.20, “Then began He to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not.” In fact we can say that the same purpose was evident in the preaching of the disciples “they went forth and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following” (Mark 16. 20).

The first miracle appears to be the **healing of a leper** (Matt. 8. 1-4). This is followed by the **healing of the Centurion’s servant** (Matt. 8. 5-13). Then comes the **healing of Peter’s wife’s mother** (Matt. 8. 14-15.) Surely here is a prophetic lesson, the leper representing Israel in her uncleansed condition, the Centurion’s servant a Gentile, being healed at a distance, and his faith compared with that of Israel, and Peter’s wife’s mother being a woman, when women were despised by the orthodox Jew. What a breaking through of traditional barriers, this was.

In the cleansing of the leper we need to keep Lev. 14 before us, where we read of the Law of the leper in the day of his cleansing. Israel was indeed in the state that this leper was in, “no soundness, but wounds, bruises and putrefying sores”, cut off from worship and service, although called to be a kingdom of Priests. Yet as with this leper they are destined to be cleansed, when the Lord wills. Then after Israel is cleansed the Gentiles too will be cleansed. So too, as Peter’s wife’s mother was healed, and she arose and ministered unto Him, Israel in the day of her healing will begin the ministry which she has for so long neglected. (Isa. 1. 6)

The next large miracle recorded in Matthew’s Gospel is where **Jesus stills the waves** (Matt. 8. 23-27). Is there not a picture of the great storm that is to come on the ‘sea’ of humanity, when it will appear as if the Lord is asleep, until Israel will cry unto Him because of the oppressors and He will rise up and say “Peace, be still—Be still and know that I am God”.

And furthermore, as we pass on to verses 28 to 34 and read of our Lord **casting out the demons at Gadara\*** and sending them forth in to the herd of swine which are unclean animals, do we not see a connection between the two miracles. For in the future after our Lord has risen up to the prey and cried "Peace, be still" we read in Rev. 19. 20 of the doom of the beast and the false prophet and in 20.10 of the similar fate of the arch-deceiver Satan and we are told in Matt. 25. 41 that his angels will be with him. No wonder these demons were fearful as we read in James 2. 19 (Diaglott) "the demons also believe and tremble". Thus these miracles, as also the parables, were but demonstrating His Messiahship, they were "the powers of the world to come" as we are told in Hebrews. Can we wonder, too, that the people marvelled.

**The man sick of the palsy, or a paralytic** (Matt. 9. 2-8). Here, not only does Jesus heal the man bodily, but he also pronounces the forgiveness of his sins. All this naturally led to the increased resentment of the Scribes and Pharisees which was to end in our Lord's rejection. But here again one suggests that our Lord was speaking to Israel as a nation, the healing of this lame man figuring the healing that would come to Israel, who at the time were not God's people, if they would but accept that Sent one of God. It seems not without significance that after our Lord had sacrificed himself, and in view of his prayer from the Cross, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do", God poured out His Spirit upon Israel at Pentecost, then the first miracle that was performed was the healing of the lame man, again a type of the healing that would come to the nation on acceptance of the proffered mercy in Christ (Heb. 2. 3-4).

In Matt. 9. 18-26 it records the **ruler of the Synagogue, whose daughter lay dying**, coming to ask Jesus to heal her. Here our Lord comes face to face with death. On the way to her Jesus is intercepted by a woman with an issue of blood which she had had for 12 years. Here again is Israel's number coming out providing another picture of the state of the nation. For her complaint made her unfit to attend the House of God, it was recognised by tradition as a sufficient ground for divorce, and in short it placed her outside the pale of society generally, much as the leper was. Then again Luke adds that the ruler's daughter was about 12 years of age. Again the number of Israel, is there is any connection here? Could the woman be the girl's mother? If so it explains much. We begin to see the part faith plays in our Lord's miracles as he turns to the woman saying

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All welcome

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**U.K. Bible Students Conference 28-30 October 2016 Report**

Phil. 4.4 ‘Rejoice in the Lord always’ was the theme text for this new convention with serving brothers speaking in English, Polish or Romanian. There was much rejoicing in singing too.

**Psalm 64:10** The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory.

**BIBLE STUDENTS FELLOWSHIP CONFERENCE**

**WEDNESDAY 16 AUGUST—SUNDAY 20 AUGUST 2017**

**HIGH LEIGH CONFERENCE CENTRE, HODDESDON**

**OUR COMFORT IN SORROW**

There is no book like the Bible for the sorrowful. It tells of the Comforter; it points to the perfect plan according to which God is working out our blessedness: it insists that all things are working together for good; it opens the vista of the blessed future, where all the griefs and tears of men shall be put away for ever.

Gone from us  
Betty Stedman (Upminster)

“Thy faith hath made thee whole.” On the other hand his final charge against the blind guides of Israel, who were leading them into the ditch of rejection and unrepentance, was that they omitted among other weighty matters, “faith”. So as we pass to the last miracle that speaks of faith before the crisis in Chapter 12 we see that healing is made conditional upon faith.

The **miracle of the two blind men** (Matt. 9. 27-31) is particularly significant insofar as our Lord was addressed as “Son of David” and He is similarly addressed by two other blind men in Matt. 20. 30-31; these being the only two miracles where He is so addressed without contradiction. Does not this suggest the blindness of Israel, that they didn’t recognise their long promised King. But on the other hand this will be the first miracle which he will perform when he returns, to open their blind eyes that they may look upon Him whom they have pierced. The very fact that there are two blind men is in itself suggestive of the Two Houses of Israel, both blind for the present, but later to have their eyes opened as they acknowledge Him who died for them, thus forming an action picture even as the Parable of the Prodigal Son, provides a word picture.

The **miracle of the dumb man** which follows (Matt. 9. 32-34) again raises the antagonism of the Pharisees causing them to ascribe the works of God to the devil. When the demons are cast out of Israel, not only their blindness will be healed but they will speak words which will make the world wonder.

Then amidst rising opposition our Lord **heals the withered hand** (Matt. 12. 9-14). This took place on the Sabbath day and was calculated to hit hard at the petty and rigid Sabbath day observances which the Pharisees were largely responsible for and note throughout that much of their opposition was related to our Lord’s attitude to this. In fact it was after this miracle that “Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him”. (vs. 14) This is followed by the quotation from Isa. 42 showing how, because of Israel’s rejection of Him the blessing will come upon the Gentiles. So the miracles keep pace with the theme.

In Matt 12. 22-30 our Lord again heals a man possessed with a demon, blind and dumb, and again the Pharisees ascribe this work to Beelzebul,

which causes our Lord to utter that denunciation in verses 31 and 32 about the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit which has been true of Israel ever since. And yet after all the signs and wonders which our Lord had given, miracles for which He had become famous throughout the length and breadth of the land, the rulers ask of Him “Master, we would see a sign from thee”. (12.38). But our Lord tells them that the only sign which would be given them is the sign of the prophet Jonah.

So we come to our Lord’s rejection and the parables of the mysteries of the kingdom which are followed by more miracles and after that in 2 sets of sevens but whereas before His rejection Christ works them alone, this is not so after his rejection, for then the disciples help him. The Dispensational fulfilment of this will be plain to all.

The first set of seven miracles have a very strong element of compassion, illustrating what our Lord had previously said, “I will have mercy and not judgement”. The second set of seven begins with another reference to the prophet Jonah, and immediately after the glory of the transfiguration, the Lord deals with a case of demon possession, then the miracle of the tribute money and so on. Truly there is much here fraught with great significance.

Looking at one of the miracles in the first series of seven—the healing of the Syrophenician woman’s daughter (Matt. 15. 21-28) This woman of Canaan, a Gentile, she addressed our Lord as “Son of David”. Now this is a title given to our Lord as King of the Jews and He will yet reign as such, and world-wide blessing will follow, but as a Gentile this woman had no claim upon our Lord as ‘Son of David’ as he told the disciples that He was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the House of Israel. Whereupon the woman apparently learning the lesson and in great faith she called unto him ‘Lord, help me’. The Lord then answered her and said that the children’s bread shouldn’t be given to dogs. Israel were the children Gentiles were the ‘dogs’. The woman seized upon the word for ‘dogs’ which in this case means puppy dogs, which were allowed in the houses for the children to play with. Yet the puppies eat of the crumbs which fall from their master’s table. What great faith this woman had. She would not be put off. So reverting back to a passage which has already been given as a key Scripture, “Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision, for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the Fathers”, but the

verse continues “and that the Gentiles may glorify God for His mercy”. So this woman recognised Israel’s place they were the Masters, she but a little “dog” but as such could expect the crumbs. So she obtained the blessing with the Lord’s commendation, and her daughter was made whole from that very hour. The fundamental principle of right division is truly manifested here, and the same idea is shown in the figure of the wild olive branches grafted into the true olive in Romans 11.

In the second series of seven miracles there is the example of **the withered fig tree** in Matt. 21. 18-19. The fig tree was always a symbol of Israel as a nation, and when our Lord saw nothing but leaves on this tree he said “let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever” and the tree withered away. Surely we need hardly say how once again, Israel is figured here, how the nation with its outward show only and a complete lack of fruit, was symbolised by the “leaves only”. Just prior to this miracle the crowd had spread their garments on the road, cut down branches from the trees and scattered them on the road and shouted “Hosanna to the Son of David”, but within a few days they were crying “Away with Him, crucify Him”. There was no fruit unto the age. But then the fig tree begins to bud and brings forth fruit, which can be seen in signs today.

There can be no doubt that the miracles counted in the **Gospel of John** are mostly of a different character and for a different purpose to those given in the other three Gospels. John’s selection of eight miracles only from the many which our Lord performed was overruled by the Holy Spirit of God, and the purpose in recounting these eight is told us in John 20. 31, “these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is...the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name.” It is noteworthy that John never uses the word *dunamis* meaning “mighty work” or “miracle” but the word *semeion* meaning “sign” although it is often translated “miracle”. Therefore these miracles shall be referred to as signs.

In considering these eight signs, two things stand out most clearly; they all manifest Israel’s need, and condition of helplessness and death: and Messiah’s glory, and his ability to meet that need, and restore Israel’s lost condition. The first is called “the beginning” and the next is called the “second”, and Bullinger suggests this is to intimate to us that we are to continue the enumeration and thus be led or to emphasize the signification

of each. It “manifested forth His glory”. There is a wonderful correspondence existing between these eight signs and this is set out very fully on pages 194 of the Appendices to the Companion Bible. The C.B. mentions that the first sign corresponds with the eighth, the second with the seventh, the third with the sixth, and the fourth with the fifth, all showing the beauty and symmetry of the whole, truly Divinely inspired, because we note further that the latter sign in each pair is always an advance on the former, the former dealing with what is preliminary and partial, and the latter with what is permanent and final.

It is very evident that the Gospel of John is divided into two sections, each commencing with a reference to “His own”. (1) “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not” (1.11) (2) “Jesus...having loved His own...loved them unto the end” (13.1). So also the first twelve chapters speak of His public ministry which ended in rejection, this then ceases and He then spends the time instructing “His own”. All the signs except one, which occurred after His resurrection come in the first section, and here again their effect is that many believed (2.23; 3.2; 6.14), but more and more the rulers turned against Him (11.47-53; 12.18,19,37). As in the other Gospels it will be found that each miracle develops the subject matter in the immediate context, all testifying to the fact that “Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His Name”.

Here are the signs in John according to the aforementioned grouping and purpose, namely the first followed by the eighth, the second followed by the seventh, etc.

1st	Marriage in Cana (2.1-11)	8th	Draught of Fishes (21.1-14)
2nd	Ruler’s Son (John 4.46-50)	7th	Lazarus (11.1-44)
3rd	Impotent man (5.1-47)	6th	Man born Blind (9.1-41)
4th	Feeding the 5 thousand (6.1-14)	5th	Walking on the sea (6.15-21)

*To be continued*

*JS*

## CORIANDER

*“And the manna was as coriander seed, and the colour thereof as the colour bdellium” (Num. 11: 7).*

Coriander is only twice mentioned in the Bible and on each occasion in connection with ‘manna’ which reminded the Israelites, during their wanderings in the Sinai desert, of the appearance of coriander seeds. Both references are in the second and fourth books of Moses. *“And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it was like a coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey” (Exod. 16: 31)*



There are three different kinds of manna mentioned in the Bible. Firstly, there is the ‘apochryphal’ manna, mentioned in Baruch, which was bought and sold and bartered. *“Behold, we have sent you money to buy you burnt offerings, and sin offerings, and incense, and prepare ye manna, and offer upon the altar of the Lord our God” (Baruch 1: 10)* This referred to the resinous or gummy exudations of various desert trees, such as the manna tamarisk (*Tamarix mannifera*) and the spiny camelthorn (*Alhagi camelorum*). It was, to be more precise, the insects feeding on those trees or shrubs which produced this sweet resin. The resin exuded by day hardened at night and could be shaken from the leaves and stems in the early morning. This is still done by Bedouins who sell it to use instead of sugar.

The second type of manna grew up during the night when the ground was moist but ‘bred worms and stank’ in the morning. This was probably gelatinous algae called *Nostoc* or ‘star jelly’; *“When the sun waxed hot, it melted” (Exod. 16:21)*

The third type of manna was that which ‘fell from heaven’. Pundits have identified this as a lichen (*Lecanora*). Sometimes known as ‘angels’ food’ and ‘corn of heaven’ these *Lecanora* lichens, in periods of heat and drought, detached themselves from their base, curled up into little balls (resembling coriander seeds), were carried along by the wind and then settled or ‘rained down’ upon some distant territory, such as the Sinai Desert, although they never actually grew there.

The Children of Israel likened manna to the coriander ‘seed’ in shape and to bdellium in colour. We know that the Garden of Eden contained ‘bdellium and the onyx stone’ (Gen. 2:12). Bdellium is a gum resin obtained from two different species of *Commiphora*, one in Africa and the other in India.

*The Flowers and Fruits of the Bible*  
John Chancellor

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# BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

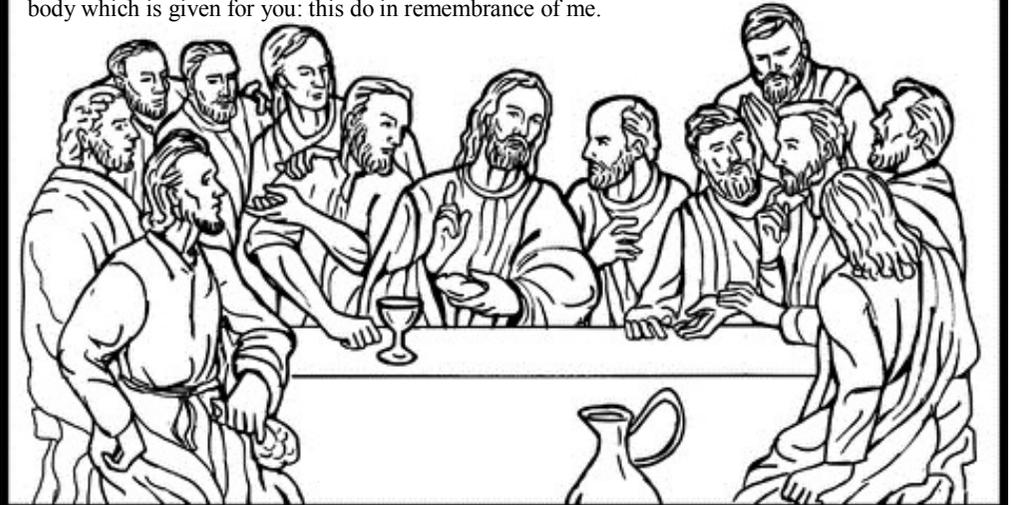
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**Luke 22:19** He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.



# BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

FOUNDED 1924

The Bible Study Monthly, published to promote knowledge of the Bible, sees the Scriptures as a true record of God's dealings with the human race, needing to be understood in our generation. It looks for the advent of our Lord, and His reign of peace and justice on the earth.

*“Speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ”* (Ephesians 4:15 NRSV)

The Bible Study Monthly is sent free of charge on request to all who are genuinely interested.

(Please renew your request each year.)

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Secretary & Treasurer: Nicholas Charcharos

## THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH CERTAINTY UNCERTAINTY

In these days of uncertainty whether they be political, financial, ecclesiastical, climatic or social, objects of enduring quality come to the fore. The gold bullion price often skyrockets like it did with the financial crisis in the last decade. Then there are the diamond markets and the extraordinary price of jewels such as the ‘Koh-I-Noor’ diamond. Others invest in works of art. One famous work of art is ‘The Last Supper’ by Leonardo da Vinci which hangs in Milan. Da Vinci’s artwork has inspired other artists like Salvador Dali and Andy Warhol. Even a Chinese artist Zeng Fanzhi was inspired by this European painting and his version was sold at Sotheby’s auction for \$23m. But for the Christian certainty is found in a different direction.

The Old Testament and the New Testament have been around for thousands of years. They attest to the events described therein. Luke in opening his account states that we “may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught”. (Luke 1: 4 ESV)

Therefore the Christian looks at this time of year, when the death of our Lord Jesus is considered to follow the request to “do this in remembrance of me” being certain its an accurate record of the words of Jesus and the certainty of the importance of following his direction. (Luke 22: 19NKJV)

Then if there is certainty that this request is valid in this day and age, then there is also certainty in his resurrection, and therefore the resurrection of all the dead in due time.

O LOVE divine, that stooped to share  
Our sharpest pang, our bitterest tear!  
On thee we cast each earthborn care,  
Feeling at rest while thou art near.

*Poems of Dawn*

### Gone from us

Anne Brockis (Suffolk)  
Peter Couling (Northampton, formerly Crick)  
Mary Davies, nee Thompson (South Wales)  
Derrick Nadal (Nottingham)

### **DERRICK NADAL**

Long standing readers will note that Derrick has now ‘gone from us’ having died at the age of 90 on Monday 19 December 2016.

Hard-working and diligent Derrick took up the role of Secretary and Circulations manager in 1992 before adding to that the role of Editor of Bible Study Monthly in 1995. He was supported in his roles by his dear and capable wife Margaret to whom we send our condolences. He relinquished these roles in 2012 due to health matters but remained an active official of Bible Fellowship Union till his recent death in hospital.

Magazine content. What is published is believed to have a wide interest, but everything printed may not necessarily be the opinion of the editor and his colleagues.

**“ARE THERE NOT TWELVE HOURS IN THE DAY.”****A study in John 11: 9**

As the life of Jesus was drawing to its close the increasingly ferocious hostility of the Jewish authorities caused Him to withdraw Himself from Jerusalem and its environment on several occasions.

This seems to have been necessary because His utterances became more challengingly emphatic, and His works more startlingly miraculous. By reason of this greater emphasis, Jesus drew the attention of the common people more definitely to Himself, but at the same time it fed the flames of anger and malice which for some time had smouldered in the hearts of the rulers.

One of His startling miracles at this time was the bestowment of sight upon the “man born blind.” To supplement this gracious act Jesus uttered the parable of the shepherd and his sheep. For daring to defend the character of his benefactor the once blind man was “put out of the synagogue” by the infuriated rulers. They thus cut him off, as they thought, from the hopes of Israel. To show the people the true character of the Pharisees and rulers, Jesus told them, illustratively, of an occurrence which had happened many times in their midst. False hireling shepherds “whose own the sheep are not,” had failed to preserve and keep the flock from danger, while a true owner-shepherd would risk his own life rather than that of his flock. Both the people and the Pharisees saw at once the point of Jesus’ story.

The Pharisees had cast out of the fold one of the sheep of Israel. They cared not what became of him. Jesus, by kindly act and forceful word, had found the wandering sheep, and gave him sight deeper than fleshly sight. The Pharisees cared more for Sabbath-day formalism than for the poor man’s eyes. Jesus thought more of the stricken man’s sufferings than of their Sabbath-day restrictions. It called not for deep insight, therefore, to understand which was hireling and which was shepherd. This was a daring challenge to make against the self-perpetuating rulers in Israel, and so incensed them that they “took up stones again to stone him” (John 10:31).

But inasmuch as His time was not yet come, the hostile Jews could not take and destroy Jesus, however much they desired so to do. “He escaped

out of their hand, and went away again beyond Jordan” to Bethabara—the place where John the Baptist began his ministry. There, for some time, He abode. (John 10: 39-40).

While dwelling there, a messenger arrived with the tidings that Lazarus (whom Jesus dearly loved) was sick, and that his grief-stricken sisters would greatly appreciate the presence of their beloved Master and Friend. Instead of proceeding immediately to the succour and comfort of the sorrowing household, Jesus remained, for reasons best known to Himself, in Bethabara for two whole days. During this period Lazarus died. Towards the end of the second day Jesus came to know, by some means, that Lazarus was dead; but strange to say, not until He knew this did Jesus take steps to go to Bethany. When, however, the knowledge had come, Jesus proposed to His disciples that they should accompany Him to the home of the bereaved friends. “Let us go into Judea again” said the Master “Oh Master” the disciples replied “it is only recently that the Jews sought to stone thee. Wilt thou go to Jerusalem again so soon? Wilt thou openly put Thy life and person in danger by such a step?”\* Instantly Jesus made the reply “**Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day he stumbleth not...**” How strange an answer to make to their solicitous reply. What did Jesus mean by these words?

To realize their meaning, let the words first be considered carefully in relation to Jesus’ experiences before, during, and after this incident, and it will be seen that this strange answer has an application to the Master Himself. A slight change of wording may bring out its intended meaning, and show how fearless Jesus was, when the Will of God called Him to service. “Are there not twelve hours in MY day? If I walk and work in the day I cannot stumble and fall. Can the Jews deprive me of so little as a single moment from that full day? If my Father bids me go again to Jerusalem to perform another challenging work among that hostile people, can any man interfere with Me till my work is done?”\*

Jesus knew He had a “day” during which He must work the works of His Father, and in that “day” He could not be thwarted; but He also knew that a night would come when He could no longer work and in which He would fall to His enemies wrath (John 9: 4). But till that “day” was fully run, until His work was completely done no power on earth could interfere to put His life in danger. Until His “twelve” full hours were spent

His life was sacrosanct, and could not be extinguished. Adopting an unknown writer's forceful phrase, Jesus was "immortal till His work was done." That was the secret ground of Jesus' confidence. He had "work" to do, and no malice of men nor hate of demons could interfere with His safety while engaged on His Father's business.

What lessons can we draw from this scrap of Jesus' history and from this cryptic statement from His lips?

In these troubled days amid the perils of our modern world, it is well for each child of God to ponder these singular, but confident words of our beloved Lord, for as Jesus "was" in His eventful day so is each consecrated believer in our day. Every follower who is "in Christ" may claim and enjoy the same privileges before God which our dear Lord possessed. Every promise and assurance which God gave to Jesus (compare Isa. 49: 8 with 2 Cor. 6: 2) may be claimed by Jesus' associates as his or her very own. Each child of God has his or her own "day" for his or her own "work"—a full complete "twelve hours" with which no foe can interfere. In face of peril or danger, be the source thereof what it may, each consecrated follower of the worthy Lamb may say "**Are there not twelve hours to my day?**" "Is it not God alone who determines what my work shall be and when the span of life shall end?"

It will greatly contribute to the peace of heart for every one who loves the Lord to realise that his "times" are in the Lord's hands, and in His hands alone, and that no man nor confederation, of men, even with the world's deadliest forces at their command, can shorten or interfere with their little "day." This is a part of God's "Care" which He reserves to His very own control. "**He Careth for you**" is no empty phrase. God has set "twelve hours" to every believer's "day" according as his "work" shall be, and no one who is "against us" can alter its length, though they marshal all the forces and furies of creation to their aid. The Lord God orders **all** the steps of a good man, from the beginning of his pilgrimage to its end, and there are no steps in a responsive son's life which a loving Father allows other hands to order, so that when each child's "day" comes to its close, it is God's hand alone which rings the knell of closing day.

But due recognition of this tremendous truth should not dispose any child of God to rash or careless procedure at any time, least of all in these

uncertain days. Although Jesus knew there were “twelve hours” to His day, He did not presume upon His Father’s providential care. He withdrew from the place of danger and went into a safer place. He did not unduly hazard His life nor fly into the face of danger. He performed one great work which raised a storm of passion and hatred—then quietly withdrew to allow the storm to subside. But when another challenging “sign” was due to be given He hesitated not to go back to the danger zone, knowing that the doing of His Father’s “Work” would ensure to Him His Almighty Father’s protection and care.

Our lesson is; **God keeps and protect those who have God’s work to do.** That is a truth we must keep in mind today, when death may meet us at any street-comer. God has never guaranteed His saints unconditionally against calamities and violence, even in ordinary times. Those who lived the life of faith, even back to pre-Christian days, were always subject to the risks of human passion and bigotry, and many, of whom neither the Jewish Age nor the Gospel Age (Christian era) have been worthy, closed their eyes for the last time amid scenes of violence and bloodshed; but not before their allotted work was done. God kept them all until their little “day” was done. There were “twelve hours to every little day,” and so it is today. God will keep His workmen here, and hedge them round with providential care until their work for Him is done. No opposing foe can interfere with God’s work, and if the doing of God’s work requires the presence of God’s workman there, then Omnipotence can challenge every foe and control the fierce fury of both mob and fire.

But when God’s work for any Age or occasion is accomplished and there is nothing more of the allotted task still to do, God’s workman will go Home. When Jesus’ work was done, God took the hedge away, and left Him to the dark forces of hate and sin. When His “Day” of work was ended, the night closed round Him, and what could not befall Him in the “day” befell Him when its “twelve hours” were run. **But Gethsemane was the prelude to Easter morn and Olivet, and God’s “right hand.”** The “day’s” work done, the Messianic workman went Home to enjoy His Father’s smile.

If, today, God’s allotted work for His Church is done, then the time has come for His workmen to go Home. God is under no promise or obligation to keep them here when the “twelve hours” are run. From the

moment of full surrender their only reason for remaining here is to do God's work, in God's own way. That work accomplished, no reason then exists for God to keep them here. His great consideration is the outworking of His Plan, and as each stage arrives at its conclusion the workmen are removed and another stage, with other men, then occupies the scene. If then, the Church's work is done, the time has come for the Church to go "Home," but if it is not yet done, then it is God's responsibility to keep His workmen here. And though the whole world becomes a howling mob, hurling destruction from the skies like torrential rain, the Hand of God can shield His child and keep him safe until the clock of Providence chimes the hour.

Let every child of God take courage then, and know within his heart of hearts that till his (or her) clock strikes "twelve," no weapon that is formed against him can reach its mark—he (or she) **"immortal till their work is done."**

AOH 1941

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### THY WILL BE DONE

My Lord, Thy will not mine be done:  
 Whatever path Thy love shall choose for me,  
 Through desert sands, or if beside the sea,—  
     Thy will be done!

Oh, may Thy will in me be done:  
 Should "harvest" labour be for me Thy will,  
 Or if I may but suffer and be still,—  
     Thy will be done!

My Father, let Thy will be done:  
 If sweet the cup Thou pourest for me to drink,  
 I'll praise Thee, but if bitter, I'll not shrink,—  
     Thy will be done!

Forever may Thy will be done:  
 I would not choose, I leave it all with Thee,—  
 The pilgrimage, if short or long it be,—  
     Thy will be done!

*Poems of Dawn*

## THE MEMORIAL

The memorial was received by the disciples as an event of such importance as the death of our Lord was intended to be, involving first the church—the firstborn and afterwards to the world of mankind.

The adversary always had in mind to bruise the heel of the seed of the woman, and had prior to the close of our Lord's ministry, endeavoured to destroy Him and had failed to do so. But at the appointed time—when "his hour had come" (John 13: 1 RSV) Jesus journeyed to Jerusalem in order to keep the Passover—and taking his disciples aside he told them, that the 'Son of man' was to be betrayed to the chief Priests, and would be condemned to death—and even delivered up to the Gentiles, to be mocked and scourged and then would crucify Him. (Matt. 20.17-19)

A few days later for the preparation for the Passover Jesus told Peter and John to go and prepare and make ready a guest chamber in the upper room. There with the 12 He partook of it in obedience to the word of Jehovah (Ex. 12: 14) made first some 1,500 years before, to all the whole assembly of Israel. "This day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever".

That evening after partaking, Jesus found time to set the wonderful example of service; by washing the feet of the disciples. "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet." (John 13: 14) So simple yet never to be forgotten.

Not all the 12 were clean—there was one that had "lifted up his heel" against Jesus, who would betray the Master and then would withdraw himself from the other disciples.

As the typical Passover was indelibly imprinted on the minds of the disciples, even more so would the details of that last Passover day—some 2,000 years have come and gone. So too now, many have come to appreciate all those happenings and their detailed significance—especially the distinction between Our Passover from the other which was imposed upon the Jews after their exile from Egypt. "This do in remembrance of

me.” These words of Jesus are very personal to each one. We see in this a commandment to the church of the firstborn an occasion to unite hearts and minds with brethren everywhere of like precious faith.

As we think of our Lord that evening in the upper room; an evening very special and different from previous occasions, unique for as Jesus intimated IT WOULD BE. “With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer” (Luke 22: 15).

Formerly all Jews celebrated the Passover, the lamb slain in Egypt, that marked not only the deliverance of the nation, and especially the firstborn; but it also marked the beginning of ‘life’ as a singular people, chosen of God and herein lies the lesson in the reality! Now let’s consider how much the Lord Jesus; the SON OF MAN gave up to come to earth to be born of a woman.

Centuries before it was written of him “The LORD possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old” (Prov. 8: 22) “Then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him”. (Prov. 8: 30) He was a witness to the Divine Wisdom even from the beginning of Creation—but He laid aside this relationship and life with the Father in these ages past, at the Father’s request.

And as the Apostle Paul says He “made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (Phil. 2: 7-8)

He endured much and yet refused to revile his persecutors—the very ones he came to save; in order to do the Father’s work that great work of cleansing the blemished creation from Sin.

For Israel deliverance for them as a nation involved the deliverance of all firstborn and unless under the blood there was no hope for them—so too the TRUE Israel of Jehovah now must remain under the blood if they would continue to live.

Our Lord’s death as a ransom has provided redemption from the curse which our first parents brought upon mankind and His faithfulness and

obedience under trial is an example of devotion to all who would follow after Him. Just as the Apostle Paul who having been apprehended of Christ Jesus declared of his Lord. “That I may know him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.” (Phil. 3: 10) In the apostle’s resolve he says “This one thing I do”...“I press toward the mark” like his Lord whatever the cost.

Now the Lord’s supper is a testimony and recognition that salvation is through the all atoning blood of the Saviour, the only begotten.

How closely connected are the bread and the wine, and its meaning, of flesh and blood. The flesh has need of blood, the REAL importance of blood is that the life is in the blood. (Heb. 9: 18,24, 25; Lev. 17: 11,14). In the typical arrangements nothing was dedicated or inaugurated without blood. And if those patterns were cleansed with the blood of animals—how much greater was the need for Better Blood for entrance into heaven in the Presence of God for redemption (Heb. 9).

Jesus said the cup, the fruit of the vine represents blood, which is LIFE, life that is given and yielded up, and sacrificed, and that the cup represents His life poured out for the remission of sins. So that all who would follow Him—who would be His disciple must of necessity drink of it.

Those who do accept His sacrifice must appropriate; must take hold of, by faith the blessings it was designed to give. As with the typical Levitical arrangement those things sprinkled with blood were cleansed, so the child of God, the one who is called of Him, is purified and cleansed by the blood of Christ.

The Apostle Paul gives us to understand our position of grace wherein we stand. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ... having predestinated us unto the adoption of children (sons) by Jesus Christ”, through which “He hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace”! (Eph. 1: 3-7) It is all of grace.

In the two emblems of ‘bread and wine’ together—the precious body and

blood of our dear Lord, convey the thought of release from condemnation, and also complete provision for our day to day cleansing. So then for the Christian the future life, our eternal life is assured by the great and precious promises and truths, providing our walk, our lives are governed by them.

In the evening of memorial one must never lose their appreciation of these wonderful details. Therefore the Lord's supper is an act of obedience and an act of Remembrance, one testifies to his death, and that Salvation is through His precious blood, and in this is our fellowship "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread" (1 Cor. 10: 16-17).

Lastly one comes to the Lord's supper because in Silence but with Power the Christian proclaims in full assurance of faith as the apostle Paul says in 1 Cor. 11: 26 "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." Many have done so without fail year after year with the words of Jesus as fresh and alive, as they were when they first heard them.

ANC



## SACRAMENT

Dear Father, grant that this new day may be  
 As bread and wine of sacrament to me;  
 The wine of inner light, that I may know  
 The cleansing sweetness of thy spirit's flow;  
 The bread of thy substance, that I may share  
 The load of those who have too much to bear,  
 And thus reconsecrate to thy great plan  
 My life, my all, to serve my fellow man.

*songs of the nightingale*

## THE STORY OF NEHEMIAH

Lessons from the life of a stalwart man of God

### Part 2. Building the Wall

When Nehemiah reached God's ancient and holy city, he immediately commenced to prepare for the practical restoration of the worship of God. In the state in which he found it, the city with its walls in ruins was the laughing stock of the neighbouring peoples. So he set out by night to examine the walls and discover personally how great the task was that lay before him. Afterwards he spoke frankly to his fellow Jews and invited their co-operation. The walls of Jerusalem could never have been built in fifty-two days without comradeship and determination. It needed undaunted courage and willingness to serve the Lord shoulder to shoulder.

The men whom he approached to help him were equally sensible in their reply to Nehemiah. They might have been jealous of this outsider who had so recently arrived from an alien country. He had come under the protection and with the authority of the monarch who oppressed Israel. They could have felt insulted by his suggestion to restore the city walls, which was a work which they should have already done. They might have doubted the integrity of Nehemiah's intentions and believed his motives to be false. Instead they recognised that the good hand of God was upon this new governor of Jerusalem and they rose up willingly to support him. They realised that their national destiny was at stake, and if the glories of Israel's former days were to be restored, here at last was the opportunity for which they had been looking. They accepted Nehemiah on trust, submitted to his plan for rebuilding the walls and followed him as their leader.

These memoirs of a great statesman give to us some very useful lessons for the Christian life. We too must face the fact that spiritual Zion is not all that it should be. During the past one hundred years or more, materialism, social revolution, the increase of natural pleasure and material advantages for everyone, have tended to make life easier for the Christian Church. We become apathetic in days of comparative peace and security. We must make a genuine examination of that part of the wall of the New Jerusalem that has been entrusted to our care to see if there is not a great deal of repair work needed to strengthen the bulwarks of our faith. Have we over the past years been doing all we can in the Lord's service? Are we content with the progress we have made? Much of the walls of the

Holy City are like they were when Nehemiah first arrived from Shushan...in utter ruins.

The sense of oneness exhibited by the Jews in our story sets Christians a lesson worthy of imitation. It is essential to our service for the Lord that we should willingly co-operate with our fellows in the Christian way. Firstly there are those in our own fellowship. Our natural differences and fleshly impediments are likely to hinder our unity in serving the Lord. The Devil is quick to notice this and to magnify it out of all proportion.

There is opportunity for all true servants of God in this work, just as there was in Nehemiah's day, the elder, the scribe, the rich and the poor, the old and the young, the ruler and the artisan. They all found a place along the walls, doing their share of the work, faithfully endeavouring to do that which had been put into their hands by the Lord. This does not mean that the baker, the perfumer, the ruler of the city all suddenly became professional bricklayers. Nor did they all build the same piece of wall, in fact many of them built that portion which was just outside their own house.

So it is with Christians today. All, whatever their religious affiliation, in whatever church or group God has pleased to call them, if accepting Jesus as their Saviour may share the great work of building Zion. It is up to us all to extend the willing and loving hand of fellowship and comradeship, for all are one in Christ Jesus. This will not cause every child of God to flock into the same church or other place of worship. But there is a common union in Christ which will give us the desire to work together rather than work against other Christian people. May we say with God's people of old... *"Let us rise up and build"*.

But Nehemiah's difficulties and troubles were not over when once the great work had begun. In fact that is just where the problems seem to have commenced. Had he not been possessed of a very wonderful faith and been a man who constantly resorted to prayer, there can be no doubt that this remarkable task would never have been completed. Human strength and ingenuity alone would have been quite inadequate to withstand the opposition of the Adversary of God.

At first their enemies laughed contemptuously and ridiculed the effort

which the Jews made to rebuild their city. They received the firm rebuke from the faithful Nehemiah in these words... *“The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem”*. (Nehemiah 2. 20.) So the wall was built in spite of the sneers of Sanballat and Tobiah, and in answer to further gibes and sarcasm Nehemiah besought the Lord in prayer and the builders worked so much the harder. The Samaritans and Ammonites were very angry and dismayed by this effect of their unkind remarks and determined to spoil the work by other means.

The first move by the enemies of Israel to frustrate the great work which Nehemiah and his countrymen were doing was a subtle infiltration of armed men into the ranks of the Jews. Nehemiah prayed and then encouraged the people to remember the Lord and not to be afraid. They set a watch against spies and enemy soldiers. Plans were made to help each other if an attack was made against one particular section of the new wall.

In the midst of all the troubles from without came internal disorder which also threatened to stop the work of the Lord.

The nobility of Jerusalem had so badly treated their fellow Jews that many of the people lived in poverty and slavery. The equity of Israel's laws, given through Moses, should have prevented just those conditions developing. There was no excuse for the Jewish aristocrats and Nehemiah acted promptly. He told the nobles plainly that they lacked in righteousness before the Lord and that their treatment of fellow Jews was a reproach to their nation. The governor's rebuke was accepted and acted upon, perhaps the more so because of Nehemiah's own upright life. The leaders repented of their oppression and readily promised to deal more justly in future.

Meanwhile, the allied opposition, headed by Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem, were consulting together how they might best overthrow Jerusalem. They tried enticing the governor from his stewardship in order to do him “some mischief”. They tried to frighten him with false accusations of treason. They threatened his life. But each effort was frustrated in the same manner, for Nehemiah besought the Lord in prayer for strength and guidance. The source of his power and ability lay in his

contact with heaven and found comfort and peace in his friendship with God.

What an inspiration to us! Does the Devil meet with such formidable opposition today? Is there such unshakeable trust in the Lord and such unrebukeable zeal in his service? Wherefore all the hindrances to the work in spiritual Zion? When the world laughs and jeers at our efforts to serve our King are we able to stand firm, confident that our labours of love are not in vain? Our unbelieving neighbours are quick to cast doubts upon our faith and to tell us that our hopes will come to nothing, just as the Samaritans did to the Jews. We may be able to refute the scoffers' arguments or to withstand persecution, but to be laughed at is sometimes more difficult to endure and we are likely to become very discouraged. May Nehemiah's example of unflinching courage and constancy in prayer urge us to seek God's help more readily that we may not fear what men may try to do to frustrate the work of God.

As in every age, the Devil will appear in a number of guises. Sometimes his agents are openly the enemies of God and brazenly seek to render ineffective the work of his people. Frequently however the approach is more subtle and the sabotage is done in secret ways. There are many exhortations in the New Testament to watch. Often these are accepted as a reference to our observation of the political drama in the world around us. They would serve their purpose more effectively if the application was made by an internal examination of the heart by each believer upon himself. It was our Master who said "*Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation*" (Matt. 26. 41), and years later, writing to the Colossians, Paul admonished "*Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.*" (Col. 4. 2) Peter exhorted the brethren to "*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.*" (1 Peter 5. 8). Each of these texts might have been the words of our Old Testament hero urging his faithful band of workers to greater building efforts. But they are in fact the words of Jesus and of two of the foundation members of the New Jerusalem. God's purposes move on from one era to the next but the great fight between good and evil remains the same in form and principle. By devious means Satan has blinded the eyes of God's people to the great "building project" which our Heavenly Father has in hand. To some he has said that this is a work which embraces all the world and hence their

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labours have sometimes been dissipated in places where they were not required. To others he has insinuated that the work is completed and so they have ceased from their tasks before they were done. Upon others he has poured his scorn and contempt until they have given up in despair. Let us each one examine our own lives, not daring to pluck the splinter from our brother's eye lest we are blinded by the log in our own. (Luke 6. 42)

Just as the work upon the rebuilding of Jerusalem suffered because of internal disquiet, so the Christian Church has been hindered by discord and strife throughout its long and chequered history. Human ambitions and selfishness have frustrated the efforts of those who have toiled for spiritual Zion. Immediately prior to the Lord's death his closest followers were quarrelling about who should be greatest among them. Today, in many quarters the same lesson has still not been properly learned.

Our message for the world is peace and good will whatever aspect of truth we emphasise. Whether we preach repentance and consecration in this life, or Christ's kingdom for all men in the age to come, the underlying spirit is the same—that of reconciliation to God. But the power of our message is lost if there is not genuine brotherly affection among ourselves. Instead, as Nehemiah said of his fellows, we are a reproach to the people of God.

In spite of the troubles from without and troubles within, the New Jerusalem will be finished and it will be God's hand through his servants which will accomplish it. Let us see to it that we work for him and not against him. But the work does not stop there, merely to be an object of beautiful craftsmanship. Cities are not an end in themselves but are built for a purpose.

AOH

*(To be continued.)*



GOD is love: His mercy brightens  
 All the path in which we rove;  
 Bliss He wakes and woe He lightens:  
 God is wisdom, God is love.

## ACCORDING TO THY GRACIOUS WORD

According to Thy gracious word, In meek humility, This will I do, my dying Lord, I will remember Thee.	When to the cross I turn mine eyes, And rest on Calvary, O Lamb of God, my Sacrifice, I must remember Thee.
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Thy body, given for my sake, My bread from heaven shall be; Thy testamental cup I take, And thus remember Thee.	Remember Thee and all Thy pains, And all Thy love to me; Yea, while a breath, a pulse remains, I will remember Thee.
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Gethsemane can I forget? Or there Thy conflict see, Thine agony and deep distress, And not remember Thee?	Then of Thy grace I'll know the sum, And in Thy likeness be, When Thou hast in Thy kingdom come And dost remember me.
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*Alternative  
final verse* And when these failing lips grow dumb,  
And mind and memory flee,  
When thou shalt in thy kingdom come,  
Then, Lord, remember me.

The words 'I will remember thee' are at the heart of this hymn so much so that its writer, James Montgomery, is reckoned to have underlined them. It was first published in 1825 in *The Christian Psalmist* and was one of 400 he wrote. It does not appear in all hymn books in 6 verses and where it does the alternative final verse appears more common especially in the older hymnals.

Montgomery was born in Irvine, Scotland in 1771 the son of a Moravian minister before moving to Gracehill in county Antrim in 1776. As an adult he spent most of his life based in Sheffield where is spent over 30 years editing the Sheffield Iris. There is a statue of him in Sheffield where he died in 1854.

These are the scriptures which are thought to have inspired the writer;

**Luke 22:19** He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

**1 Corinthians 11:24-25** When he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

**Matthew 26:36-39** Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

**Luke 22:44** And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

**Luke 23:33** When they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him.

**Isaiah 53:6-7** All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

**John 1:29** The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

**1 Pet. 5:5 (RSV)** "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

**Luke 23:42** He said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

**Romans 6:5** For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.

**Matthew 6:10 (RSV)** Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.

This hymn can be sung to a variety of tunes as it is set as a common metre (C.M.). 'Dalehurst' is often used.

## PRAYER AND THE BIBLE

### Part 2

#### **Salvation is Impossible without Prayer.**

The Scriptures clearly teach that God requires prayer, and that through prayer his plan for the salvation of the world is to be realised. (We state the matter plainly that the philosophy of prayer may appear more evident.) It is true that with God all things are possible. But God has made some things impossible. When Jesus prayed: “Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me”; but a little later: “O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done”; he understood that it was not possible. To redeem man from death Jesus must drink the cup of suffering and die the just for the unjust (Mark 14: 36; Matt. 26:42). God had made it impossible for the world to be saved out of death by another method.

Had it been possible for the world to be saved from death without prayer, Jesus would not then have been required to pray. Neither would he have impressed upon his disciples the necessity of prayer; nor would the Apostles have been so insistent in their exhortations to all believers in Christ to pray constantly.

For to state the philosophy of prayer simply—if men desire to gain the glorious liberty of the children of God, they must overcome the forces of evil. But none have the strength within themselves to fight evil. God alone can supply this power; and he is willing to give it in the way appointed. He cannot send down his saving power to earth until he has there a kindred heart in communication with himself, through whom he can operate. God works by love and persuasion; not by fear and force. His plan is to win men from under the banner of Satan, the usurping prince, and convert them into willing worshippers. He does not want men to be slaves. At present they are slaves to sin, and slaves to Satan; but God desires their liberation and willing allegiance; and he has provided a way by which all may come to him for the necessary power to fight for their freedom. Prayer is the line of communication between the fighter and the base of power. The struggling earth cries to God for help, because it finds no help in itself to overcome the powers of evil; and God requires this heart-felt prayer, for it is a spirit force against which spiritual forces of evil cannot stand (Eph. 6:12-18).

In the meantime only the few can direct the power of prayer aright; and while misunderstood and even hated by the world, these are really fighting the battle on behalf of the world (1 John 3:1; John 15:18,19; 17:14). They understand the dire distress of humanity because of the sin and fall of Adam in the beginning, and fervently pray for the liberation of themselves and all mankind, not so much from individual present ills, as from the great general condemnation to death, and the cruel dominion of Satan. These scripturally-enlightened few know the true need of the human race, and, like their Lord and Master Jesus Christ, they long for its everlasting salvation (John 10:10). These prayers, like the prayers of Jesus, are meritorious, because they are carefully thought out in line with Jehovah's Plan of Salvation as revealed in the Living Word.

We must recognise that the act of praying is not in itself necessarily meritorious, for it is after all a natural tendency. Ultimately, when the knowledge of the Lord covers the earth as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:9; Zeph. 3:9), the inherent praying-faculty will be cultivated and developed and properly directed, so that all men may then pray acceptably (Isa. 58:9; Psa. 65:2; Job 33:22-26). But it is an enviable favour to know how to pray acceptably in the present dark night of sin and death. It is given to very few to have this special knowledge (Isa. 53:11; Hos. 4:6; Rom. 10:2; Mark 4:11,12). Yet the privilege is not withheld from any who earnestly desire to use it (Matt. 5:6).

ME



*Next time*

## **Prayer a Necessary Office**

### **HOW WELL?**

Tis not how long we live within this vale,  
 But how we live and meet the gale.  
 And if we to our God and friends are true  
 Our record rests in what we do.

Our wealth retained, to leave of import less  
 Than what within we do possess;  
 And riches that are left, how value-less  
 Than heav'nly crown as our success.

*songs of the nightingale*



## MARCH

*For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich. 2 Cor. 8.9 (R.V.)*

**The greatest victory.** Faithfulness unto death on the part of the Redeemer, represents the greatest victory which has ever been enacted. Moreover there was no other way to lift the sentence resting upon Adam. Jesus died the Just for the unjust; and as we remember the cost, his humiliation, the pain he bore, his shameful treatment at the hands of wicked men, it calls forth all that is within us in the way of appreciation and gratitude.

Then there is the love of the Father, for it meant more than our minds can grasp, for him to part with his Son and to see him suffer unto death. Who of us can appreciate to the full the message which runs: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Happily the outcome will be wonderful and infinitely more far-reaching than the measure of many a timeworn creed. This is evident by the very next verse: "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3: 16, 17).

Whatever the genuine likeness of Jesus, since his resurrection, his glory goes far beyond our imagination. He is now "the express image of his (the Father's) person." (Hebrews 1: 3).

O Thou who in the fullness of time didst raise up our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to enlighten our hearts with the knowledge of Thy love, grant me the grace to be worthy of His name. Amen.

*A Diary of Private Prayer*

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## APRIL

*In everything give thanks: for this the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. (1 Thess. 5: 18.)*

**Gratitude:** Have you ever bestowed something upon another which has had an ill response in the way of gratitude? Possibly you felt at the time that you would withhold further favours. You were heart-hungry and at the same time powerless to remedy a situation which should spring spontaneously from the heart.

The wonderful thing is that this very attitude belongs to God Almighty. He has framed a stupendous universe full of good things. He has made known his purpose to remove iniquity and to bless all peoples of earth through the redemption centred in Christ Jesus. He has promised eternal life to all who are obedient. To crown it all, he comes nigh to each one who trusts him. Reasonably he looks for gratitude even though he will not enforce this. Harken to his words addressed to those inclined to selfishness: "If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, and drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High: and call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me" (Psalm 50: 12-15).

There can be no doubt that those who are fully devoted to the Lord are ever grateful for the many blessings strewn along their path. This is the atmosphere which they generate. God loves them dearly and blesses them accordingly.



Almighty God, who art ever present in the world without me, in my spirit within me, and in the unseen world above me, let me carry with me through this day's life a most real sense of Thy power and Thy glory.

O Lord, hallowed be Thy name. Amen

*A Diary of Private Prayer*

## TIMES AND SEASONS

### Part 2. From the Flood to Abraham

The second period of dated Bible history commences with the Flood and ends with the death of Terah and Abraham's departure from Haran to take up residence in Canaan. From that point the history of Abraham properly begins and forms the natural starting point of another period. All that is recorded concerning this long span of more than a thousand years is contained within the 9th to 11th chapters of Genesis, necessarily brief and consisting of little more than the genealogies and lines of descent of the immediate descendants of the sons of Noah. One family line of descent, from Noah through Shem to Abraham, gives the age of each father at the birth of the relevant son; the sum of these ages represents the Biblical view of the actual duration of the period.

Right here the same situation exists as in the case of the antediluvian era, dealt with in the previous chapter of this series. The Masoretic text displays a shortening of the period of 650 years, using the same expedient as before, viz., deducting 100 years (50 in one case) from the ages of the patriarchs. The Samaritan text, however, which followed suit in the case of the antediluvian patriarchs, does not agree with the Masoretic here, but shows the same figures, with one exception, as the Septuagint. From this it has been surmised that the alterations to the Masoretic text were made in two stages, the antediluvian first, probably in the early A.D. centuries, and the postdiluvian at a much later date when the desirability of still further postponing the end of the 6,000 years from creation became evident, and that the Samaritan, having become a fixed text by then and outside the "orthodox" Jewish stream, was not altered and so remained conformed in this respect to the Septuagint.

One other point of difference is that both the Masoretic and the Samaritan omit Cainan the son of Arphaxad, whereas the Septuagint includes him. It is fairly certain that this omission was made in the Hebrew texts at a very early date, probably some time before Christ, for Josephus also omits Cainan, although otherwise he agrees generally with the Septuagint. (*For a full discussion of the arguments for the inclusion or exclusion of Cainan see B.S.M. for Jan/Feb. 1975. Ed.\**) The Apocryphal "*Book of Jubilees*", about 150 B.C. includes Cainan with an account of the sin for which he was condemned, this latter logically leading to his being "blotted from the

book” when the Hebrew texts were rationalised in the early centuries. “*Jubilees*” is believed to stem from a variant Hebrew text midway between those which eventually led to the Masoretic and the Septuagint. A subsidiary testimony is offered by the fact that the chronology of the Gospel of Nicodemus, (2nd-4th cent. A.D.), in its estimate of the time between the Flood and the Tower of Babel, also includes the period of Cainan’s life.

The following table compares the relevant figures from the Masoretic, Alexandrian Septuagint, Samaritan, and Josephus.

	AGE AT BIRTH OF SON				TOTAL LENGTH OF LIFE			
	Mas	Sam	LXX	Jos	Mas	Sam	LXX	Jos
Shem (from Flood)	2	2	2	12	600	600	600	-
Arphaxad	35	135	135	135	438	438	565*	-
Cainan	-	-	130	-	-	-	460	-
Salah	30	130	130	130	433	433	460	-
Eber	34	134	134	134	464	404	504*	-
Peleg	30	130	130	130	239	239	339	-
Reu	32	132	132	130	239	239	339	-
Serug	30	130	130	132	230	230	330	-
Nahor	29	79	79*	120	148	148	208*	-
Terah ...	130	70	130	70	205	145	205	205
<i>To death Terah</i>	<u>75</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>75</u>				
Total	<u>427</u>	<u>1017</u>	<u>1207</u>	<u>1068</u>				

\* Sixtine LXX has 179

\* Sixtine LXX has 535, 404, 304

It will be noticed that there are two discrepancies apart from the Masoretic omission of 100 years in six instances. One is the case of Terah who is said by the Samaritan and Josephus to have been 70 instead of 130 years old at the birth of Abraham. This is due in both cases to careless reading of Gen. 11.26 “*Terah lived seventy years and begat Abram, Nahor and Haran*” with failure to notice that the three names are not in order of birth but of their prominence in the history of after events. Gen. 11.32 and 12.4, with Acts 7.4, make it clear that Abraham was seventy-five when he left the city of Haran upon the death of his father Terah at 205 years, so that he was born when Terah was 130. A confirmation of this is the fact that both Abraham and Nahor married daughters of their elder brother Haran, the one who died early before the departure from Ur, and that

Haran's son Lot was the companion and colleague of Abraham in his later journeyings. The position is set out in Gen. 11. 27-29, where it is shown that Nahor married Milcah and Abraham married Sarai, both daughters of Haran. The otherwise unknown name "Iscah" in vs. 29 should be read "Sarai". Josephus says (*Ant. 1.6* also ch.6.5), as does Jewish tradition, that Sarai was the daughter of Nahor, but only in recent times has it been discovered how the name came to be rendered Iscah in the Hebrew text; this incidentally is one of the many indications that this part of Genesis originally existed in Sumerian or Akkadian cuneiform before Moses included it in his "Five Books". The cuneiform signs for "Sarai" and "Iscah" are almost identical and a scribe copying the tablet might easily mistake one for the other; alternatively a translator rendering the cuneiform record into the early Hebrew script, which might have been any time between Joseph and Joshua, could easily have misread the name. Cuneiform characters were often roughly or badly executed on the clay tablets as modern decipherers have often found to their cost.

The other discrepancy is in the age of Nahor at Terah's birth and this is more far-reaching. There are four versions; Mas at 29, Alexandrian LXX and Sam. at 79, the Sixtine LXX at 179, and Josephus at 120. The easy way out is to assume that the LXX 79 is correct and that the Masoretic, unable to deduct 100 as with the other patriarchs, deducted 50. This, however, does not explain where Josephus got his 120 or the Sixtine LXX its 179. And in the LXX all the other patriarchs show consistent figures between 130 and 135; this one seems to be a strange anomaly.

The solution probably lies in variations introduced in the process of copying old worn-out manuscripts, or in translation from the "Old Hebrew" to the "square Hebrew" of the 1st-2nd cents B.C., and from that to Greek. Numbers were written as full words in the 1st Cent. Hebrew and Greek texts so that mistakes are unlikely, but it is not known whether the "old Hebrew" used words or numerals so that research is difficult. On the assumption that numerals were used in the "Old Hebrew"—as they certainly were in the original cuneiform from which these records are derived—it is possible that the original figure in the oldest texts was 129. This number would have been denoted by the three letters *Kuph* (100) *Caph* (20) *Teth* (9). But the Old Hebrew letter *Caph* looks much more like the square Hebrew *Ayin* (70) than it does the square *Caph* and some copyists might easily thus change 129 to 179. Thus some Mas. would

retain the 129 and others show 179. Other considerations which are too lengthy to be entered into here tend to suggest that the Hebrew texts used by the Masoretic and Josephus had 129, which was subject to the same 100 years deduction as the rest of the patriarchs to give the Masoretic 29, and used by Josephus with the loss of the final 9, perhaps a slip on his part or even a later corruption of his writings, to give his 120. The variant Hebrew texts which had 179 led eventually to the Samaritan and the Alex. and Sixtine texts, with the former two modified to 79 to avoid the incongruity of so late an age of fatherhood when Nahor died at 208. All this is at best a hypothesis, for the available data is too scanty for certitude, and the best that can be said is that in all likelihood Nahor's age at the birth of Terah was either 79 as in the LXX or 129 as might be suggested by translation probabilities.

There is one other consideration which tends to favour the latter view. It has been often remarked that the consistent ages at which the patriarchs' sons were born—always between 130 and 135 years—is too artificial to be real, especially upon the usual assumption that these were all first-born sons. There is, of course, no reason for insisting that this latter must be the case. Many of the men destined to occupy places in the line of descent from Adam to Christ were not first-borns—Seth, Abraham, Jacob, Judah, David, and others—and the same could well be the case here. There may be another reason. A little reflection will show that the elder sons of men like these who are depicted as living three or four hundred years, must have departed and set up their own family arrangements and themselves become something like great-great-grandfathers while their own father was still “hale and hearty”. Thus the sons who would be near enough to the ancestral home to carry on the father's interests after his death would more naturally be those born somewhat later in life. It might well be that a custom existed defining the time of life at which the son then born would become the one considered as carrying on the family line. It is certainly the case that Abraham, born when his father was 130, became the heir in preference to his elder brothers born something like thirty and sixty years before him. In such case the consistency of these “birth” ages may be intentional. The land, the people and the culture in which and amongst whom these patriarchs lived was that to which historians have given the name Sumerian. The Sumerians, from their earliest days skilled in astronomy, measured time by the Saros, a period of 18 years, (being the span of time during which all eclipses of the sun and moon recur in the

same order; incidentally 70 sarii equal 1260 years, the celebrated Scriptural prophetic number). If in fact Terah was born in Nahor's 129th year then all the nine postdiluvian patriarchs from Cainan to Abraham were born during the eighth sarus of their father's lives (126-144 years). It could have been the practice that the first son born after the end of the seventh sarus was considered the heir. If so, this would strengthen the case for 129 against 79.

Be all this as it may, the position is apparently that the Septuagint, Samaritan and Josephus have preserved the original figures for the duration of this postdiluvian patriarchal era. The two latter are deficient in having omitted Cainan and erred in the age of Abraham. That leaves the Septuagint figure of 1,207 years holding the field. (If the hypothesis of 129 years instead of 79 for Nahor outlined above is sustained, this becomes 1,257 years but it is not possible to be dogmatic.) The Masoretic figure of 427 years obtained by reducing the ages by 100 years each is necessarily unacceptable.

General support to this 1,207 years period is given by what is known of ancient history. The earliest city-states of the Sumerians were founded at least five centuries before Abraham, some authorities claiming several centuries more, and there was certainly a previous historical period of indeterminate length for which no contemporary records have been found but from later allusions must have lasted quite a few centuries. The birth of Egyptian civilisation goes back as far. Plenty of authorities insist that the civilisations of the Euphrates and Nile valleys could not possibly have emerged in even the period denoted by the Septuagint, that they must have required at least two thousand years, but this is not the place to go into that. So far as present day positive knowledge goes, there are five or perhaps six centuries of known history prior to Abraham, and another six or seven behind that back to the date of the Flood as defined by the Septuagint. The Genesis presentation in chapters 10 and 11 is that the peoples listed in those chapters were natural descendants of the three sons of Noah; there is nothing impossible or unreasonable in accepting that those six or seven hidden centuries, about which history is silent and the brief record in Genesis the only available information, was adequate for that purpose.

If, then, the death of Terah and the entry of Abraham into Canaan, which

really marks the commencement of detailed Bible history, did occur some 1,200/1,250 years after the Flood, and if the antediluvian world had previously endured for something like 2,250 years, the implication is that God in his wisdom had waited 3,500 years before even a nucleus among mankind were ready for, and capable of, receiving and understanding the magnitude of the future He plans for them. Abraham was called “the father of the faithful”; his sterling faith and loyalty to God are proverbial. With him the developing Plan of God commenced its outworking, leading on to Israel the people of God in the ancient world, then to Christ the world’s Saviour, then on to the Christian Church which is to be associated with Christ in his future work of blessing all mankind, finally to that great day when sin and evil is banished and “*all that hath breath shall praise the Lord*”. It all started with Abraham. But it took God 3,500 years to find Abraham.

AOH



### LOVEST THOU ME? JOHN 21: 17



Jesus, I see Thee led to Calvary,  
There to endure, in bitterest agony,  
An awful loneliness; that I might be  
Set free from sin—’Yes, Lord, I love Thee.’

Saviour, I see Thee silent in the tomb;  
Thy followers despairing in the gloom;  
The door is closed. That stone has sealed my doom.  
It was my death—’Yes, Lord, I love Thee.’

My Lord, I see Thee rising from the dead,  
And through the earth Thy radiant light is shed  
In darkest places. Death holds no more dread.  
This, this is life—’Yes, Lord, I love Thee.’

Someday, my Lord, I’ll see Thee come again  
With angel hosts, o’er all the earth to reign;  
I’ll see an end to sin, and grief, and pain,  
In that great day—’Yes, Lord, I love Thee.’

*THE GOD OF ALL GRACE and Me*  
*Maurice Cox*

# THE MIRACLES OF JESUS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

## Part 2

(See Part 1 for the pairing of the Parables)

The first sign is the **Marriage in Cana of Galilee** (John 2. 1-11) and the last the Draught of Fishes (John 21. 1-14) Here is a comparison of the two...

John 2. 1-11 Marriage in Cana

- a. The background. Nathanael's faith (1.49-51)
- b. The Place. Galilee (2.1)
- c. "The third day" (v.1)
- d. Wine Provided (vv. 8,9)
- e. "Jesus was called, and His disciples" (v.2)
- f. Failure confessed. They have no wine (v.3)
- g. Numbers. Six water pots holding two or three firkins apiece (v.6)
- h. Command. "Fill the water pots with water" (v.7)
- i. Obedience. "They filled them". (v.7)
- j. Waterpots filled to the last drop "Up to the brim" (v.7)
- k. The servants bare (Greek *enagkan* v.8)
- l. Glory manifested (Greek *ephanarose*, v.11)
- m. His disciples faith (v.11)

John 21. 1-14 Draught of Fishes.

- a. The background. Thomas's unbelief (20.24-29)
- b. The place. Galilee (v.1)
- c. "The third time" (v.14)
- d. A meal provided (v.9)
- e. The Lord was the caller of His disciples (vv. 5,12)
- f. Failure confessed. They had caught nothing (v.3) No meat (v.5)
- g. Numbers. 200 cubits (v.8) 153 fishes (v.11)
- h. Command. Cast net into water (v.6)
- i. Obedience. "They cast therefore" (v.6)
- j. Net full to the last fish (vv. 8,11)
- k. "Bring of the fish" (Greek *enegkate*, v.10)
- l. The Lord manifested (Greek *ephanerothe*, v.14)
- m. His disciple's love (vv. 15-17)

The first sign was on "the third day". If the words are taken literally as they stand, we immediately think of Hos. 6. 2 "After two days will He revive us: in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight". This suggests the day when Israel shall be delivered, when the anti

-typical Joseph shall be revealed to His brethren, and this is the “day” when the wedding takes place, the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. On the other hand if this is the third day in connection with the other days which precede in the first chapter, then this would be the seventh day really and here again depicting the Millennial Sabbath. Again both Jesus was called and His disciples to the marriage. Will not this be the case in that far greater marriage to come? And if they run out of wine, will it not be our Lord Himself who will pour them out the wine, yes the wine of joy, wine on the lees, well refined. John the Baptist in the first chapter could only point to him, but here in this first sign we read that by it He “manifested forth His glory”. Further although the water was for the purifying of the Jews, a sordid reminder of the legal side of their religion, the transformation was into wine that maketh glad the heart of God and man.

Now what of the last sign, the Draught of Fishes. Well if in the first sign our Lord manifested forth His glory, here He manifested Himself, this having taken place after His resurrection. So what He came to do at His first advent He will accomplish at His Second. In the sequence of the signs, it follows the seventh, the raising of Lazarus. All is as it were wheels within wheels, one picture often being superimposed upon another. Nicodemus was attracted by the first miracle (John 3.2) and our Lord referred him to the story of the rebirth of the nation as shewn in Ezekiel 37. This sign however is preceded by the story of the doubt of Thomas “except I shall see...the print of the nails...” (John 20.25) a true picture of those in the day to come who “will look upon Him whom they have pierced...” (Zech. 12.10). Regarding the number of fishes, 153, much could be said on this point, as this has exercised the minds of many students of the Bible down through the years. That it has a meaning, or more than one meaning goes without saying.

The second pair of signs are the second and the seventh, **the Nobleman’s son** (4.46-50) and **the raising of Lazarus** (11.1-44) here once again there is an echo of Hos. 6.1-3 for in John 4.43 it says “now after two days” and in John 11. 6-7 it says “He abode two days. . . after that saith He to the disciples, let us go into Judea again”. Once again we see the 2000 years of Israel’s death as a nation.

Here in the case of the Nobleman’s son, there is a picture of Israel at the point of death, but in the seventh sign we read that “Lazarus is dead”,

even so at the beginning of our Lord's ministry Israel should have been in a position of asking for healing, but when the sign of Lazarus was given, this was saying that it was too late, resurrection alone would be the only hope, and so it is followed by the quotation once again of that all-important passage in Isaiah 6.10. This again is a reminder of Rom. 11.15 "if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" or Hos. 6.2 "in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight." A further link with the history of Israel as a nation is given in the story of the raising of Lazarus, where in verse 17 it says that he had "lain in the grave four days already" although the Lord had waited "two days still in the place where He was". It would seem that as this too is a "sign" then the four days may very well represent the 4000 years of Israel's impotence from Sinai to their full restoration especially when compared with the two days of Hosea 6.2. Our Lord came to Israel at the end of the first two days, even as he could have gone to raise Lazarus at the end of two days, but when he came to Israel it was only a remnant that received Him whereas the deliverances of the nation depends on their repentance as a whole. Then again there is much in this chapter about the Glory of God. The sickness of Lazarus was for the Glory of God (11.4) and again in verse 40 Jesus said to Martha that if she would believe she should see the "Glory of God". How true all this is with a dispensational viewpoint and look into the future when Israel will indeed see this Glory as Ezekiel and other O.T. prophets have indicated. Furthermore the statement of verse 40 was actually fulfilled in one who "did believe", a prototype of the nation, for when Stephen was brought before the Council, "he being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up into heaven, and saw the 'glory of God'" (Acts 7.55)

Also note the particular force of our Lord's words in verse 25, "I am the resurrection, and the life" for this is a truth which is echoed and expanded by the apostle Paul in 1 Thess. 4. for to the dead believer Christ is the Resurrection, and to the believer who is alive at His coming He is the Life. Also in considering Lazarus as a type of the nation of Israel, what pathos and deep sympathy and understanding to say nothing of the power of Divine love is revealed in the shortest verse in the Bible, "Jesus wept" and in the words which follow "Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him". Cannot it be seen here the reflection of the father falling on the neck of the Prodigal Son, or Joseph of old revealing himself to his brethren. But it is time to look at the next pair of signs.

The third sign is the **healing of the impotent Man** (John 5. 1-47) and this is closely allied to the sixth sign **the healing of the man born blind** (John 9). In both the subject is “sin” even as in the previous two the subject was “death”. Here again in both there is a pool, a long standing case, the Sabbath day and Jerusalem the place. In the case of the impotent man in John 5. 5 that he had had his infirmity for 38 years. Surely this reference alone should be sufficient to realize that here again is a reference to the nation of Israel, for was not this the exact period of the wanderings of the Children of Israel (Deut. 2.14) and all because of the sin of unbelief, the subject of this very sign. But to this man, cut off from aionian life comes the word of power, “Arise...” and he was made whole and that on the Sabbath. It was because of our Lord’s works on the Sabbath (a type of the Millennial Age) that the Jews raised such opposition to Him. Here, therefore, is represented the future restoration of Israel as also in the sixth sign. For in the antitypical Sabbath when Israel is delivered, of which this is a type then indeed the spiritual meaning of the Sabbath and of the laws of the Old Testament will be seen and acted upon, and the whole nation will be given power to carry out God’s injunction, “What does the Lord require of thee but to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God” or God requires “mercy and not sacrifice”. It is therefore not apparent why this miracle or sign took place at the Pool of Bethesda. “Bethesda”, meaning “house of mercy”. Here is an impotent man healed on the Sabbath, in the sixth sign a blind man also on the Sabbath. In Luke 13 a woman loosed from her infirmity again on the Sabbath. Oh! what a day that will be, the coming Millennial Age when the deaf shall be made to hear, the blind to see, the graves opened and the dead shall hear the same voice that awakened Lazarus, when they shall taste with joy the new wine in the Father’s Kingdom and the 153 fishes shall all be safely gathered to the shore.

Also in these two signs reference is made to the testimony of Moses (5.45 -47 & 9.29) “Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me” our Lord said, and the 38 years of wilderness wandering would have ended. Instead the sixth sign shows that because of unbelief blindness total and complete was Israel’s portion. Looking more particularly at this sixth sign we see that in this case the man was told to go and wash in the Pool of Siloam (John 9: 7) which we are told means “Sent”. Continually throughout the N.T. we read that Christ was the “Sent One” of God (John 3.34-36, 6.38-40, 7.16). Israel’s sin being the rejection of this Sent One

and their salvation being dependent upon receiving Him. There is so much in this sign which could be dwelt upon, and indeed the same can be said of all the others, but one further point could be made before passing on to the next pair. Once the blind man was healed the verses which follow show the growing appreciation of the Person of the Lord which the blind man came to enjoy, and here again as we consider what happened to Joseph's father and brethren in the O.T. coupled and enlarged upon by the Prophets later, we can hear the echo of those wonderful words "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." (Isa. 25.9)

So to the last pair of signs, the fourth and fifth, namely, **the Feeding of the Five Thousand** (6. 1-15) and **Jesus walking on the sea** (6.16-25). The first point to notice is that they both took place after our Lord had ascended into a mountain, and are indicative of the way in which the restoration of the nation of Israel will be accomplished. As with Israel of old it was the need for food which led to the eventual revelation and identity of the one who was the provider for all their needs so Christ takes five barley loaves and two small fishes from a young lad and in the exercise of his wondrous power make them sufficient to feed 5,000 men in addition to women and children (Matt. 14.21). Now note that it was because of this wondrous miracle that these men were able to say "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world" and again an echo of "Lo, this is our God....". Then the narrative goes on to say that "When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him king, He departed again into a mountain Himself alone." Yes, because it was not the will of God for Him to be made king at that time, but rather that He should be "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God and be crucified and slain" that God might raise Him up again and that thus He might "make reconciliation for the iniquity of His people." Proceeding with the narrative the disciples went over the sea, and then when night drew on a great storm arose. "It was now dark" it says "and Jesus was not come to them". Then they saw "Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid". Does a picture emerge here? Will it not be during a time of great trouble, when the four winds of heaven will strive upon the great sea and bring about the day of Jacob's trouble that our Lord will suddenly appear, yes walking upon the sea of troubled humanity in order, as it says, that "Jacob shall be

saved out of it". (Rev. 17, Dan 7, Psalms 97, 98, and 99 etc.) Note that this occurs in antitype after His actual resurrection, when "All power is given" unto Him "in heaven and in earth" and therefore it is that we read of Him walking upon the water. (see Job 9.8) Of course the disciples were afraid, but the words of our Lord spoken with calmness and assurance "It is I; be not afraid" which provide a link with the words actually spoken after His resurrection were enough to allay all their fears. There is an air of beautiful serenity and peace in the words, "Then they willingly received Him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went." (v.21) Also it does seem most significant that this miracle or sign is followed by our Lord's discourse on the bread of life, with its reference to manna and the wilderness, and setting himself forth as that true bread that cometh down from heaven and giveth life to the world, when after His actual resurrection, he met the two disciples on the road to Emmaus he began at Moses and all the prophets and expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself. We too as we search the Scriptures to see if these things be so, can oft-times testify to the fact that our hearts burn within us as he talks with us "by the way" and as He opens them to us even as to these two disciples.

JS

*'Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him  
twain.'* Matt. 5: 41

*Today, I'm bound to meet them,  
The folks who will not share  
My viewpoint . . . But I'll greet them  
And bring Christ's thoughts to bear.*

*Yes—even when they tire me.  
I'll greet them with a smile,  
And if they should require me  
I'll go the second mile.*

*THE GOD OF ALL GRACE and Me  
Maurice Cox*



## GOD'S PRECIOUS JEWELS

### Part 5 The Diamond



The Diamond always presents a fascinating study. When symmetrically cut and polished, it is transformed into a gem which is at once beautiful, valuable and lasting. Its property of exquisitely reflecting and refracting light into its rainbow colours captivates immediate attention and commands wonder and admiration.

The extraordinary thing about this amazing gem is noted in the fact that it is derived from pure carbon. In other words, a diamond is a piece of crystallised charcoal! It is just like the great Creator to take hold of quite simple materials and to fashion them into articles of supreme worth and enduring splendour. His own precious jewels—His elect—are chosen from degraded humanity. He has visited the pit of sin, and offered some His highest and best! Even the pure and holy angels marvel at God's way of working. (1 Peter 1: 12; Psalm 40: 1-3). Still more amazing is the knowledge that He has not drawn the so-called elite of the earth, but His outstretched arm has beckoned mainly those who have been considered of little worth in human eyes. The apostle calls them the "are nots" that will eventually bring to naught the things that are, that no flesh should have any reason for boasting in His sublime presence (1 Cor. 1: 26-31).

#### **Strength and Beauty.**

The origin of the diamond, therefore, is from soft black and grimy soot, which, in the Divine laboratory, becomes practically the hardest of known crystals. True to the picture, the Lord's own have been born in regions of darkness and despair, but, under the power of infinite grace, they are transformed into beings of strength and beauty—"Strength and beauty are in his (Thy) sanctuary" (Psalm 96: 6). These characteristics come gradually into existence during their earthly career, after having received the Holy Spirit of truth. So strong and decisive become the dispositions of the Lord's true people, that they need to be ever on their guard against imparting unnecessary pain. The beauties of meekness, patience and kindness inclines them to wield the "sword of the Spirit" only in love.

It has been well said that "it takes a diamond to cut a diamond." Even diamond dust is necessary to polish the gem, thus we perceive the immense value implied by fellowship of kindred minds. To the teachable and faithful such fellowship is of the utmost importance for growth in grace and in knowledge. Oft-times fellowship is extremely pleasant, but sometimes it

may be otherwise, for diamond-like characters prove a great test to those who have not this worth of quality. Fellowship of the Lord's people has consequently been one of constant changes and upheavals from Pentecost even unto this hour. All who resent the cutting and polishing processes, and who become offended, peevish, morose or bitter, give evidence that their characters are not jewel-like. If we have reason to affirm that we belong to the Lord, we will surely give heed to the apostle's exhortation as follows: "Let us consider one another to provoke (incite) unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10: 24,25).

### **The Kohinoor.**

There are gems which are gems of renown because of their history and value, and the Kohinoor is one of these. It can be traced back to 56 B.C. What stories it could tell were it a living subject! For instance, rather than give it up, Shah Rukh endured many horrible tortures, including the putting out of his eyes.

It was at one time in the possession of the Mohammed Shah. When Nadir Shah conquered Delhi, he ordered Mohammed to give up everything he possessed. The latter, however, concealed the diamond in the folds of his turban, but one of the women of the harem betrayed his secret. Nadir Shah adopted a novel stratagem to obtain it. He ordered a grand festival, at which the two rulers swore love and friendship to each other. At its close, Nadir declared that they must exchange turbans to cement this friendship, and, without giving poor Mohammed a moment to consider, Nadir snatched off his turban and exchanged it for his own. Quietly, within his own abode, Nadir removed the gem from the folds, and exclaimed, with extreme satisfactory and delight, "Koh-I-Noor," meaning "Mountain of Light," a name which has been maintained to this day.

The Emperor of the Universe likewise treasures His special gems, to whom a new name will be granted (Isaiah 62: 2, 3: Rev. 2: 17).

### **Cutting and Polishing.**

The ancients never realised the wonderful possibilities of their jewels. Fearing to reduce their size, they sacrificed brilliance for bulk. Nowadays a gem undergoes very drastic treatment in order that it may be enhanced in symmetry, beauty and refractive power. To this end there is no hesitation to cut away two-thirds or more of an original stone. The celebrated Pitt

diamond, for instance, was reduced from 410 carats to 136. This cost £5,000 and took two years to accomplish.

The Kohinoor originally weighed nearly 800 carats, and was reduced to 280. When the province of Punjab was annexed, it became the property of the English, and it was delivered to Queen Victoria in 1850. Its appearance was then somewhat disappointing, for it had been badly cut. Prince Albert sought the advice of Sir David Brewster as to the best manner of re-shaping it. The result was that eleven Amsterdam workmen became engaged on the work, and in due course it was reduced to 107 carats, but its beauty was so greatly enhanced that its value went up enormously. It was once worth at least £100,000\*. It found its place in a bracelet, which was worn by The Queen on State occasions.

Thus it is with the Lord's precious jewels, their value does not so much depend upon their prominence, but upon their beauty—the beauties of holiness—and this means a patient, laborious and costly cutting, shaping and polishing. Only God is able to view in advance the ultimate design of each and all. He knows precisely the experiences which are necessary. The part of the consecrated believer is to submit to Divine providences, without murmuring or expressions of discontent, thanking Him always in anticipation that the ultimate design will be according to His sovereign will.

#### **“Whom He loveth He Chasteneth”**

Sometimes the experiences of the Lord's people appear drastic and almost incompatible with human reasoning. We are safeguarded with the knowledge that it is “whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.” When John Bunyan was sent to prison there flashed upon his spiritual vision the words, “He knew that for envy they had delivered Him” (Matt. 27: 18). Thus the Lord overrules the envy, malice and pride in other hearts to produce the fruits of the Spirit in His beloved. In Bunyan's case his soul burned within him as he became conscious of the Lord's saving grace. Behind prison doors, he produced works which have attracted the attention of tens of thousands to this day. It mattered little if others corrected his grammar; his soul was alight with the Holy Spirit, and that was sufficient for the Divine purposes.

The same experience applies to that persecuted and much maligned woman, Madame Guyon. Illuminated with the gift from on high, she could endure all things through Him who strengthened her. Hear her song during one period of captivity:-

**NOTICES**

For the benefit of those who wish to keep the memorial of our Lord’s death at the time nearest the anniversary, it is suggested that Sunday 9 April 2017 after 6 p.m. is the appropriate date and time.

**BIBLE STUDENTS SEMINAR DAY  
SATURDAY 13 MAY 2017  
KENSWORTH VILLAGE HALL**

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11 a.m.—4.30 p.m.

All welcome

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Thanks to the anonymous donor

**BIBLE STUDENTS FELLOWSHIP CONFERENCE  
WEDNESDAY 16 AUGUST—SUNDAY 20 AUGUST 2017  
HIGH LEIGH CONFERENCE CENTRE, HODDESDON**

The theme for the week is Psalm 50.5 *Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice*

“A little bird I am,  
Shut from the fields of air;  
And in my cage I sit and  
sing  
To Him who placed me  
there;  
Well pleased a prisoner to  
be,  
Because, my God, it pleases  
Thee!

Oh, it is good to soar  
These bolts and bars above,  
To Him whose purpose I  
adore,  
Whose providence I love;  
And in Thy mighty will to  
find  
The joy, the freedom of the  
mind.”

My cage confines me round;  
Abroad I cannot fly;  
But though my wing is  
closely bound,  
My heart’s at liberty.  
My prison walls cannot  
control  
The flight, the freedom of  
the soul.

**The Diamond Point.**

One astonishing feature of the diamond is that it may be ground to a point of infinitesimal fineness. Mr. J. R. Farrants, one time President of the Microscopical Society, had executed upon a piece of glass the Lord’s Prayer. The writing done by a diamond was so small that the whole of it resembled a dot made by a fine pen. It needed a very delicate machine to

accomplish this, and a very powerful microscope to distinguish the writing. Were the whole of the New Testament written in this manner, then the space occupied would be about the size of a small thumb-nail.

Thus God's precious jewels will comprehend things great and small—inconceivably small! Recall, for instance, the minute formations which make up organisms! Think of the marvel of the brain structure! Millions and millions of impressions stored in a small space. These will all be precisely duplicated by the Royal Family in due course. The saints of the Most High will possess the kingdom! (Dan. 7: 27).

### **The Jasper ?**

Commentators have concluded that the jasper of the Bible could not be the same which is now commonly called by this title. The modern jasper is represented by an impure variety of quartz, which may be in colour—dark green, brown, yellow, blue or black. Light does not penetrate this variety, whilst that mentioned in the Bible is transparent. Indeed, from the standpoint of its description, it is evident that the diamond is indicated. Note the words in the Book of Revelation: “Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal” (Rev. 21 : 9-11).

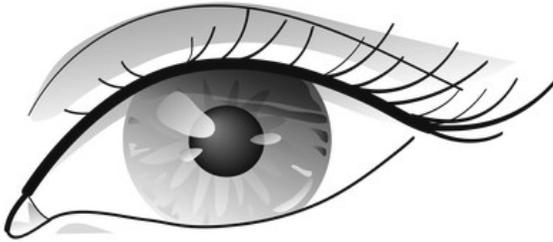
Such a description illuminates also Rev. 4: 3, already quoted, for as a diamond scintillates so gloriously the prismatic colours, so the glorified Redeemer, upon His throne, sheds abroad the varied beauties expressed in the Divine character. “For God is love,” and it has been well expressed that, as “every lovely hue is light, so every grace is love.” Now, the jasper, or rather the diamond, was the last stone depicted in the Breastplate, this as though picturing the glorious consummate desire of the Omnipotent, which desire will be amply fulfilled through the offices of the Royal priesthood. The last shall be first, and so this last stone becomes the first foundation-stone of the city, the New Jerusalem, when the Bride will be complete (Rev. 21: 19). Truly marvellous is the mind of God!

FL

# BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

Volume 94 Issue 3

May / June 2017



*Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. (1 Cor. 2.9)*

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# BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

FOUNDED 1924

The Bible Study Monthly, published to promote knowledge of the Bible, sees the Scriptures as a true record of God's dealings with the human race, needing to be understood in our generation. It looks for the advent of our Lord, and His reign of peace and justice on the earth.

*"Speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ"* (Ephesians 4:15 NRSV)

The Bible Study Monthly is sent free of charge on request to all who are genuinely interested.

It is supported entirely by the gifts of its readers, and these are sincerely appreciated.

Secretary & Treasurer: Nicholas Charcharos

## THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

Eyes are one of the five senses and so important to everyday life. They enable us to read, write and do so many things like ride a bicycle or drive a car. Darkness makes us aware of what it is like just to have poor vision. Many of us still remember the 1970s when power cuts were commonplace and you had always to have candles ready to light and keep matches in a safe place that you can find in the dark.

Restoring the sight of the blind was one of many miracles our Lord Jesus did during his first advent. He restored the sight of Bartimaeus, who became a follower (Mark 10: 46-52) because he had faith. There was also the two blind men who had their eyes opened (Matt. 9: 27-31).

But the Christian today perceives and understands the truth in the beautiful Plan of God that illumines the eyes of our understanding and are blessed to have eyes that see. (Matt. 13:16).

As watchers of political, social and economic events the world lunges from one problem to another. The decision of one group having a

significant impact on another group. But seen with the eye of faith and from reading the Bible these events point to events prophesied at the end of this Christian era which we are now seeing ‘face to face’, events which precede the revelation of Christ.

But God does not just see and watch, but he hears too. Hears all our prayers and even what’s in our hearts when we come in prayer and supplication.

The Bride of Christ looks forward to seeing her Lord ‘face to face’.

*A Glimpse of*

*God’s Plan*



This has now been reprinted and is available free on request

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#### **4 MANOR GARDENS, BARNSTONE ADDRESS**

Please note following the death of Derrick Nadal, there is no longer anyone linked to the Bible Fellowship Union or Bible Study Monthly living at the above address.

Magazine content. What is published is believed to have a wide interest, but everything printed may not necessarily be the opinion of the editor and his colleagues.



## THY WATCHMEN SHALL SEE EYE TO EYE



*“Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion” (Isa. 52: 8).*

The immediate setting of this text is the promised return from captivity to Babylon. There would be symbolic watchers on the walls of Jerusalem and symbolic heralds hastening over the mountains to announce to the watchers the coming of the returning hosts intent on rebuilding the Temple and city. The long night of captivity is past; the day of Divine favour is come. “I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: my house shall be built in it,...and a line shall be stretched forth (out) upon Jerusalem” (Zech. 1: 16). Hence the stirring cry of the watchmen in the seventh verse: “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings,...that bringeth good tidings of good,... that saith unto Zion, ‘Thy God reigneth!’” (Isa. 52: 7).

Then come the words of our text. The rejoicing watchmen sing together because they see, **face to face**, the heralds of good tidings announcing the Lord returning to His sanctuary in Zion.

That is what this expression “eye to eye” means. “Face to face.” It only occurs in one other place in the Old Testament, in Num. 14: 14, where it is rendered “For...thou LORD art seen ‘face to face,’” and the thought in Isa. 52 is that the watchmen see clearly, face to face, the heralds of glad tidings announcing the imminent return of their God to His people.

Rotherham’s rendering is “Eye to eye, shall they see, when Yahweh returneth to Zion,” and he further remarks on the meaning as “Probably ‘face to face with the event.’” Moffatt has it: “They see the Eternal face to face as he returns to Sion.” Margolis: “They shall see, eye to eye, the LORD returning to Zion.” Ferrar Fenton: “When clearly you see that the Lord comes to Zion.” The Septuagint confirms the thought by having “Eyes shall look to eyes, when the Lord shall have mercy upon Sion.”

Bible students know that this wonderful imagery was not intended solely for fulfilment in the days of Israel’s return from captivity. Paul uses the seventh verse as applicable to the heralds of the Gospel, in Rom. 10: 15.

Realising that the return under Cyrus was but a picture, a type, of the greater release from captivity which should come to spiritual Israel at the close of the Gospel Age (Christian era), and the joy which the imminent Advent of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus, would inspire in the hearts of the Gospel Age “Watchers,” we can discern a greater and more glorious application to these glowing words.

The “Watchers” on the walls of the Holy City of this Gospel Age have waited through a long and dreary time during which the people of God have been held captive by an oppressive system which has crushed the Truth to the ground. Only a few of the “poor” have remained to be “vine-dressers and husbandmen,” but these have faithfully manned the walls watching for the promised “return.” The night is far spent, the day is at hand, but as yet only the first gleams of dawn are perceptible.

Then come the heralds. Hasting over the mountains, pressing toward the Holy City, so long downtrodden and oppressed, they come with glorious news. The KING is on his way. He is returning to Zion with favour. Enlightenment and prosperity is to come with Him. The captive people are loosed—even now they are on their way to commence the great work of rebuilding the Temple of God, and placing within it the golden vessels—the precious truths so long submerged under the defilements of a foreign power.

How eagerly the Watchers fasten their gaze upon the heralds. They haste—therefore the news is good. Did they bring bad news their pace would be slow. They each seek to out vie the others in order to reach the city first. How beautiful the sight, heralds upon the mountains proclaiming the coming King!

So they meet, face to face. No longer any doubt. The news runs round the city. Not all the watchers receive the news at once. Not all hear exactly the same story from the different heralds, all zealous to proclaim the essentials of their message. But one central truth stands out—THE KING IS AT HAND! He may be upon the mountain approach; He may even be within the city, and making Himself known to those who have perceived His entrance. There is no lack of love and zeal on the part of those who have not actually seen Him enter the gate, if so be He really is now within the walls. All are united in the one joyous theme—the time has come. “I

am returned to Jerusalem with mercies.”

That is the story of this closing period of the Gospel Age—a period which is now well advanced. Is the King within the walls? Is He at the gates? Whether the one thing or the other, the important teaching of the text is that we are “face to face with the event.” The Watchers and the Heralds have met, and their united testimony has been given. The Temple has been built; Divine Truth, things new and old, has been established in its rightful place. The work is not yet finished; the building must go on; the Temple must be adorned with yet purer and nobler vessels of truth and understanding, that the day may at length come when the great outer doors will be flung open to all mankind and the invitation come to all men to enter and walk in its light.

The importance of a right understanding of this Scripture is great. It calls us to recognise the significance of the times in which we live, a period of active preparation for the day when our Lord Jesus Christ shall be manifested in His glorious **apokalupsis**—His revelation of Himself to all men, in association with His glorified Church, for man’s blessing and salvation. How beautiful upon the mountains...the heralds...proclaiming “*Thy God reigneth*”...for the time of His Kingdom is come, and the day is not far hence when He shall “*reign in Mount Zion, and before His ancients gloriously.*”

AOH

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**“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus” Hebrews 12:2 (BSB)**

It is not your hold on Christ that saves you—it is Christ; it is not your joy in Christ that saves you—it is Christ; it is not even faith in Christ, though that be the instrument—it is Christ’s blood and merits; therefore, look not so much to your hand with which you are grasping Christ, as to Christ; look not to your hope, but to Jesus, the source of your hope; look not to your faith, but to Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith.

*Spurgeon*

## THE STORY OF NEHEMIAH

Lessons from the life of a stalwart man of God

### 3. Holiness unto the Lord

In fifty-two days the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt because “the people had a mind to work”. How much can be accomplished when those who labour do so willingly, joyfully and purposely. It must have been a wonderful moment when the last brick was laid, the doors were all hung and the city could once more resume its function as the centre of national life. Good though it was for God’s people to dwell in safety within the city wall, and delightful as that wall was to look upon, Nehemiah’s great work did not stop at that point. It now remained to be seen whether the zeal and co-operation engendered by patriotism for their national heritage could be carried over into everyday life.

Jerusalem was the city of worship, and its restoration meant that the voice of prayer and praise could once again be heard in the holy place. The greater work of restoring the ancient faith of their fathers now began. Israel had to be reconciled to the Lord if they were to enjoy his blessing under their covenant with him. They had to understand and keep his law if they wished to have his care and protection. So Nehemiah, having completed the first phase of his work, called upon his colleague, Ezra the scribe, to read and teach the Jews from their holy Scriptures. The Levitical priesthood was reinstated amongst the people, their method of worship as instructed by Moses was again operative and the Hebrew way of life was re-established in the city of peace. Thus prosperity began to return to this God-fearing remnant in Israel.

Not infrequently servants of God in our own day become so engrossed in the service of God that the vital need for prayer and the reading of his Word is forgotten. No great work can be accomplished for our Heavenly Father unless we are in close touch with him. Whatever outward success there may be in our labours of love, the deeper issues of our faith must be kept well to the forefront. Serving the Lord and knowing about his purposes are valuable assets in the Christian life but they can never become substitutes for prayer and worship. We shall in fact be quite unprepared spiritually for our tasks for the Lord unless we spend much time at the Throne of Grace. Natural talent cannot make up for genuine spiritual power received at God’s own hand. Nehemiah accomplished his

great work because the driving force of his life was derived from communion with God and not from self gratification. It was quite natural for him to turn to religious reform after the outward material essentials had been restored.

Nehemiah's cleansing of the priesthood and people from the surrounding nations is not to be interpreted as an act of snobbery. The interlopers in the recently built city and reconstituted nation were not the friends of Israel nor lovers of her God. They had for the most part been the very ones who had tried to hinder the rebuilding scheme and had sought to bring disgrace upon Nehemiah. Having failed in one direction they now planned to wreck God's people by mixing their own heathen blood with that of Judah. There was only one way into the nation of Israel by Gentiles—and that had been specifically laid down in their law. Haphazard inter-breeding on the part of the Hebrews would have quickly reduced them as a nation to the depravity of other nations. Rigid separation from the language, customs and worship of their national neighbours was the only solution to their strength and holiness before the Lord.

Once again the parallel between Israel and the Christian Church reflects how the same conditions have brought subsequently spiritual prosperity or bankruptcy. Thus we must turn the light of God's Word upon our own consciences to see if in truth we too have "separated ourselves from the people of the land". This in no way signifies a "holier than thou" attitude, into which Judaism finally developed, nor does it prevent us being sufficiently in the world to let our light shine. On the contrary, God's commission to Israel is to be found in the words of the prophet Isaiah "*It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth*" (Isa. 49. 6), Israel failed in her day of opportunity and the light of ancient Jerusalem was snuffed out by ritualism and base gain.

Paul therefore declares to the people of Antioch in Pisidia that this privilege of bearing witness to the light of God's truth had fallen to the followers of Jesus (Acts 13. 47). Darkness yet abounds in the world. Without compromising with that darkness let us shine forth as the children of our Heavenly Father, in preparation for the day when the New Jerusalem shall descend from Heaven as a bride prepared for her husband.

May God help us to bestir ourselves and continue the work of past ages and generations. It is no use sitting down and expecting miracles to happen to fulfil God's work. Nehemiah when assured of his work undertook it in a spirit of zeal and perseverance which shows up in marked contrast to the inertia of the twentieth century Christian Church. God awaits our co-operation and is ready to place within our hands the credentials of service such as we frail mortals can do, but only in his strength, and by his Spirit. "Without God, we cannot: without us, God will not." So ends a remarkable book by Mildred Cable, who did so much for spiritual Zion in central Asia.

*"Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen and Amen."*

*The End*

*AOH*

SALVE. The spiritually blind Christians in the Laodicean congregation were urged to buy eyesalve, to rub in their eyes that they may see. (Rev. 3:17,18) The Greek word for eyesalve (*kol-lou-ri-on*) literally means a roll or cake of coarse bread, suggesting that the salve was likely made up into small cakes or rolls. As Laodicea was famous for its medical school and probably also produced the eye medicine known as "Phrygian powder," the recommendation to buy eyesalve would have been very meaningful to the Christians there.

*Selected*

Various other things are done for the adorning of the bride, including having her face polished till it shines like marble, and having henna painted on her nails, the palms of her hands, the arms, the breasts, and the feet. Her eyebrows are pencilled so as to appear to meet and the eyelids blackened also to make the eyes appear larger. She would also be adorned with bracelets, anklets, and many necklaces, and often have real gems sewn into her dress.

*Customs and Costumes in Bible Days*

*I.E.D. Gollmick*

The use of cosmetics was apparently not common, at least until the latter days of the divided kingdom. The painting of the eyes referred to in several passages e.g. Jeremiah 4:30 RV was a form of tattooing of the eyelids and a painting under the eyebrows. A black dye was used.

*They Lived in Israel*

*Laurence H. Bunker*

*"Leah had dull eyes" Gen. 29: 17 (Moffatt)*

# THE VIRTUOUS WOMAN

A devotional commentary on Proverbs 31: 10-31

Part 1

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COME HITHER, I WILL SHEW THEE THE BRIDE, THE LAMB'S WIFE.

---

In the Word the highest of human relationships is lifted beyond the earthly plane, beyond and above angels in the courts of heaven, to point us to that blessed union that belongs to the Divine... *“I speak concerning Christ and the church.”* (Ephesians 5: 32).

In Proverbs 31:10 to 31, we have the description of the virtuous woman of any age, a glowing account of ideals, a help meet for a perfect man. As the Word of God directs us to such a list of qualities and character the Spirit of God helps us to see reflected therein some glimpses of the Bride of Christ.

The statement of perfection may bring little comfort to those who are only too aware of imperfection. The high standards seem remote as they are beautiful. As our perception deepens so the goal may appear to recede further from our reach. We know we have not yet attained, but how conceivable is it that we shall ever attain?

The answer lies in the blessed truth that this is a work of grace. *His* grace, producing *ours*. Just believing this, and staggering not, makes us pure in His eyes, and brings us into a relationship of at-one-ness with the very Source of All Perfection through our Lord Jesus Christ. That *He* is *our Lord* is special enough in the sight of His Father to give us faith's access into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Here then is a kind of check-list of those attainments of the bride in her making ready for that eternal union with the Heavenly Bridegroom. All the divine resources are at hand, the very power of God at our disposal, and the angels of God waiting upon the every spiritual need of heaven's princess, with those echoes of mercy and whispers of love.

*THINE EYES SHALL SEE THE KING IN HIS BEAUTY...*

AND HE CARRIED ME AWAY IN THE SPIRIT ...  
TO A MOUNTAIN, GREAT AND HIGH

---

The description of the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31:10 to 31, in which we catch glimpses of the Betrothed of the Lord, consists of 22 verses. It is alphabetical, each verse commencing with the next Hebrew letter. No doubt this was to aid the memory of a precious passage worthy indeed of engraving in the mind. This may seem of little point to us in that few of the Lord's people can read Hebrew. However, it has been noticed that in each letter there may be some deeper link than at first supposed with the principle point of each verse. *If* this be so it is a *bonus*, the main value rests in the verse. Nevertheless a further bonus may lie in that we are thus afforded an opportunity to become a little more acquainted with the language of the Holy Word.

The nineteenth century was a remarkable one for Bible students in many ways, not least in the works of the Hebrew scholar Gesenius which marked its opening years. It is to him we are indebted for the designations given to each Hebrew letter by those who used them. Thus the first letter Aleph is designated the ox, probably because if viewed with imagination it does rather look like the head and horns of an ox. Beth is a house, Gamel a camel, and so on.

If the Lord uses the ideal of the virtues of this woman to paint a picture of the virtuous woman of this gospel age (Christian era), then indeed do we need the spirit's power to carry us away, to translate both the picture and also ourselves in the highest spiritual terms. The love of God that has overflowed into human hearts is this moment expressing itself in countless human ways in the lives of His saints. Here the human is but the vehicle, the vessel, of the divine. A new mind is in control, a new light in the eyes, a new life and purpose in the step. A woman in love lives in a different world. She faces the realities around her, but she is not inhibited by them, for she has in her heart a glowing vision of a life shared with the man of her dreams.

*SO SHALL WE BE . . . FOREVER WITH THE LORD.*

---

*Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.*

Proverbs 31:10



**aleph.** = the ox, symbol of domesticated strength.

The ox from which all domestic cattle are thought to be derived, was for man a great source of harnessed strength. It is used to depict the strength of God's throne in Ezekiel 1:10 etc.

Virtue = strength under control.

---

### THE ABLE WOMAN WHO CAN FIND?

So great a source of strength to man. Eliezer found her at the well. Boaz found her at his feet. Both accounts we are afforded in which to glimpse something of the preciousness of our call to the fellowship, the sharing of His Son. So important it was to Abraham that the right choice be made, the right woman found for the son of his love. Can we begin to sense, in that weight of responsibility laid upon his faithful servant, something of the great importance of the divine choice and selection in this present age? There can be no room for mistake. She must be right, exactly right, for that One Who now inherits all things, in Whom all the promises of God are positive and sure, Yea, and Amen.

### PRECIOUS MORE THAN RUBIES.

The mission of the age is not in vain. He has found Him a wife, a woman whose qualities of character and purity are after the likeness of her Creator (Col 3: 10). He has revealed her worth to Him in the bride price He has paid...in the ruby-like precious drops of her Redeemer's blood. Can any human husband love his wife *"as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."* (Ephesians 5: 25-27) The able woman...her first great feat of ability...just to believe, just to say, *'I will go (with this man)'*. (Gen. 24: 58) And as she thus walked with him, and as we walk in the spirit, to that faith is added...*virtue*...the character of full spiritual strength and ability in Christ. (Ruth 2:12,13; 3:10,11.)

I HAVE PURCHASED HER TO BE MY WIFE (Ruth 4: 10)

---

## AND HE SHOWED ME THAT GREAT CITY...

*The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. 31:11*

**Beth.** = a house, tent, tabernacle. The woman is the home of the man, the place of his rest in whom he lives. There are no possessions, no material things, that can replace a woman's love, "*and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment*" filled with her love. (John 12:3)

 It is a place of mutual trust.

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HER HUSBAND'S BELIEF IN HER. Ruth 3:14, "*She lay at his feet until the morning:*" She was at rest and so was he. It was the highest place she knew, to lie at his feet. At that trysting place of love he made to her his vow, and she to him. That I believe in Him has changed my life, but that He believes in *me*! That He has such confidence in His ability to finish, to perfect that state of trust of which He is the Author, to anticipate even now that finished work of grace, to share with me that mutual confidence which is the basis, the foundation, walls, and topmost stone of love's eternal abode.

Who shall love most? Not the one who felt most worthy, but the one with most forgiven. It is grace that enriches the heart and furnishes it right through as we treasure the love messages of the Word, follow its instructions, its revealing of His mind, the things that please our Lord, accept its corrections (His hand upon the tiller,) and value its reproof. (2 Tim. 3:16,17.) His is such love that can tell us when we are wrong, and help us cleanse away the spots in character that would impede that perfect union, and smooth away the wrinkles where our flesh so poorly fits the new mind within. He sees our responses, recognises there the motivation of our heart, and cherishes the strength of its desires towards Himself.

SHE WILL NOT MISUSE THAT MUTUAL TRUST. "He will have no need of spoil." This means that she becomes totally reliable in her management of all His affairs. The two think *as one*. She values His provision, appreciates with gratitude His gifts. Everything He trusts to her she gladly takes and uses to His praise. No task or service is too great. No 'day of small things' is despised. No opportunity she wastes, nor time. Nor will she pass by privilege of service to her Lord, some work He needs of her, that He must turn to others to fulfil. The pouring out of love so many ways, may seem to some 'great waste'. But one thing only satisfies her mind, that He Who understands love's language best...believes in her. How precious to her ears is His defence... "*Let her alone, on Me has she wrought a good work.*"

THOU HAST BEEN FAITHFUL. ENTER INTO MY JOY..

...I SAW THE HOLY JERUSALEM DESCENDING OUT OF HEAVEN

*She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.* Proverbs 31:12

**Gamel** = the camel, long used in the service of man, bearing forth his goods and treasures with remarkable powers of persistence, and with great durable qualities even in the most hard-going wilderness conditions. Part of the train of Rebekah as she journeys to Isaac, and of the Queen of Sheba too, bearing good things to Solomon.

### SHE DOES HIM GOOD

How beautiful the thought! She is good, and she does Him good. It is her nature and her role. Fruit of God's Own Spirit (Gal 5:22, Eph 5:9), *goodness* may be variously defined. It is the receptive state of heart ready to embrace His every word and nurture it as living precious seed to bring forth much fruit. (Mat. 13:23) Goodness is as salt, fully effective in the purpose of its being. If it should lose its savour it is good for nothing. (Mat. 5:13) Goodness is the giving of the best, the centring of the attention on the one thing needful. The Hebrew carries the thought of 'pleasing'. Attitudes and works are only good in that they are pleasing to our Lord. It is His definition of goodness to do only those things that please His Father, and it is our earnest desire and endeavor to more and more share that only worthy aim of existence.

### ALL THE DAYS OF HER LIFE

So does each body member function every day and every hour, with precision and sensitivity fulfilling every desire of the Head in every service it can pay. What goodness is there in the vine save to bear grapes? All other purposes are broken off from the day of betrothal. Each day is now her Lord's, and every act has part in the language of her love for Him. In the youthful days of inexperience she tries so hard to please though lacking expertise. As the years pass, it matures into absorbing delight. In riper years, - fulfilment. His "lovest thou Me?" rings in her ears each hour, and finds relief in the outlet He supplies. "Tend My lambs." "My goodness extendeth not to Thee..." unless directed towards "the saints that are in the earth." In His eyes and now in hers, they are "the excellent" that ever reflect the exceeding glory of all His goodness as it passes before them, "in whom is all my delight."

MAY GOD FULFIL EVERY DESIRE FOR GOODNESS 2 Thess. 1:11

*She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.*

Proverbs 31:13

**Daleth** = a door, opening into a further realm. Thus used figuratively of the door of opportunity. Knocking thereon signifies diligence in seeking and pursuing what is desired. Digging of the ear of the devoted slave to the doorpost implies the opening of our heart to the openings of service, entered with joyful satisfaction. The Lord is ever opening and closing doors for us. It speaks of His overruling care, as our responses speak of understanding and appreciative love and trust.

#### DILIGENCE IN SEEKING.

Is ever opening doors, enquiring, exploring opportunity to serve the Master of the house. The wool and the flax are the raw materials of such service, perhaps the needs of others of the household, discovered with the delicacy of love, and developed with design and delight into the dress or durable garment or whatever may cover or furnish that need. Sometimes we need the comforting warmth of another's understanding, interest and care. Sometimes the cool light garment of uplift and encouragement. Sometimes the wool, sometimes the flax, the fine linen. The Lord supplies our needs in the needs of others, by drawing forth that generous caring love that seeketh not her own. In comforting we ourselves are comforted, in watering watered.

#### DILIGENCE IN WORKING.

The working of that garment that will fit the need of someone we love may take long persevering effort. It may need more than one fitting, much repeated application. David epitomized the spiritual despondency of lapsing faith in his fear that he would die at the hands of Saul, in our case, that the flesh might conquer. We need many "kisses of His mouth", many reassurances of love. What priceless privilege is mine if my Lord, knowing intimately the needs of one of His anointed, places in my hands the very means of their supply. However lowly and unworthy the vehicle of His love, the tether must be loosened at the words, "The Master hath need of it." "What is that in thine hand?" Is it wool? - Flax? - A box of precious ointment do you hold? Why has He thus filled my vessel with such fullness of His love? "*All Thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces (or boxes), whereby they (the King's daughters) have made Thee glad.*" Psa. 45:8.

## OPEN MY EYES THAT I MAY SEE

Open my eyes that I may see  
 Glimpses of truth Thou hast for me;  
 Place in my hands the wonderful key  
 That shall unclasp and set me free.



*Silently now I wait for Thee,  
 Ready, my God, Thy will to see,  
 Open my eyes, illumine me,  
 Spirit divine!*

Open my ears that I may hear  
 Voices of truth Thou sendest clear;  
 And while the wave-notes fall on my ear,  
 Everything false will disappear.



Open my mouth and let me bear  
 Tidings of mercy everywhere;  
 Open my heart and let me prepare  
 Love with Thy children thus to share.



Open my mind, that I may read  
 More of Thy love in word and deed:  
 What shall I fear while yet Thou dost lead?  
 Only for light from Thee I plead.

These are the words of Clara H. Scott (1841-1897), an American who studied music in Chicago and went on to become a music teacher. When she had her volume 'The Royal Anthem Book' published in 1882 she was the first woman to do so. The tune appears attributed to her as well. She died unexpectedly in an accident involving a horse and carriage. This is her only hymn in circulation today.

Here are some of the scriptures which are believed to have inspired her.  
 Psalm 119:18 Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things  
 out of thy law.

Luke 24:31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him.

John 8:32-36 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free... If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

Revelation 3:7 (NKJV) To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, 'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, "He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens".'

Luke 10:21-24 In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him. And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

Eph. 2:18 Through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

Romans 5:5 (RSV) God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.

Matthew 11:15 He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Matt. 13:16 Blessed are your eyes, for they see:... your ears, for they hear.

Colossians 1:9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

Psalms 51:15 (RSV) Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.

Mark 16:20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.

1 John 3:18-19 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

## PRAYER AND THE BIBLE

### Part 3



### Prayer a Necessary Office

The most wonderful kingdom the world shall ever know is to be established as the result of prayer. When Jesus taught his disciples to pray to the Father for the Kingdom to come, and for His will to be done on earth as in heaven, he was committing to them a necessary office (John 15: 16). We must not suppose that the Kingdom would have come in any case, whether prayed for or not. We do well to grasp the proper thought, as it makes much difference in our attitude toward prayer. *Prayer is in itself one of the factors in Jehovah's fore-ordained Plan of Salvation.* Tennyson expressed a great truth when he sang: "*More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.*"

The Kingdom and all matters pertaining to it must be prayed for; and if men did not pray angels would. We read that angels desired to look into these things; but God has not committed the future Kingdom into the hands of the angelic hosts, but to specially chosen men, the Son of Man himself being chief. The prophets of old foretold of the sufferings of this chosen class, and the glory of the Kingdom to follow (1 Pet. 1:12; Heb. 2:5).

Jesus, addressing his disciples, said: "Unto you it is given to know the mystery (secret) of the Kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That seeing that may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand" (Mark 4:11, 12). It is not every one who can be the disciple of Jesus; only those who deny themselves and take up their cross daily, and follow him into his sacrificial death, can claim discipleship (Luke 9:23; 14:27; Rom. 6:3-5; Psa. 50:5).

Effective prayer implies sacrifice, and consequent suffering. Here is a great secret underlying power-producing prayer; and we would that we could make it clear—the Kingdom cannot come unless it is prayed for, and those only who know God's will concerning the Kingdom can pray acceptably. It is not every one who repeats: "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as in heaven," who is praying acceptably, for few indeed know what God's will is, and what kind of Kingdom is to come. Accord-

ing to the plain declaration of the Scriptures (1 John 5: 14,15), only such as know God's will can be heard by him, and receive an answer. Therefore, the Kingdom shall come, and God's will shall be done on earth, not because millions in Christendom have for centuries prayed for it, but on account of the few who have known the secrets of the Kingdom, and have been heard and answered. Just why it is that the prayers of the specially instructed few can accomplish the great work of establishing the Kingdom of God, will, we believe, become clear as we proceed.

### **What Prayer is.**

There are a number of senses in which the word prayer is used, as: petition, intercession, entreaty, supplication, confession, invocation, blessing, praise, thanksgiving, adoration, devotion. These all imply communion with God as the centre of power, and the giver of every perfect gift. The fundamental thought is that of a petitioner pleading with a contrite heart for favours for himself, or on behalf of others. As befitting the hallowed majesty of the great Being with whom he communes, the petitioner approaches in a reverential attitude of heart, in a thankful mood because of favours already enjoyed, and in loving adoration and praise at the realisation of the wonderful perfection of God's character as demonstrated in his gracious and bountiful provision in reserve for the children of men. In no sense, therefore, is praying to be thought of as commanding; although the attitude of a commander may often be necessary for the Lord's co-labourer, in order to bring into effect that for which he has previously prayed. In other words, after having prayed to God according to his will, we are sometimes invested with authority to command the performance of God's will. Our meaning will appear clearer by a contemplation of Mark 11:13,14,20-24.

While the subject of prayer is wide, and its phrases many and impossible to comprehend in a sentence, one thing is specially prominent, namely, that the only prayers that are heard and answered by Jehovah are those uttered according to his will (1 John 5:14, 15; Psa. 34:15; Psa. 66:18-20; John 9:31). And if God's will is reflected in acceptable prayer, then prayer can be said to be the expression of God's will. It is this definition of prayer we desire particularly to consider. Whatever other definitions can be profitably brought forward and studied, this one, that prayer is the expression of God's will, is thoroughly Scriptural; and to understand it is most helpful to the child of God.

None can know God's will and pray in accordance therewith, unless they have given themselves in *sacrifice to him in the way appointed*. This is the teaching of Rom. 12:1,2, where we read: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

Complete knowledge of God's perfect will cannot be acquired without careful Christian study and experience; yet from the very first the spirit-begotten son of the heavenly Father can pray acceptably. The Father of Spirits has so ordered it that we who obey the call to be sacrificing-disciples of Christ shall be heard by him, though not at all times able to frame our petitions in suitable words nor even fully realise what are our proper desires as New Creatures in Jesus Christ. In this connection we specially notice the Apostle's words in Rom. 8:26,27, Diaglott rendering: "The spirit assists our weakness; for we do not know what we should pray for as we ought; but the spirit itself intercedes with unspoken groans. And he who searches the hearts, knows what is the mind of the spirit, because according to God it intercedes on behalf of Saints." This vague pleading of the child to the Father will continue with us in measure to the end of our Christian course; for the spirit-begotten sons of God cannot be satisfied until they awake in the spirit-realm in the likeness of Christ. (1 John 3:2). As the Apostle says: even we ourselves, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, "groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Rom. 8:23).

But while our inarticulate yearnings in the spirit are acknowledged and answered by Him, who reads and understands the heart, it is still possible, and necessary, that we should study the Holy Scriptures to show ourselves approved unto God, workmen that need not to be ashamed (2 Tim. 2:15). Otherwise, if we did not study to rightly divide the Word of Truth, how could we know God's perfect will and pray in accordance therewith? Prayer is a necessary office, to which those who show themselves approved spiritual-workers are appointed (John 15:15,16). And as the will of our heavenly Father is made manifest to us through our study of his Word, it is our glad privilege to pray according to the things thus revealed and so obtain the blessings promised. This, however, requires a close

adherence to our covenant of sacrifice. Our own will must go as God's will is done, until at the end of our course the will of our Father is supreme, and our own will is entirely laid aside. It was so with Jesus to the end (Mark 14:35,36), and it must be so with all who desire to be where he is (1 Cor. 14:15).

ME

*Next time*

## **The Exclusiveness of Prayer in the Gospel Age**

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### **REFLECTIONS**

Down by the shore, on jutting rocks,  
 We sat and gazed upon the view  
 Which stretched like rare and perfect art  
 In gorgeous green, dark brown and blue.

The glassy lake reflected well:  
 The trees and grasses decked with dew,  
 The clean white house on further side,  
 The birds which swift and quiet flew.

While gazing silently, we thought  
 Of how our hearts are mirrors too,  
 Reflecting qualities of God—  
 If we are trusting Him and true;

But when we fail to rest in Him,  
 Our fainting hearts become perturbed;  
 They then cannot reflect so well,  
 Nor could the lake, when winds disturbed.

*Poems of the Way*

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E'EN sorrow, touched by heaven, grows bright  
 With more than rapture's ray,  
 As darkness shows us worlds of light  
 We never saw by day.

*Poems of Dawn*

## TIMES AND SEASONS

### Part 3. Abraham and Isaac

The period from Terah's death and Abraham's departure from Haran to Jacob's entry into Egypt is simple to calculate and there is a mass of supplementary detail which throws considerable light on the lives' events of these three patriarchs. Abraham left Haran at 75 years of age (Gen. 11. 26 & 12.4, Acts 7.4) and was 100 at the birth of Isaac (Gen. 21.5). Isaac was 60 at Jacob's birth (Gen. 25.26) and Jacob was 130 at his entry into Egypt (Gen. 47.9). This makes the period between Haran and Egypt 215 years. During this time these three men, with their respective establishments, moved about from place to place in Canaan according to the exigencies (need) of available pasturage, the friendship or hostility of their neighbours, and the incidence of famine.

The first dated event in the life of Abraham in Canaan is the birth of Ishmael, when he was 86. During the intervening eleven years since leaving Haran he had entered Canaan, settled for a while in Sichern (Shechem) in the north, moved on to Bethel, then to the south (the Negeb). A period of famine sent him onward into Egypt from whence he emerged considerably richer in flocks, herds and servants than when he went in. From Egypt he went back to Bethel where he must have stayed at least two years for it was here that the rapid increase of both his sheep and cattle and those of his brother-in-law Lot led to an enforced separation, since the land could not sustain them both (Gen. 13.5-12). So Lot moved his establishment to the vicinity of Sodom and Abraham remained at Bethel. All of this must have taken at least seven years and by now Abraham was 82. At this point the Lord appeared to him and made the first declaration of his intention to give the whole land, eventually, to Abraham and his seed for ever (Gen. 13. 14-17). Almost at once Abraham moved his headquarters to Hebron, in the south, and within two years there came the invasion of the Elamite armies against Sodom and Gomorrah which resulted in Lot and his family being taken captive and Abraham's successful foray against the enemy to rescue them (Gen. 14). Immediately after this (Gen. 15.1) the Lord again appeared to Abraham to make the covenant which thereafter bore his name, and within a year after the covenant Ishmael was born to his second wife Hagar and Abraham was 86. This succession of stirring events can only just be fitted into the eleven years and it meant that Abraham must have

been on the move most of the time, never staying more than a year or so in any one place.

The next thirteen years in the patriarch's life are blank so far as the narrative goes. Gen. 17 takes up the story from the 16th chapter, when Abraham was 99. He was still at Hebron. For the third time the word of the Lord came to him, reiterating the covenant and telling him that Sarai his wife would certainly have a son, the destined heir of promise. Abraham still thought fondly of Ishmael, now in his thirteenth year, but God told him that there was a destiny for Ishmael also and that he also would become the father of a great nation; nevertheless Isaac was to be the heir of the covenant and progenitor of the Seed through whom all the families of the earth are to be blessed. Within a few weeks the three celestial visitants appeared at his tent door (Gen. 18) bearing the prediction of the birth of Isaac within the ensuing year and also that of the imminent destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, which must have happened almost at once for it was accomplished before the birth of Isaac.

It was probably the fiery end of the doomed cities, only forty miles away, which induced Abraham at this time to leave Hebron and migrate to the territory of Abimelech, ruler of Gerar, a hundred miles farther away. Here he remained, on amicable terms with Abimelech, despite the unfortunate contretemps regarding Sarai. Here Isaac was born, and from here Hagar and Ishmael were banished from the family home (Gen. 21).

Isaac could only have been a few years old when the family was on the move again, this time to Beer-sheba. It would appear from Gen. 21. 23-34 that Abraham's widely spread interests were infringing upon those of Abimelech's people so that in the interests of their friendship a separation became necessary. Abraham stayed at Beer-sheba for something like thirty years during which time the only incident recorded is that of his journey with Isaac to Mount Moriah in obedience to the Divine command, and Isaac's deliverance at the last moment by the substitution of a Divinely provided ram (Gen. 22). It would seem, however, that Abraham still maintained his old establishment at Hebron, for it was at Hebron that Sarah died at the age of 127, and to Hebron that Abraham came from Beer-sheba to mourn and bury his wife. From then to the end of his life, a matter of thirty-eight years, Abraham remained at Hebron. Isaac, now nearly forty years of age, had already set up his own home and

establishment at Lahai-roi, seventy miles away, with his own flocks and herds. But the old man was solicitous for his son's unmarried state, remembering the Divine promise that through Isaac the promised seed should come; desirous that Isaac's bride should be of his own race and not of the women of the land around him, he sent Eliezer his steward to Haran, where his own elder brother Nahor had settled, to find a bride for Isaac from Nahor's family. The story of how Eliezer returned with Nahor's grand-daughter Rebekah is one of the epics of Old Testament history (Gen. 24). Three years after his mother's death, and at the age of forty (Gen. 25.20) Isaac was united with Rebekah. At about the same time Abraham married his third wife, Keturah (Gen. 25.1), at the age of about 140. By her he had six more sons—and probably a few daughters; womenfolk are not mentioned in the Old Testament unless they figure in some definite event or situation. He must have been at least 160 when his last child was born.

So, at the age of 175, Abraham died, an old man and full of days. He died in the faith by which he had lived, supremely confident that the promise of God to him and his would surely be fulfilled. "*And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him*" says the chronicler. Despite the circumstances of Ishmael's banishment at the instance of Sarah seventy-five years before, there was apparently no animosity between the two half-brothers, and Isaac evidently knew where to find Ishmael. Their respective territories were only something like a hundred miles apart and they had probably been in touch many times before. Ishmael was now ninety years of age and had a rapidly growing family of his own. Jacob and Esau, the sons of Isaac, were fifteen years old so that Abraham closed his eyes in death knowing that the Divine promise was being fulfilled.

The recorded life of Isaac is by no means so colourful as that of his father, nor yet as that of his son Jacob. In fact Isaac seems to have done little more than provide a link between Abraham and Jacob, with both of whom God had much more to say about the Covenant than He did with Isaac. Married to Rebekah at the age of 40, the father of Jacob and Esau at 60 (Gen. 25.20, 26), he succeeded to his father's estates and possessions at 75. It was probably very soon after this, say five years or so, that another famine descended on the land and he trekked southwards, as his father had done before him, in search of sustenance (26.1). Forbidden by the Lord to go into Egypt, he finished up with his father's old friend Abimelech, ruler

of Philistine Gerar, now an old man of at least 120 years. After “a long time” here (26.8), there occurred the incident of Abimelech seeing Isaac “sporting” with Rebekah which made the other man realise that she was not his sister, as Isaac had told him, but his wife. Isaac must have been at least 82 and Rebekah 58 at this time. The story of his subsequent prosperity (26. 12-15) requires that his stay in Abimelech’s domains must have totalled a minimum of six or seven years after which he spent several years gradually drifting back into the highlands of Canaan, finally coming to rest at Beer-sheba (26. 17-24).

A point not generally realised is that Isaac and Rebekah had several other sons—perhaps daughters also—after Jacob and Esau (27. 29,37). These were probably born during this period so that upon finally settling at Beer-sheba at about 91 years of age Isaac was surrounded by a sizable young family. At this point the Lord appeared to him and reiterated the Abrahamic promise (26.24), but it is significant that the full terms as outlined to Abraham and Jacob were never propounded to Isaac. Child of promise he may have been, but without much doubt the real custodian of the covenant was his son Jacob.

Here at Beer-sheba there probably occurred the incident of the birthright, which Esau traded to Jacob for a “mess of pottage” (25. 29-34). The two men would by now be in their early thirties, and Esau’s roaming disposition already evident in his adoption of the life of a hunter. A few more years, and Esau at 40 married two of the Hittite women of the land, thus openly avowing his disregard for the Abrahamic promise, “*which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah*” (26.34-35).

There was not much left in life for Isaac. He seems to have prematurely aged and was going blind, so that at 117 years of age he decided to confer his patriarchal blessing in Esau, so confirming him as the heir of the promise. He evidently did not take into consideration Esau’s admitted unfitness for the honour, and of course was not likely to have known that Esau had traded his rights to Jacob years before. The story of how Rebekah and Jacob plotted to impersonate Esau and deceive Isaac into conferring the blessing on the younger son, related in chapter 27, is well known, and its sequel in the flight of Jacob to Rebekah’s brother Laban at Padanaram four hundred miles away to escape Esau’s justifiable wrath. Immediately following Jacob’s flight, Esau, in a belated attempt to

reinstate himself in his parents' favour, took as an additional wife Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, of Abrahamic stock (Gen. 28.8-9). There is no evidence that this action achieved his purpose; he remained apart from the family, the head of his own tribe which eventually became the nation of Edom (ch. 36). It is of interest to notice that, on the assumption that Mahalath was not more than 25 at her marriage, her father Ishmael was about 110 years old at her birth. Similar deductions from the Genesis narratives make it plain that not only Abraham himself, but his contemporaries, and his sons and grandsons, were all fathers of children at ages up to 120 and more, and this fact has a direct bearing upon the authenticity of the chronological framework of Genesis.

There is no more said about Isaac. At some time during Jacob's forty year absence in Padanaram he must have moved his headquarters from Beer-sheba to Hebron for it was there that Jacob found him on his return. By then Rebekah was dead; Jacob never saw her again. The oversight of the community was probably in the hands of Isaac's other sons. He survived Jacob's homecoming by only some twenty years and died ten years before Jacob and his family entered Egypt. His eldest sons, Jacob and Esau, the old feud forgotten, buried him beside his father Abraham, but by then the Bible story had long since shifted its emphasis to the deeds of Jacob, the acknowledged father of the nation of Israel.

AOH

*to be continued*



MAP OF ISRAEL IN THE TIMES OF JOSHUA SHOWING THE SIX CITIES OF REFUGE

## CITIES OF REFUGE

*“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble”. Psalm. 46:1*

All references New King James version unless otherwise stated

What a wonderful thought the Psalmist brings out in this verse, that God is our refuge and strength. King David was well aware of the Cities of Refuge and their legal status and how this provided a place of refuge for those who had broken God’s laws. However he realized that they were only temporary places of refuge compared to what God had to offer to those who are faithful to Him. Paul also realized the advantage that we have when he states, “We...who have fled for refuge” (Heb. 6:18). The Jews he wrote to were very familiar with the “Cities of Refuge” and their purpose of protecting a Jew or even a stranger who had accidentally killed a person making them liable to death under the “eye for an eye” provision of the Law of Moses. Under the provision of the “Cities of Refuge” God had made allowance protecting them until they could plead their case. The Heavenly Father knew that as imperfect human beings, mistakes can be made. He knew that not all the sins of the people were deliberate and wilful. What lessons can Christians learn about this feature of the Jewish Law and what it tells about the relationship with the Heavenly Father?

**Cities of Refuge in the Old Testament.** The setting for the provision of the “cities of refuge” was at the time when the Jewish nation had just come through the 40 years in the Wilderness and entered the Promised Land. They were rough times for this fledging nation, vengeance was a way of life to people, backed by the law of God. The family of a slain person were more often interested in repaying eye for eye rather than carefully examining of the circumstances to see whether the offending party deserved the severity of the punishment that anger and grief dictated. God knew that Divine Justice did not differentiate between sins, but that Divine Mercy could and so the Cities of Refuge were established.

In Joshua 20:2-6 The Lord spoke saying, “Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘Appoint for yourselves cities of refuge, of which I spoke to you through Moses, that the slayer who kills a person accidentally or unintentionally may flee there; and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood. And when he flees to one of those cities, and stands at the entrance of the gate of the city, and declares his case in the hearing of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city as one of them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them. Then if the avenger of

blood pursues him, they shall not deliver the slayer into his hand, because he struck his neighbour unintentionally, but did not hate him beforehand. And he shall dwell in that city until he stands before the congregation for judgment, and until the death of the one who is high priest in those days. Then the slayer may return and come to his own city and his own house, to the city from which he fled.”

**Where were the cities of refuge?** Six cities were set aside by the Lord’s command as cities of refuge. They were centrally located so that people could reach them from any point in Israel in a minimal period of time. They appointed Kedesh in Galilee, Shechem (in Ephraim), Kirjath Arba (Hebron) in the mountains of Judah, and on the east side of the Jordan Bezer, Ramoth-Gilead and Golan in Bashan. (Josh. 20:7-9) They were part of the 48 cities that were allocated to the Levites with their common-land. Such cities ensured that they were free from all tribal bias or prejudice. The tribe of Levi stood separate and distinct from all the other tribes, as the religious representatives of the nation. It was fitting, therefore, that these refugees from justice should be wards of Levite protection.” (Num. 35:6-7)

**The Purpose** of cities of refuge was to temper justice with mercy; they were established, not to protect willful murderers, but for those who had unintentionally, through error or accident, taken the life of another. This is now known as manslaughter. Anyone taking a life was worthy of death under the decree in Gen. 9:6 “Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man.” Even self-defense or being the result of an accident was no excuse. Anyone believing they were free from malicious, willful, intentional murder could flee to one of these cities of refuge and there be protected from the full demands of the law against their life. They could obtain a measure of mercy without condoning the offence.

It is of interest that the routes leading to these cities of refuge were to be built and kept in good order, free from stumbling stones, with bridges over water-courses, so as to afford the guilty ones full opportunity for a rapid flight to secure safety. Moreover at frequent intervals signboards were erected pointing in the direction of the city of refuge and bearing the word, “Refuge.” It was also a custom among Jews that two scribes should accompany the refugee. Their purpose was to persuade the avenger

should he overtake the culprit, to permit him to reach the city of refuge and to have a proper trial. This was to recognize the justice of vengeance, but instilling into the minds of the people the principle of mercy. Most of the people felt sympathy for the person fleeing from an avenger to a city of refuge, as they realized that at some time they too may commit a similar offence and thus need to seek refuge and mercy.

**Murder or Manslaughter.** On arrival the person was not free. They were received into the city and protected until such time as a trial before the elders of the city representing the people of Israel, could take place. The cause of the death was to be carefully investigated. Murder was adjudged if the death was:

- being struck with an iron object, a stone or wooden tool
- being pushed in hatred,
- lying in wait to throw something thus striking him down or by hand in hostility (Num. 35:16-21)

Manslaughter was adjudged if death was caused by:

- being pushed suddenly without enmity,
- throwing something without lying in wait
- use of any deadly object and without seeing it dropped on him who was not an enemy nor seeking to cause him injury. (Num. 35:22-23)

The intention of these cities of refuge was not to defeat the ends of justice, but that while serving justice, mercy might be extended to those who were eligible for it. If a person was found guilty of murder then the city of refuge could not save him from the death penalty. If he were acquitted of any malice, he was not freed but was obliged to remain in the city of refuge or within its suburbs of \*1,000 cubits beyond the walls. In addition Numbers 35:25-28 says “the congregation shall deliver the manslayer from the hand of the avenger of blood, and the congregation shall return him to the city of refuge where he had fled, and he shall remain there until the death of the high priest...But if the manslayer at any time goes outside the limits of the city of refuge where he fled, and the avenger of blood finds him outside the limits of his city of refuge, and the avenger of blood kills the manslayer, he shall not be guilty of blood, because he should have remained in his city of refuge until the death of the high priest. But after the death of the high priest the manslayer may return to the land of his possession”.

The high priest was one of the most prominent individuals in the nation, and his death, therefore, would be such a notable event as to be known throughout all the tribes. This would allow the convicted to leave the cities of refuge and to return to their homes free from the danger of the avenger, the avenger's opportunity expiring with the death of the high priest; and were he to avenge after that, he would be the murderer.

This still placed a heavy penalty upon carelessness or passionate actions. The penalty included separation from family and restriction of liberty. This showed that the careless person inflicting serious injury to another, as a result of their actions should suffer the inconvenience of having to stay in the city of refuge and the loss of their freedom for whatever period was required before the death of the high priest.

**The meaning to Christians.** The opening text "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble," draws to our attention the antitypical significance of these cities of refuge. It becomes apparent that Christians are like those fleeing to the Cities of Refuge under a death sentence. If God were to pursue the Christian with the full weight of His Divine Justice it would result in death without hope. But Paul says "through one man (Adam) sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned" and as a result we all "fall short of the glory of God". The result of this is "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 5:12; 3:23; 6:23).

Once the Christian recognizes that they are sinners in the eyes of God and on their own cannot stand in His divine presence, the picture of the Cities of Refuge can be seen. The avenger, Divine Justice, is on our trail, and it is only a matter of time before the Christian is overtaken and destroyed under the Adamic death sentence.

In the account of the Cities of Refuge there are similarities of our own refuge in Christ Jesus! Christ is our shield and refuge against the penalty of all of our sins, except those sins that we commit willfully against the knowledge received through the gift of the Holy Spirit. Christ does not shelter the obstinate neither the unrepentant sinner, but he does shelter everyone who accepts Him and realizes that they were born in sin and shaped by iniquity. (Psa. 51:5). All inherited sin through birth. To seek refuge in Christ one must flee from our old life and practices, finding the

only refuge God has offered, forgiveness and life in Christ Jesus. Fleeing to the city of refuge is like our own repentance and conversion from sin as we flee from the world. We must be honest and earnest in our desire to stop sinning with our body, our mind, and our affections. Like the ancient Hebrews who sought the city of refuge, having faith that they would be safe, we too must seek Christ by faith. We are assured that we will find protection but we have to accept and act on that promise of that protection knowing that without Christ we are subject to the wrath of sin.

**Assistance in the way.** When we make the decision to flee unto Christ for refuge we are assisted on the way, as with those fleeing to the Cities of Refuge, by the sign posts we find in God's word that give us encouragement on the way. Not only is there the word of God to assist us, but also like in the Cities of Refuge where the roads had to be kept in good order to assist the person fleeing, we have the Holy Spirit to help smooth our way. Like those fleeing, who had the sympathy of those on the way, we are fortunate in have fellow travellers to assist and encourage us on our journey as it says in 1 Thess. 5:11 (ESV) to "encourage one another and build one another up".

**Life of sacrifice.** Our behaviour in the City of Refuge is set out under the rules and regulations that Christ Jesus himself laid down for us. Christ has also shown us the way ahead as He learned obedience by the sufferings he endured, also the follower of Christ will have to continue to please God in the same way being prepared to sacrifice friends, wealth, earthly pleasures even family in the life of sacrifice.

What a privilege there is in abiding within the hallowed precincts of the salvation, deliverance, and refuge, in Christ which God himself has provided. Romans 8:33-34 says "Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us".

When looking back to the Cities of Refuge it can be seen that protection was not available to those who willfully took a person's life. His covering robe of righteousness does not provide a place of refuge from willful and intentional violation of the divine Law. Motives, intentions and heart condition are important. One cannot take off the robe of Christ's

righteousness. If once one accepts the offer of refuge in Christ but then leaves the city of refuge, abandoning trust in the precious blood of Christ, which cleansed us from all sin, departing from Christ, means one abandons the mercy and forgiveness, which the Father has extended through His beloved Son then one becomes liable to the demands of Justice, without mercy and would be subject to the penalty of Second Death. As the Apostle explains, “it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. 10:31).

The reason and result of standing in Christ is because He “is able to guard you from falling (stumbling), and to place you blameless in the presence of His glory, with great Joy, to God alone, our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord”. (Jude 24-25 Diaglott).

**How long?** The Christian today will have to abide in the antitypical City of Refuge, the covering Robe of Christ “until death”, in order to receive a “crown of life”. (Rev. 2:10) How long are the antitypical cities of refuge needed? They are needed until the death of the antitypical High Priest. This has largely been accomplished. The Head of the antitypical high priest, our Lord Jesus, already has finished the work that His Father gave him to do, and the members of the body of the high priest, his Church in the flesh, are filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ. Col. 1:24 states “even now I rejoice in the midst of my sufferings on your behalf. And in my own person I am making up whatever is still lacking and remains to be completed (on our part) of Christ’s afflictions, for the sake of His body, which is the church”. (Amplified Version) With the promise of the result of this suffering says “provided we suffer with him...we may also be glorified with him (Christ)”. (Romans 8:17 ESV)

Soon the entire body will have died and the Christian era with its purpose of calling out the Bride of Christ will come to an end. Then the new dispensation will be ushered in and no longer will our imperfection need the covering robe of Christ’s righteousness in order to stand before divine justice. Rev. 20:6 (ESV) says “Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.” Being made like our Lord Jesus, and being presented before the Father blameless, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, without any vengeance on the part of divine justice.

The entire arrangement is of the Heavenly Father, His Justice as the avenger of sin, and His son Christ Jesus as refuge and deliverer. Therefore “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”

RC



## I will follow Jesus Christ



### MAY

*“The saints possessed the kingdom”*. Dan. 7: 22.

**And they followed him.** Today there are men and women of noble aspirations, who, not knowing the Divine Plan, will do their utmost to better earthly conditions. Whatever their progress along this line, they will have to come to the realisation that they are but straws floating upon the raging sea of conflicting ambitions, discontent and the unbridled passions of fallen humanity. Only the Most High is able to assume effective control. He will use as his instruments, his saints. The Bible furnishes us with many an advanced picture of this glorified spiritual company ruling the earth.

Who are the saints? I answer that they are known only to God and his dear Son. They have however been following in the footsteps of Jesus from Pentecost till now. Externally they were just ordinary human beings: even so, within their bosoms were such fires of faith and love, that through the Power of the Holy Spirit, self was eliminated. They thus became lovely and strong in character; and so sincere as to be likened unto rare and precious jewels. Destined to reign with Jesus, they will, during that period, remove iniquity from the earth, overcome all enemies and wipe away all tears... (Rev. 20 & 21.)

FL

## JUNE

*“Be strong and of good courage.” (Joshua 1:9 RSV)*

**David encouraged himself.** The art of self-encouragement, is a noble art, for whilst it is a good thing to encourage others, nevertheless to do this effectively, one must practise on oneself. We must remember too, that the Holy Spirit of Truth runs counter to depression and despondency. Here is a story remarkable in the annals of history. David had returned to his own city only to find that it had been burned with fire by the Amalekites. They had also taken captive all the inhabitants. The shock was so great, that David and his men lifted up their voices and wept until they could weep no more. To crown his misfortunes, David was on the verge of being stoned by his hitherto loyal followers. Then swiftly and surely David began to encourage himself in the Lord. After seeking Divine counsel, they pursued and vanquished the enemy, recovering all, including wives and children and much booty besides—I Samuel 30.

This shows how the shock of disaster, when it comes upon the Lord’s people, should be quickly followed by self-encouragement. On such occasions, intelligent faith will recall past mercies and victories. It will cry out for grace and wisdom, and cooperate in the renewal of spiritual interests until all is recovered with the additional blessings of grace and truth.

*FL*

G

*God open my eyes  
so I may see  
And feel your presence close  
to me...  
Give me strength  
for my stumbling feet  
As I battle the crowd  
on life’s busy street,  
And widen the vision  
of my unseeing eyes  
So in passing faces I’ll  
recognise*

*Not just a stranger,  
unloved and unknown,  
But a friend with a heart  
that is much like my own...  
Give me perception to make  
me aware  
That scattered profusely  
on life’s thoroughfare  
Are the best Gifts of God  
that we daily pass by  
As we look at the world  
with an Unseeing Eye.*

*Helen Steiner Rice*

## ANTICHRIST AND DANIEL 9: 27

*“He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease” (Dan. 9.27)*

Daniel 9:24-26 (NKJV) says “Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times. And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.”

Using the day for a year principle, the first 69 weeks (or 483 years) reached to the first coming of Jesus Christ who died in the middle of the “one week” remaining.

**Naming of Papacy as Antichrist.** During the Protestant reformation those who studied such Bible prophecies came to the conclusion that there was one entity that fits all the characteristics: the Papal dynasty of the Roman Catholic Church. They saw the antichrist was not merely a single individual, but was a system of apostasy and persecution that would rule for more than twelve centuries. The Roman Church was violently opposed to the scriptures being available for everyone to read for themselves. There was such a stir created during the Reformation that the Fifth Lateran Council (1512-17 A.D.) resorted to strictly forbidding anyone to publish a book without prior censorship, and also prohibited anyone from preaching on the subject of antichrist. Therefore as part of the Counter Reformation Roman theologians sought to place antichrist in the future or the past.

**Preterist thought.** Preterism sought to place the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation in the past. Luis del Alcazar (1554-1613), a Spanish Jesuit theologian identified the antichrist as Nero. Nero was the Roman Emperor from 54 to 68 A.D. His persecution of the church is believed to account for the deaths of Peter, Paul, Erastus, Aristarchus of Macedonia,

Trophimus and Ananias of Damascus amongst others. This fits well with the destruction of Jerusalem and the second Temple by the Romans in A.D. 70.

**Ribera and the futurist view.** For his part of Papacy's counter-attack to Protestantism, another Spanish Jesuit Francisco Ribera (1537-1591) wrote a prophecy also with the purpose of diverting the attention off the Roman Catholic Church after they had been identified as Antichrist during the Reformation. Ribera therefore chose to look at the 70 weeks of the Daniel prophecy to find another way of looking at those scriptures. The following is how he interpreted the 70th week of Daniel. Ribera's futurism puts the Antichrist into a future three and a half literal years. So in Daniel's 70 week prophecy, there is the 7 weeks plus 62 weeks which leaves "one week" left, otherwise known as the famous "70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel." Again, that somewhat controversial text literally reads: Daniel 9.27 "*And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease*". The Futurist theory states that the Antichrist is yet to appear and will be unveiled in the last 3.5 years of Daniel's 70th week when he declares himself to be God in a rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem.

The Pro-rapture view looks at this as a seven year period of tribulation. The idea is that while the first 69 weeks (or 483 years) did reach to the first coming of Jesus Christ, the prophetic clock had stopped because the Jewish people largely rejected Him. Then they slide the 70th week of Daniel (the last seven years) all the way down to the end times, call it the tribulation and say it applies to the Jewish people after the overcoming class are gone. Rapture teachers interpret Daniel 9:27 as follows:

"He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week." "He" is the antichrist who will make a covenant (or peace treaty) with the Jews during the seven years of tribulation. "In the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." In the middle of the seven year tribulation, the antichrist will break his covenant, turn against Israel, and stop the animal sacrifices. The phrase, "he shall cause the sacrifice...to cease" is viewed as irrefutable proof that a Jewish Temple will be rebuilt on the Temple Mount inside Jerusalem.

One Protestant writer stated: "It is a matter for deep regret that those who

hold and advocate the Futurist system at the present day, Protestants as they are for the most part, are this really playing into the hands of Rome, and helping to screen the Papacy from detection as the Antichrist. It has been well said that ‘Futurism tends to obliterate the brand put by the Holy Spirit upon Popery.’ More especially is this to be deplored at a time when the Papal Antichrist seems to be making an expiring effort to regain his former hold on men’s minds.” (Joseph Tanner)

Both interpretations put antichrist outside the Middle Ages and the reformation period identified by Protestant historicists as the 1,260 prophetic year reign of antichrist.

**Modern view.** Author Hal Lindsey in his “The Late Great Planet Earth” (1970) book reflects this current view when he writes about “God’s last seven years of dealing with the Jewish people before the long awaited setting up of the kingdom of God (Daniel 9.27).” (The Late Great Planet Earth, p. 46) According to H.A. Lindsay, during those seven years “the Antichrist, breaks his covenant with the Jewish people and causes the Jewish temple worship, according to the Law of Moses, to cease (Daniel 9:27). We must conclude that a third Temple will be rebuilt upon its ancient site in old Jerusalem.” (Ibid)

The majority of Bible scholars have not applied Daniel 9:27 to a seven year tribulation period at all. Neither have they interpreted the “he” as referring to a future antichrist as many do today. Instead, they applied it to Jesus Christ. From Genesis to Revelation there is not one passage that specifically mentions a seven year period of tribulation at all neither will you find it any concordance. The entire theory is based on a speculative interpretation of two little words in one single verse. That text is Daniel 9:27 and the two little words are, “one week.”

Prophecy minded Christians all over the world often engage in a fierce debate about whether Jesus Christ will return for His Church **before** the seven years of tribulation (the “pre-tribulation” view), in the **midst** of the seven years (the “mid-tribulation” view), or **at the end** of the seven years (the “post-tribulation” view). Yet is an end time “seven-year period of tribulation” even taught in the Bible at all?

The following points suggest that Daniel’s famous 70th week prophecy

has no application to a future seven year tribulation at all. Rather, this great prophetic period of Daniel's 70 weeks is a Messianic prophecy that was fulfilled nearly two thousand years ago.

A. Logic dictates that "seventy weeks" refers to one consecutive block of seventy straight sequential weeks. There is no example in Scripture of a stated time period starting stopping, and then starting again. All biblical references to time are consecutive: 40 days and 40 nights (Gen. 7:4), 400 years in Egypt (Gen. 15:13) and 70 years of captivity (Dan. 9:2). In Daniel's prophecy, the "seventy weeks" were to begin during the reign of Persia from the command to restore and build Jerusalem and continue to the time of the Messiah.

A. Messiah and not the Antichrist is the focus of the prophecy and the destruction of the city and the sanctuary relates to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70.

B. The (New) "covenant" was confirmed by Jesus Christ by his blood. (Matt. 26:28). Nowhere is there a covenant in the Bible between the Antichrist and anyone.

C. The sacrifice ceased "in the midst of the week" at the moment of his death when "the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom" signifying that animal sacrifices ceased to be of value after Jesus' perfect sacrifice.

D. There is no mention of a rebuilt Jewish temple in Daniel 9.

E. The prophecy worded by Gabriel is specifically applied to the Jewish people (v.24). Jesus ministered to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" for 3.5 years. (Matt. 10:6) Then for another 3.5 years the Gospel was preached mainly to them before Paul became the "apostle to the Gentiles" and Peter's vision (Acts 10). This ended the 70th week.

A look at history from the days of the Protestant Reformation shows that once the established Roman Church realized that they were being pointed at as the Antichrist they then set about proffering an alternative view of the scriptures. Luis Del Alcazar's preterist view placed them in the first two centuries. Francisco Ribera, also a Spanish Jesuit, placed it away from the Middle Ages to a time future from when he was writing. Nevertheless the futurist view is still discussed by students of the Bible in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries, such as writer like Hal Lindsay. However there are reasons why there are other interpretations of that passage are still as valid as they were in the Protestant Reformation.

## NOTICES

### **BIBLE STUDENTS SEMINAR DAY**

**SATURDAY 13 MAY 2017**

### **KENSWORTH VILLAGE HALL**

**The Chilterns, off Common Road, Kensworth, Near Dunstable LU6 3RJ**

**12 noon—6 p.m.**

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### **BIBLE STUDENTS FELLOWSHIP CONFERENCE**

**WEDNESDAY 16 AUGUST—SUNDAY 20 AUGUST 2017**

### **HIGH LEIGH CONFERENCE CENTRE, HODDESDON**

The theme for the week is Psalm 50.5 *Gather my saints together unto me;  
those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice*

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### Gone from us

Kate King-Smith (Birmingham)

## HENNA

Dictionary definition yellowish-red dye from Egyptian privet.

The Hebrew word *ko'pher*, twice translated “camphire” in the A.V., is generally considered to be ‘henna’ and is so rendered in many modern Bible translations. This shrub, mentioned only in The Song of Solomon (1:14; 4:13), still grows wild in Palestine. Ordinarily the henna plant’s maximum height is about ten feet, roughly 3 metres. It bears clusters of small cream-coloured, four-petal flowers at the tips of its branches, their strong fragrance being especially enjoyed by Middle Eastern peoples. Often a sprig of henna is put in bouquets, and women wear it in their hair.



From ancient times henna has been employed as a cosmetic. The pulverised leaves of the plant are combined with hot water to form a paste, which is applied to the part of the body to be dyed and then is usually left overnight. When the henna paste is washed off, the stain, commonly an orange or reddish colour, remains. It lasts for about three weeks, after which another application is required. Henna has been used to dye the nails of fingers and toes, fingertips, hands and feet, beards, hair, and even the manes and tails of horses, as well as skins and leather. Testifying to its ancient usage are findings of Egyptian mummies with stained fingernails. Also, the Hebrew root from which *ko'pher* is thought to be derived has been defined as “to smear,” seemingly indicative of its use as dye.



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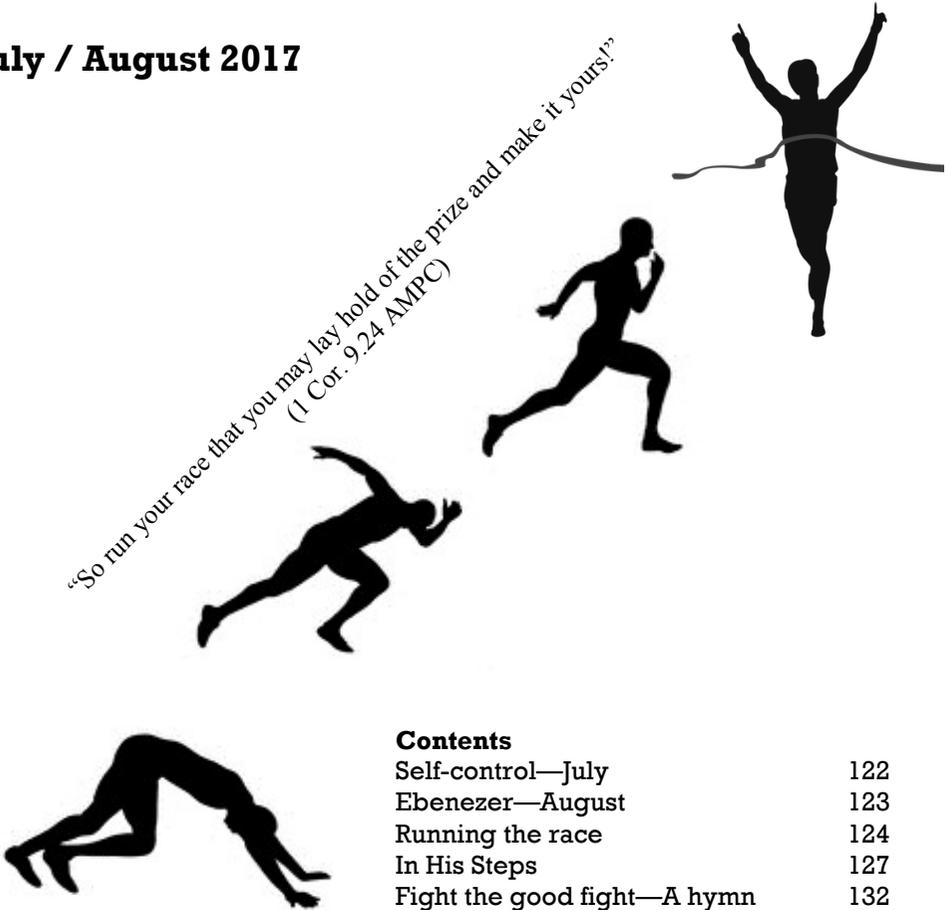
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# BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

Volume 94 Issue 4

July / August 2017

*“So run your race that you may lay hold of the prize and make it yours!”  
(1 Cor. 9:24 AMPC)*



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# BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

## FOUNDED 1924

The Bible Study Monthly, published to promote knowledge of the Bible, sees the Scriptures as a true record of God's dealings with the human race, needing to be understood in our generation. It looks for the advent of our Lord, and His reign of peace and justice on the earth.

*“Speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ”* (Ephesians 4:15 NRSV)

The Bible Study Monthly is sent free of charge on request to all who are genuinely interested. It should never be sold for money.

Secretary & Treasurer: Nicholas Charcharos

## JULY

*“He that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city”* \*  
(Proverbs 16: 32)

**Self-control.** We gather one lesson from a tragedy which occurred in 1865. I refer to the conquest of the Matterhorn as led mainly by Edward Whymper. Before starting, Whymper beheld with misgivings one who was somewhat inexperienced. Returning from their successful attempt, this same young man slipped and carried with him to destruction all except Whymper and a Swiss guide.

The lesson is one of experienced discipline and self-control. It may be spiritually applied to every Christian. He must be sure-footed with each step of his journey associating the Celestial Heights. The apostle Paul used other analogies when he said “Do you not know, that those running in a race-course, whilst all run, but one receives the prize? Thus run that you may obtain. Every combatant possesses self-control in all things. They, to receive a perishable crown, but we an imperishable. I run with certainty. I so strike, not as one beating the air. I severely discipline my body and make it subservient, lest having preached to others, I myself should become a castaway”\* (1 Cor. 9: 24-27).

Slips come to every Christian, hence his need to fix his eyes upon One who alone constitutes his safe Guide. He is well able to keep us from falling into pride, envy and every other questionable desire or doctrine which would in the ordinary way bring spiritual disaster of the first magnitude.

FL

## AUGUST

*“Hitherto hath the LORD helped us”!* (1 Samuel 7: 12)

**Ebenezer.** The Scriptures abound in stories which have been designed to encourage the people of God. Here is one which will surely betoken a goodly measure of spiritual growth if we are able to say without hesitation: “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us!”

The words hinge upon a very dramatic moment for Israel. The Philistines had come against them with so great an army, that they besought Samuel to cry to the Lord continually until they were delivered. Samuel did this and offered at the same time, a lamb. The Lord answered by thundering with a great thunder, which so terrified the Philistines, that they were easily smitten by Israel. A great victory was achieved; and out of gratitude Samuel erected a Memorial Stone and called it: Ebenezer, saying “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us!”

In like manner, the Lord’s people remember the Lamb of God and pray continually. Then, in quiet confidence they await deliverance in each and every trial which overtakes them. It is when they look back on these that they raise their Memorials of Faith, saying with a deep sense of thankfulness: “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us!” Thus they advance from faith to faith and from glory unto glory until they are made ready for their grand inheritance so graciously promised by the Heavenly Father.

FL

**4 MANOR GARDENS, BARNSTONE ADDRESS**

Please note following the death of Derrick Nadal, there is no longer anyone linked to the Bible Fellowship Union or Bible Study Monthly living at the above address.

Magazine content. What is published is believed to have a wide interest, but everything printed may not necessarily be the opinion of the editor and his colleagues.

## RUNNING THE RACE

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 (NKJV) “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.”

The 2012 Olympic Games stadium in Stratford, East London will once again be in use for the 2017 World Athletics Championships. There will be competitors from all over the world aiming to win medals, preferably gold medals, for themselves and their countries. The apostle Paul used the metaphorical language of the Grecian Games often in his various epistles. In ancient Greece there were a number of games every three, four or five years. The most well-known now were the Olympic Games at Olympia in South-West Greece about 100 kilometres from Kalamata. Now in the modern era they recommenced in 1896 at Athens. There were other games such as the Pythian, Delphic, Nemean as well as the Isthmian which was near Corinth. At such games there were track and field competitors and also wrestlers and boxers, crowds of spectators and prizes.

Purpose. Such games were not without a practical purpose, the type of skills these sportsmen had, made them good soldiers for the armies and these games meant such men were fit and ready to fight. Speed and strength are attributes of soldiers which is why King Saul and Jonathan were described as being swifter than eagles and stronger than lions. (2 Sam. 1: 23)

Encumbrance. The writer to the Hebrews talks about “laying aside every encumbrance” and “close-girding sin” (Heb. 12: 1 Diaglott). Athletes should be fit not carrying any useless fat, swelling or tumour nor needless clothing or jewellery that would slow them down or impede their stride. It is believed athletes in those times competed naked to gain an advantage. Today competitors wear lightweight clothing and materials such as Lycra that stretch easily. The message for the Christian is to consider any possible baggage or pointless task that may impede their Christian walk

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more difficult and seek a simpler Christian walk.

In New Testament times there were hindrances too. One specific example Paul relates in Galatians 5: 7 in relation to running as there were Judaizing teachers who were teaching Christians to follow the law with the traditions of circumcision, food, and Sabbath day observances. Paul also used the Hebrews in the wilderness as an example of the perils in the sins of idolatry, excessive partying and sexual immorality that had beset a much earlier generation as a warning to the saints at Corinth, and hence to all down the Christian Era. (1 Cor. 10.1-14)

Target. Paul says in a race that only one receives the prize telling us to “run in such a way that you may obtain it”. Paul’s own words showed the way he was living his life when he said “I press along the Line, towards the prize of the High Calling of God by Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 3: 14 Diaglott) The line was towards the winning or finishing line for the prize that would be awarded by the umpire. In another way Paul uses the picture of obtaining a crown like a prize in a games that the righteous Judge our heavenly Father would award (2 Tim 4: 8). In this case it is a crown “unto all” implying that there are more than one. Then he mentions Demas as a contrast who had ‘loved this present world’ and abandoned him at that time.

Temperate. Every elite athlete knows that they must be disciplined whether it be to do with diet, training and rest. Some have to limit the calories such as jockeys yet others have to have a high calorie diet with plenty of protein if they are going to get the necessary nutrition to train and build muscle. Many need to train every day even Christmas Day as part of their discipline. Rest is also important to allow the muscles to recuperate and be ready for the next training session and thereby avoid any unnecessary injuries. How often do we read of injured athletes having to miss a major global championship because of injury and have to wait for 2 or 4 years for the next opportunity. Paul says ‘every combatant is temperate in all things’ (1 Cor. 9: 25 Diaglott). The Greek word ‘egkrateuetai’ translated temperate means ‘possessing self-control’ and Paul advises the Corinthians to apply that same discipline to their Christian walk.

Lawfully. 2 Tim. 2: 5 talks about ‘contending lawfully’. There has been a

big problem for athletics. Even now they are planning to remove any world record since 2005 where the sample for testing has not been kept for 10 years. Records such as Florence Griffith Joyner over 100 metres and Marita Koch over 400 meters have been in the record books for many years and now thought impossible to beat because of the suspicion that they took performance enhancing drugs and their samples have not been stored so they can be tested to the degree they can be now. But what does this mean for the Christian in this day and age? It indicates following the rules and guidelines provided in the Bible especially those in the New Testament. The example of our Lord Jesus shows us the proper way. Hence we constantly look to him (Heb. 12: 2).

Self Denial. Every elite athlete has to deny self if they are to achieve the goals they set for themselves. They must use their time wisely and avoid activities which would inhibit them from achieving their goals. Peter advises that the Christian should not live dissolute lives full of excess and idol worship. (1 Pet. 4: 3-4).

Disqualified. Paul uses this phrase ‘run in vain’ twice in Gal. 2: 2 and Phil. 2: 16. Have you ever seen the disappointment on the athlete expecting to win but coming second or even fourth ‘the worst position to finish’. This implies the followers of Jesus have to examine how they are running their race now and in the future.

Who would have thought Paul’s games and running pictures would have real meaning at the end of the Christian Era with its lessons to those who now follow? These scriptures come to life and are ones that can be easily related to in those corners of the world where the elite athletes, their successes and failures, are highlighted in the modern media.

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### “Have faith in God” (Mark 11: 22)

Faith is the foot of the soul by which it can march along the road of the commandments. Love can make the feet move more swiftly; but faith is the foot which carries the soul.

*Spurgeon*



## IN HIS STEPS

### An Exhortation to Discipleship

*“Christ...suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps”. (1 Pet. 2: 21).*

**“Ye should follow His steps: who did no sin.”** (1 Pet. 2: 21-22) So writes Peter, the Apostle of the circumcision. In the exercise of this Apostleship, though writing for Hebrew converts who lived among the strangers of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, we find his line of teaching fully in harmony with the writings of the Apostle to the Gentiles. In the five chapters of this first letter there are no less than seventy instances of parallel words, phrases, and allusions with the letters of “our beloved brother Paul.” Additionally, like John, as one who heard and saw and handled the Word of Life (1 John 1: 1-3) Peter had vivid recollections of the words of his Master. More than forty words, phrases, and allusions from the Master’s own lips are found woven into the fabric of Peter’s letters.

We may not find the same depth and variety of expression in Peter as in Paul, but his memory, as a first-hand hearer, of Jesus’ own teachings give his plainer utterances a force and directness all their own. As a further feature we find Peter’s mind saturated with thoughts regarding Jesus, from the Prophet Isaiah’s graphic picture of ‘Jehovah’s suffering Servant.’ How easily Peter glides into the thought of Isa. 53: 9, “he had done no violence, neither was any deceit (found) in his mouth,” “who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth” says Peter (1 Pet. 2: 22) of his beloved Lord. Isaiah’s already-spoken words describe so fittingly what he wants to say of his Master. Again, though not a direct quotation of Isa. 53: 7 (He was oppressed, ...and afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth) we can see more than a passing allusion thereto when Peter says, “when He was reviled, reviled not again.” Further, in the words of verse 24, “who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree” we find, unmistakable reference to Isa. 53: 12, “He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” Additionally, note the close parallelism of verse 25, “ye were as sheep going astray” with the words of Isa. 53: 6, “All we like sheep have gone astray.” Then finally note Peter’s application of Isa. 53: 5 “and with His stripes we are healed,” to those who forfeited their peace with God, by going far astray.

Like the Evangelist Philip (Acts 8: 26-37) Peter had learned to apply this prophecy to Jesus, as the one in whom all redemption work centred. With such a background to his thoughts, then, Peter takes up one of the telling phrases of Jesus. **“Follow me—follow thou me”** (Matt. 16: 24; Luke 9: 23; John 21: 22) and through it, teaches the same profound truth which we find in Paul, and John, and Jesus’ own teachings. ‘Following an example’ may not seem a profound teaching, but when it is coupled with an “Example,” who finished His course on a ‘Tree’ (or Cross) it adds great emphasis to the homely illustration “Ye should follow His steps who did no sin...who, when He was reviled, reviled not again...who His own self bare our sins...on the tree.” There is something here deeper than a moral following. It certainly affects and regulates all the doings and sayings of one’s life, but the ‘following’ is not completed until it conducts the follower likewise to a ‘tree’—to a ‘cross.’ In the course of the journey, both the Exemplar, and the copier, are to be found, on a Tree. Thus this seemingly simple exhortation of Peter teaches the same deep truth that Paul teaches, in “baptism into His death”; which John teaches in “fellowship with...His Son Jesus Christ,” in “an unction (or anointing) from the Holy One” (1 John 1: 3; 2: 20) and which Jesus teaches in the drinking of His Cup; in baptism with His baptism (Matt. 20: 22). To follow the Lord means a ‘via Crucis’—a way of the Cross, which will require in the follower all that it required in the Leader. Peter sets out two beautiful complementary lines of thought; the first of which describes us as astray in the wilderness of sin, but redeemed by Jesus; the other, when its climax comes, will see us linked inseparably with our Lord and Leader both here and hereafter.

**“He bare our sins in His own body on the tree”** tells of Saviourship; **“ye should follow His steps”** that is Leadership. Saviourship combined with Leadership! That is the unique, all-important relation of Jesus to His follower. This is exactly the same thought set out by another pen, likewise written to Hebrew brethren. “It became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain (Prince-Leader) of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Heb. 2: 10). A Captain—and His Company! A Leader and His followers! “Forasmuch...as Christ hath suffered...in the flesh, arm yourselves...with the same mind” says Peter (1 Pet. 4: 1) as he links together in experience and purpose the Leader and the led. He exhorts them to “no longer...live...in the flesh,...but to the Will of God” (v. 2).

Thus, as with the Master, so with the follower, doing the Will of God should be the whole objective of life. The Will of God directed Jesus to ‘the Tree’—making Him a ‘curse’ for the nation which had failed to keep its Covenant relationship with God unsullied (Gal. 3: 13). As Moses lifted up the serpent on a pole, so the Son of Man was to be lifted up on a ‘tree’ that the curse of the people might rest upon Him; He bearing it ‘for’ them.

Of course, this ‘tree’ was not merely that wooden cross which Jesus bore along to Calvary, and on which He was ‘lifted up’ to die. That ‘tree’ was no more than an emblem of another tree which Jesus had carried from His baptism at Jordan, and on which He had been dying for three and one-half years before reaching Calvary. The cross of full submission to His Father’s Will was the ‘tree’ on which He bore the curse of our sins, and freed us from their guilt.

Having noted this harmony of Peter’s thought with Paul and John and Jesus’ teachings, and the influence of Isaiah upon his words, let us now note a wider background to his utterances. The very mention of ‘our sins’ carries us back in our quest to the Atonement day in Israel. As if to give us the particular line of thought which was prompting this letter. Peter has already informed his readers (of that day and ours also) that they are “a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 2: 5). And while his immediate readers were already of an elect nation—inasmuch as Israel had been separated out of the nations to be God’s people—yet he speaks of these followers of Jesus as participating in a further and more exclusive ‘election’—“elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus.” (1 Pet. 1: 2).

The impartation of the Holy Spirit, and the anti-typical sprinkling of the blood of Jesus had ‘set them apart’ (or sanctified them) in the same manner, but in a higher sense, that Aaron and his sons were ‘set apart’ for their holy ministry by the application of both anointing oil and blood, as recorded in Leviticus 8: 30. This further ‘election’ and ‘sprinkling’ constituted them priests of God, and it is as such that they were to “follow His steps, who did no sin.” Until they had been freed from their sins, they could not even begin to follow the Sinless One. Jesus could not have had companionship with them in their sins without Himself becoming a

sinner. This He never became. He remained always ‘holy, harmless, and separate from sinners.’

When He started therefore to lead the way to Glory, by the way of the Cross, it was as an unblemished, sinless Leader that He began the journey, and to its end he remained unblemished and sinless. Not until His brethren have obtained a righteous standing, in Justification, can they begin to follow Him along this journey. For them, therefore, Jesus’ Saviourship stands at the entrance to the way, but, thereafter, in every ‘step’ they take, it is His Leadership which they follow. If then, this ‘way’ led Jesus to the ‘tree’—the cross—and through this cross procured cancellation of sins, (our sins) (1 Pet. 2: 24) is it not patent to us all that at the back of his mind, Peter had the whole picture of the Atonement Day services.

The priesthood he had already mentioned,—now, in the suffering victim he refers to that which was laid down in sacrifice,—the fat which went on the Altar, and the blood which was taken into the place of propitiation. And here, we see right well the sphere of Leadership and subsequent ‘following,’ inasmuch, as by the institution of God, the fat of the goat followed the fat of the bullock on the Altar, and the blood of the goat followed the blood of the bullock into the Most Holy Place,—in like manner its carcase followed the bullock’s carcase to the place of burning ‘without the camp.’ But before the Lord’s goat could begin to follow the bullock, it had to be received and accepted from among the people of Israel. The bullock was of the High Priest’s own providing (Lev. 16: 3) but he had to ‘take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats’—one of which was destined to follow the bullock provided by the Priest. Hence, before the goat could begin to follow the bullock it must be conducted on to the Holy ground of the Court, from among the people of the congregation. The sources from which the two animals were taken should be duly noted, because it shows a stage in the experience of the goat which had no recorded parallel in the experience of the bullock. It is only from the time that the goat was ‘presented before the Lord’ that it began to ‘follow’ in the steps of the bullock. Its experience of being conducted on to the holy ground from the midst of the congregation, would seem fittingly to correspond with the experience of some, who, in the higher sphere, are led from amongst the ‘congregation of Israel’...as were these immediate readers of Peter’s letter—to the holy ground of consecration and sacrifice.

While Peter does not particularise these matters to this degree, yet, the background of all his remarks concerning the Priesthood, and their Antitypical sprinkling, their selection and sanctification, and the ultimate reference to the Leader, in whose steps we are exhorted to tread, bearing ‘our sins’ on the ‘Tree,’ seems to warrant the deductions which have been drawn from his letter. We cannot walk in His steps, till we are justified from sin—we cannot follow Him, till we are accounted clean from our defilements. “Follow me” said the Leader; “Ye should follow His Steps” says the Apostle, and the content and meaning of the Apostle’s words must be deduced in the light of the Master’s Call. It is not merely a call to follow Jesus in an attempt at moral rectitude, but to follow Him to ‘the Tree.’ It is not merely a matter of good words, or good deeds, but of a deeper purpose—contract to live “to the will of God.” (1 Pet. 4: 2).

Beloved in the Lord, let no teaching beguile you from the purpose of your calling. Ye were called not merely to know Jesus as your Saviour, but as your Prince-Leader to Heavenly Glory. Accord Him therefore, the privilege not only of reaching down to your level in order to save you from sin, but of leading you up to His level of Glory, Honour and Immortality.

Let us see to it that we appreciate His Leadership, as well as His Saviourship, till we see Him face to face, beyond ‘the Tree’ in the Glory.

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### FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

Life is so pleasant when walking with God,  
The fellowship marvellously sweet,  
As we constantly dwell in his presence each day  
And enjoy his blessings complete.

When the storms of life are raging without  
And the enemy tries to get in,  
God sends a calmness into your soul,  
And his grace will help us to win.

Walking and talking with him every day,  
There are joys and blessings untold.  
‘Tis only a taste of what is to come  
When we reach that city of gold.



F.W. Davis

## FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT—A HYMN

FIGHT the good fight with all thy might,  
 Christ is thy strength, and Christ thy right;  
 Lay hold on life, and it shall be  
 Thy joy and crown eternally.

Run the straight race through God's good grace,  
 Lift up thine eyes, and seek His face;  
 Life with its way before us lies,  
 Christ is the path and Christ the prize.

Cast care aside, lean on thy Guide  
 His boundless mercy will provide;  
 Lean, and thy trusting soul shall prove  
 Christ is its life, and Christ its love.

Faint not nor fear, His arms are near,  
 He changeth not, and Thou art dear;  
 Only believe, and thou shalt see  
 That Christ is all in all to thee.

John Samuel Bewley Monsell (1811-1875) who wrote these words was born in Londonderry to an Archdeacon, Thomas Monsell. After being educated at Trinity College, Dublin, John himself followed a similar path to his father. It was while Rector of St. Nicholas in Guildford he fell off a roof and subsequently died.

He was a prolific hymn and poem writer and one of the few that also remains popular now is 'O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness'.

The following verses are thought to have been in the writer's mind when penning this well-known and stirring hymn;

1 Tim. 6: 12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

2 Tim. 4: 6-8 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course,

I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

Revelation 2: 10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

1 Cor. 9: 24-26 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain...Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air.

Phil. 3: 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Heb. 12: 1-2 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.

Psalms 25: 15 Mine eyes are ever toward the LORD.

Psalms 55: 22 Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.

Heb. 11: 33-34 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

1 Peter 1: 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Luke 8:50 But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.

Psalms 119: 151 Thou art near, O LORD; and all thy commandments are truth.

1 Cor. 15: 28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

Pentecost is the tune most often associated with this hymn.

## TIMES AND SEASONS

### Part 4. Jacob

Jacob was 57 when he went to Padanaram to find himself a wife and 97 when he returned with four wives, numerous children and a large establishment of servants, shepherds and herdsmen. It is sometimes thought that his period in Laban's service was only twenty years but this is due to an insufficiently careful reading of Genesis 31.38-41. In any case the events of this period cannot possibly be fitted into less than forty years.

Put briefly, the twenty years of Gen. 31.38 is one period spent by Jacob "*in the field*" caring for Laban's flocks and herds; the twenty years of verse 41 is another period, "*in the house*", comprising the initial fourteen years service for Leah and Rachel, and the final six years during which he was building up his own flocks preparatory to returning to Canaan. This is shown by the use of what is called the "double demonstrative" which in English is normally expressed by the comparison "this" and "that". The Hebrew demonstrative "*zeh*" is normally "this", but when repeated, as in this passage, has the meaning of difference or contrast. So "*this twenty years*" in verse 38 is in contrast to "*thus*" (or that) "*twenty years in thy house*". Other examples of this use of the double demonstrative "*zeh... zeh*" are:

1 Kings 22.20 "One said on *this* manner, and another said on *that* manner".

Exod. 14.20 "It was a cloud and darkness to *them* (the Egyptians), but it gave light by night to *these*" (the Israelites).

Job 21.23,25 "*One* dieth in his full strength...and *another* dieth in the bitterness of his soul".

Eccl. 6.5 "*This* hath more rest than *the other*".

The sense of Jacob's words might have been brought out more clearly in the A.V. had the translators rendered "*zeh...zeh*" as they did in the Kings and Job quotations, so making him say "One twenty years have I been with thee (in the field)...another twenty years have I been in thine house" and this would have made the matter perfectly clear.

A critical examination of the circumstances surrounding the births of Jacob's sons as narrated in chaps. 29-30 supports the forty year period.

Jacob served seven years before receiving Leah and Rachel as wives. Thereafter Leah had four sons and probably at least a couple of daughters. This could hardly have been achieved in less than, say, ten years. She then “left bearing” (Ch. 29.35). In the meantime Rachel, despairing of herself becoming a mother, gave her maid Bilhah to Jacob in accordance with custom, hoping to obtain children by her. She must have waited maybe five or six years before resorting to this expedient. Bilhah presented Jacob, probably during the next four years, with two sons, and this must have led Leah, after five years or so barrenness, to present her own maid Zilpah to Jacob for the same purpose. The result was two more sons, Gad and Asher, with perhaps another daughter, and all this implies that Asher could not have been born less than twenty-five years from Jacob’s entry into Laban’s service.

It was after this that Reuben brought the mandrakes to his mother (Ch. 30.14) which led directly to the birth of Leah’s fifth son in the following year. Another son Zebulun, followed, and last of all a daughter, Dinah. Now Dinah could not possibly have been less than eleven or twelve years old at Jacob’s departure from Laban if the narrative of Gen. 34, in which Hamor, the son of Shechem, wished to make her his wife, is to be credible and this in turn means that Issachar must have been born at least fourteen years before the departure. Twenty-five years from Jacob’s entry to the incident of the mandrakes, plus fifteen years thereafter to his departure, totals forty years which appears to be the minimum possible.

The implication of Gen. 30.25 is that Joseph was born at the commencement of the final six years. Since he was thirty years old when called before Pharaoh, (41.46), and therefore thirty-nine in the second year of famine when Jacob came down into Egypt, the period of Jacob’s sojourn in Canaan after leaving Laban was 33 years. This however must include the time taken on the journey from Padanaram. The magnitude of this undertaking is not appreciated by a mere cursory reading of the narrative. According to Gen. 32.13-20 Jacob sent his brother Esau a present from his flocks totalling 580 head of cattle, sheep, camels and so on. This means that his flock must have numbered several thousands at least, and this in turn that they would consume at least ten tons of food per day, and a considerable amount of water. Much of this must have been in the form of stored grain and root crops brought with them from Padanaram. He would hardly achieve more than ten miles a day, with a day’s rest in between,

and could easily have been three months covering the 250 miles to Succoth, on the eastern side of Jordan. Here, the narrative tells us (33.17) Jacob built himself a house and made booths for his cattle. This implies a lengthy stay; a little reflection will show that whilst his cattle could very largely “live off the land” in the uninhabited pasture-lands east of Jordan, once inside settled Canaan, already occupied by farmers and stock-breeders, his food supply problems would be much more acute until he could reach his father’s lands in the far south. Evidently the stay at Succoth, with its house building and provision of corrals for cattle, all indicative of a lengthy sojourn, was for the purpose of sowing and eventually reaping crops sufficient to tide them over the last stages of his journey. Such a programme, of course, would require two years. At the end of that time Jacob resumed his journey, crossed the Jordan, stopped briefly at Shechem but had to move on in consequence of the trouble over Dinah, and finally arrived at Bethel in the very centre of Canaan, where in obedience to the instructions of God he built an altar and settled down for a lengthy stay. Here God solemnly re-affirmed the Abrahamic covenant and pledged that it would be fulfilled through the sons of Jacob.

All things considered, the arrival at Bethel must have been a full three years after the departure from Padanaram. It could not have been less, and succeeding events make it unlikely that it could have been any more. One intriguing incident is connected with this sojourn at Bethel; Ch. 35.8 records the death and burial at this time of Rebekah’s old nurse, Deborah. Rebekah was obviously already dead; it would appear that the old lady, probably now more or less an encumbrance to Isaac at his advanced age, and of no concern to the younger sons of Isaac now managing his affairs, had been sent to Jacob upon his arrival back in Canaan to be looked after. The point of interest is that Deborah must be the longest lived woman mentioned in the Bible whose age can be deduced. According to Gen. 24.59 Deborah was Rebekah’s “wet-nurse”—this is the meaning of the Hebrew word—in her childhood and accompanied her when she came to be Isaac’s wife. Deborah must have been at least twenty-five years of age at Rebekah’s birth to have acted in the capacity indicated, and even if, as is likely, Rebekah was as young as sixteen at her marriage it implies that Deborah died at Bethel in Jacob’s encampment at the ripe old age of between 161 and 163. Sarah the wife of Abraham is stated to have lived 127 years, Miriam the sister of Moses died within a year or two of 137; but Rebekah’s old nurse appears to hold the record.

The sojourn at Bethel lasted a few years only, not more than three or four. Eight years later, when Joseph was 17 (Ch. 37.1-4), Jacob was reunited with Isaac at Hebron. In the meantime, and while the family was still at Bethel, Joseph had the dreams which incurred his brothers' enmity (Ch. 37.5-11). He would then be about ten or eleven years old and his mother Rachel was still alive (see Ch. 37.10). A year or so later, on the march from Bethel towards Hebron, she died giving birth to Benjamin and was buried near Bethlehem (Ch. 35.16-20). So, at last, Jacob arrived back at the family home at Hebron after an absence of half a century. There was little happiness in his home coming. He had lost his beloved wife Rachel; within another year or so he mourned her son Joseph, torn to pieces by wild beasts as he believed, in reality sold as a slave into Egypt by the jealous brothers. He only had five-year old Benjamin to remind him of them both. Another twelve years and Isaac died and there was the brief reunion with his brother Esau as together they paid their last respects to the old Patriarch. The descent into Egypt was now only ten years away; already the shadow of the approaching famine was darkening the land. The story of Jacob's sons going into Egypt to buy corn for their families' sustenance does not sound as if the vast flocks and herds which Jacob brought with him from Padanaram still existed. Neither is there any indication of what was left of Isaac's far-flung interests which Jacob had inherited. Only a few years previously Jacob's sons were scattered over the country from Dothan in the north to Hebron in the south (Ch. 37.17), whilst Judah was apparently running a separate concern in the south-east at Timnath (Ch. 38.12-14). Much of this appears to have disappeared towards the end, and it does seem as though virtually all of Jacob's achievements had vanished and he was left with little more than his own family and closest retainers, with considerably shrunken possessions, at the end of his sojourn in Canaan. Well may he have said, as he did rather bitterly to Pharaoh when he appeared before him, "*few and evil have the days of my life been*". (Gen. 47.9).

So, at 130 years of age, and 215 years after Abraham's entry into Canaan, Jacob and his family and household left the land and went into Egypt. The era of the Patriarchs ended. A new era began, that of Israel, the nation that was to be the peculiar representative of God and of his truth in the world for nearly two thousand years, until the duty and the privilege was taken over by the Christian Church. Jacob knew nothing of all that; he knew only that according to Divine promise his descendants would return to

Canaan after four hundred years had passed, and he made his sons promise that he himself would be buried in the family sepulchre at Hebron where his father and grandfather lay, that he himself might be identified with the promise.

AOH

*To be continued.*

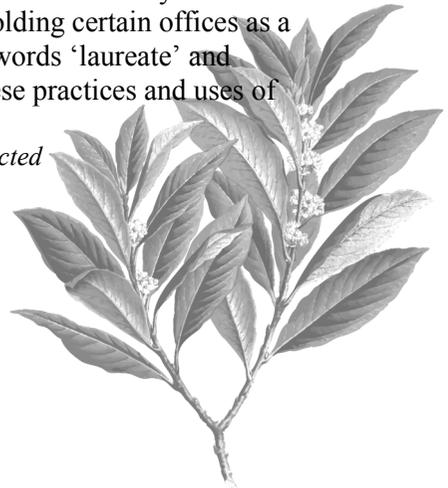


## LAUREL

This tree is mentioned as the last of several trees in Isaiah 44:14 (CSB), the only reference to the tree in the Old Testament. Koehler and Baumgartner identify the name with the laurel tree (*Laurus nobilis*), also commonly called ‘the sweet bay tree.’ The laurel is an evergreen, often growing as a shrub but capable of heights up to some 50 feet. Hence Isaiah could speak of the pouring rain making the tree “get big.” The entire tree (leaves, bark, roots and fruit) contains an oil long employed in medicine. The leaves are oblong and leathery, with a glossy upper side. They are also used as a condiment. In spring the tree blossoms with small creamy-white berries. The *Laurus nobilis* is found from the coast on up into the middle mountain regions of Israel and grows in other Mediterranean countries too.

Laurel leaves were used by ancient Greeks to form wreaths, which they placed on the heads of victors in the Pythian games and also extended to those holding certain offices as a symbol of distinction. The English words ‘laureate’ and ‘baccalaureate’ are derived from these practices and uses of the laurel.

*Selected*



## PRAYER AND THE BIBLE

### Part 4



### The Exclusiveness of Prayer in the Gospel Age

One truth which stands clearly revealed is, that during this Gospel Age any prayer to be effective, that will do definite lasting work, must ascend to God in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Other prayer God does not hear (John 5:23; 14:6), for ignoring the world's Saviour they cannot, in the great Plan of Salvation (Acts 4:12).

The Scriptural teaching that in the Gospel Age vital, co-operative, prayer is the exclusive privilege of the sacrificing followers of Christ, is illustrated in the beautiful, orderly-arranged, services of the Levitical priesthood in the tabernacle of Moses. We note three general conditions of men in the world today:

- (1) the comparatively few who have covenanted with God to lay down their lives with Christ in his sacrificial death,
- (2) those who have belief in the Son of God but do not sacrifice with him,
- (3) the unheeding Gentile-unbeliever.

The first class are represented by the sacrificing priest in the "Holy" apartment in the tabernacle, where they enjoy the light of the golden candlestick, eat the showbread, and offer incense on the golden altar, which things are typical of spiritual blessings and privileges. The second class are pictured by the Levites, who are not sacrificing priests, in the "Court" outside the tabernacle. These Levites were not permitted to enter or look into the "Holy", thus prefiguring the inability of the non-sacrificing believers in Christ, who are therefore not spirit-begotten sons of God, to perceive the deep spiritual things of God (1 Cor. 2:9-16). The unbelieving world in general is represented by the "Camp" outside the Court.

"The golden altar in the 'Holy' would seem to represent the 'little flock,' the consecrated Church in the present sacrificing condition. From this altar ascends the sweet incense, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ—the willing services of the priests; their praises, their willing obedience—all things whatsoever they do to the glory of God. Those who thus offer incense acceptable to God (1 Pet. 2:5) come very close to their Father, close up to the vail which separates from the 'Most Holy'; and if they

have requests to make they may be presented with the incense—‘much incense with the prayers of saints’ (Rev. 8:3). The prayers of such priests of God are effectual. Our Lord Jesus kept the incense continually burning, and could say: “I knew that thou hearest me always” (John 11:42). So the under-priests, ‘members of his body,’ will be heard always if they continually offer the incense of faith, love and obedience to God. None should expect to have requests recognised who do not thus keep their covenant. “If ye abide in me, and my words (teachings) abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (John 15:7). “The necessity of a clear apprehension of Christ’s teachings as a guide to our requests and expectations, that we may not ‘ask amiss,’ and out of harmony with God’s Plan, is clearly shown by this Scripture, but seldom noticed.” (Charles T. Russell).

### **The Prayers of a Gentile**

There is Scriptural record of one apparent exception to the rule governing effective prayer during the Gospel Age (Christian era), where the prayers of the Gentile Cornelius, as we read in Acts 10, had ascended to God as a memorial, and ultimately received the Divine recognition. This proves that the great Jehovah is not unmindful of those whose hearts are in the right, receptive, attitude. We are told that Cornelius was a devout, God-fearing man, and that he “prayed to God alway.” Before God sent the Apostle Peter to tell him “what he ought to do,” the heart-felt prayers of Cornelius could not accomplish any part in the prearranged work of salvation, for he did not then know of “The Way, the Truth, and the Life,” the Lord Jesus Christ, apart from whom we can do nothing (John 14:6). Nevertheless his prayers were sincere and uttered in all good faith, and they and his good deeds ascended as a “memorial” before God, and were had in “remembrance” when, in the due time, the offer of joint-heirship with Christ was extended to the Gentiles (Acts 10:4,31).

After his conversion and illumination by the Holy Spirit, the words of Cornelius could then minister grace and life to his hearers, the necessary power being granted by God through the medium of his prayers in Christ’s name (Acts 10:44-47; Eph. 4:29; 1 Tim. 4:16; 1 Thess. 1:5). It is probable that the earnest, though not yet properly instructed, prayers of many kind-hearted men and women, devout in their daily lives as was Cornelius, will similarly serve as memorials, and bring them in remembrance before the Everlasting Father in the Age of Restitution immediate-

ly in the future. It is probable that there is an important place for such to fill when the scope of Salvation is widened toward all on earth, even as the centurion Cornelius had the honour of holding first place among Gentile believers when the grace of God was due to be extended beyond the nation of Israel. For this reason we would not think to deter any from praying to the Lord of heaven and earth (Acts 17:22-31), but while commending would seek to make manifest Christ as “the way, the truth, and the life,” as Peter was instructed to do for Cornelius, and leave the issue with the heavenly Father who knows the end from the beginning (Acts 10:28,34,35; Isa. 46:9,10).

### **God regards the Children of Believers**

We also note the statement of the Apostle in 1 Cor. 7:14—“For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the (believing) wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the (believing) husband: else were your children unclean: but now are they holy.” Many of the Lord’s people who were born in this cleansed or justified, “holy,” condition can, on reviewing their early life, perceive that the Lord had kindly regard for them, shaping many of the affairs of their life to their ultimate spiritual advantage. Trials and difficulties were tempered that they might not destroy but discipline. In these days, also, they realised that many of their prayers to God, uttered in simple faith though not with much knowledge, were heard and honoured. We see now that this divine supervision in our infancy was directly owing to our parentage. One or both of our parents were spirit-begotten new creatures in Christ Jesus; otherwise we had been “unclean” like the children of unbelievers. Such providential covering continues until the years of discretion are attained; and this period varies with the individual. A few seem to have discerning minds at an earlier age; others develop slowly and reach personal accountability later in life; while some, by no means small in number, are so devoid of judgement that they never attain to responsibility.

It is obvious that should any die while in the “minority” state of mind, they are not of that class who are “dead in Christ”. For the irresponsible are incapable of taking the intelligent step of full consecration to God, without which none can receive the Holy Spirit of begettal, and so become members in particular in the body of Christ. Nevertheless the child of the believer has much advantage over the child of the unbeliever; for the prayers of his parents, and the character training and heavenly knowledge

he acquires, enables him to choose the right way when sanctification in the service of the Lord is made clear to him; whereas the child of the unbeliever has much of error in doctrinal teaching and practice to unlearn. Thus it is manifest that, during the time until their discretionary powers are sufficiently developed, the prayers of the children of the consecrated are honoured by God, these prayers cannot have the vital force of such as are uttered by the mature Christian who has made a covenant with God by sacrifice.

### **Idea. Expression. Realisation.**

The necessary part fulfilled by prayer in the outworking of God's glorious Plan of Salvation, is apparent when we consider the three successive stages which must be essential parts of every completed work. To illustrate:

A man conceives an idea to build a house. At first no one is aware of this, and hence his plans are secret. In his thoughts only has his idea taken formation.

Then, having detailed all the features of the house in his mind, he voices this idea that his workers may know of it.

And having heard their employer, these co-labourers build the house and materialise the idea. The idea was conceived, expressed, and realised.

So with God's creation of earth. In his thoughts he pictured what form the earth should have, and all the details connected with it (Isa. 40:13,14).

Then God gave expression to his idea. As the Scriptures declare: "He spake." Or as it is written in Genesis: "God said—."

With the result that "it was so." "He spake, and it was done" (Psa. 33: 9). God's idea was realised. All his mighty power was at the disposal of those agents which put into effect his idea as soon as it was expressed.

Here, then, we have what is really the basis of prayer. It may at first appear strange, but it is true. For what is prayer but the expression of God's will? And of our prayers express the will of God, we know that God's will must be done. But if any pray contrary to the Divine arrange-

ment he is voicing his own or some other's will; and thoughts not sanctioned by God cannot be realised as the Scriptures declare: "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it" (Psa. 127:1). For there is but one grand scheme which can achieve the promised blessing to all nations, the one which had its conception in the mind of the great Jehovah (Isa. 14:24; 55:6-11). It is contained in the Word, but is secret. It is revealed to those only who make a covenant with him by sacrifice (Psa. 50:5; 25:14; Prov. 3:32). Authority to give plain utterance to the secret thoughts of God was first invested in Jesus Christ, and by him extended to the members of his Body; and therefore every detail of the loving heavenly Father's gracious and beautiful Plan shall be realised. For the assurance we have of the truth of this we thank and praise Him (Matt. 13:34,35; John 7:16,17; Rom. 16: 25,26).

### **The Will of God**

God warned Adam that if he ate of the forbidden fruit he would die. Adam disobeyed, the sentence was pronounced, and Adam died (Gen. 2:17; 3:17-19; 5:5). Was this contained in the Creator's original idea? Yes; otherwise he could not have devised his wonderful plan of salvation beforehand if he had not foreknown that man would require to be saved. The Almighty was not taken by surprise, for he knew that Satan would succeed in causing the entrance of sin. He had left Adam freedom of will to chose either obedience with life, or disobedience with death; and as Adam was created perfect mentally, morally and physically, he had ability to obey—he was not deceived into disobedience like Eve (1 Tim. 2:14). God therefore did not foreordain the sin of our first parents; but He foreknew of it.

The Scriptures show that God had prearranged to so overrule the foreknown degradation of mankind, that it became an essential part of his Plan for the exaltation of his Son Jesus Christ (Phil. 2:7-11; Heb. 2:9,10; Heb. 5:7-10; 1 Pet. 1:18-21).

It was the heavenly Father's foreordained intention to select the "Bride" for his Son from the fallen human race; and in so doing he has abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence (1 Pet. 1:2,3; Eph. 1:4-12).

And, additionally, his original idea provided that the "children" of Christ and his Bride were to be a *regenerated* human family—a family which

had been condemned to death, and which would therefore require to be purchased from the grave and owe its restored life to its great Redeemer, its “Everlasting Father.”

Christ with his glorified Church, spoken of in the Scriptures as “the Spirit and the Bride,” will be the life-giver who will bestow everlasting life to men in the regeneration, or times of restitution (Psa. 45:16; Isa. 9:6; Matt. 19:28; John 6:40,48-51; John 10:10; John 11:25,26; Acts 3:19-21). The making of the “new heavens and the new earth” is a work of salvation from first to last, and is to be completed within Jehovah’s “Rest Day” of seven thousand years (John 4:42; 1 Tim. 4:10; Heb. 2:10; Heb. 5:7-9). “Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world” (Acts 15:18; Heb. 3:11; Heb. 4:1-3).

### **How God Communicated His Will**

During the course of the centuries God declared the numerous details of his purpose or idea; for we read that “Holy men of God (of old) spake as they were moved by the holy spirit”; and “God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began” (2 Pet. 1:21; Acts 3:21). Not only did he express himself by human mouthpieces under inspiration, but also by means of types and shadows; or, as the Scriptures put it: “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past” (Heb. 1:1).

ME

*Next time—How God’s Will is Realised*

When over the hilltop the morning appears,  
And chases the night with its dreams and its fears,  
My heart leaps with joy and I offer my praise  
To Him who doth brighten my days.

As noon pours its sunshine in radiant streams,  
And nature responds to the life-giving beams,  
With joy I inhale the sweet breath of His love—  
The fragrance Divine from above.

When softly around us the night shadows throng,  
And hushed are earth’s voices, the shout and the song,  
With faith, which no darkness can weaken or dim,  
I yield myself wholly to Him.

*Poems of the Way*



# THE VIRTUOUS WOMAN

A devotional commentary on Proverbs 31: 10-31

Part 2



## HAVING THE GLORY OF GOD

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*She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar.* Prov-  
erbs 31:14

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**He** = a window or lattice, presenting a view through and beyond a wall. Figuratively it may speak of the penetration of that wall that encloses our own personal inner feelings and thoughts, as the eyes are windows to the soul. It also may be used of the barrier between the present moment and time to come. In the latter sense it depicts far sight and foresight. The “windows of heaven” also reveal the divine abundances when opened towards us, in Genesis 7 of judgment, in Malachi 3 of mercy. The Beloved of the Song of Songs makes His presence known through the lattice, but even the partial and momentary glimpse is enough. How we value those glimpses!

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**EPITOME OF EDIFICATION** Enriched with jewels of silver and of gold bequeather by Eliezer, the betrothed goes forth. She emulates all that is edifying. She is like the merchant ships laden with good things. She is an exhibition of blessing-laden grace. The windows of heaven have been opened unto her, and from that vast and wondrous store she draws forth supplies abundant as she has space to receive. Her sight is for her treasure. She shares a view of higher things of a different realm, and the glory of them shows in her eyes. Beyond the world of the momentary she sees the realm of the eternal. The abundances of divine goodness bring forth an abundant living that is shared with all she may meet.

**FOOD FROM AFAR** From this body of humiliating contradictions she looks away unto Jesus. She sees Him waiting there for her, Himself a Victor at His Father's right hand. He stands ready to intercede on her behalf, and to her prayers He adds the sweet incense of His love, confessing her before Her Father and His. Only by that preceding incense can any pass into that holy place. Thus does she find the boldness to enter and explore the courts of heaven, the land of far distances and immeasurables. She dwells on earth, yet in her heart sojourns in a land of promise. She spies out its resources, and tastes its luscious fruits. Yet not for herself alone.

Beyond her needs, by nature of this atmosphere of heaven itself in which she walks, she now the more perceives another's lack, the parched ground thirsting for the rain. And it is hers to give, and blessings shared increase. So ready to dispense, to be out-poured, and none who meet her leave with empty heart. Into their lives she enters but to bless, to edify, and leave behind her peace. Her very breath brings hope, her presence joy. She has wherewith to comfort from her God. No shallow platitude of words, but truth that stems from treasure in her heart. Enriched of Him, her Lord, she has within abundant life that yet through her is destined to make glad and satisfy the present groaning race.

### OUT OF THE ABUNDANCE OF THE HEART

#### AND HER LIGHT LIKE UNTO A STONE MOST PRECIOUS

*She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.* Proverbs 31:15

**Vav** = a nail or hook, something fixed and solid upon which one may depend (as the "nail in a sure place" of Isa. 22:23,24.). Its own reliability depends upon two factors, the solid firm structure of the wall, and the tenacity of its hold. Its trustworthiness is thus linked by faith to His.

**VITALITY OF FAITH** The English alphabet would bring us to the corresponding "F" for faithfulness. The Hebrew roots deeper by suggesting in the very sound of "vav" that vital union with Christ on which that faithfulness depends. Herein lies the vivacity of that compelling vital force of the Spirit of God which habitually rises early. In Scripture this is the language of great earnestness. Thus in Psalm 63:

1. *"O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;*

2. *To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.*

3. *Because thy loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.*

4. *Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name.*

5. *My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips."*

The daily attitude of each devoted soul may be voiced in the determination of David. Psalm 132:3-5 *"Surely I will not come into the tabernacle*

*of my house, nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the LORD, an habitation (worthy) for the mighty God of Jacob.”*

To this end each day he stored the most durable and precious materials, all that, when his course was done, would complete the Sanctuary of God. (1 Chronicles 29:2) “*Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God*”.

The fullness of God is for those that thirst for Him, and is exhibited in the spiritual food and blessedness with which they each are filled to the building up of the household of God.

**FAITHFULNESS OF THE LIFE** Who are these maids to whom she assigns her tasks? These are all the powers she owns, now dedicated to the business of her Lord.—Her lips, her hands, her feet, her heart, mind and strength, all that she is in joyful service for the glory of her King. Such sentiments and blessedness, the spirit of a living faith, like coals of fire, enkindle others with their warmth, enthuse with their diligence in service, and leave a glow in the heart of that love shared between the Lamb and those who seek to follow closer every day. Thus does He betroth them to Himself in faithfulness forever. They are His jewels, His today, tomorrow, and forever.

LEANING ON THE ARM OF HER BELOVED...



MAY Heaven sustain thee day by day,  
And make thy generous heart of love  
Rejoice through all the pleasant way  
That God directs thy feet to move,  
Inclining thee, just, generous, true,  
Nobly thy Christian work to do;  
Honoured and loved and blessed of God,  
O! sweet may be the pathway trod;  
May heavenly light around thee shine,  
Divinely blessing thee and thine!

*Poems of Dawn*

## LIKE A JASPER STONE, CLEAR AS CRYSTAL

*She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. Proverbs 31:16*

**Zain** = a weapon or instrument or tool, including for measuring out, cutting out, chopping down and building up. Weapons not carnal, yet mighty through God. His Word, like a sword, searches our hearts, laying bare our very motives. Instruments of iron cut and prepare the stones for the Temple of God.

**ZEAL FOR KNOWLEDGE** The zeal that uses every opportunity as a tool, instrument, weapon in the Lord's work in order that she might grow in the acquisition both of knowledge and of grace. "Hearken O daughter, and consider." It was to her an invitation to begin to try to evaluate, weigh, and measure the immeasurable. Since that first wonderful day of receiving that proposal of love new fields of knowledge and understanding have opened up for her to zealously explore, for her to seek to comprehend and to make her own. The land is good land indeed, richly flowing with honey-sweet words of grace, with nurturing milk, and with the fruit of the great vine.

**ZEAL FOR FRUITAGE** Not for long does she clasp in her palms the earnings from all their efforts of meticulous endeavour. The profit ensuing from such hours of sweet research are turned to the planting of more vines, to produce that more abundant harvest of the fruitage that brings glory to Him, fruit of heavenly wisdom and love overflowing the heart., fruit that remains. Might not such growth in knowledge puff her up? The invitation was to weigh, and to expand the mind to consider a proposal of great love. Her thirst is to know that One from Whom it came.. KNOW HIM, more intimately know that wise and mighty skill revealed in His wondrous works, more closely feel the things that fill His mind., that grieve His Spirit.. that bring Him joy. She has the zest of love to *share the whole realm of His being*, the abundances of His living. Without that love the understanding of all heaven's secrets would be academic and empty. He is her Light, and Light is sown for the righteous to harvest, and all the gladness of exploring that eternal Light...for the upright in heart.

I AM MY BELOVED'S AND BELOVED IS MINE...

*She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. Prov.31.17*

**Cheth** = a surrounding hedge or fence used both to mark out a possession, and to protect and defend from wind, wild beasts, and enemies. So did the Lord set a hedge around the vineyard He had planted. It was the lament of Satan that the Lord had set a hedge surrounding His servant Job. Zech. 2:5 “*For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.*”

**THE CLAIM OF FAITH** The character of her strength lies not in her own powers but rather on that confessed weakness which leans hard upon the Lord and the power of His might. His care for her, assured by many infallible proofs, is the joy of her heart. She knows that she is precious in His sight, that He loves and cherishes, comforts and consoles, circles her about, centre of His desire. Thus corsetted with love, she clasps to her heart His promises, knowing He will never leave her nor forsake. This is the ground of her strength. It is in this blessed state of faith she dares to lay her claim on what else she never could conceive. The land of promise she considers well, and finds therein the goal of her desires. How might she gain this promised place of “rest”? What currency will purchase such a field? Her claim is one of faith, and with her feet she thus marks out the promised land as hers, and lays her hold upon eternal life. That field, that holy heavenly prize, would never be possessed save by such trust that stakes its all upon its gain. Counting all else but loss, accepting any cost that proves that faith is real, she manifests a zeal consuming as her Lord’s, an inner holy fire.

**TO BEAR MUCH FRUIT** Her place of rest is lying at His feet, and there she finds the sense of inward calm. She trusts Him come what may. But well she knows her faith must now bear fruit, to yet complete its growth and victory. The Vine. Its fruitfulness reflects the care of the Husbandman, yet hers a precious part, to swiftly respond to His attentive care. To share that same design as His that she might grow to yet more fully glorify His Father’s Name. Into her hands He puts the task of planting and of watering that peace, and honours honest toil by His increase. So tirelessly she works the work of trust, from morn through noon-day heat until the dusk, and then, at last, all labour done, the fruit of her works will follow on.

Psa. 90:17 “*Let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, THE WORK OF OUR HANDS ESTABLISH THOU IT.*”

*She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night.* Proverbs 31:18

**Teth** = something that twists, hence a serpent, something entwined. Be ye wise as serpents. Strength of understanding and wisdom depends not on just one strand of knowledge. Through just one single wire a thousand messages may flow. Where many strands entwine they form a cable great in strength. The pillars of the Temple were entwined about their upper chapters (heads of columns) with chains and pomegranates, each member of the Christ a link, the bonds of love entwined with endless life.

**TASTING AND TESTING** As in the kitchen the woman tastes what she prepares, such is the sense here. This woman tests and tries her work against the Lord's standards of what is true and right. She tests her understanding alongside His understanding revealed in the Word of Truth. There will be one ultimate moment of truth at the hour of her appearing before Him. Then will she stand without shame for her endeavour in the blessedness of His approving smile. And it will be of her He speaks, when, from those gracious lips she hears the words, "Well done!" The value of the finished work lies in the loving zeal that prompted toil, the hours of diligent care, the testing of each stage, all which that final state reflects. The pattern was not of her own devising, but hers the labour and the love that prompted such devotion to her task. His the instruction, closely sought, though sometimes costing concepts of her own device. So to her hands entrusted was the work, the careful application of pattern to cloth, the right dividing, piece by piece, the making up and matching of each part. Spiritual was to spiritual neatly laid, the needlework of grace so deftly sown that only He could see each tiny stitch. Each stitch endeavour showed, and one design that unobtrusively she might complete a work that brings all glory to her Head. *Together* did that daily task involve them both, He working in, she working out. Like growth rings in the tree each stitch betrayed the many varied seasons of each day, life's ins and outs, and ups and downs, contrived, by His direction all along the way.

**TRIMMING AND TENDING** Within the Word of Truth lie messages designed and coded for the hungry mind, and only such, to find. The students of the Light knows how impeded sight so easily distorts. His way of searching hearts is what that Light imparts whose eyes are single and

whose vision one. Whose minds are full of light His lights become. His Word of truth her light, and precious is the sight to Our Dear Lord, her candle through the night. With well-trimmed lamp and vessel full of oil, she bends intent upon her task to seek, the silver piece that waits in some corner of the house with joy she finds, and crumb of leaven lurking in the dark she sweeps away.

*Her lamp is not allowed to dim ..So tireless does she feed and trim.  
Love's own objective forms her light. Will it have beauty in His sight?*

The tale once was told (in sacred song) of fisherman returning in his boat from days of toil, who as he neared the shore looked up to see the lamp that shone so brightly through the dark. - Love's welcome at the window of his home. And as he rowed for shore the sight did cheer his heart.

She lights her lamp for Him, and in the night its light expresses love's desire, a holy warming fire. And does the woman see that love returned? In Psalm 43 the psalmist speaks for me, when to the Lord He cries 'Thy Light and Truth....send out! Let them my leaders be to bring me safe to Thee, upon The holy Mount.' Thus two-ways is this message sent of light, of those who in the light rejoice, and shall yet know inheritance of saints in light of perfect day.

THAT I MAY SHEW FORTH ALL THY PRAISE IN THE GATES OF...ZION.  
Psa.9:14. DH

## **EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT—A PAMPHLET**

This is a 12 page booklet on 2 words in Matt. 25: 46 which have entertained ideas of terrible penalties for sin that never end. The writer of this short, small work endeavours to look closely into those two words and discovers that the 'God of love' did not have that in mind which was only a translation from a book in Greek of the 1st Century. It shows from Scripture that the death of a human is only one incident in a long process and how sin and death will disappear. (1 Cor. 15. 24-28). The pamphlet investigates other New Testament words which have produced misunderstandings long after they were first written 2,000 years ago such 'damnation' and 'hell'. One suggestion is that some passages are metaphors. It concludes with a consideration of the consequence of sin in full light and after a full opportunity where the individual's sole will incurs the final verdict.

*"in regard to...the fullness of the appointed times, to re-unite all things under one head, even under the Anointed one;—the things in the heavens, and the things on the earth,—under him"* (Ephesians 1:10 Diaglott )

To order your copy of 'Everlasting Punishment' for FREE, please email  
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Or send to Dept. A, 12 Stanley Gardens, Tring, Hertfordshire, HP23 4BS



## THEIR LIGHTS ALSO SHONE



Who are we referring to?\* Hebrews 11:37-40 (RVIC) says “they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword: they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves, and the holes of the earth. And these all, having had witness borne to them through their faith, received not the promise, God having provided some mightier thing concerning us, that without us they should not be made perfect.” So we are going to discuss Christians living in the time periods as covered by Rev. 2:1-22, but mainly the time span from the church of Smyrna to the church of Sardis. Here are the seven churches and the likely time spans.

1. Ephesus, the early apostolic period.
2. Smyrna, covers the time of Pagan Persecution up till 325 A.D.
3. Pergamum, the rise of the Catholic Church and Papacy.
4. Thyatira, the time of the true church in the wilderness while the false Apostate church (Papacy) sat and ruled as Queen and committed spiritual fornication with the kings of the Earth.
5. Sardis, covers a short time till the beginning of the Reformation.
6. Philadelphia, beginning of the reformation until the 19th Century.
7. Laodicea, the true church of God and Jesus, his anointed, consecrated followers as first gathered by (Pastor) Charles Russell.

After the Apostles passed away it says that the Man of Lawlessness would take control as 2 Thess. 2:7-9 (RVIC) states “For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work: only there is one that restraineth now, until he cometh to be out of its midst. And then shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of his mouth, and bring to nought by the appearing of his presence; even he, whose presence is according to a working of Satan with all power and signs and wonders of a lie,” So from this time period, about 100 C.E. there was a weakening of the gospel message, and as time went on teachings were introduced that were not taught by the apostles in New Testament times, especially with the rise of the Catholic church, during the transition from pagan Rome to the Holy Roman Empire (Catholic Church) nevertheless there was still a Light shining in this spiritual darkness.

**Arius** lived around 300 C.E. At this time Constantine and the now

\*Heb. 11 refers to those who lived before the Christian Era



established Church were trying to extinguish the truth with pagan doctrines, especially the trinity. Arius stood up against this doctrine and would not accept it and said “If the father begat the son, he that was begotten had a beginning of existence: and...there was a time when the son was not”. In A.D. 325 Constantine decreed, “If any writing composed by Arius should be found, it should be handed over to the flames, and if anyone has hidden a copy, his punishment will be death”. Arius was most likely poisoned soon after. There were others as well who stood up for truth before this time period, Clement of Rome (A.D.45-101), said “Jesus was sent by the Father, so Christ is from God and the apostles are from Christ.”

As time progressed the established church, Babylon the great, under Satan’s influence grew stronger and the true Gospel becomes less based on ‘grace’, but on ceremony and pomp and the introduction of man-made doctrines to corrupt the gospel. There was an outbreak against the worship of saints and images in the seventh century and these truth-loving Christians were called Iconoclasts, “that is breakers of Images” and they caused a lot of stress to the Catholic Church. In fact it lasted for over a period of 100 years until the false church was victorious and Image worship then became once and for all time firmly established.

There were still a few fearful men in the 12th Century who also stood against the established church and specific doctrines.

**Henry of Lausanne** was an Italian who preached in the Alps and around the city of Toulouse, as well as in the Pyrenees. He preached against the Church of Rome and its authority, condemned infant baptism, rejected the Eucharist Mass, worship of saints and prayers for the dead. He only recognized the authority of the gospel! So popular was his teachings that the churches in his districts were empty, so he was arrested by the Bishop of Toulouse and imprisoned for life.

**Peter de Bruis** made the most laudable attempt to reform the abuses and superstitions that disfigured the simplicity of the gospel message, but after having engaged in this cause for over 20 years, he was burned alive at St. Gilles, near Nimes in France in the year 1130, by an enraged mob, instigated by the clergy who were worried that the enterprising spirit and

message of this reformer would expose them! He also rejected infant baptism and condemned the false added doctrines of the Popes. He taught that the real body and blood of Christ were not exhibited in the mass, but taught that they were merely represented, or symbolized by the emblems used. Also that the prayers and good works of the living, could in no way help the dead, so as stated he was removed and burnt at the stake.

**Arnold of Brescia**, early in his life, travelled from his native Italy into France. In France he imbibed the spirit of soul-freedom, and received into his heart the Light of the gospel. He returned to his native city in the habit of a monk, and began to preach the gospel in the streets of Brescia. The people melted and were roused by his fiery appeals. The clergy were alarmed, and at the second Lateran council he was condemned to perpetual silence. It was in the year 1139 Arnold fled to the wilderness, and in the valleys of the Alps found shelter among the kindred spirits there. He was soon found proclaiming the truth in the canton of Zurich. Conspiracies were formed against him. The whole power of the Roman Church was directed to overthrow him.



We cannot contemplate the lion courage of Luther at Worms without emotions of enthusiastic admiration, and this admiration is just. But the stand that Arnold took was fully equal to, if not superior to Luther's, but is seldom mentioned. A lone man, in a still darker age, unsupported by the presence and sympathy of Princes, as Luther was, he berated and defied the might of the Roman church. Driven from his shelter, he crossed the Alps and planted himself in the midst of his foes, yes, he entered Rome itself, where he flashed the light of truth in burning eloquence in the district of the seven hills.

Freedom triumphed for the hour. Rome awoke from the slumber, and religious slavery of ages. "But the fervor of the people is less permanent than the resentment of the priest" (Gibbon). The powers of the clergy were again concentrated and directed against him. The heresy of Arnold was considered two-fold. He dared to quote the language of Christ, "My kingdom is not of this world", also that the church was a distinct and spiritual assembly of baptized believers, so as a consequence, the heinous

crime of rejecting infant baptism was laid on him. “He was arrested, condemned, crucified and then burned on the stake, his ashes thrown into the river Tiber”.

Peter Waldo



**The Waldenses** were a large group living in and around the French/Italian Alps also during the 12th Century, who were targeted by the Catholic Church as heretics. This was because they rejected several of the Catholic Church’s teachings as false. In fact they regarded her as the whore of Babylon as described in the Bible. They believed also in the separation of church and state, rejected the mass, they also believed that the bread and wine were symbols only, they rejected infant baptism, rejected the clergy laity class and rejected extreme unction, which is the use of oils as a religious rite. In addition they rejected purgatory and prayers for the dead, as well as praying to saints, rejected confessing of sins to priests, as they believed in forgiveness of sins comes from God alone. They had their own version of the bible called the “TEPL.”

Their area of dwelling was around the French/Italian borders, ”The Mighty Alps.” This area was always known for its opposition to the Papal Throne, as early as the 9th Century, **Claudius, Bishop of Turin** was preaching against the apostasy in the Catholic Church. He spoke out against the excesses of the church on such matters as Image worship and relics, pilgrimages, prayers to the saints, worship of the cross, and also that there was no successor to Peter and that the Pope did not possess the keys of heaven. So it is no wonder the established Church sent all its might and heresy hunters into these regions to punish these groups. To counter this the Waldenses and other groups moved into more remote areas to escape the power and persecution of the church. We have no idea how great their suffering was nor the amount that these agents “The Catholic Church” slaughtered. When we read of their plight and suffering we should be humbled and shocked. No wonder the Book of Revelation speaks of a great crowd, which no man was able to number standing before the throne worshipping our heavenly Father. Nothing can prepare us for the torture and sufferings that these searchers of truth endured and it went on from the 14th Century up till the start of the protestant Reformation. Untold thousands of men, women and children were butchered,

tortured and burnt alive on the stake or hacked to death. In fact the Nazis during the World War Two were not beginners in this art, the established church far outshone them in cruelty. As stated this persecution went on until and after the Reformation. In fact in the early 16th Century the Waldenses on hearing that the reformation had started appealed to the Protestants in Geneva to send them spiritual help, so a young minister was sent to them.

His name was **Jean Louis Paschale**, and he was dispatched to \*Calabria where he preached full of zeal and this helped to revitalize the Waldenses, and this small dim flickering light that had nearly been extinguished by the Church of Rome, started to glow again, too bright in fact it aroused the priests and clergy of the established church who conspired to have this young preacher arrested and thrown into the dungeons for 8 months, and in the year of 1560 he was brought before a Papal Tribunal and sentenced to death. The young man, tied to the stake turns to the Pope and condemns him as the persecutor of his flock, the antichrist and warns him and all the assembled cardinals that they will have to answer for all their crimes and murders before the throne of God and his Lamb. He is then strangled and burnt on the stake and after his ashes were scattered.

What faith, what courage was shown by these men who followed the truth. How important is our light? Do we let it shine? Do we feel as the apostle Paul did in Romans 8:35-39 So whatever the season, 'Let our Light Shine forth' and at all times praise our Lord the risen Christ.

Romans 8:35-39 (RVIC) *“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Even as it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; We were accounted as sheep for the slaughter. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

RT

## THE PATHS OF MERCY AND TRUTH

*“All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant.” Psa. 25: 10*

It is an extremely sweet doctrine to be assured that every step of the consecrated life is under the control of our loving Father in heaven. At all times it is comforting to be reminded that “All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose,” (Rom. 8: 28) but it is especially helpful to have this assurance repeated frequently in seasons of trial and difficulty. Most of the children of God are such leaking vessels, that the sweetness of the morning’s promise is apt to be forgotten before tired eyelids close for the night’s repose. And for that reason every consecrated child of God needs the frequent reminder that every phase of his life is under the supervision of an Eye that never sleeps; that all the way he is kept in the hollow of a Hand that never grows weary. It is not that we want to forget that sublime fact—it is not that we find any pleasure in the slips of memory which afflict over the years.

But because the summers and winters steal by with increasing speed (or so it seems) and because modern life is so full of responsibilities of so many kinds, the things that belong to the higher life seem at times to be crowded into a very small corner of our day, even if they are not fully crowded out for a time. But no true child of the Father in heaven, is ever averse to being reminded again and again of that loving Father’s Care. He will find it soothing to his heart, after a worrying day, to be told again that he is one of the sheep of His pasture; that the Lord is his Shepherd and that whether his pathway lies through the green pastures or the valley of shadows, the Lord is with him to keep and protect him all the way. When, during the day, the tender spirit of the New Creature has been wounded by the instability or harshness of some poor son of Adam, how good it is to be told of a Friend who stands closer than any Brother, to whisper a word of comfort to our aching heart. It is the perfect end to any day to be able to listen to the gentle assurance of tongue or pen that no act or word need have cost us our Father’s smile. Not that the day’s page would not show blot or smudge (for indeed, no day is entirely free from short-coming or failure) but because by the grace of God, so many of His paths are paths of mercy. Long ago, the Father of Mercies made provision for our need. He sent down from heaven a Saviour, who, by His death, can save His

people from their sins. Himself without sin, yet in His compassionate love for men, became Himself the bearer of their sins. He gave Himself, the “just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God (1 Pet. 3: 18.) He reconciled us by His death; He now lives to save us by His living, loving care (Rom. 5: 10.) The path of mercy, from our first feeble Christian days, till now, is hedged about by His precious blood. It is a scarlet trail, for precious blood made possible our first faltering step in Grace, and precious blood has made safe our every further step.

From those first feeble feelings after God, when escaping from the darkness of sin, till now we know our God (and also are known of Him) the blood upon the lintel has been the constant pledge of our security and safety. No day has passed but that we have drawn upon the store of compassionate mercy—yet our constant claims have not impoverished the store, nor exhausted its supply. New every morning, and fresh with each evening’s shades have been these resources of grace, for that precious blood was of compensating worth for every man, and for all time, and so, because Divine Law was satisfied, Divine Grace has been free to come to our relief, abundantly—yea, more than that, we have received superabundantly of His Grace. Thus, many paths in our lives which the Lord has directed have had their commencement in His Mercy, while all along the way, the shady bowers and quiet resting places have been fragrant with His Grace. Let us thank our Gracious God for His Goodness.

But along with Grace He gave us knowledge; along with mercy He gave us truth! “The paths of the Lord are mercy and truth.” First those simple elementary truths which told us of our need for a Saviour to free us from our sins, and to release us from Father Adam’s condemnation. The truth about God’s own love was wonderful—it cost Him His dear Son. The greatness of His Gift was the measure of His Love. That truth was sweet to our famished hearts. It was the first satisfying Truth we had ever learned. No collegiate course ever imparted Truth so satisfying and refreshing. Nor has any instruction from any other source in later days, brought such abiding joy. To the end of our earthly days, nay, let us say for all eternity, the remembrance of that blessed fact that God loved the world so much that He gave His Son to die, will never lose its soul-reviving power.

But Redeeming love was but the prelude to Paternal Love. We learned

## NOTICES

**BIBLE STUDENTS FELLOWSHIP CONFERENCE  
WEDNESDAY 16 AUGUST—SUNDAY 20 AUGUST 2017  
HIGH LEIGH CONFERENCE CENTRE, HODDESDON**

The theme for the week is Psalm 50: *5 Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.*

**Day Victors Welcome**

For a programme, please email [nick.charcharos@btinternet.com](mailto:nick.charcharos@btinternet.com)  
Or by post 10 Plaiters Close, Tring, HP23 5TA, U.K.

**BIBLE STUDENTS SEMINAR DAY  
SATURDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2017  
KENSWORTH VILLAGE HALL**

**The Chilterns, off Common Road, Kensworth, Near Dunstable LU6 3RJ**

**11.30 a.m.—5 p.m.**

All Welcome

For a programme, please email [nick.charcharos@btinternet.com](mailto:nick.charcharos@btinternet.com)  
Or by post 12 Stanley Gardens, Tring, HP23 4BS

**UK Bible Students Convention  
26-28 October 2018**

### Gone from us

Vera Simpson (Warrington)

another transcendent Truth that He who redeemed us at such infinite cost desired to have us as His sons and daughters. He called us to follow in the footsteps of His First-born Son, that we might enter the innermost circle of His family, and be the Father's eternal delight. Our Gracious God caused His beloved Son to become unto us a channel of Wisdom, Justification, Sanctification, and ultimate Redemption. And in order that all these steps of Grace might be realized in us, and experienced by us, He gave us Truth accordant with each step. He taught us not only to learn the Truth, but also how to profit by that Truth. Knowledge thus acquired, then rightly applied, became in us "Wisdom." Knowledge that the Victim died

**for** sin (and that means, among other things, for **my** sin; for our sins) led us humbly to seek our acquittal at God’s hands, so that henceforth there should be no condemnation laid to our charge.

Knowledge that God desired the submission of our lives, so that we should no longer serve sin, but live solely unto Him, brought us to the point where He could invest us with His Holiness, and set us apart to His Will and Purpose. What a wonderful School God keeps! What an excellent syllabus He has arranged! How incomparable is the education He provides! He educates His pupils for Eternity; for Omniscience! He trains them for Kingship for the highest Throne! He dedicates them for a Priesthood—to succour untold millions “who are out of the way!” He moulds them to be replicas of Himself, to be channels of His Great Love, of Infinite Mercy and, tender Compassion.

This is all so wonderful, but—(is there a “but” in this overflow of grace?), yes indeed,—this glorious accomplishment is contingent upon the keeping of “His covenant and testimonies.”

God requires as the condition of His oversight in our lives, first, a covenant of sacrifice—a vow intelligently and solemnly sworn—and then obedience to His Sovereign Will throughout our days. Disobedience would dam the refreshing streams of mercy and grace. Frowardness and headiness would blight the fruitage of His Truth. His word would cease to satisfy, and soul hunger, such as no plenty on earth could gratify, would set in. But if His children keep His Covenant, and observe His testimonies, then “neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature” can interfere or block one single path of the Lord’s mercy and truth in their lives.

Do we know that this is true? Then happy indeed are we!

*Selected*



Jas 1:12 (NKJV) Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.



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# BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

Volume 94 Issue 5

September / October 2017



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# BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

FOUNDED 1924

The Bible Study Monthly, published to promote knowledge of the Bible, sees the Scriptures as a true record of God's dealings with the human race, needing to be understood in our generation. It looks for the advent of our Lord, and His reign of peace and justice on the earth.

*“Speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ”* (Ephesians 4:15 NRSV)

The Bible Study Monthly is sent free of charge on request to all who are genuinely interested. It should never be sold for money.

Secretary & Treasurer: Nicholas Charcharos

## THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

*Rev. 3.12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God.*

It is almost 500 years since Martin Luther (1483-1546) published the ‘Ninety-five Theses’ and had them nailed to All Saints’ Church in Wittenberg, part of the Holy Roman empire now in Germany. Luther is one of the most well-known Protestant Reformers.

He built upon the work of other reformers like John Wycliffe who had very similar views on the authority of the Bible and justification by faith. He also pushed back against the power and rules of the Catholic church in many ways including by marrying and having children, translating the New testament into German and criticising them for raising finance by selling indulgences.

Building metaphors are commonplace in language whether it be English, Greek or Hebrew. A ‘brick wall’ can be taken to mean any type of barrier. An ‘ivory tower’ can mean someone who is detached from reality. For someone to be ‘a pillar in the temple’ is a good and easily understandable biblical metaphor for even a new Christian would be familiar with the Temple in Jerusalem. Even non-Christians are aware of the ‘wailing wall’ in Jerusalem. Hence it would not be outrageous to suggest that Luther will be a pillar in the Kingdom.

The virtuous woman in Proverbs 31 would also be a picture of someone who would be a pillar in the Temple of God. One could also add the names of Paul and Titus as potential pillars in the Temple. Paul and Titus did the great work God had planned for in the establishment of the early church, working with materials that were common and base and sometimes hostile.

The ones that were worked with were meek and teachable, and willing to be moulded and corrected by His loving care and education to become that would be useful in His service.

David also used a building metaphor in Psalm 61 when he talks of God as 'a strong tower' and 'shelter'. These days it is common to hear of someone being called 'a tower of strength' to them, when they are going through a time of difficulty in their life.

Therefore it is a matter of joy to realise the protection we have and see the hand of him who is preparing the Church for its future work, when the Kingdom has come on earth as in heaven.



PRESS ON

BUILD Thee more stately mansions, O my soul,  
 As the swift seasons roll!  
 Leave thy low-vaulted past!  
 Let each new temple, nobler than the last,  
 Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,  
 Till thou at length art free,  
 Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea.

*Poems of Dawn*

**4 MANOR GARDENS, BARNSTONE ADDRESS**

Please note following the death of Derrick Nadal, there is no longer anyone linked to the Bible Fellowship Union or Bible Study Monthly living at the above address.

Magazine content. What is published is believed to have a wide interest, but everything printed may not necessarily be the opinion of the editor and his colleagues.

## PILLARS OF THE TEMPLE

There is a wealth of natural illustration in the Scriptures, using objects familiar to the natural eye, to convey to the mind an understanding of spiritual things. Among these is the Temple, used in both the Old and the New Testaments to portray the dwelling place of God in the future, when He will dwell with men, when He himself shall be with them, and be their God.

In Revelation 3. 12 the promise is that the overcomers shall be pillars in that Temple, and in considering just this one detail of the larger picture we find much that is calculated to assist the overcomer in this day of preparation.

The first essential quality of a pillar is strength, for, although pillars are ornamental, their real purpose is to support some important part of the structure in which they are used. Before going on to consider this quality of strength we must first take note that the strongest pillar would be of little use unless erected on an even stronger foundation. There is no need to dwell upon the foundation upon which the overcomers are being founded, for in Matt. 16. 18 our Lord tells us. It is upon the great truth that Jesus is the Christ that we have any standing at all. Paul's statement in Eph. 2. 20 that we are being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets is quite in harmony with our Lord's statement, as is his further declaration in 2 Tim. 2. 19: "*The firm foundation of God, standeth, having this seal, 'The Lord hath acknowledged them who are his'*" (Roth.).

Moses, in his triumph song, proclaimed that the Lord was his strength and song, and this theme is echoed and re-echoed throughout both the Old and the New Testaments. The Lord is the source of all spiritual strength, but how does He impart this strength to his people? It is not conveyed through some mystic channel to those who merely ask for it; rather is it developed as a living, vital force in all those, who, having heard the call to become sons of God, are being dealt with as spiritual children of a loving Father.

The means used to develop this quality of strength are the lessons and experiences which God permits to come to those whom He is preparing to be pillars in his holy habitation. In the natural world materials possess various kinds of strength, e.g., tensile strength, or the ability to sustain

stretching or straining; compressive strength, or the ability to sustain pressure or crushing; shear strength, or the ability to resist a cutting action; and impact strength, or the ability to withstand a sudden blow. It requires but little thought, to realise that we may need some or even all of these qualities if we are to be overcomers. The straining of earthly ties or relationships, crushing loads of anguish or distress, temptations to cut ourselves off from fellowships, so essential in these last days, (Heb. 10. 25), or sudden blows, shattering to our faith, may be our portion. Fiery trials, and the wearing influence of constant contact with the world, all combine to destroy faith, and must be resisted.

The illustration of the mason, at work with hammer and chisel upon the stones, is familiar, and applied to the pillars is well summed up in words well known:

*“The temple stones God now prepares, oft cry you hurt me sore.  
The Sculptor seeks their perfectness, and trims them more and more-  
Until by dint of strokes and blows the shapeless mass appears,  
Symmetric, polished, beautiful, to stand the eternal years.”*

In modern times this method of making pillars has been largely superseded by a different method, which more aptly illustrates the development of that strength so necessary in the pillars of the Temple. In this process, steel and concrete, two entirely dissimilar materials, are used to form the pillars, or piers, as they are more commonly known, which are used in the buildings of today. Without going into details it is pointed out that each material has quite a different form of strength, and they are so arranged that the particular strength of each material is used to the best advantage, eliminating weaknesses which would exist if either were used alone. Bearing this brief outline in mind, turn to Isa. 30. 15, where the Holy One of Israel says *“In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.”* Here are two qualities of character, each in themselves strong, and of an entirely different type, but which COMBINED give great strength of character to those in whom they are developed.

For instance, Peter was very confident when he said he would die rather than deny the Lord, and he had confidence of a sort when he walked upon the water to meet the Lord, but in each case confidence was born of impetuosity; in later years, after many hardly-learned lessons, Peter

manifested a QUIET confidence vastly different from that which previously revealed his weakness. Quietness is defined as stillness, repose, silence. These all suggest immobility or stability, and remind us of Paul's exhortation in 1 Cor. 15. 58: "*Be ye steadfast, unmoveable.*"

But conditions are not always conducive to stillness and repose. Sometimes the affairs of life are very tumultuous, even frightening. In spite of the many promises in the Word, one may sometimes feel as did David when he cried: "*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from saving me, and from the words of my loud complaint? O my God! I call in the day-time, but thou answerest not; and in the night I find no rest*" (Psa. 22. 1 & 2 Leeser). But the very experience which wrings such a cry is sent that we might develop that quietness which gives strength; under such conditions one must wait before the Lord, and thus learn, BY EXPERIENCE, that they that wait upon the Lord shall "acquire new strength" (Leeser). Whilst thus waiting before the Lord, we may hear him, in the stillness, asking:-

*"When I to thy pleadings seem no heed to pay,  
And thy foes grow bolder—claim thee as their prey;  
Tho' towards thee I'm silent, will thou stand the test?  
On my word of promise lay thee down and REST?"*

If the answer is "yes," we shall again say with David, "It is lovely to me that the Lord heareth my voice, my supplications. For he hath inclined his ear unto me: therefore throughout all my days will I call on him.... Return, O my soul, unto thy rest; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee" (Psa. 116. 1, 2 & 7 Leeser).

Even so, it is difficult, in affliction of body or of mind, to wait patiently before the Lord; if so, we should do well to consider Lamentations, Chapter 3. For the first 20 verses Jeremiah dwells upon all the calamities that may befall the faithful, but in verses 21 to 23 a complete change takes place. He continues: "This, will I bring back to my heart, therefore, will I hope. The lovingkindnesses of YAHWEH, verily THEY ARE NOT EXHAUSTED. Verily! Not at an end, are his COMPASSIONS: New things for the mornings! Abundant is THY faithfulness" (Rotherham). Many, indeed, are the afflictions of the righteous, but, as Jeremiah continues (verse 33): "For He (God) doth not afflict (his children) willingly" (from his heart, (margin) of his own will (Leeser)). So, we may

ask, why does God afflict us at all? The answer is found in Heb. 12. 10 (margin): *“For they verily (indeed), for a few days chastened (chastised) us as seemed good to them; but He FOR OUR PROFIT, that we might be PARTAKERS OF HIS HOLINESS.”*

Quietness is also defined as “peace of mind, seclusion, freedom from disturbance, or alarm.” Only those who are hidden in the seclusion of the shadow of the Almighty can find complete peace of mind. And only those who are trusting in all the promises of the Word can be free from disturbance or alarm.

*O, blessed peace of a perfect trust  
That looks away from all;  
That sees Thy hand in everything,  
In great events or small;  
That hears Thy voice—a Father’s voice—  
Directing for the best:  
O blessed peace of a perfect trust,  
A heart with thee at REST!*

If under all the varying circumstances of life we have that quietness which comes with such a perfect trust we are blessed indeed, but even as in the natural picture the concrete is not sufficient of itself, so this quietness needs to be coupled with and supported by confidence.

To be confident is to be positive—bold. How are we to attain this quality? Once again we look to the Lord, this time as the source of our confidence. The wise man says (Prov. 3. 26): “For the LORD shall be thy confidence,” and in Prov. 14. 26 he shows us how, for he says: “In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence.” What is fear? Again the wise man says: “The fear of the LORD is to hate evil” (Prov. 8. 13). David says (Psa. 5. 7): “In thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.” So “fear” may be summed up as that attitude towards God which urges us to a life of sanctification and holiness (2 Cor. 7. 1). But how does reverence bring confidence? Reverence engenders faith, and faith brings confidence.

Many are the promises to those who reverence God; Psa. 25. 14: *“The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him.”* Psa. 33. 18: *“The eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him.”* Psa. 34. 7: *“The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him.”* These, and many others, do,

if accepted by faith, become a real basis for confidence, and are well summed up in Eccl. 8. 12: “It shall be well with them that fear God.”

The writer to the Hebrews says (3. 6,14 *Moffatt*): “Now we are this house of God (Temple), if we will only hold on, confident and proud of our hope. For we only participate in Christ provided that we hold firm to the very end the CONFIDENCE WITH WHICH WE STARTED”. Looking back to the time when we started out on our pilgrimage, we may recall the enthusiasm and the confidence with which we started; but, is that confidence maintained? Even as in the natural picture each material needs the support of the other, so we, if we are going to maintain our confidence to the very end, shall need to combine with it that quietness which is developed by completely trusting in our Father in every experience. In these last days it is most essential that our confidence is rightly placed, for the Scriptures warn us that if it were possible even the very elect would be deceived.

The clouds of trouble over the earth today are indeed the very chariot in which our Lord is returning in triumph; He is indeed walking on the wings of the wind of adversity—that wind which is causing “the earth (to) be removed, and...the mountains (to) be carried into the midst of the sea” (Psa. 46. 2).

But, someone may say, I believed all this, and am quietly waiting before the Lord and have confidence in him, yet I am still conscious of my own weakness. Hebrews 11. 34 (*Moffatt*) speaks of those who “from weakness won (to) strength.” Likewise, Paul said: “When I am weak then am I strong,” yet he asked the Lord to remove his weakness (thorn in the flesh), but God’s reply was: “My grace suffices for you, for POWER MATURES IN WEAKNESS” (2 Cor. 12. 9 *Weymouth*). Power (strength) did mature in Paul, but not before he came to the full realisation of his own weakness, and learned, *from experience*, that he could put his whole confidence and trust in God. So with us, it is well that we feel our own weakness, providing always that we have learned that confidence in God, through Christ, and quiet waiting before him will enable us to become pillars of strength. We may have to wait long and patiently, but even as in the natural picture the pillar cannot take its load until it has matured, so we must, even after we have attained a high standard of strength, stand in this evil day, and, having done all, to continue to stand, so that in the final

test we may prove worthy to take our place as a pillar in God's eternal habitation.

But strength is not the only quality to be found in the Temple pillars: beauty, too, will surely be seen in every saint who is elevated to this greatest of all honours.

Beauty and strength are not always combined. So often, in the natural world, strength goes hand in hand with tyranny and brutality, but in Jesus, our example, beauty and strength were combined to such a degree that as He stood before his accusers Pilate marvelled, and was constrained to exclaim: "Behold—the man." It was the power of the Holy Spirit, with which our Lord was filled, that was made manifest in the beauty of holiness which crowned his earthly ministry; so we, as we are filled with the same spirit, must develop the fruits thereof as we become stronger and stronger, so that, as power is matured in us, we may attain that growth in holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.

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## PILLARS

Biblical references and archaeological discoveries show pillars of wood, stone and brick being used in the Near East as structural supports. Often the roof beams or upper stories of a building were held up by vertical columns. (Prov. 9:1; Jud. 16:25,29; 1 Kings 7:2) The wood or brick pillars might rest on stone bases. Solomon's House of the Forest of Lebanon contained rows of cedarwood pillars supporting the beams and upper chambers. Apparently the fact that the cedar was from Lebanon or the resemblance of the pillars to a forest resulted in the building's name.

Judges 16:25, 29 *And they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison house; and he made them sport: and they set him between the pillars. And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left.*

1 Kings 7:2 *He built also the house of the forest of Lebanon; the length thereof was an hundred cubits, and the breadth thereof fifty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits, upon four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams upon the pillars.*

*Selected*



## A STRONG TOWER

“Thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy” (Psa. 61: 3). From the early times of the Judges when force and violence prevailed, towers were common among the inhabitants of Palestine (Israel) as strongholds for defence. Here they could take refuge from their foes and find themselves in safety. Owing to the disturbed state of the country, towers were built in the cities, in the forests, and in the deserts. Many of these towers were spacious enough to hold hundreds of people. They would hasten in, shut the door, climb the stairs to the roof, and standing within the battlements, look down upon their enemies below, to defy and mock them.

The Scriptures frequently make reference to this figure. “The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe” (is set aloft—margin) (Prov. 18: 10). “Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name” (Psa. 91: 14). “I am poor and sorrowful: let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high. I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving” (Psa. 69: 29-30). “He poureth contempt upon princes,...yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction” (Psa. 107: 40-41). “The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust;...my high tower... so shall I be saved from mine enemies” (Psa. 18: 2-3).

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” We honour Him by our obedience and faith when we take refuge in Him as our strong tower. By invoking His name, calling upon Him everywhere, and trusting Him at all times, we learn to set the Lord always before us, and we get to know Him whom to know is life eternal. We are safe and confident if we abide under the shadow of the Almighty. We thus cast our burden upon the Lord, our fears disappear, and we enter into the peace which passes all understanding. All around us enemies may seek to oppose, to hinder, or to injure us, but God will set us aloft and compass us about with songs of deliverance.

This does not mean we shall never be involved in trouble, but we shall always be set up above it, lifted into the atmosphere of heaven. The outward circumstances will not incessantly be removed but we shall be

enabled to rise above them, being changed and fitted as overcomers for the great inheritance that the grace of God has prepared for us in His heavenly kingdom. He wants us to keep His favour, His guidance, and His presence. He longs for us to know His sympathy, interest and Fatherly care. Our domestic, business, or religious problems; our cares, longings and joys; everything that concerns us becomes His concern. "He careth for you." "The Father himself loveth you."

There is a strong tower, the secret place of the most High, where the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity dwells with those of a contrite and humble spirit. He forgives, restores, refreshes, and gives more grace. He quickens our mortal body by his Spirit that dwells in us. He knows our frame, our temperament, and every detail of our circumstances. He makes all allowances for what we seek to do, weighs all our motives, and never misunderstands us as others often do, or as we sometimes misunderstand ourselves. He asks to leave it all in faith to Him, and He will bring forth our righteousness as the light and our judgment as the noonday.

*The Forest Gate Bible Monthly*

*JESUS is the*  
**TOWER OF STRENGTH.**

*He is the castle, the fortress in which we find protection from our enemies. JESUS says...The closer to Me you come, the clearer you see the battle lines. I have called you to be part of My army, which wars, not people or nations, but against the spiritual forces of wickedness, the centres from which sin, sickness, and grief come. In My protection you are commissioned to destroy the fortresses of speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God...*

Psalm 61:1-4 Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer. From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy. I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah.

*At The Name of Jesus*  
*Sarah Hornsby.*

**SEPTEMBER**

*He that is entered into his (God's) rest, ...hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.*  
(Hebrews 4: 10)

**Secret of Sabbath.** God has a method in everything he does. He has times and seasons. In six great epochs—called days—he created all things. This was followed by a Sabbath rest equal in length to one of those long preceding days. This implies that after arranging and bringing together the mechanism of his universe and winding it up as it were that it may speed on of its own accord, he ceased from his works.

He now rests even though Jesus proclaimed that his Father still laboured (John 5: 17). This particular work is due to the intrusion of evil which is being overruled for the sake of its own vital lessons. Having all power and wisdom, God is not perturbed during this process. He moreover appeals to all who would live, to enter into his own rest and assurance. The saints, during this present age, hear this message; they learn to rely upon God to bring individual and collective victory, and in this manner find rest.

The world of mankind has not yet been invited to share this privilege. Even so the golden doors are about to open because the 6000 years (six millenniums) have nearly run their course. Then all mankind, past, present and future, will be graciously called by the Lord of the Sabbath, to enter into his Father's rest (Mark 2: 28 ; Isa. 32: 15-18).

*FL (1944)*

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O God, who hast proven Thy love for mankind by sending us Jesus Christ our Lord, and hast illumined our human life by the radiance of His presence, I give Thee thanks for this Thy greatest gift.

And in each of these ways give me grace to follow in His footsteps.

*A Diary of Private Prayer*  
*John Baillie*

## OCTOBER



*Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. (Matthew 5: 5)*

**Teachableness:** Meekness is one of the most charming of child-like characteristics. It is opposed to pride, arrogance and self-importance. One who has it will be found approachable, teachable and responsive. Even so true meekness will be like steel in its flexibility and strength. This is because it is founded in God. One would therefore find it difficult to teach error to one who has meekness combined with purity of faith.

There are degrees of meekness. Moses in his day was the meekest man in all the earth. Jesus was so meek that thousands flocked around him without the slightest fear that they would be reproached. Instead they found a compassionate heart burning with sympathy and goodwill. Jesus exhorted them to learn of him, because he was meek and lowly in heart (Matthew 11: 28-30; Numbers 12: 3).

Opposed to meekness is pride with all its various subtleties of self-consciousness, vain reflections, touchiness, peevishness and obstinacy. These must all be overcome by those who are able to breathe from their soul depths: "In the secret of his presence, how my soul delights to hide! Oh how precious are the lessons which I learn at Jesus' side! Earthly cares can \*never vex me, \*neither trials lay me low, for when Satan comes to tempt me, to the secret place I go!" (\*Hymn versions vary)

*FL*

O God, let Thy Spirit now enter my heart.

Now as I pray this prayer, let not any room within me be furtively closed to keep Thee out.

O God, give me power to follow after that which is good.

O God, let Thy Kingdom come on earth.

Now as I pray this prayer, let me not be still intending to devote my own best hours and years to the service of lesser ends.

*A Diary of Private Prayer  
John Baillie*

**IN THE SECRET OF HIS PRESENCE—A HYMN**

IN the secret of His presence how my soul delights to hide:  
Oh, how precious are the lessons which I learn at Jesus' side.  
Earthly cares can only vex me, trials never lay me low  
And when Satan comes to tempt me, to the secret place I go.

When my soul is faint and thirsty, 'neath the shadow of His wing  
There is cool and pleasant shelter, and a fresh and crystal spring.  
And my Saviour rests beside me, as we hold communion sweet,  
If I tried, I could not utter what He says, when thus we meet.

Only this: I know, I tell Him all my doubts, and griefs, and fears.  
Oh! how patiently He listens and my drooping heart He cheers,  
Do you think He ne'er reproves me? what a false friend He would be,  
If He never, never told me of the faults which He must see.

Do you think that I could love Him half so well, or as I ought,  
If He did not plainly tell me each displeasing word or thought?  
No! for He is very faithful, and that makes me trust Him more,  
For I know that He doth love me, though sometimes He wounds me sore.

Would you like to know the sweetness of this secret of the Lord?  
Go and hide beneath His shadow, this shall then be your reward.  
And whene'er you leave the silence of that happy meeting place,  
You must mind and bear the image of the Master in your face.

These reflective and thoughtful words were penned by Ellen Lakshmi Goreh (1853-1937). She was born in Benares, now known as Varanasi, which sits on the banks of the Ganges in North India. Her father was a Christian convert. Her mother died while she was still a small baby and she was therefore adopted and in her childhood was brought to Britain.

She returned to India as a missionary in 1880 and after this she published the book, 'From India's Coral Strand: Hymns of Christian Faith' in 1883. This is one of the hymns in that book and by far the most well-known in recent years.

Here are some scriptures which are reckoned to have inspired this lady.

Psalm 31:20 Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion.

Psalm 36:7 How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.

Psalm 63:7 Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.

Psalm 91:1 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

1 Peter 1:6-8 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Psalm 19:12 Cleanse thou me from secret faults.

Heb. 12:5-11 My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, ...then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

1 John 4:10,19 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins...We love him, because he first loved us.

1 Corinthians 1:9 God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Philippians 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

James 4:8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.

## THE VIRTUOUS WOMAN

A devotional commentary on Proverbs 31: 10-31

Part 3

*She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.*

Proverbs 31: 19

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**Yod** = a hand, which performs the will in all activity. Used many times of the Lord in Whose hand we rest secure. Also of the handmaid of the Lord who ever keeps her eyes upon that hand that indicates to her by sign each dictate of His Will. Thus does she *become* His hand Whose Will she thus fulfils.

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**YIELDED HANDS:** Her hands are yielded to her Lord. Like all her members, they are His, no longer servants of the former will, but instruments of righteousness. Touched by the blood and by the oil, cleansed from all that is unworthy and impure, they function at the impulse of His Mind Whose Spirit now controls. How gladly she accepts His filling of her hands with that which ceaselessly she waves before the One this offering exalts. Day after day, and hour by hour do they untiring seek His glory, show His praise, in working out His Will, and in her heart His ways. In homely language does this verse its lesson serve this offering to describe. In one hand is the distaff from which the thread is slowly unwound. From the other the spindle hangs. Inch by inch the thread of life passes through her hands. Moment by moment does the spindle spin the seconds by. There is no going back. Of each moment is something made, nor can it be reversed or yet undone. Something is learned, or virtue gained, the processing of time. Through consecrated hands the moments pass, experience and privilege first to last, while to the end the spindle spins, and thus with many fibres forms the thread. Of every moment is there some thing wrought. Like forty days in embryo each hour a change, each moment does it grow, nor does one moment lapse but is so. With wondrous sense of purpose is her life transformed from pointless wandering to a shining way. Thus does she take each moment as it comes and e'er it slips through fingers and away she uses it to glory of her Lord. Thus patience does perform its perfect work, until holiness adorn the servant of the Lord.

**HANDFULS OF PURPOSE:** Tedious the work of gleaning, like that spinning inch by inch. The single ears of corned picked one by one. So

Ruth gleaned in the field 'til evening came. But one was watching and observed that maid of Moab's stooping frame, and her meticulous care. How well she searched and gathered, one hand reaching while the other to her breast received and clasped the sheaf she gained. And from his lips (who was to be her future Bridegroom) came the instruction to his servants concerning her, that they let fall "handfuls of purpose" for her to find. Did she the message get? Did she thus realise that overruling of her lord? Do we? "Where hast thou gleaned today?"

...AND ALL THE WOMEN...BROUGHT WHAT THEY HAD SPUN...

Exodus 35: 25.

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AND IN THE STONE A NAME WAS WRITTEN

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*She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.* Proverbs 31: 20

**Caph** = a covering wing, or the hollow of a palm. Wings were used to cover and protect, to succour and defend. Comforting their warmth and cheer to those in need. Used to describe the dear Lord's care of those He owns as His. His hands too open to fulfil and satisfy each heart's desire.

**CHILD OF CONSOLATION:** Her name is Charity as her Father's Name is Love. The cheer and goodness that her Lord brings to her life she gladly shares, and knows whatever form such giving takes her own supply will never fail. In emptying she the more is filled, and her abundance overflows to all around. Each cool refreshing cup of water from her hands ne'er fails to guarantee her Master's smile. As many blessings fill the heart that cared. Touched with the feeling of her Lord's compassion, thus does she know the joy of love that lives most when it gives. The "poor" in this verse means those depressed whether in mind alone or circumstance. The reaching out towards all such who need that helping hand, some word of understanding cheer, encouragement and love, involves a caring sensitive heart. It cannot bear its blessed fullness now except to share with those around whose emptiness cries out. Thus deeper grows that bond with her dear Lord, both in her burden bearing and her grace, her sharing all she has, communion of heaven's love. A child of consolation she indeed a breath of heaven breaths into the lives of those whose hearts are low. Known is she, like her God, for refuge, shelter, strength, no, not her

own, but His, for His comfort she fits to others needs. The Spirit of her Lord within attracts not to herself but to the One she serves in ministry of that grace received. Inducing trust, such spirit makes her first to whom they turn when earthly comforts fail.

CHALICE OF CHEER: Hers is the privilege of dispensing now a foretaste of that sweet transforming power this earth shall know in age of love to come. She cannot yet wipe out all tears, but introduces broken hearts to One Who can and will. The reaper, death, she cannot stay, but 'neath its shadow other prisoners hear that song at night's dark hour when she is called to share their pain. If thus her songs of love's salvation one heart claim to turn from prisoner of dark to one of hope, or cause one tearful face to look towards the cross, her life is not in vain. Yet greater joys remain to which such foretastes point. How blest that hour when from death's power the Bride cries "come!", and first to ankles, then to waist, to neck, the weary world first taste and then are overwhelmed by heaven's grace, and that abundant life of knowing God, and walk the path that previously she trod. Each act today of sharing, caring love, engraves more deep that likeness to the Lord, more able makes that minister of grace when heaven's windows open from above to flood this earth with glory.

AND SAVIOURS SHALL COME UP ON MOUNT ZION

CURIOSLY WROUGHT IN THE LOWEST PARTS OF THE EARTH

*She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet. Proverbs 31:21*

**Lamed** = an ox goad. It was used to motivate and thus to guide the ox according to the wishes of its master. In Ecclesiastes 12: 11 it is used to describe the words of the wise. In Acts 26: 14 it refers to the pricking of the conscience in the mind of Saul of Tarsus.

LABOURS OF LOVE: The labours motivated by true love of her brethren of the Household of God ever seeketh their highest welfare and good. Such love anticipates with wise foresight the future needs of failing years,

and seeks to build up and to strengthen faith in things unseen, dependence on the strength that faileth not when human strength gives way. The effect of her fellowship is thus to deepen trust and to encourage that maturing of the spirit mind, the fitting of the armour well secure against the needs of battles yet to be, that in the evil day they thus may stand. The flimsy passing arguments of time that tend with fruitless words to shipwreck faith, sow discord among friends, and serve the enemy whose devices we well know, can never serve the interest of saints. The structure founded firm, established and secure in Him we love, must grow in things divine—gold tried in fire, in truth's bright silver framed, with precious gems of promise overlaid, a building worthy of our God, His Temple Spirit-filled, made to endure. Such will not fear when icy blasts of winter chill the air, when looking for our friends, they are not there! To this upbuilding does the woman's task not cease, until, her brethren served, she is at peace in knowing that they share in deed, not word, that "secret place," where they may be secure, whatever comes.

LUXURIOUS LIVING: Having a Father Who loves to make abundant provision for His child's comfort and blessing, the Betrothed shares that deep desire that the household of God indulge in all the blessings of abundant living available to them now. The Lord's saints may be poor in the eyes of the world, yet are they rich in faith. They must learn to live with glory, learn to live in the centre of a great love the dimensions of which they have yet to comprehend. Their garments are of scarlet (margin, 'double garments'). Theirs are the great privileges of firstborns. They are of a royal line, all children of a King. All these blessed realities, the exceeding great and precious promises, the dizziness of the height of the heavenly calling, the untold treasures of divine truth, all things are for their sakes that the abundant grace might, through the thanksgiving of many, redound to the glory of God. This wondrous provision, the abundance of His thoughts towards us, the riches of His mercy and tender love, all combine to produce that warm inner glow of the beloved of God. Her household will not fear the snow in winter, the chill of earthly loss. The mighty fortress of all the divine resources remains her impregnable abode.

I WILL LAY THY FOUNDATIONS WITH SAPPHIRES

*She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple. Prov. 31:22*

**Mem** = water, the waters of the sea. The greatest covering. When the earth was passing through its earlier stages, “Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains.” Psalm 104: 6. In due course the whole earth will thus be filled with the knowledge of His glory.



**MANTLE MAKING.** With the vision of that blessed hope in her heart, the wife of the Lamb makes herself ready. As probationary minister of reconciliation she adorns herself with meekness and the mantle of mercy. Her ability as a future minister of the new covenant is related, she knows, to the preparation of the garments of glory and beauty which depict the blessed qualities required of the Christ to befit the work before them and to relate to the satisfying of every human need. Here and now is the time and place of that preparation. Then there is the wedding dress, the cutting out, the making up, the putting on and fitting of His likeness. The sanctifying power of the hope combines with the experimental ‘suffering with,’ and ‘dying with,’ that constitutes that ‘fellowship,’ that ‘sharing’ with her Lord, to form such closeness that His character and mind in her is formed. The path to glory for each saint is marked out by the footprints of the Lamb.

**THROUGHLY FURNISHED.** Her hours she spends in the beautifying of the House of God, His dwelling place. She takes to heart the instructions, and corrections and reproof of the divine Word. Thus is His sanctuary ‘furnished right through’ in that blessed and holy way that makes the God of glory feel at rest, at home. His Spirit grants the wisdom and the skill, as in the days the Tent of God was made a shadow of His dwelling-place today. That Spirit thus adorns all she does touch, and ‘everyday’ and ‘ordinary’ transforms, for everything she does is for her God. Her garments were foreshown in priestly dress, fine linen (not here ‘silk’) of righteousness, while purple to another priesthood points. The order now is of Melchisedec, the King of Righteousness and King of Peace. So high the call she knows, so short the hours that yet remain to make that calling sure. In His hands are her times, Who, calling, knew the heart that would respond to favour shown. He trusts her zeal this one thing to do, all else forsaking, and redeeming time, that she might so run to obtain. In turn she trusts her Lord, Who would not call without supplying every needed aid, and grace sufficient for the pressing task.

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HE SET THE ROYAL CROWN UPON HER HEAD, AND MADE HER  
QUEEN (Esther 2: 17)

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*Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of  
the land. Proverbs 31:23*

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**Nun** = a fish, the name of a gate of the city of Jerusalem. Though dubious the source, the fish became one of the earliest symbols of the Christian church, an acronym for the title in the Greek, 'Jesus Christ of God the Son Saviour', each first letter being taken to form the word *ichthys*, 'fish'.

THE NOBLE NAME. Wonderful Counsellor, He sits at the gate of all knowledge, epitome of the wisdom of the truly wise. Of the Creator, Source of all the great unsearchables, He alone could say, "I have known Thee." He also knows with intimate acquaintance all there is in man. Ruth 4:1 "Then went Boaz up to the gate, (where all matters were decided,) and sat him down there:" with the elders of the city. The Law had claims over Ruth, but could not help her. Boaz settled the claim of Law on her behalf. He acted as her 'gaal', her 'next of kin', redeemer. "What the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh" He has done for this His future Bride. He "hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law." (Romans 8:2,3. Galatians 3:13.) The cost of that redemption and the way that it was met conveys some inkling of her preciousness to Him. In her eyes He is Wonderful indeed, His Name the name of Wisdom and of Love. The only Name all other names above.

NEXT OF KIN. Nearer and dearer than the closest friend, His is the Name she shares. This is the honour that she treasures most, to bear His Name. What sense of honour does this bring, and with what carefulness she walks, that she be worthy of that Name. In His Name does she serve, in His Name pray, in His Name shares with God her deep desires. To call upon that Name is to be saved. To breath that Name, the deepest peace inspires. Its holiness repels unworthy thought. No impure word, no shameful act of hers shall bring upon that Name the least reproach. Her whole life honours it, and hers the first of knees that bow at its sweet sound. When one day every knee will bend, all tongues confess Him as their worthy Lord, she longs to then be at His side to lead and welcome for Him all acclaim, who first has trusted in that Name.

THY NAME IS AS OINTMENT POURED FORTH, THEREFORE DO  
THE VIRGINS LOVE THEE (Song of Solomon 1: 3)

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A GOLDEN REED, TO MEASURE THE CITY, AND THE GATES  
AND WALL

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*She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant. Proverbs 31:24*

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**Samech** = a prop or support. *A measure of the love* for her husband is the **D** *total support* she seeks to give to Him and to His work. The upholding of His word, and defence of His good Name, in these things she would wish to be His ‘*pillar of strength.*’

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**SAVOUR OF SALT.** The seal of a saint is the influence of the life. Her Lord is known for love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity. She is His partner here below, ‘salt’ of the earth. Together is the title shared “Light of the world.” His influence within her glows, her life in flesh does manifest the life of Christ. Salt by its nature purifies. Corruption is resisted by its power, and further it adds relish to all touched. So in her life the woman’s touch endows the everyday occasions with a grace befitting to her call. The linen she prepares is yet to clothe the many imperfections of the world. The many righteous acts of saintly souls may seem today to influence so few, but this does not deter her holding forth that living Word, nor can she hide for long the torch that burns within. She whists not that her face her “life” betrays, nor knows what influence her ways may yet reveal. The time may be that others may recall, at hour of their deep need, the light she bore, and glorify her Lord.

**SATISFYING SERVICE.** Not only does she become perceptive in her appreciation of righteousness, and the qualities of service that distinguish human from divine, but her wearing of these adornments so fitly and with such grace models them for the world around. People tend to want what they can see brings satisfaction and delight to other’s lives. The blessings of the truth and of the Light, the Christian’s joy and peace best advertise. The world will hear her call to “Come and buy!” and then will sluice-gates open to engulf this earth with all the blest effects of righteousness. For this great call the Bride even now prepares. What she has learned of grace she then will share to turn the tide of human misery. His jewels who His character reveal, that light and beauty of a holy walk, will then turn men on earth to righteousness, and like the suns will shine into this world with all the warmth of heaven’s love. The **reed of gold**, that standard of

divine, to which all things on earth must measure up in time, ***will be the finished Christ***, the Head and Body too, in whom He now engraves to His eternal praise that righteous holy law.

THE OVERCOMER . . . “ I WILL MAKE A PILLAR IN THE TEMPLE”

DH

## PILLARS



The most noteworthy pillars in Solomon’s temple were two huge copper pillars named Jachin and Boaz at the porch. (1 Kings 7:21)

For he cast two pillars of brass, of eighteen cubits high apiece: and a line of twelve cubits did compass either of them about. (1 Kings 7:15)

The height of the one pillar was eighteen cubits, and the chapter upon it was brass: and the height of the chapter three cubits; and the wreathen work, and pomegranates upon the chapter round about, all of brass: and like unto these had the second pillar with wreathen work. (2 Kings 25:17)

The king stood at his pillar at the entering in, and the princes and the trumpets by the king: and all the people of the land rejoiced, and sounded with trumpets, also the singers with instruments of musick, and such as taught to sing praise. (2 Chronicles 23:13)

The king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant. (2 Kings 23:3)

*Selected*

## PRAYER AND THE BIBLE

### Part 5

#### **How God's Will is Realised**

But most of these expressions were sealed (1 Pet. 1:10-12; Matt. 13:16-17; Dan. 12:9). Nearly all were dark sayings and parables and therefore unintelligible, and by men much misunderstood and misapplied. None but the "wise" or spiritually-minded can understand the "deep things" of God, and then only when these are due to be revealed (Dan. 12:10; Acts 1:7-8; 1 Cor. 2:9-16). But as soon as the sealed communications of God are comprehended, they are re-expressed plainly, and at once the requisite power is granted to carry them into effect. Jesus was the first to have this honour (Col. 1:17-18). When he was baptised with the Holy Spirit at Jordan the "heavens were opened unto him," and he then gained an understanding of many of the dark sayings of the past (Matt. 3:16). The types became clear to him through his spirit of discernment; for the Holy Spirit has an enlightening action on the mind. Christ was thus enabled to re-express the previously sealed declarations of God, that the will of God might be accomplished or realised (Heb. 1:1-2; Heb. 2:3-4).

The unfolding of the Old Testament Scriptures revealed to Jesus what was the will of the heavenly Father regarding the part he had himself to perform in the great work of salvation; and thus knowing the perfect Divine will he prayed for its fulfilment. As the result of his prayers our Lord was able to address his followers with life-giving words, and carry on his miracles and works of healing. We read in Mark 1:35-39 that Jesus, "rising up a great while before day, ... departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." Immediately after this he is reported as preaching the Gospel and healing the sick. Also in Luke 5:16-17, after mentioning that the fame of Christ had gone abroad so that great multitudes came together to hear him and to be healed of their infirmities, the narrative relates that "He withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed." It then declares that the "power of the Lord was present to heal them." These and other examples demonstrate the intimate connection between the prayers of Jesus to his heavenly Father, and the manifestations of power by which he was able to preach with effect, and perform miraculous healings. They are consistent with his own confession, which he constantly impressed upon his disciples, that: "I can of mine own self do nothing...because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John

5:30). Because he delighted to do the will of the Father his prayers were always honoured, as he himself intimated: “The Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him” (Psa. 40:8; John 8:28-29). And not only in the matter of preaching and healing did he require to pray, but for wisdom also that he might correctly interpret the will of God in other features of the Divine Plan.

Just as Jesus Christ received the spirit of discernment to enable him to comprehend and give intelligible expression to the dark sayings of the ancient prophets, so his followers have been granted a like power. As Jesus said: “Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God” (Mark 4:11); but to the world in general these things are still sealed. Jesus even thanked the Father that the Plan of Salvation was hidden from the wise and prudent of the earth, and was revealed only to those who like children had a humble and teachable disposition (Matt. 11:25-26; 18:1-4).

In furtherance of Jehovah’s wise arrangement to conduct the operation of the Plan in secret, and thus make accurate knowledge of it the exclusive privilege of his covenanted, spirit-begotten people, Jesus himself never addressed the multitudes except in parables (Matt. 13: 10-13, 34-35). His answers to the direct questionings of the sceptical, fault-finding rulers were evasive, for he did not intend they should understand. Even the explanations of his parables granted to his enquiring and truth-hungry disciples are not comprehended by any who are not faithful children of God, (Mark 4:33-34; Luke 10:22-24). The hard heart of unbelief is impervious to the simple message God’s love (Prov. 28:14; Mark 8:14-21). The world therefore is altogether unable to give expression to the will of God, for they do not know it. And as they cannot give expression, God’s will or idea concerning the Kingdom is not realised through their agency. No, it is the Church of the Living God who understand his will and are honoured, as was Jesus, to give voice to his purposes and thus call into operation all the resources of Jehovah’s mighty power to accomplish his work (1 Cor. 2:14-16). This is the teaching of Eph. 3: 9-12 (Diaglott).

### **The World’s Greatest Battle**

The earthly life of Jesus furnishes us with many illustrations of how the power of God is exercised when his will is expressed in prayer. The greatest conflict ever waged was during these forty days that Jesus spent in the wilderness after being anointed with the Holy Spirit and with

power. Satan, the powerful adversary of God, there tried his utmost to entice away Jesus' heart-loyalty to his heavenly Father. "Fall down and worship me," he said, 'and I will give you all the kingdoms of the world.' But Jesus expressed Jehovah's will by replying: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matt. 4:8-11). The utterances of God's spirit-begotten children, when expressed harmoniously with the Divine will and in implicit faith, is of the nature of prayer.

Jesus could not be induced, even under the trying conditions of hunger and thirst, to forsake his God and give his heart to another. He would not allow his sweet communion with his heavenly Father in heaven to be severed. Satan, by his deceptive lie, had succeeded in the garden of Eden in enticing away the heart of man to himself; and because communication with God was broken he had retained his power over the world. But the Man Christ Jesus resisted him, and through the wonderful power of his Father's words defeated the enemy of God and man forever! Jehovah had re-established everlasting communication with the hitherto alienated earth through the heart of another, loyal, man (Matt. 3:17; 12:17-18); and he there began to reclaim His earthly Kingdom, because His perfect will was now done on earth once more. All previous communicative work was tentative, and based upon the foreknown work of Christ (John 8:56; 1 Pet. 1:10-12).

From this time onward Jesus called into requisition the power of the Lord of heaven and earth by means of prayer. Through his loyal heart God could operate and finish his great work, his seventh-day-rest work, of reclaiming the fallen world to himself. The Church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven, are the first to escape the condemnation; for the power of God exerted through his loyal Son accomplishes a sanctifying work in those who heed the message (John 17:15-20; Rom. 1:16). These hear the word of reconciliation, and in response to the invitation: "My son, give me thine heart," they take away their (unwitting) allegiance to the god of this world, Satan, and give their heart-loyalty to the heavenly Father (Prov. 23:26; Col. 1:8-13). God is then able to use them to accomplish further features of his purposes, and to send his operative power through the medium of their prayers (Col. 4:3; 1 Thess. 3:10; 1 Pet. 3:12; Phil. 1:19).

Although Satan is vanquished he is allowed his freedom temporarily in

order that the power of God may be manifested in winning over a few here and there by the message of love. Such as respond to this message are said to be delivered from the power of darkness, and are translated into the Kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. 1:13). And after a sufficient number have joined forces with the Conqueror, giving their heart's loyalty to him and agreeing to do his will, the devil will be bound for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1-2), during which all the remainder of his deluded subjects will be won over under more favourable conditions, and will learn to love their new Ruler with all their heart (Isa. 25:8-9). And when the evil one is let loose at the end of the thousand years, and tries again to entice men to give their services to him, he will not succeed (Rev. 20:7-8). The love of their victorious King will be so much appreciated that they will then be immovably loyal to him (Rev. 21:4-5). The incorrigible who lack love will be destroyed with the devil (Matt. 25:41-46; Rev. 21:6-8). God's will shall then be done on earth (in all men's hearts) as it is now done in heaven.

*Next time—God's Power Works Through Prayer*

*ME*



## PILLARS

The material and function of structural pillars made them fittingly symbols of sturdy support. They would illustrate that which securely upholds. The Christian congregation could be called a “pillar and support of the truth” for through it Christians learn and gain understanding about the truths of God's Word.

1 Timothy 3:15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

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## TIMES AND SEASONS

### Part 5. The sojourn in Egypt

The period between the entry of Jacob and his family into Egypt and the Exodus under Moses is known as the sojourn in Egypt. During this time the descendants of Jacob's twelve sons grew into a nation of some two million people. They went down as a family; they came up a nation. It is from this time that the history of the people of Israel begins.

The sojourn in Egypt lasted for four hundred years. There is no connected history of the period. Between the death of Joseph and the birth of Moses is a blank and were it not for three casual allusions, in Genesis, Exodus and Acts, it would not be possible to determine from the Scriptures just what interval of time did elapse. But these three references do afford all the information that is necessary.

When the Lord told the patriarch Abraham that his descendants would ultimately possess the land in which he had settled, He also made it known that before inheriting it they would sojourn awhile in an alien land. "*Know of a surety*" He said "*that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict **them four hundred years**; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the **fourth generation** they shall come hither again*" (Gen. 15. 13-16). Two significant facts emerge; one, that the sojourn would last four hundred years, and the other, that the return would take place in the fourth generation. With the modern idea of several generations to a century in mind these statements would seem irreconcilable, but this is not the case. In the days of Abraham, when men lived well beyond a century and children were being born at anything up to 120 or so, a hundred years was a reasonable figure for a generation. Isaac, for example, was born 230 years after his grandfather Terah. One consequence of this was that a much greater number of generations was living simultaneously than is the case nowadays. It can be shown that at the time of the Exodus members of the fourth to the eleventh generations were living and participated in the departure from Egypt under Moses. The four hundred year period is confirmed by Stephen at his trial before the Sanhedrin (Acts 7. 6) quoting from this passage in Genesis.

The other relevant statement is in the story of the Exodus, where Exod. 12. 40-41 reads, in the A.V., “*Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was **four hundred and thirty years**. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt*”. There would seem to be a discrepancy of thirty years between this and the former statements, but this can be resolved by a little investigation. Both the \*Samaritan Pentateuch and the Alexandrian Septuagint render this verse “*the sojourning of the children of Israel (\*and of their fathers), which they sojourned in the land of Egypt **and the land of Chanaan** (Canaan), was 430 years.*” (LXX margin) This dates the commencement of the “sojourn”, not at the entry into Egypt, but at the time of Jacob’s arrival at Bethel in Canaan on his return from Padan-Aram about thirty years earlier. His twelve sons were the “fathers” of these renderings: “our fathers” is the expression used to denote them by Stephen in Acts. 7. 11. Confirmation of this comes from Paul’s words to the Galatians in Gal. 3. 17 “*The covenant, that was (previously) confirmed before of (by) God, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul...*”. (The words “in Christ” are a late intrusion into the text and should be omitted.) It is clear that Paul was either quoting from the Septuagint, as he so often did, or that the Hebrew text of his day contained the additional phrases which it has since lost so that the A.V. omits them in consequence. The “covenant” therein mentioned is obviously the original one made with Abraham and the “law” is the second covenant, made between the Lord and Israel at the time of the Exodus. The “confirmation” referred to is certainly something other than the original making of the covenant with Abraham, and it does seem very well to fit the occasion recorded in Gen. 35. 1-15 when God met with Jacob at the sacred site of Bethel, reiterating and confirming the terms of the covenant and assuring Jacob that he and his seed would assuredly be its inheritors. The chronological indications in Genesis are reasonably conclusive that this event took place in Jacob’s 100th year, thirty years before he went down into Egypt.

It has sometimes been suggested that the 430 years should be counted from the departure of Abraham from Haran 215 years before Jacob entered Egypt, so that the combined “sojourning” of the elder patriarchs Abraham and Isaac could also be included. Against this it has to be recognised that there was no covenant existing at that time. Not until

many years later, when Abraham was 86, was there talk of a covenant, and its terms were not fully stated until he was 99. There is no reasonable starting point for the 430 years so far back.

Some additional support for this claimed “short” period of 215 years in Egypt is provided by the apparent pedigree of Moses derived from certain passages in Exodus and Numbers, from which it would appear that Moses was Levi’s great-grandson. To fit this into the 400 year period requires that Moses and his forebears were each born when their fathers were 125 years of age, which, whilst not completely out of the question in the light of conditions indicated by the Scriptures as prevailing at that time, is in the highest degree unlikely. Hence the 215 year period is sometimes advocated as the only one to which this pedigree can be fitted. This situation will be examined in greater detail presently but it can be said here and now that a much weightier argument in favour of the 400 year period is the impossibility of the stated number of Levites appointed to the service of the Tabernacle being derived from the three sons of Levi in just four generations. This in turn is associated with the known number of the adult male population at the time of the Exodus, and the question naturally arises as to whether the Scriptures contain sufficient data to estimate sufficiently closely the time required for the twelve sons of Jacob to grow into a nation of that size.

From its very nature the result of the calculation must be taken with a certain amount of reserve, but its implications are interesting, especially in the light they throw on the manner in which apparently casual and unconnected remarks in the text present, in association with one another, a strong testimony to the factual accuracy of the narratives. This accuracy can only be accounted for by accepting that these early books were actually written at the era with which they deal, and not, as the “modern scholarship” still loves to claim, a thousand years later by priestly scribes gathering scraps of folklore and legend out of which they constructed the story. The essential data is as follows:

The census conducted by Moses a few weeks after leaving Egypt showed that the number of adult males above 20 years of age was 603,550 (Exodus 38. 26).

The number of Levites, descendants of Levi, aged between 30 and 50, for  
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the service of the Tabernacle, was 8,580 (Num. 4. 48).

Jacob's twelve sons fathered 51 sons between them, an average of a little over four per family. From various genealogies and casual allusions the families of another 31 individuals of later generations show a similar average of four per family, falling off slightly in the generation of the Exodus. The span of life was anything up to 137 (\*Levi and Amram); Moses and Aaron 120 and 123, Joseph 110; probably a century would be a good average. (This was the accepted expectation of life in Egypt at the same time.) It can be deduced from the narratives that births were normally between the early thirties and late seventies, so that so far as can be discerned from the accounts the four sons and four daughters of each average family were born over this period.

On this basis a rather tedious but illuminating calculation shows that the 51 grandsons of Jacob would have grown in 400 years to some 600,000 men above 20 years of age, and the Levites between 30 and 50 to some 8,200, both of which are remarkably close to the actual figures recorded in Exodus and Numbers, as stated above. Too much stress must not be laid on this, since a quite small difference in the basic assumptions, average children per family, for example, or the influence of possible epidemics during the sojourn carrying away numbers of Israelites, could make an appreciable difference to the result. The calculation does at least support the accuracy of the 400 year alternative as against the 215. To attain this number of grown men at the Exodus in 215 years would require that every man had 18 children and this between the ages of 20 and 60, which, while not physically impossible, is unlikely, especially in that period of history, and has no supporting indication in Scripture. Neither would it be possible to attain the 8,580 Levites between 30 and 50; the best that could be attained in 215 years would be 3,600 which is much too far away from the Scriptural figure.

There is, though, one apparent argument for the 215 years in Egypt, viz; the Authorised Version statement that Jochebed the mother of Moses was the daughter of Levi. This, if correct, would make Moses the grandson of Levi on his mother's side and imply an extremely short period between the entry to Egypt and the Exodus. Several times Moses is said to have been the son of Amram, husband of Jochebed, and it has been tacitly assumed on the strength of these statements that Amram son of Kohath,

\* Exod. 6. 16,20

son of Levi, is the individual referred to. A little thought shows that this cannot be the case. The male descendants of the four sons of Kohath, (Amram and his three brothers) numbered 8,600 at the Exodus (Num. 3. 27-28) and by no stretch of the imagination could it be thought that Moses had something like 2000 brothers. The genealogies do not make clear that Amram the father of Moses was a different individual living several generations later. This points to the necessity of a closer examination of the relevant texts.

Exod. 2. 1 says that “*a man of the house of Levi...took to wife a daughter of Levi*”. “Daughter” is *bath*, which is used for daughter, granddaughter or female descendant. (Example Josh. 17. 6—“daughters of Manasseh” although their father was \*Zelophehad.) The parents of Moses were both descended from the line of Levi but in what generation is not here stated.

Exod. 6. 20 has it “*Amram took him Jochebed his father’s sister to wife; and she bare him Aaron and Moses.*” “Father’s sister” here is *dodah*, which means an aunt—father’s sister or uncle’s wife. The Septuagint gives a variation “Amram (Amram) took to wife Jochabed (Joshebed) the daughter of his father’s brother” i.e. his cousin. This may be thought a little more reasonable than the A.V. “aunt” although at that time when so many generations were contemporary the aunt in one family could well be considerably younger than the cousin in another. Nevertheless no indication of the particular generation in Levi’s line is given.

The most difficult text is the third, Num. 26. 58-59; “*Kohath begat Amram. And the name of Amram’s wife was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, whom her mother bare to Levi in Egypt: and she bare unto Amram Aaron and Moses, and Miriam their sister*”. The Hebrew text is admitted to be faulty; the words “her mother” do not exist and were supplied by the A.V. translators to help out what they thought was the sense. In their place the Hebrew has *atha* which could be a second personal pronoun but then implies that Jochebed “bare” herself to Levi which is an absurdity. The alternative, favoured by a number of responsible scholars, is that “*atha*” is a proper name, that of the mother of Jochebed. The expression “bare to Levi” could then mean that this Atha bare Jochebed to a husband who was of the line of Levi so that the child was accredited to its more remote ancestor, a practice met with elsewhere in the Scriptures, generally when for some reason it was not desired to mention the intervening generations,

or they were not known. Another and more likely explanation is that the unknown father of Jochebed was himself named Levi, after his illustrious ancestor. There are at least three other individuals named Levi mentioned in the Bible, and this extra one is not out of place. It would not occur to the historian to explain that the Levi to whom Atha bore Jochebed was not the famous progenitor of the tribe several generations earlier.

The literal Hebrew in this text runs “Amram’s wife was Jochebed, a daughter (descendant) of Levi whom damsel Atha bare to Levi (*asher yaldah atha le-Levi*) in Egypt”. This verse, together with the other two referring to Moses’ parents, is consistent with the conclusion that Amram the father of Moses was a descendant of Kohath in probably the fourth or later generations, married to Jochebed who was a daughter of an unnamed descendant of Levi, (perhaps also named Levi), married to the otherwise unknown Atha. The purpose of Num. 26. 59, set as it is in the middle of an account of the census of Levites taken just before entering the land, is clearly to establish the legality of descent of Moses and Aaron from Levi the father of the tribe. The expression in vs. 58 “Kohath begat Amram” can quite as reasonably apply to his later descendant, the “second Amram”, father of Moses, despite the fact that one of his own sons had the same name.

This still leaves the fact that Exod. 6. 20 does read as if Amram father of Moses is presented as identical with Amram the son of Levi and this should be considered before leaving the subject. An examination of Exodus chap. 6 reveals the very strong probability that verses 14-27 are an insertion by a hand other than Moses, at a much later date, intended to establish the lineage of Moses and Aaron at a time when the fact might be called into question. “*These are that Aaron and Moses, to whom the LORD said, Bring out the children of Israel....These are they which spake to Pharaoh*” say verses 26-27, as if to impress the point. Certainly these words are not from the hand of Moses and must have been added after his death. Verse 28 connects very naturally with verse 13. At verse 14 the unknown reviser starts off by recapitulating the list of tribal heads of Israel given in Gen. 46 but after recording Reuben, Simeon and Levi he diverges to record Levi’s posterity down to Moses and Aaron’s grandson Phinehas. He never went on to include the remaining tribal heads, his purpose now having been served. His information regarding Moses must have been taken from Num. 26. 59 which was part of the official census



Considerable light can be shed upon the sojourn in Egypt by contemporary Egyptian history but the details of this require a separate treatise in itself. Modern research has quite clearly established that the Exodus took place during the 18th Egyptian dynasty, in or near the year 1453 B.C. and that Amenhotep II was the Pharaoh of the Exodus. This date is demanded also by the 480 years of 1 Kings 6. 1 to the 4th year of Solomon so that it can be accepted as Scriptural. The record of Exodus fits in very accurately to the political events of this period. Jacob entered Egypt near enough to 1853 B.C. during the 12th Egyptian dynasty which came to an end about the time of the death of Joseph. A century later came the Hyksos invasion from Syria which gave Egypt its 15th and 16th dynasties, bitterly resented by the native Egyptians but, since the Hyksos were themselves of Semitic race, probably welcomed by the Israelites with whom they would have felt some kinship. Then about 1600 B.C. came the successful rebellion against Hyksos rule which expelled them from Egypt and restored native Egyptian Pharaohs, the 17th and 18th dynasties. It would be only natural that the victors would look with disfavour upon the alien Israelites who were racially akin to the defeated Hyksos. This could have been the time indicated by Exod. 1. 8 when *“there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph”*, the “new king”, if actually an individual, being one of the early rulers of the 18th dynasty, perhaps Thotmes (Thutmose) I, father of the Princess Hatshepsut, the “daughter of Pharaoh” who took the child Moses out of the Nile. This brings Moses’ forty years in Midian within the reign of the famous Thotmes (Thutmose) III, Pharaoh of the oppression, the only Pharaoh of the period whose reign was long enough to cover that forty years, and whose death occurred only a few years before the Exodus, so that everything fits. The Biblical claim that the Israelites were 400 years in Egypt is thus quite feasible and more probable than any alternative when viewed in the light of Egyptian history.

AOH

*To be continued*



Nearer, still nearer, close to Thy Heart,  
 Draw me, my Saviour, so precious Thou art;  
 Fold me, O fold me close to Thy breast,  
 Shelter me safe in that “Haven of Rest,”  
 Shelter me safe in that “Haven of Rest.”

## PAUL'S EPISTLE TO TITUS

Titus was a Greek and was converted to the gospel by Paul, who in consequence called him “mine own son” (1:4). He proved to be of much comfort to Paul in his affliction (2 Cor. 7:6); and is shown to have had a loving care for the brethren generally (2 Cor. 7:15).

The epistle was written to Titus when he was in the island of Crete. There is no actual record that Paul had been there, but by implication we must conclude that Paul was there with Titus, for it is recorded in Titus 1:5 that Paul left Titus in Crete to consolidate the work of the gospel, and to create Christian assemblies in every city. The epistle shows that the apostle's motive in writing to Titus was that he foresaw the progress of the gospel being endangered by “many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers” (1:10). Paul uses other strong words in verses 11 to 13—rebukes which may have been intended for the false teachers rather than the Cretans generally, although he quotes one of their own prophets as having said, truthfully in his opinion, that “the Cretians (the modern spelling is Cretans) are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies”. The Cretans were notorious for their untruthfulness, and there is a Greek word “*cretizo*” which means “to lie”. Their Prophet had also ranked them with animals, and as “idle gluttons” (RV), which means that they were of uncontrolled greed. The wonder is that among such a low community God should ordain that some among them should obtain salvation through the proclamation of the gospel there. Most of Paul's epistles showed the depravity which existed in his day in cities which were largely pagan, and yet as God told the apostle regarding Corinth, “I have much people in this city”, so it was with Crete.

**Good works of faith.** Throughout the epistle emphasis is laid on “good works” and their maintenance (3:8) as the necessary evidence in all the brethren of salvation and this burden is laid upon Titus himself (2:7), and comprises Paul's final word of exhortation in 3:14. These works, of course, would be works as the outcome of their faith.

**Chapter 1** is concerned with the appointment of elders or bishops (overseers) by Titus. **Chapter 2** widens out to different sections of members of the Christian assemblies, with separate exhortations for aged men, aged women, young women, young men, Titus himself and slaves.

Much of the advice given is as instructive for modern times as when written. Titus (and the “thou” is emphatic) is instructed (v.1) to speak things that are suited to, and consistent with sound teaching. We today will be much profited by carefully reading and considering all Paul’s instruction, according to our respective age group, although in the present article, we can refer only to a few of the characteristics given.

Verse 2 referring to aged men indicates that their general behaviour must tally with belief. We mention gravity which is urged upon them, and make the observation that gravity does not mean gloominess.

Verses 3 to 5 urge the aged women to be “reverent in demeanour” (RV), and instructors, not publicly, of good things, and particularly in training (RSV) the young women in their domestic lives. This would be in order to counter the home-disturbing tactics of the false teachers, as shown in 1:11: “Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake”. The object of the wholesome instruction is vividly expressed in the words “that the word of God be not blasphemed” (Titus 2:5) or injuriously spoken against. Here it is not the “name” of God but His “word”—the message of the gospel of salvation—that might be besmirched and brought into disrepute in the eyes of unbelievers outside the assemblies. How careful all of us must be that our conduct shall not bring discredit upon that which we profess!

Young men are to be sober-minded, which has perhaps special significance in service for the Lord, as Paul wrote in Rom. 12:3: “For I say...to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith”.

Titus himself was also exhorted that he be a “pattern” (v.7), that is to say, an example. Paul exhorted Timothy similarly: “Be thou an example of the believers” (1 Tim. 4:12); not alone “to” believers but rather that he ‘be a specimen of what is a true believer’.

Slaves are exhorted in verses 9-10 (RSV) to observe a course of life which would have been completely the reverse of the conduct of slaves generally in those days. The latter part of v. 10 “that they may adorn the doctrine of

God our Saviour in all things” might at first appear as only applicable to slaves, but it is incumbent on all believers to be bound by these profound and urgent words. We are all called upon to “adorn the teaching” that has been imparted to us in God’s word. The word for “adorn” in the original was used in “the arrangement of jewels to set off their beauty”. This obligation is imposed upon all of us to beautify the already beautiful message, together with its precepts, which we have received.

Verse 11 begins “For” meaning “because of”. Because of what? The answer is that God has intervened in the Person of His dear Son. Verses 11 to 14 introduce one of the most notable epitomes of saving truth anywhere in the New Testament, surveying the past, the present and the future. The past is in verse 11: “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared”; the present is in the next verse: “Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts (desires), we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world”; and the future in verse 13: “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing (lit. ‘the appearing of the glory’) of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ”. In this section, reference is twice made to “a shining forth”. Divine grace “appeared” (shone forth) and “the appearing (the shining forth) of the glory” of our Saviour has still to be manifested. Paul calls this “that blessed hope”, but let not our conception of this be limited to the church of Christ being then received by Him in glory, but let us see Him also as the world’s Great Deliverer from the curse of sin and death. These two parts of the “blessed hope” cannot be separated. Verse 14 does, however, give emphasis to God’s chosen. They are described as “a peculiar people”, but “a people for God’s own possession” expresses the original more clearly. The object of their redemption is shown to be their purification or sanctification.

**The third chapter** begins with exhortations defining the believers’ attitude to ‘the powers that be’, and calls to mind their condition prior to being translated from darkness into the light of the gospel. This change is characteristically introduced by Paul with the words: “But after...”. (A similar expression by him occurs in Rom. 3:21 “But now...”. The comparison deserves study.) To Titus, Paul describes the “after” in verses 4 to 7: “But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared (shone forth), not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regenera-

**NOTICES**

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**11.30 a.m.—5 p.m.**

All Welcome

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tion, and renewing of the holy Spirit; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life”. Here we have three things: What we were—the wonder of our conversion—and our being made heirs of eternal life; all interwoven by God’s kindness, His love, His mercy, and His grace!

After urging Titus to affirm these things constantly (v.8) Paul enjoins him to “avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain”. By saying “avoid”, Paul literally said “turn yourself about so as to face the other way”, or in other words “ignore those who put forth such follies”. They are called “hereticks” in the following verse. Paul’s usage of this word is given by one writer as signifying: “An opinionative propagandist who promotes dissension by his pertinacity”. After two warnings to such, Paul instructs Titus to reject them, literally meaning that he should “leave them out of account”.

We conclude with a brief comment on verse 14 in which true fellow-believers are urged to “maintain good works for necessary uses”. In other words, unlike the Cretans and the false teachers, they were to make themselves practically useful, “so as to help cases of urgent need” (RSV). As we ponder all of Paul’s wise words to his “own son after the common faith”, may we also read, mark, and learn these precepts, so that “the word of God be not blasphemed” (2:5), but rather be adorned and embellished by our Christian deportment!.



## POMEGRANATE

(Hebrew *rimmon*)

The pomegranate came to be regarded as a sacred plant early in Man's history and its fruits and flowers were used as models for decorating both the pillars of Solomon's temple and the hem of the high priest's robes. "*And four hundred pomegranates for the two networks, even two rows of pomegranates for one network, to cover the two bowls of the chapters that were upon the pillars*". (1 Kings 7:42) "*And they made upon the hems of the robe pomegranates of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and twined linen.*" (Exodus 39:24)

Moses, in Deuteronomy 8:8, mentions it as one of the desirable features of the Promised Land and Solomon adorned his Song of Songs with allusions to both the fruit and the flowers of that beautiful plant. "*Thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks.*" (Song of Solomon 4:3)

The word pomegranate comes from *pomum granatum*, or 'grained apple' of the Romans. This name refers to the many red seeds embedded in the juicy pulp. The tree itself is small and bush-like; the leaves are deep green and the flowers are scarlet.

*The Flowers and Fruits of the Bible*  
John Chancellor

## HIS WORKMANSHIP

"We are His workmanship." Some of us have been moulded in the soft clay, touch by touch, by the gentle finger of Love; and others have been chiselled out of the hard, resisting stone, that needed so many hard blows before beauty that lay within could be unveiled; but when the blows were struck unerringly—not one wrongly; not one too many, not one unneeded, and all from the Master's loving Hand.

And others have been purified, as silver seven times in the fire, and on these we look with reverence, for do they not reflect our dear Master's Image.

Ah yes; they bear His mark; they are stamped with His deepest engraving of Love for evermore.

*June 1940 BSM*

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# BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

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The Bible Study Monthly, published to promote knowledge of the Bible, sees the Scriptures as a true record of God's dealings with the human race, needing to be understood in our generation. It stands for the pre-millennial advent of our Lord, and His reign of peace and justice on the earth.

*"Speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ"* (Ephesians 4:15 NRSV).

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Editorial note. I would like to apologise for the errors in the last issue of the printed version

## THE BALFOUR DECLARATION

It is 100 years since the Balfour Declaration declared the British government's support for a national homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine (Israel). It was dated 2 November 1917 and addressed to the 2nd Baron Rothschild.

Arthur James Balfour was born in 1848. His father who died age 36 of TB had been an MP from 1841 to 1847 and his mother was the daughter of the Marquess of Salisbury and of strong religious convictions. The eldest son he was educated at Eton and Cambridge but did not excel at school although having a lively mind and does not appear to have been diligent in his studies. As most men need some type of occupation he followed his father and uncle into politics.



Israeli stamp in 1967 marking 50 years since the Balfour Declaration

Magazine content. What is published is believed to have a wide interest, but everything printed may not necessarily be the opinion of the editor and his colleagues.

He was adopted as the conservative candidate for Hertford in 1873 largely because his politician uncle was Lord Salisbury, and was duly elected in 1874 when Disraeli became Prime Minister for the second time. He began very quietly and did not give his maiden speech till late 1875 on the topic of the Indian currency, something he knew a lot about, when the chamber was at its quietest. His career continued in the same quiet vein till he became involved in the Nonconformist grievance that burials were carried out by Anglican parsons who would use words and phrases in Anglican churchyards that would not match the beliefs of the deceased and their families. So in 1878 he introduced the Burial Law Amendment Bill. Later on he got involved with religious instruction in primary schools with different school boards realising there were a number of protestant denominations in the country.

Despite not appearing dynamic in the early part of his political life he was Prime Minister from 1902 to 1905. He succeeded his uncle \*Lord Salisbury as Prime Minister who favoured him and did much to advance his role in Parliament. But it was not until twelve years later when part of the government during World War 1, that the declaration that Balfour became so widely remembered for, occurred.

Balfour first met the Zionist Chaim Weizmann in 1906 and became very interested in the Zionist cause. He noted the genius in the Jewish race and he is recorded as saying that the Jewish race was ‘the most gifted race that mankind has seen since the Greeks of the fifth century’. During the First World War the Foreign Office considered winning over Jewish opinion in Germany, Russia and the U.S.A. In 1916 the Fall of Jerusalem to the British army boosted morale in a public who had been dismayed by the loss of life on the Western front. In this background in June 1917 Balfour asked Weizmann and Lord Rothschild to draft a Zionist declaration to put before the war cabinet. This was done on 4 October. Prime Minister Lloyd George was in favour of the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and did his best to move this endeavour forward. British churches were very aware of the importance of the Old Testament at a time that most Britons were still churchgoers. The main objection also came from the Foreign office who had regard to the reaction of the Arabs. So it was that the Balfour Declaration came about in the form of a letter dated 2 November 1917 to Lord Rothschild:

*‘His Majesty’s (George V) Government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use its best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.’*

Lord Rothschild (Lionel Walter 1868-1937) was the 2nd Baron Rothschild. He was from the successful banking family and had a prominent place in the Anglo-Jewish community and



was a friend of Chaim Weizmann. He lived all his life in Tring apart from time studying zoology at Cambridge where his main interest lay after a short time in the family banking business and being MP for Aylesbury (1899-1910). His Zoological Museum in Tring was opened to the public in 1892 and it was bequeathed to the British Museum at his death. The said museum, much extended is there today. Later on the family had much to do with financing the building of the Knesset in Israel.

The Balfour declaration did nothing to affect the course of the war. As it came to a close Lloyd George was keen to maintain control of Palestine although Balfour is recorded as trying to get the League of Nations to award control to the U.S. Balfour spoke up for the Zionist cause and defended the troubled British mandate in the House of Lords in 1922. In 1925 he visited Palestine (Israel) and was warmly welcomed there which was the polar opposite to the reaction he received in Damascus, Syria on the same trip. He died in 1930 and Chaim Weizmann was one of his final visitors. Rothschild died in 1937. Neither man got to witness World War two and its horrors nor the establishment of the state of Israel 70 years ago. One would be inclined to think that if Balfour had still been in charge of the Foreign office that the British would have voted for the establishment of the state of Israel rather than abstaining. 1967 saw the capture of Jerusalem by the Israeli army.

## TITLE DEEDS OF THE LAND

Extract of chapter 2 of Jacob's Trouble

*“In the latter years you will go against the land that is restored from war, the land where people were gathered from many nations upon the mountains of Israel, which had been a continual waste; its people were brought out from the nations and now dwell securely, all of them ”* (Ezek. 38. 8 R.S.V.).

The central feature of the prophecy is the land and its people, and a question immediately arises “Where is the land and who are the people?” The old time theology, inspired mainly by St. Augustine, declared that the whole passage is symbolic, that it depicts the final triumph of Christ and His Church over the forces of evil. Such explanation will not satisfy students of the Bible who understand and look for the coming of Christ's Kingdom upon earth. Quite clearly, this passage is directly related to the Divine destiny for the ideal Israel of the End Time and to the establishment of the Kingdom, and must therefore be understood in a dispensational sense and in an earthly setting. Putting it briefly, the time of the prophecy is at the end of this Age and the place of its fulfilment is upon this earth.

The Old Testament, from the Book of Genesis onward, maintains a consistent claim that God promised the patriarch Abraham that of his descendants there would be developed a nation which should possess to all perpetuity the land over which he wandered and in which he lived. In that land this nation is to become the Divine instrument, to be a light to the nations and declare God's salvation to the ends of the earth. The New Testament takes up the promise and shows that it will become reality at the end of the Age. In the meantime Abraham's descendants, whilst admittedly constituting a power for good in history, have never reached up to the standard demanded for this historic destiny, but when the time comes such a nation will be ready in the land thus promised; Ezekiel's prophecy refers to that fulfilment. It is to be taken as a basic principle, therefore, that the land promised to Abraham nearly four thousand years ago, the land in which he spent his life, the land in which his descendants Isaac and Jacob, and the nation of Israel which sprang from Jacob, played their respective parts on the stage of history, is the land of the promise and of the prophecy. There it is that a people will be gathered to fulfil in every

respect the description given by Ezekiel. Although the contemporary modern political state of Israel is but a small country the size of Wales the ancient nation of Israel did in fact occupy a larger area; the promises to Abraham and his successors define an even greater expanse of territory destined to form the Holy Land of the Kingdom Age. It has to be accepted that not only modern Israel but a number of other recently created sovereign States in that part of the world will eventually be merged to form the stage upon which this last act in the drama of this “present evil world”, to use St. Peter’s description, is to be played.

It is noteworthy that God seems to have selected this part of the earth’s surface as the scene of those events which mark definite steps or epochs in the development of His purposes. The travels of Abraham, from Ur of the Chaldees in the south-east Euphrates valley, to Haran in the north, down through Canaan into Egypt in the south-west, and back into Canaan, there to settle, mark out a great triangle which roughly defines the area promised to him and to his seed by Divine covenant. Within or immediately adjacent to this triangle practically the whole of the incidents in the Old Testament were enacted, with the three exceptions of the landing of the Ark in the far north-east, Jonah’s mission to Nineveh, and the story of Esther. If it should be, in the Messianic Age, that the sites of great events in the story of redemption are excluded from ordinary uses and reserved to the interested gaze of redeemed men visiting the Holy Land from all parts of the world, there is some reason to expect that all this territory will be under the direct care of the Holy Nation.

There is a very significant expression in verse 12 of chapter 38. The regathered nation is said to dwell “*at the centre of the earth*” (RSV). Now this is, geographically, literally true of the land of Israel and its surroundings. Of all the circles of latitude encircling the earth, that passing through the Middle East traverses the greatest length of land, nearly ten thousand miles. Israel is situated at the junction of three continents, Europe, Asia and Africa. It is roughly midway in distance between the West Coast of Africa and the East Coast of China, between the southernmost limit of Africa and the northernmost of Siberia. If a point had to be selected which could be said to be the centre of the land masses of the earth then Israel would logically be that point, and can claim more than anywhere else to be called the “centre of the earth”. As the administrative seat of the World Government which will be in operation during the Millennial Age no

more suitable place could be chosen. It is tempting to think that God deliberately selected this particular part of the earth's surface for its historic mission because of its physical suitability.

Now the actual extent and boundaries of this future Holy Land are defined in the Scriptures with a certain degree of precision and in good legal form. The ancients of Abraham's day were quite accustomed to the drawing up of legal documents embodying the title to ownership of land—many such tablets exist today in the British Museum among other places—and the promises of God regarding the land He has set aside for the administration of the Kingdom are set out in precise style. There are four such “title deeds” incorporated in the Old Testament, each defining the land in a different manner, by their united testimony affording the student a very fair idea of the boundaries of the land that is to be.

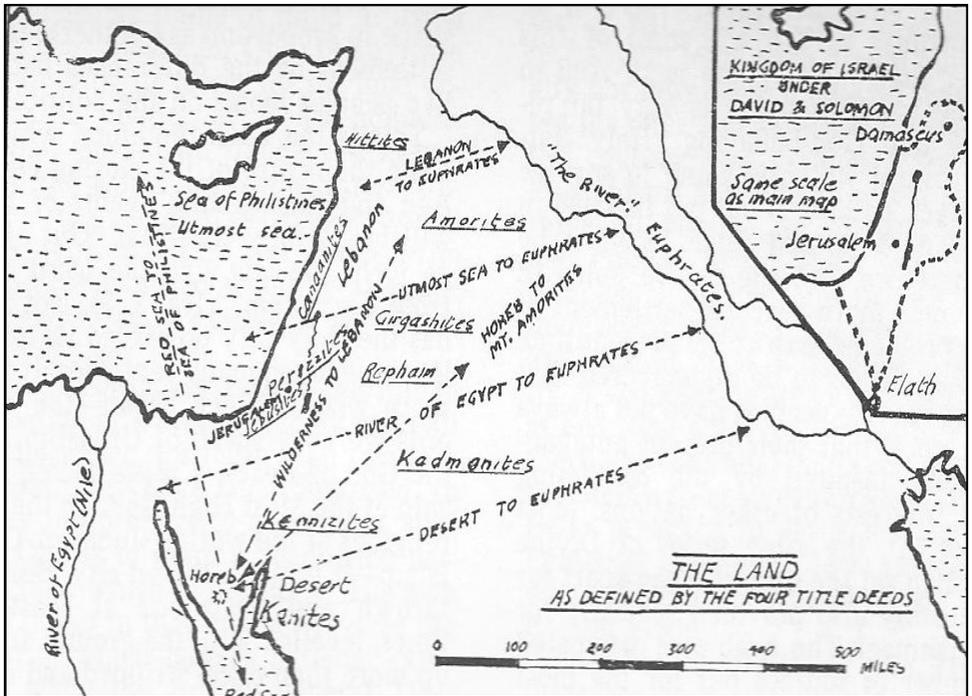
The first definition was given to Abraham and recorded in Genesis 15. 18-21. The Lord had concluded a covenant with the patriarch under the terms of which his seed was to become the means of blessing all families of the earth. Later events showed that the line of descent to the “seed of blessing” was to be traced through Isaac, Jacob and eventually the twelve tribes of Israel. Said the Lord *“Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, the Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites”*. A significant element in this passage is the list of peoples then existing whose territory is to be included in the Holy Land.

The river Euphrates rises in the mountains of modern Turkey and after traversing northern Syria flows through Iraq into the Persian Gulf. The empires of Sumeria, Assyria, Mari and Babylon rose and fell on its banks. Abraham's migration from Ur to Haran followed the course of the river for a great part of its length. David and Solomon extended the commercial influence of the Kingdom of Israel to the Euphrates where it now flows through Syria. According to this title deed the eastern frontier of the Holy Land is marked by the Euphrates.

The “river of Egypt” is the Nile. The same expression is used some half dozen times in the Old Testament to describe the \*Wady-el-Arish, a

\* alternative spelling Wadi el-Arish

seasonal stream running down from the middle of the Sinai peninsula into the Mediterranean sea at El-Arish. In these cases the word for river is “*nachal*” meaning a torrent bed dry in summer and flooded in winter—the Arabic “*wady*”. When the Nile is intended, as in Gen. 15. 18, the word is “*nahar*” meaning a permanent running stream. The Nile delta or its vicinity would therefore appear to be the western frontier of the Holy Land. David’s Kingdom reached as far as the Wady-el-Arish.



### THE LAND AS DEFINED BY THE FOUR TITLE DEEDS

All the ten nations mentioned as occupying this territory in Abraham’s day have long since disappeared from history, although in most cases a good deal is known about them. The Kenites occupied southern Sinai—Moses during his forty years exile from Egypt lived with a Kenite tribe—on the eastern side of the Gulf of Akaba. The Kenizzites occupied the Negeb and what afterwards became Edom, the land of Esau. Of the Kadmonites not much is known but it is believed that this was a general term for tribes living to the far east of the Jordan and towards the Euphrates. The Hittites were a very numerous people who established a notable civilisation in Asia Minor; the Hittites of Genesis, however, were a separate and isolated

branch of this people occupying sites throughout the country west of Jordan and in Syria. The Perizzites held the mountainous districts of Galilee and eastward across Jordan. The Rephaim were originally from east of Jordan and only at the time of the Exodus were they found in Israel proper. They were men of gigantic stature. The Amorites were the most important of all the peoples named—they inhabited not only Canaan proper but extended northwards into Syria and eastwards to Euphrates. Canaan and Syria were known to the Assyrians and Babylonians as the “Amorite land”. Several times in history the Amorites descended the Euphrates in force to attack Babylon, and from time to time the Babylonians were ruled by Amorite kings. The Canaanites were well distributed over the entire land of Canaan; the Gergashites east of the Sea of Galilee, and the Jebusites a powerful tribe in the very centre of Canaan with Salem (Jerusalem) as their capital in Abraham’s time. This catalogue of tribal territories covers most of the country between the Nile and the Euphrates from Sinai in the south to Syria in the north.

The second title deed was the gift of God to the emerging nation of Israel at the time of the Exodus. “*I will set thy bounds from the Red sea even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert unto the river*” (Exod. 23. 31). This statement defines the north-south and east-west limits of the land. The expression “sea of the Philistines” is in itself an interesting internal proof of the early date of the Book of Genesis. The Philistines were immigrants from Crete (*Caphtor* in the O.T., Egyptian *Keftu*—see Jer. 47. 4 and Amos 9. 7) and were settled on the coast of Canaan primarily for the purpose of growing corn for their homeland. Crete was the dominant sea power in the Mediterranean in the days of Abraham and that sea was then known as the “sea of the Philistines”. Less than a century after the Exodus the supremacy of Crete was broken and her sea power passed to the Phoenicians of Tyre and Sidon. From then the sea was known to the Hebrews and in the Old Testament as the “Great Sea”.

From the Red Sea to the Mediterranean; from the desert to the river! “Desert” here is “*midbar*” which defined the desert of Sinai and north-western Arabia, in the former of which Israel was at that moment encamped. “*The river*” when not otherwise qualified, always denotes the Euphrates in the Old Testament. The Red Sea, the Arabian desert, the Euphrates and the Mediterranean coast are declared to be the ultimate boundaries of the land, agreeably to the definition given to Abraham in

Gen. 15. 18 four centuries earlier.

The third title deed was awarded a few months later, when Israel was about to leave Sinai. *“Turn you, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites, and unto all the places nigh thereunto, in the plain, in the hills, and in the vale, and in the south, and by the sea side, to the land of the Canaanites, and unto Lebanon, unto the great river, the river Euphrates. Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them”* (Deut. 1. 7-8). The Mount of the Amorites was the elevated region extending for many miles east of the Jordan; the “plain” (*arabah*) the deep valley in which the Jordan flows from Galilee to the Dead Sea; the “hills” (*har*-high peaks) the hill country of Judea and Samaria; the “vale” (*ha-shephelah*) the low plain extending from Joppa southward; the south (*negeb*) the territory toward Sinai and the Gulf of Akaba, the sea-coast in the west, Lebanon in the north, sweeping across to Euphrates in the east. This vast terrain was only partially won, even in the days of David; the full accomplishment of the Divine mandate lies still in the future.

The fourth title deed given forty years later as Israel was at long last about to pass over Jordan into the land, is confirmatory of the third. Said Moses *“Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be”* (Deut. 11. 24). “Wilderness” here is *midbar*, rendered “desert” in the second title deed, Exodus 23. 31, so that the boundaries here defined also extend from the Arabian desert in the south to Lebanon in the north, from the Euphrates in the east to the Mediterranean (“uttermost sea” is *acharon*, the “hinder sea” a Hebrew term for that sea) in the west.

So the four declarations, separated from each other, first to last, from the time of Abraham to that of Joshua, agree together on the boundaries of the land as it is finally to be constituted when the Divine purposes come to fruition and the Kingdom of God upon earth is at hand. The fact that Israel of old never possessed more than a part of this great area is immaterial; Israel’s failure to measure up to the conditions of her calling accounts for this as well as many other deficiencies in her attainments in history. This is the land as it will be when the ideal Israel, the Holy Nation

of the End Time, takes its stand for God in face of world opposition.

The territory thus defined includes not only contemporary Israel but the whole of the State of Jordan and parts of Egypt, Arabia, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq. There must obviously be a considerable political adjustment of frontiers to be effected before the Holy Land assumes the shape foreseen in the Pentateuch, and nothing in the prophetic Scriptures gives ground for thinking this is to be attained by physical force or by aggressive warfare. Any territorial changes achieved by conflicts between the present State of Israel and her Arab neighbours have to do with the fortunes of the kingdoms of this world rather than those of the next. And in any case, the Israel of today is very far removed from that God-believing "Holy Nation" of the future which is going to survive the great attack because it has put its trust in God instead of in armed force. It must be expected therefore that the future holds in prospect a much more peaceful settlement of Arab-Israel problems than at the present time seems possible. It has to be remembered that in the past these two peoples have not always been at variance, that their present antagonism is largely inspired by the conflicting commercial interests of other nations. Most important of all, the same series of Divine promises which set the sons of Isaac apart for a specific destiny also provided specially for the sons of Ishmael. The Arab race originated from a number of sources but for the most part are of Semitic stock, in the main from the thirteen sons of Joktan (Gen. 10. 26-30) and the twelve sons of Ishmael, many of their names surviving as main Arabic divisions to this day. Concerning Ishmael God declared that he would make of him a great nation and multiply him exceedingly, so that he could not be numbered for multitude. Four times in Genesis is this promise reiterated. "*I am with the lad*" said the Most High "*I have blessed him; I will make him a great nation*" (Gen. 16. 10-12; 17. 20; 21. 13; 21. 18). These words are not meaningless and the very significant fact that not one of the Semitic Arab nations appears in Ezekiel's list of those who join the forces of Gog in the attack provokes the question as to their whereabouts and their attitude at that time. The land of Arabia proper, one-third the size of Europe and something like four times the size of the Holy Land of the End Time, if restored to the fertility it enjoyed in early ages, could support many times the present populations of the Arab nations of the Middle East. Calling to mind the progress now being made in restoring the present land of Israel from its past desolation it is not too fanciful to surmise that something of the same kind might be achieved in Arabia.

God said of Ishmael that he was to dwell to the east of his brethren, i.e. of Isaac (Gen. 16. 12). The geographical definitions of the land originally settled by the sons of Joktan (Gen. 10. 30) covers the whole of Arabia to the Indian Ocean. History concurs in pointing to that land as the natural home of the Arab peoples just as Israel is that of the Israelis. It might well be, therefore, that the outlines of the promised Holy Land will begin to take shape in proportion as a hitherto unlooked for settlement of the differences between these two peoples looms on the political horizon.

This is the land, therefore, which is to become the centre of the closing events of this Age and the opening events of the next. It will be literally true that *“Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem”* (Isa. 2. 3). Not for nothing has the Holy City preserved its existence and its name for so many centuries. It was already there when history began—the earliest records we have speak of Urusalim, the City of the God of Peace, a place sacred to the worship of the Most High God. To the three great religions of the world—Judaism, Christianity, Islam—it is still a sacred city. Besieged, overthrown and destroyed at least seventeen times, levelled with the ground and ploughed up more than once, stripped and despoiled of its treasures time after time, always has the city risen again, still it stands, a symbol of the eternal things that can never pass away. Where else in all the world could God find so fitting a land and city to be the centre of administration for the new earth which is to be? *“Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion,...the city of the great King”* (Psa. 48. 2). There is much in all the Scriptures which speak of the day when God sets His hand to recover to this land a people which will build up the desolate wastes and raise a standard of righteousness in the eyes of all nations. Here, where Europe, Asia and Africa meet, it is the Divine intention to create a gathering place for that nation which shall enter the most fiery trial that has ever confronted a people—and, in the power of God, emerge victorious.

AOH

### JACOB'S TROUBLE

Gog and Magog at the End of the Age

An exposition of Ezekiel 38/39

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## TIMES AND SEASONS

### Part 6. Historical background of the Exodus

The date of the Exodus is stated in 1 Kings 6.1 as being in the four hundred and eightieth year before the commencement of building Solomon's Temple in the fourth year of his reign, which is sufficient to afford a close approximation to the date but did nevertheless in earlier days provide a subject for dispute and argument on the part of some scholars and commentators. Some disputed the veracity of the text itself whilst others found reasons for avoiding its implication and propounded other dates divergent by several centuries. All of this has been nullified by discoveries at ancient Jericho which indicate beyond doubt exactly when Joshua destroyed that city, and in consequence fixes the date of the Exodus.

The site of Jericho was thoroughly excavated during the 1930s by Prof. John Garstang, who found the remains of the city destroyed by Joshua precisely as described in the Bible. Within its ruins there remained indisputable evidence of the date. In and around what had been the royal palace or the governor's residence, and in the tombs of various notabilities, there were found nearly two hundred scarabs (a kind of medallion) bearing the "cartouches", or royal insignia of the Pharaohs who reigned in Egypt over a period of more than three centuries, covering the time that Egypt wielded political domination over Canaan. These Pharaohs were those of the 14th to 18th dynasties and ended with Pharaoh Amenhotep III, ninth ruler of the 18th. That, together with other evidences, establishes the fact that Jericho fell to Joshua at some time during the reign of that Pharaoh. A little latitude has to be allowed as to the precise commencement of his thirty-six year reign, but even so the event must have happened at some point between 1430 and 1377 B.C.

The building of Solomon's Temple is fairly reliably placed in the springtime of 974 B.C., in the second month. If this was the 480th year as stated in 1 Kings 6.1 then the Passover of the first month when Joshua invaded the land was that of 1413 B.C. (An authoritative elucidation of this point is to be found in the "*Bible Chronology*" of Dr. Adam Rutherford, the Egyptologist and Pyramidologist.)

There is independent confirmation of this point. In 1884 an Egyptian

peasant woman found a buried collection of inscribed tablets which proved to be letters from the petty kings and provincial governors of Canaan to Amenhotep III and his successor Akhenaton, reporting the invasion of the Israelites under Joshua and pleading for military help to resist the invaders. (Canaan was under Egyptian political domination at this time.) There is no indication that help was ever sent; the Egyptians probably remembered the plagues of forty years previously, and were in no mood to try issues with the God of Israel again. The letters grow more despairing as time went on and city after city fell to the Israelites. A notable fact is that although many towns of Canaan sent their pleas there are none from Jericho; Joshua had already destroyed that town before the alarm was raised. The course of the invading Israelites past Edom and through Moab is reported, confirmatory of the Old Testament account, and Joshua's name mentioned. These tablets constitute reasonable confirmation that the invasion of Canaan occurred in the early part of the reign of Amenhotep III.

If the date of Joshua's invasion is established as 1413 BC, the date of the Exodus, forty years earlier, is 1453 BC. This comes in the middle of the reign of Amenhotep II. It is significant that this very warlike Pharaoh led several military invasions of other lands in the early part of his reign but none at all after his ninth year. It is even more significant that the son who succeeded him, Thutmose IV, was not his eldest son as would normally have been the case, although no explanation of the reason is given in any inscription. The eldest, of course, would be the firstborn who died with all other firstborns on the night of the Exodus.

Eighty years previously Moses was born. The ruling Pharaoh was Thutmose I, about 1540-1520 BC, from his history a very likely Pharaoh to fill the role of Exod. 1.15-22. He boasted that when he invaded the Sudan he left none of their male children alive, which illustrates his similar command in Exod. 1.16. Moses was born 1533 BC, roughly in the middle of his reign.

The only daughter of Thutmose I was the famous Hatshepsut, who afterwards ruled the land for some thirty-five years. She would have been about twenty-one at the time she found the babe Moses at the river side. On the basis of the precise dates above suggested Moses' flight to Midian at forty years of age coincided with her death, and the Pharaoh who

“*sought to slay Moses*” on account of the slaying of the Egyptian overseer (Exod. 2.15) was her successor, the redoubtable warrior Thutmose III. This Pharaoh died about eight years before Moses returned from Midian, which is what is stated in Exod. 2.23. There is no other Pharaoh in Egyptian history of the period which can fit the recorded incidents in the life of Moses; no others reigned or lived long enough.

The new king that knew not Joseph of Exod. 1.8 was most likely Aahmes I, founder of the 18th dynasty and the great-grandfather of Princess Hatshepsut who took Moses out of the water. He reigned some thirty years before Moses’ birth and from his reign the slavery of Israel most likely began. Aahmes had fought and expelled the Asiatic invaders, the Hyksos, who had occupied and dominated Egypt for over two centuries; the Hyksos were Semitic Bedouin, racially akin to the Israelites, and would have treated them with tolerance. Exod. 1.10,20 indicates the new Pharaoh’s fear that Israel might become a menace to the native Egyptians and must therefore be repressed.

The Bible leaves a gap between the death of Joseph and the emergence of this “new king that knew not Joseph”. In the meantime the children of Israel had multiplied so abundantly that Pharaoh became apprehensive that they might become more powerful than his own subjects. During the four hundred years of the sojourn in Egypt the fifty-one grandsons of Jacob, some born in Canaan and some in Egypt, grew into a nation of nearly three million men, women and children. This is deducted from the census figures and other data given in Exodus, Deuteronomy and Numbers. In the normal process of population growth, it is possible that the nation numbered three quarters of a million when the “new king” introduced his measures to limit further growth and considerably more when Moses was born thirty years or so later. The language of Exodus is definite; “*the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew*” (Exod. 1.12). Two and a half centuries elapsed between the death of Joseph seventy years after Jacob came into Egypt (Gen. 50.26) and the birth of Moses. (Exod. 2.2). The Israelite community could hardly have exceeded a thousand in number when Joseph died. Soon after his death the friendly Pharaohs of the 12th dynasty who had befriended Joseph and his fellows had given place to the invading Hyksos and nothing whatever is known of Israel’s fortunes during this period. When the veil is lifted nearly three hundred years of the four hundred of the Sojourn had passed

and the period of the oppression had begun. When that period ended Moses led three million descendants of Jacob towards the Promised Land.

All this implies that Jacob and his sons came into Egypt in 1853 BC during the reign of Senusert (Senusret) III of the 12th dynasty so far as can be determined. Egyptian dates at these remote times become increasingly approximate. It does appear certain, however, that the four hundred year sojourn of Israel in Egypt is well supported by external historical evidence allied with Bible allusions as occupying the period near enough to 1853-1453 BC.

\* \* \*

A word as to the alternative dates propounded on other bases may be appropriate here. Before the Jericho discoveries, archaeologists and historians in general—most of whom have pursued their labours without much consideration of Bible evidences—usually propounded the view that the Exodus took place in the reign of Merneptah of the 19th dynasty, and that his father Rameses II was the Pharaoh of the Oppression, about the year 1350 BC. The principal argument was the statement in Exod. 1.11 that Israel built the cities of Raamses and Pithom and it was usually thought that these were built by Rameses II. In addition stress was laid on Psa. 78.12 (RSV) which says that Israel in Egypt lived “*in the fields of Zo’an*” which was another name for the Hyksos capital Tanis in Lower Egypt. Tanis was destroyed when the Hyksos were expelled, lay desolate throughout the 18th Dynasty and was rebuilt by Rameses II. The definite statement of 1 Kings 6.1 was ignored and the fact that Egyptian records of much later times told of Hebrew slaves still in Egypt was taken as evidence that the Exodus had not yet taken place. Later investigators have found that much of these arguments are invalid; Rameses as a place name existed long before there were Pharaohs of that name. According to Gen. 47.11 Joseph installed his father and his brethren in the land of Rameses several centuries before the Oppression. The “*field of Zoan*” of Psa. 78 was what is now called Lower Egypt, a territory which even today is the best agricultural land in the country, as is said in Gen. 47.11, and this was Israel’s habitat for the entire four hundred years of their sojourn. It is also an unfounded assumption that there were never any Hebrews in Egypt after the Exodus; there were frequent Egyptian invasions during the course of later history and the taking of Hebrew prisoners to be slaves in Egypt was a frequent occurrence. Because this widespread belief that the Exodus took place in the reign of Merneptah a century later has appeared

for generations in all the text-books and histories it is still a widely held misconception; but the verdict of modern archaeological research allied with the Bible evidence demonstrates its inaccuracy.

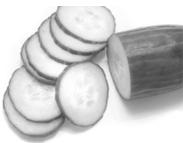
A completely different approach characterised the work of many early Bible chronologists of the early 19th Century and earlier, such as Usher, Clinton and Bowen. Archaeology had not appeared in their day and their method was to add together all the time periods of the Bible in the endeavour to establish the date of the creation of man. The period between the Exodus and David was determined by adding the judgeships and periods of servitude as though they were consecutive, thus giving a span of some 560 years which is nearly a century too long and placing the Exodus at an impossible time in Egyptian history. (They did not realise this since Egyptian history was only sketchily known in their day.) What they did not know was that the judgeships and oppressions were not consecutive; many of them overlapped so that a judge might be ruling in one part of the country while oppression was in progress in another. (Strangely enough, exactly the same thing happened when records of ancient Sumer and Babylon and Egypt came to light. The recorded reigns of the kings were all strung together and extremely ancient dates for these nations arrived at in consequence. Today it is known that many of these kings reigned contemporaneously and the time scale of the ancient nations has been drastically deflated and brought much more in line with Bible chronology.) These chronologies giving a date for the Exodus a century too early are therefore now quite out-of-date.

A variant on this hypothesis was introduced in the middle 19th century by Benjamin Wilson, translator of the Greek-English "*Emphatic Diaglott*", who suggested that confusion between the Hebrew letter-numerals *daleth*—4, and *heh*—5, had led to 480th in 1 Kings 6.1 being corrupted from an original 580th, so bringing that text into line with the arguments for the then received ultra-early date. Unfortunately for Wilson, his Hebrew was not up to his Greek; he did not know that numbers in the O.T. are invariably expressed in words (as in the English versions) so that his suggested corruption would not have been possible. There is therefore today, even without the Jericho evidences, no foundation for any scheme of dating which ignores the accuracy of 1 Kings 6.1.

A much more modern school of thought as to the fate of Jericho is that

propounded by the eminent archaeologist Dame Kathleen Kenyon, who included Jericho in her Palestinian researches in 1952-58. Dame Kenyon held to the view, now being increasingly discredited, that the early historical books of the O.T. are 9th Cent. B.C. compilations of old traditions and folklore, and not to be taken as serious narratives of actual historical events. She did not believe that there was ever a historical Exodus but rather that the story came from several migrations of Israel at different times and in fact one section of Israel never went into Egypt at all. Relying upon the now notoriously unreliable Carbon 14 test for the age of ancient organic substances, and the (currently) fashionable science of dating ancient sites by the apparent age of pottery found there, she draws a picture of a Jericho existing from about 9,000 years before Christ and with no clear-cut catastrophic end such as is depicted in the Book of Joshua. If the O.T. is to be ignored this may be as good a theory as any, but with the progressive closer correlation of sacred and secular history due to the labours of other serious and qualified archaeologists the destruction of Jericho by Joshua cannot be denied. Although the high reputation of Kathleen Kenyon has exalted her findings to a leading position in purely academic circles it is difficult to dispute that Garstang was correct in his conclusions and the date of Jericho's fall was accurately placed by him against the background of Egyptian history.

*AOH*



## CUCUMBER

Numbers 11;1,5 (NEB) There came a time when the people complained to the LORD of their hardships. Think of it! In Egypt we had fish for the asking, cucumbers and water melons, leeks and onions and garlic.

Small wonder that the thoughts of the Israelites, when in the inhospitable desert, should have turned to that cooling fruit which grows in the thick moist mud along the banks of the Nile.

In Egypt and Palestine (Israel) cucumbers still grow on moist, low-lying land. In summer they are an important part of the people's diet.

*The Flowers and Fruits of the Bible*  
*John Chancellor*

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## THE CROSSING OF JORDAN

(Josh. 3: 7-17)

The fact that we may now know with considerable certainty just how this miracle was performed should not in the least detract from its value. With God nothing would be a miracle, since He of His own power is able to accomplish His will in every respect. Many things are miracles simply because we do not understand the Divine processes. We are miracles ourselves, fearfully and wonderfully made. The growth of the plant, the flower, or even a blade of grass, is a miracle to us—something wholly beyond our power, and in a general way considerably beyond our comprehension as a process.

The account tells plainly that the heaping up of the waters was in the direction of the city Adam. This place has been located certainly by Professor Wright as situated seventeen miles above Jericho, on the Jordan. The waters became in a heap, a lake, the Professor assures us, by reason of a land-slide which choked the narrow passage of the river where there were steep banks. The character of the soil in that vicinity would be favourable to the blocking of the narrow channel of the Jordan there by the slipping of the hill sides. Indeed history tells us that a similar slide took place in the same vicinity in A.D. 1267, damming up the Jordan for several hours and leaving the bed of the river below quite dry, the waters draining off to the Dead Sea.

Professor Wright says, “So striking in this conformity of the facts to the conditions indicated by the Biblical account, that geologists can find but little difficulty in believing the written record. At the same time, the written record is so precise itself, and so free from fantastic elements that the literary critic cannot well consider it as anything but the original, unvarnished tale of an eyewitness.”

“The marvel of the story is that the Divine marching orders were so timed as to suit the circumstances and conditions exactly.”

The above words were written a generation ago. In our own day the drying up of Jordan has occurred again, at exactly the same place. At this district Adam, now known as El Damieh, the river flows between clay banks forty feet high, and landslides into the river are frequent. During the earthquake

of 1927 these banks collapsed and dammed the river so that no water flowed down for more than twenty-one hours. As is remarked above, the essence of the miracle is not the drying up of the river, but the Divine oversight which caused it to happen at just the time Israel needed a means of making a safe passage across the river.

*Selected*

*“Tis but a little and we come  
To our reward, our crown, our home!  
Another year, or more, or less,  
And we have crossed the wilderness;  
Finished the toil, the rest begun,  
The battle fought, the triumph won!*

*We grudge not, then, the toil, the way;  
Its ending is the endless day!  
We shrink not from these tempests  
    keen,  
With little of the calm between;  
We welcome each descending sun;  
Ere morn our joy may be begun!”*



### MELON

Numbers 11:1,5 (NEB) There came a time when the people complained to the LORD of their hardships. Think of it! In Egypt we had fish for the asking, cucumbers and water melons, leeks and onions and garlic. Numbers 11:5 (KJV) ‘*and the melons*’

Only once does the Bible mention the fruit after which the Israelites thirsted in the desert. Opinion is divided as to whether they longed for the water-melon or the musk-melon, which is now called the cantaloupe. Probably both. The musk-melon came originally from India and has been cultivated in Egypt for thousands of years. It was introduced to England in the sixteenth century.

The water-melon is a native of central Africa and has been grown in Egypt since time immemorial. You now see them on the plain between Haifa and Jaffa, the vines supported by sticks to prevent the plants crashing down under the weight of melons which may weigh up to thirty pounds.

*The Flowers and Fruits of the Bible  
John Chancellor*

## THE VIRTUOUS WOMAN

A devotional commentary on Proverbs 31: 10-31

Part 4

## WALK ABOUT ZION..TELL THE TOWERS THEREOF...

*Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.* Proverbs 31:25

**Ayin** = an eye, hence vision, sight, and that which is in view. By analogy, something which is in the centre of a view or landscape, as a fountain or well. In Genesis 24, seven times is the word for ‘eye’ used for the well where Rebekah and Eliezer met.—Rebekah’s eye for the water of life,—Ruth’s eye for the grains of corn, each come to the attention of the Lord and His servants.

**BLESSED ASSURANCE.** She lives in the sight of that Lord Who seeth not as man. She glories not in appearance, but in the view of those holy eyes of divine compassion and tender understanding of the materials in which He works. He knows her frame, knows His power, and how to use the weakness of the one to exhibit the sufficiency and glory of the other. It is this blessed reality that forms the ground of her confident assurance. In vain will her accusers point with finger of guilt at sins now past. With blood of Lamb upon the mercy seat, who is he that can condemn? He Who once died on her behalf will not now say His death was all in vain. She thus has full assurance of understanding (Colossians 2:2), of hope (Hebrews 6:11), of faith (Heb. 10:22). Her strength and honour is not of flesh, but of a mind at rest with God. She is clothed with the calm serenity and poise of a child of God.

**APPREHENSIONS OF JOY.** Rebekah had an eye to the journey’s end. Forgetting the things behind, she reached forth to what lies before, where Christ is waiting at God’s right hand. The NASB says, “*she smiles at the future*”. When saints smile regardless of surrounds, a moment of translation may be assumed. The woman’s life is dominated by hope, and hope brings forth its joy by anticipation. Her apprehension is of bliss which is yet to be, a laying hold *now* on the blessings of *then*. Rebekah’s fond anticipations were not just hers alone, for they were shared by One awaiting that same bliss. The woman’s smile is His smile too. The very name, Isaac, means “laughter,” and in it lies the joy of countless hearts and ages yet to be. She cannot yet measure the divine immeasurables, nor yet can she know the boundaries of the love of Christ, nor comprehend that joy unspeakable with glory full, but her eye is on that goal.

AT HIS RIGHT HAND...PLEASURES FOREVERMORE

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 MY MOUTH SHALL SPEAK FORTH THY PRAISE
 

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*She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. Proverbs 31:26*

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**Pe** = a mouth, linked with speech (from root, 'to blow'). Means of expression of thought, hence, in consecration, an important member, not easily controlled. In some passages mouth may represent the edge of a sword. (Compare Revelation 1:16.) Personal expression of the will and mind, - "We will call the damsel, and enquire at her mouth." (Genesis 24:57.)

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PRECEPTS OF GOLD. Her prayer, that the hand of the Lord be upon her, that she open not her lips save when prompted and empowered by her Lord. (Ezekiel 3:26,27; Psalm 51:15.) She knows well the frailty of this member, for by nature, her lips are unclean. (Isaiah 6:5.) Yet she dwells in the presence of One Whose Name is Holy. The Lord understands her plight. It is He Who directs the seraphim to take the live coal from the holy altar of God to touch human lips. Those lips now are His, part of the acceptable offering of love. The source of cleansing becomes the source of utterance. He is made unto her *Wisdom*. The Spirit tells her what and how to speak, and heaven's wisdom graces now her mouth. The words, they are not hers, but His. - Expressions of a treasure deep within, not empty, never shallow, insincere. The very spirit of the Mind that brings them forth controls her tongue, enriches speech. Thus words of heaven's fountain pass her lips, to bring refreshing to the weary soul, and to the weeping hope. Men wondered at His gracious words, and still they speak through those whose lips He moves. The gift of wisdom from above bypassing many prudent minds, engraces now the lips of babes. Yet was it dearly sought by many prayers and earnest seeking of the Word as for hid treasure. And when HE saw the thirsting ready mind, the Lord Who answered Solomon's request, His gold bequeathed.

PICTURES OF SILVER. What is of herself has little worth. What is of Him has great worth. Divine oracles are as nuggets of gold. They are imperishable, and can never fail. But more than knowledge does the Lord desire. In inward parts He seeks the genuine reality called Truth. Light is sent forth for righteous hearts. For these alone its gladness is reserved. How beautifully does that wisdom shine, nor ever fosters pride, but full of

mercy and good fruits, its purity with grace resides. So easy to approach are those endowed not only with the truth but its effect. An influence of peace with God is found, a deep attractive warmth makes common ground with those who also thirst for Zion's brook. Truth is so precious. Those whose hearts are with this treasure blessed must with that truth its sacred Source confess, and in its fruitfulness reveal its power. In season, fitly spoken be our words, as golden fruit encouched in silver frame, that those who hear may glorify His Name.

LET THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH...BE ACCEPTABLE IN THY SIGHT

AND THE CITY WAS PURE GOLD, LIKE UNTO CRYSTAL

*She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.* Proverbs 31:27

**Tzade** = ? (No designation given by Gesenius.) Begins the first word from "*sapa*", to lean forward to pay close attention, or peer into the future. Here the diligent interest and care of the woman in the affairs of the household, her watchfulness and concern.



**TOWER OF THE FLOCK.** So, in Micah 4:8, is Jerusalem described, from which the King and Shepherd of Israel observes and guards His flock. While the Lord has special watchmen over His people, watchfulness over the spiritual welfare of self and of our brethren of the household is the responsibility of all saints. She eats not the bread of idleness, tittle-tattle and tale-bearing detrimental to others. Her deep love for her Lord demands expression, and this she finds in uncounted ways of selfless laying down of her life in their interests. Yet, like a woman caring for her home and those she loves, she makes no list of services or care, nor would she recognize in her ceaseless role the thought of sacrifice.

**HER JOY AND CROWN.** The ultimate attainment of these beloved in Christ, this is her earnest prayer. Their crown will be her crown, and hers their joy. As drink offering on their sacrifice of faith, she pours out all she has on their behalf, and counts it privilege indeed to even know His saints. The thought that, in the preparation of His jewels, the Lord may take, and in the smallest way might use her as His tool of grace, to further His design, what thrill, what satisfaction brings. She owes so much, and never can repay that love of Golgotha. Her sacred privilege counted dear, to

wash the feet of saints, pour out her spikenard on those lowly members of His Body in her reach, with tears of love His “feet” to thus embrace. She knoweth well such precious tasks will soon be past. The hour grows late, the shadows of Gethsemane await, this day must soon be closed. Thus, while it is called ‘day’, she works to smooth the way, to comfort and to cheer, whose lives to her are dear. The poor world yet will see the feast He has in store, when saints this side the veil will be no more. Thus purposeful, and watchful does she pray she might not miss one chance His saints to bless, His “feet” caress, when tired, sore, they cry out for that caring love. The House of God is a house of love, and filled with the sweet savour of its Head. The law of Christ that rules therein is thus fulfilled in mutual care, and burdens shared.—Quiet moments of deep feeling, heart reaching out to heart, united in that blessed hope that brighter shines through tear-cleansed eyes. Such is the fellowship of love, the bonds now wrought that will forever hold and beautify the servants of the Lord.—Each one surrounded and constrained by ready arms and willing hands that speak the passing of each heart from death to life.

“ INASMUCH...”

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### THE FOUNDATIONS...GARNISHED...WITH PRECIOUS STONES

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*Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. Proverbs 31:28*

**Koph** = hole of an axe...that is, something which needs perfectly to fit so that the function of the whole may be achieved. The Father has *made us meet* to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Each vessel *meet* for the Master’s use. (Col. 1:12; 2 Tim. 2:21.)

**CHARISMA OF GRACE.** Her ‘children’ are her fruit, the harvest-time result of grace within. This fruit reveals her for what she is. What is now reaped is that which with care and patience she has sown and watered, nurtured on with tenderness. Upon this fruitage now depends her fitness for that future ministry of glory.

**GLORY OF HIS FACE.** Reflected in her life the holy place of her abode and His. Planted in the House of the Lord she flourishes in His courts. His is the glory, hers the delight. The fruit she now brings forth in its due season is what she has drawn from the river of life whose banks receive

her roots. The words “in Christ” have opened up to her their blessed secrets of unsearchable riches. The hour approaches. That hidden life in Him will then be manifest in all the beauty of an express image.

KINGDOM HARVEST. Then what wonders yet await, the half of which has not been told. The life He gives her yet will fill this earth with children of the Kingdom. Hers the precious privilege of bearing and nurturing that family of His love. His Spirit and His Bride await the hour of His command that shatters every tomb and brings new life upon this earth, eternal youth in glorious liberty, the whole earth filled with fruit. And this her Lord will see, and will be satisfied, and so will she. At ninety years dear Sarah bore her child. This woman will still be bearing fruit at nine hundred! To each child she will be mother. With each new life her part will weave that deep special relationship of love, and an eternal bond of peace, harmony, unity, oneness. Such is the fruit of love, abounding and abiding. Each one a living blessing. There in the midst of His great family see the Father’s face, which now reflects from every child of grace, radiant with that joy so long He sought. And there the Lamb, by Whose own blood He bought the fallen race, and there His Bride, locked in His sweet embrace.

...THY CHILDREN, WHOM THOU MAYEST MAKE PRINCES...

EVERY SEVERAL GATE WAS OF ONE PEARL

*Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.*

Proverbs 31:29

**Resh** = the head. The words of this verse are the words of Christ, her Head. There is no better judge of excellence, nor yet more tender heart to be touched by sight of broken reed, smoking flax, or those two tiny mites in the Temple treasury.

HIS BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE. In His sight virtuous women of other ages have graced the pages of history. Theirs was not the privilege of the race that we are called to run, but there they stand, so many witnesses of faith, by whose obedient trust and tireless zeal they shout encouragement and urge us on to that supreme devotion that alone will win the prize. And

there does Miriam stand with tinkling timbrel in her hand to lead forth every grateful soul to join with her with their timbrels and with dance, and then with voices high, "Sing unto the Lord," they cry, "sing for His glorious triumph." (Exodus 15:20,21) Does my zeal excel hers? There see Deborah too. To her all Israel came for counsel clear, and to her looked for leadership in battle with the foe. Her song of victory in my ears still urges on, as it did then, to yield a willing offering to His praise. (Judges 4&5) What priceless privilege is ours to take from them the torch of truth, and lift on high the sacred flame of love for God, and to His Name pour tribute as we trace the path they trod. There waves dear Ruth, and Hannah at her side, and there the Shunamite whose sheltering care gave comfort to the man of God. And Esther too, whose faith withstood the test of loyalty. These all call out to me.

REWARD FOR EXCELLENCE. Between the greatest of the ages past and least within this age of grace, the difference lies not by one wit in worthiness, but in the hope held forth and privilege. In this alone the woman of this age excels, where grace abundant more abounds. Hers is a calling high, a blessed mystery, that never was revealed in ages past. For her, the greatest prize of all reserved. For this was offered not to the angelic host, nor yet to righteous hearts of faithful ones who patiently endured so great a fight, but to the "woman" of this 'better' day, when type and shadow must give way to blest reality. Thus passing by more worthy souls, He came to me, that all His wondrous grace may see. The words of Baptist John speak for them all, when heralding the Bridegroom as His friend, foreseeing there the romance of this age, He then confessed "My joy is now fulfilled." He echoed thus the aged Simeon who with one glimpse of what was yet to be, though in its very infancy, with satisfaction did request that he now might depart in peace. How they will shine, those faithful ones of old, in princely role. What lessons were prepared in their dear lives for those now called to share that "better thing"! The glory that excelleth was reserved for His dear Bride. Such honour He bestows, and this she knows. Her life reveals the depth of her response. "One thing" she seeks, and runs with arms outstretched straight for the goal, nor runs indifferently but that she might obtain. It is her beauty that her Lord desires, within whose heart His own great love inspires that yielding of her all.

WHO...HAVING FOUND ONE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE...SOLD  
ALL

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 THESE ARE THE TRUE SAYINGS OF GOD
 

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*Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised. Proverbs 31:30*

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**Shin or Schin** = ? (No designation given) It begins the first word of the verse ‘*sheqer*’, which means untrue, false, a lie, a denial of what is true. Used in many contexts, it is never condoned by the God of Truth. ‘White lies’ is a term that is itself a lie.




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IN THE STREET CALLED STRAIGHT. As scales from her eyes, all superficial concepts of true holiness did fall. No more by works of flesh did she pursue what sinful flesh could never thus obtain. She now could see such works were all in vain, and would to heaven’s grace a hindrance prove, not gain. The Edom (old Adam within,) must yield, not wrestle with the Lord to yet usurp and thus by fleshly means obtain what He must give by grace. No sense of self-achievement finds a place in one whose struggles ended with embrace, who now will not let go until He bless. Aware now of her weakness does she cling and trust to His great strength. And cling she must ‘till morning light reveals to her the face of God. For flesh and spirit war within as did those two within Rebekah’s womb, nor cease the struggle ‘til their work is done. The Lord of Truth sees not as seeth man. No vanity of superficial gloss, nor outward show will gain approval of the eyes of holy fire of Him Who knows our works and all we are. Begun in the Spirit, we will not complete the course we run with works of flesh. No room for pride will yet reside where He is Lord confessed. The street is straight that leads us to the goal. The way of holiness is a road of purest and transparent gold.—A workmanship, not human, but divine, through which its Maker’s likeness yet will shine. Transparent character does He refine, with truth in inward parts. His gold is pure and furnace-tried.

THE SHINING WAY One blinding flash of truth enough, one glimpsing of the Saviour’s face, and persecution turns to praise, the works of flesh to Grace. It cometh not with outward show, His reign within. Yet through the life expressed, that fullness of the heart is manifest, in love for Him. There was no point the breaking of that seal of alabaster box, except to pour out all it held within. What if that box had empty proved to be? Then empty too the act, an outward form, a shell of godliness without its power.

What shame, whatever ornament without engraced that box, if there within was nothing stored that would refresh and please her Lord. But in her heart the Lord could see its contents true and precious in His eyes. That blush betrayed her love, with tears that touched a chord so deep within His soul. For ages yet to be it will be told, the love that broke the box and overflowed from every heart where He was owned as Master and adored as Lord. So shall the King with great desire that inner beauty prize, where He doth reign, that burning flame reflecting from the eyes love deep within the soul.

### MANY WATERS CANNOT QUENCH LOVE

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#### A VIRTUOUS WOMAN IS A CROWN TO HER HUSBAND

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*Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.* Proverbs 31:31

**Tau** = a sign or mark, like that upon a seal, and that upon the forehead of the elect,—their Father’s Name. This final verse looks beyond the present signs of divine favour and love to that ultimate sign when at the end she shall receive His “*Well done*”, and the abundant entrance.

**TRIBUTE TO A WOMAN’S LOVE.** These are His words not ours. They follow love’s outpouring through the life. The broken empty box is laid aside, and all that then remains, the savour clinging to the house, the views of men upon her wasted work, as in their eyes it seems, would soon forever be forgotten. But then it is the Master speaks His gracious words. Love’s labour cannot be in vain, nor any offering accepted in His sight. So little does it seem that she can do to show her love. Yet in that little He perceives her all, and makes immortal that unworthy deed. She hath done what she could, all that lay within her power to do, with all the courage that His love could give. It shall be told. That simple act of love that was a woman’s life. Her all she gave, and in response His all with her He shares. The love of the woman is linked with the love of God’s Lamb. Wherever the one is told so will the other, for here the love of both entwine. He is the light of her life, and she, the crown of His glory.

**ABUNDANT ENTRANCE** The moment comes, that blessed hour when toil in flesh must cease. She now is clothed with raiment of His own

supply, which in her hands was beautified with grace. To faith was added virtue, knowledge, patience too, and every precious quality of mind. Each stitch in love for Him was worked, in strength of His enlisted grace. It is indeed *the product of His preciousness to her*, for which she claims no praise, save that deep understanding in His eyes. Therein lies all the treasures she has stored and laid up for that heavenly home she longs to share with her Betrothed. The first sight of her dear Beloved's face, the loving smile, the look of great desire, this vision has so long her heart inspired. The object of her race, that she might win Christ. That joy unspeakable awaits as glory's crown. Then looking back will she reflect how every day the prospect grew more bright since first they met. Until it turned to burning deep desire, that first small flame became consuming fire within her breast, His presence, living bright reality, and life transferred to love.

Now at the gates she meets Him face to face, and on His arm she still does lean, leaves desert scene for His embrace, and they together share the joys of that *abundant entrance*.

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CHRIST...LOVED THE CHURCH, AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR IT; THAT HE MIGHT SANCTIFY AND CLEANSE IT WITH THE WASHING OF WATER BY THE WORD, THAT HE MIGHT PRESENT IT TO HIMSELF A GLORIOUS CHURCH, NOT HAVING SPOT, OR WRINKLE, OR ANY SUCH THING; BUT THAT IT SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLEMISH.

EPHESIANS 5:25-27

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DH

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**Exodus 12:33-34, 37-39** And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men. And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneadingtroughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders.

And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children. And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle. And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened; because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual.



## NOVEMBER

*Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened—Isaiah 35.5*

**Perfect perception.** Of all the stories related in our Bibles, that which is recorded in John 9, is one of the most outstanding. Here was a man who was born blind and whose eyes were opened by Jesus. Arrested and brought before the religious rulers, the one thus favoured, found himself answering a charge of gross deception. In answer he vehemently asserted that he had indeed been cured by Jesus. Filled with a frenzy of hatred against the lowly Nazarene, his judges vented their animosity by excommunicating the one who had been favoured by him. Jesus heard it, found the man and revealed his Messiah-ship. In this way a double miracle was performed: firstly the opening of literal eyes and secondly the giving of mental perception relating to truth.

“Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened.” This will be physically fulfilled during Christ’s reign. It will also apply to mind and heart. Upon the complete opening of the “eyes of understanding” will depend life eternal. “Every eye shall see him” therefore refers to this most important phase of visual perception. Meanwhile are our own eyes so clear—clarified by the Holy Spirit of Truth—that we can sing: “Since my eyes were fixed on Jesus, I’ve lost sight of all beside. So enchained my spirit’s vision, looking at the crucified!”

*FL*

### ALL FOR JESUS

Let my hands perform His bidding;	Since my eyes were fixed on Jesus,
Let my feet run in His ways;	I've lost sight of all beside—
Let my eyes see Jesus only;	So enchained my spirit’s vision,
Let my lips speak forth His praise.	Looking at the crucified.
All for Jesus! all for Jesus!	All for Jesus! all for Jesus!
Let my lips speak forth His praise.	All for Jesus crucified.

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**Exodus 12:35-36** The children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians.

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## PRAYER AND THE BIBLE

### Part 6



### God's Power Works Through Prayer

By the expenditure of vast wealth in the terrible first world war millions of men lost life; but not all the treasure of all the ages can purchase back life to a single dead soldier. The worship of the Golden Calf destroys life; it cannot invoke power to restore it. Where there is life there is hope; but when life is gone hope is lost, for man cannot revive the dead.

And yet the raising of the dead seemed an easy matter with Jesus. He commanded: "Lazarus, come forth"; and he that was dead came forth! (John 11:43-44). Lazarus had died four days previously and was decomposing; but when Jesus spake he was restored to life immediately. The power of our Lord's words was mightier than death! The source of this might is revealed in the simple thanks which Jesus offered before calling forth the dead—"Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me." From the time he received news about Lazarus, Jesus had been supplicating for that power which could return his friend to life. He had no doubt that his request would be granted; for he knew he correctly interpreted the Father's will in thus proving his right to the title: "The Resurrection and the Life." (John 11:4,15,25). Had our Lord not rendered thanks audibly we might have mistakenly supposed that the marvellous resurrection forces originated with him instead of with his Father. Thus Jesus explained himself: "Because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 11:42).

Lazarus was not raised to everlasting life. He and certain others were restored to their former activities, as practical demonstrations of that power by which Christ will be able to call forth from the sleep of death all of earth's millions, and start them on the upward way to perfect and lasting life (Isa. 35:10). "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth" (John 5:28,29; Acts 24:15). Careful, reverential, thinkers will not receive with incredulity this information. A miracle is not wrought by the violation of any law, but by the counteracting influence of another law. The disobedience of Adam brought into operation the "law of sin and death"; and scientific investigation has failed to discover a natural force strong enough to reverse it. But prayerful investigation of the Written

Word of Jehovah, which is the greatest science, has been rewarded by the revealment of a law which is vastly more powerful than the law of sin and death. It is called the “law of the spirit of life,” and was brought into force by the obedience of Christ Jesus (Rom. 5:19; 8:2). This new law has the power to free us from the law of sin and death in the present Age if we have faith; for it is written: “sin shall not have dominion over you” (Rom. 6:14). Ultimately all the human race, both those who have died in the past, and those still going into death, will experience the benefit of the “law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.” In the coming Age of universal blessing man will pray, and restoration of life will come.

We note another example of the granting of power through prayer. It is essential that the rulers of any country should be chosen with wisdom, for on them the welfare of the nation depends. But in spite of the many safeguards dictated by the experience of generations, mistakes are made and hence no government is fully satisfying. If through wire-pulling and graft the elected governing body is corrupt, the country suffers. Surely he would be endowed with wisdom indeed, who could devise a method by which the electors would know for a certainty who were the very best candidates possible to vote into office.

But Jesus seemed to have no difficulty in selecting the men who were destined to be the chiefs in the mightiest Kingdom. We read: “He called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles” (Luke 6:13-16). This momentous selection is related so simply, that it appears as if our Lord put forth little effort. But it was not easy to elect the twelve foundations of the Church, the rulers who were to sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel in the regeneration (Matt. 19:28; Eph. 2:20; Rev. 21:14). Jesus was unerring in his judgement. Of those whom he chose from among his numerous disciples only one was lost. Here is the explanation: “And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.” And when it was day he called his disciples and separated the twelve without faltering.

Jesus knew it was God’s will that he should have twelve special representatives who would constitute the twelve foundations of Spiritual Israel, just as Jacob’s twelve sons were the founders of fleshly Israel, and he therefore prayed Jehovah to grant the insight and wisdom necessary to

enable him to make the correct appointments. For it was not his own wishes, but the choice of his Father that he desired to be guided by (Matt. 20:20-23). This is shown by our Lord's reference to these twelve in John 17:6 as previously belonging to the Father. And even the inclusion of Judas, the son of perdition, was not an error, for it was God's will that a betrayer should be numbered with the twelve; and he had foretold of this in the Scriptures, and the Scriptures must be fulfilled (John 6:64,65; 13:11; 17:12) It made the trial of Jesus the more searching, and proved his loyalty to his covenant of sacrifice.

The heavenly wisdom was given to Jesus in response to earnest prayer; and it is accorded to his followers also if they ask for it with unwavering faith (James 1:5-8; 3:13-17). For the wisdom which is from above is the right application of the knowledge granted by the great Jehovah, who is the fountain of knowledge.

*ME*



### LEEK, ONION & GARLIC

Numbers 11;1,5 (NEB) There came a time when the people complained to the LORD of their hardships. Think of it! In Egypt we had fish for the asking, cucumbers and water melons, leeks and onions and garlic.

The leek, the onion and the garlic are very similar foods, being vegetables.

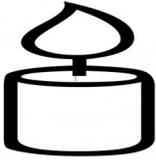


Leeks were very popular in Egypt and are still commonly eaten there and in Israel. The bulbs and leaves of this plant are cooked as vegetable and used as a seasoning. They are also eaten raw.



Onions and Garlic were commonly cultivated in Egypt. The Greek historian Herodotus records that they were provided for labourers. Egyptian onions have been described as being softer and sweeter than the European ones. The garlic is also a perennial plant which is very pungent and is composed of up to 20 cloves in a bulb. They are believed to aid the circulation.

## DECEMBER



*If we walk in the Light, as he is in the Light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.— 1 John 1: 7.*

**By way of reminder.** You ask what should we keep in mind every day and in the silent watches of the night? I answer as follows.

1. Trust in God. Affirm the truth that he is good, and overwhelmingly so to all who commit their ways to him in the name of the Redeemer.
2. Do your best to obtain a balanced understanding of the Scriptures. Fit in every doctrine, however insignificant, so that it is harmonious with the picture as a whole. Nearly all holding the name of Christ, have some kind of kink in their spiritual armour. Aim therefore at perfection.
3. Remember that Jesus died for everyone else as well as you. If you cannot render assistance at least do not injure yourself and them, with thoughts which would be unacceptable to God. Think good, speak good and do good. Leave the perverse and wicked to the One who will deal with them in his own just way.
4. Be courageous and positive in thought, word and action. Do everything worth doing, thoroughly. Tread on Solid Rock all the time. Cultivate cheer, gentleness, sympathy, patience, the prayerful attitude, as well as the noble art of giving.
5. The presentation of the Truth represents the best of all good gifts. Its melody is eternal! With God as your guide, be a slave to no man or system. If you belong to his House of Sons, then you are free and entitled to the best of all fellowship. Walk worthy of it!

*FL*

ALL for Jesus! all for Jesus!  
 All my being's ransomed pow'rs;  
 All my thoughts and words and doings,  
 All my days and all my hours.  
 All for Jesus! all for Jesus!  
 All my days and all my hours.

## A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL

The scriptures relating to the New Covenant have offered much hope and encouragement to believers all through the Christian Era. But at the end of this age it has come more into the minds of students of the Bible as prophecies have been fulfilled during the last 100 years.

An examination to the New Covenant cannot be done without contrasting it to the old Law Covenant. The old Law Covenant was made between God and the nation of Israel at Mount Sinai. It was soon after leaving the land of Egypt that Moses went up Mount Sinai and God said *“if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people....and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.”* (Exod. 19:5-6) These words were addressed to the children of Israel. Even the writer to the Hebrews, be it Apollos or Paul or another apostle, wrote *“he hath made the first **old**. Now that which decayeth and waxeth **old** is ready to vanish away”*. (Heb. 8:13) According to Christian scholars this was written in the years immediately prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

Jeremiah was the first to write it. Jer. 31:31-34 (RSV) says *“Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke...But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbour and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD”*. This was written in the days of the last kings of Judah prior to the captivity in Babylon but records seem to confirm this was after the captivity of the so-called ten tribe kingdom of Israel. One notable feature of this promise was that it would be made with the house of Israel and Judah. Only natural Israel has been labelled in such a way.

### **The Book of Hebrews and the New Covenant**

Hebrews 8:8-12 virtually repeats the verses above from Jeremiah 31.

Again it repeats that God would make it with “the house of Israel and with the house of Judah”. The context in Hebrews places it against the context of the tabernacle arrangement. The writer to the Hebrews after talking about the sacrifices in the law arrangement states “This is the covenant that I will make with...Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds.” (RSV) This states that it works in the hearts and in the mind.

### **Made the former old**

In New Testament times the Law Covenant passed away. Jesus stated he came to earth to fulfil the law (Matt. 5:17-18) This he did, so Paul was able to say some years after our Lord Jesus' death that he blotted “out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross” (Col. 2:14). The New English Bible translates it, “For he has forgiven us all our sins; he has cancelled the bond which pledged us to the decrees of the law. It stood against us, but he has set it aside, nailing it to the cross.” Or to put it simply the old law was nailed to the cross having served its purpose. A few years after his ascension, the work widened out by inspiration of God and by revelations to Peter and Paul regarding the Gentiles. No longer were the promises of God solely to the natural seed of Abraham and some proselytes. Yet some Judaizing teachers wanted them to keep the law. Therefore Paul at times pleaded with them to disregard such teaching saying that the law was merely a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ but now we are justified by our faith and if we are Christ's we are Abraham's seed and heirs according to faith and not to the keeping of the law. (Gal. 3:22-29) Then in AD 70 Jerusalem and The Temple were destroyed by the Romans and there was no place to offer any of the sacrifices daily, monthly, annually or otherwise. Thus showing it served no purpose in the eyes of the Heavenly Father. So by the time John penned Revelation the old nation of Israel had been scattered and removed from the Promised Land. This did not mean that many did not attempt to keep the law but they did so in communities outside of what became called by many Palestine.

In Britain many Jews still observe aspects of the law either in their daily lives in matters of food and cleanliness and other traditions such as a Passover meal. According to ‘The Guardian’ in the 2011 National Census just 16% of Jews in the U.K. are ultra-orthodox. So the old law came to

an end only seen in those of natural Israel, who did not recognise that the Anointed One had come, but kept the aspects they did chose to keep. The law did pass away and only an appearance of it remains with orthodox Jewry.

### **Everlasting covenant**

The matter of the New Covenant cannot be written about without mention to the verses on the Everlasting Covenant. One such scripture is in Isaiah 55:3,5 “Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David” and “Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel”. A second one is Isa. 61:8-9 “For I the LORD love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the LORD hath blessed.” These intentions were laid out before the time of Jeremiah to another prophet, Isaiah more than 100 years before Jeremiah. It saw a time of a then-future covenant that would be wrought in Israel in which the Gentiles would also be blessed. It would be a covenant that would not end. Like the New Covenant that appears to have no end.

### **Perpetual covenant**

Going forward many years and returning to the book of Jeremiah there is a verse regarding a perpetual covenant. The word translated ‘perpetual’ is Strong’s Hebrew word 5769 *owlam* which has the meaning of always, ancient time, any more, continuance, eternal, everlasting, long time. This is the same word translated as ‘everlasting’ in Isaiah and therefore must be the same covenant. Another feature of these verses is the mention that the covenant would be made with both houses of Israel. It says “*In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the LORD their God. They shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward (toward it), saying, ‘Come, and let us join ourselves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten.* (Jer. 50:4,5).

**Jesus, the Last Supper and the blood of the new covenant.** (Matt. 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25-26)

Our Lord Jesus made mention once of the new covenant. That was the important record of the last supper when he likened the wine to his blood, the blood of the new covenant. He states it was shed for those disciples in the room for remission of sins. This is a phrase that can apply today to those who partake in the bread and the wine in the manner our Lord Jesus instructed us, whether to Jew or Gentile.

### **The Mediator – Jesus**

The word mediator is *mesites* which is Strong's Greek word 3316 which carries the idea of a 'go-between, a reconciler, an intercessor'. This is why the writer to the Hebrews is able to label Jesus as the mediator of the New Covenant as he also fulfilled to old law covenant. (Heb. 9: 14-15; 12:24) In a similar way Moses was the mediator of the Law Covenant as it implies in Hebrews 8:5-7 while noting that the new covenant was based on better sacrifices than the old.

### **Deacons of New Covenant (2 Cor. 3:3,5-7)**

How should Christians today label their position in relation to the New Covenant? In the A.V. Paul says "God hath made us able ministers of the New Testament (Covenant)". In the U.K. government a minister is a high ranking member of the cabinet tasked with running the country being responsible for some major section of British life whether it be agriculture, health or trade or something similar. But the Diaglott describes them as 'servants' from the Greek word *diaskonos* which is often translated as deacons as in 1 Tim 3:8 where it describes those who assist the Overseers. It is the same word used to describe Phoebe's work for the congregation near Corinth. It can be concluded this is a subordinate role at present if the verse is to be applied to the present rather than to the future. The Diaglott used the phrase that "our qualification is from God; who qualified us to be Servants (deacons) of a New Covenant".

Therefore the prime function of the New Covenant is with natural Israel rather than spiritual Israel and hence the main function is still in the future. The state of Israel has been recognised for 70 years and the population grows in number decade by decade. This can happen as Jesus fulfilled the law at his first advent and that old covenant is now at an end and following his death is the mediator of the new covenant having shed

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his blood to remit sins. It was shed for all but especially for his disciples at his first advent and all those disciples who have followed the same way as those early ones did. Now the followers are qualified to be deacons of a new covenant until that number is complete and the next wonderful phase of the new covenant, an everlasting and perpetual covenant can be seen in Israel forever that will be good for all nations.

**QUAILS**

**Exodus 16: 11-13** And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God. And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host.

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