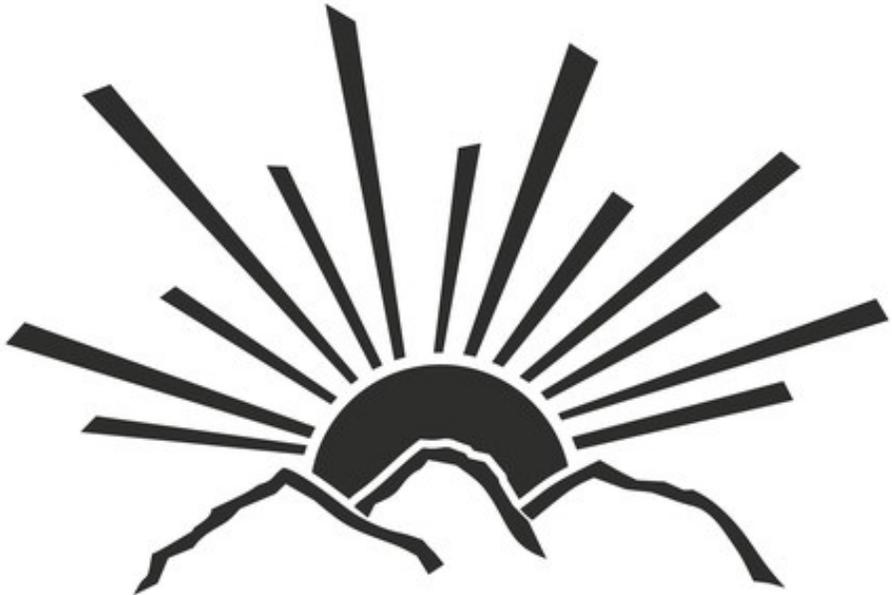


# BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

Volume 96 Issue 1

January / February 2019



*This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.*  
(Psalm 118. 24)

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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 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).

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

On 1 January 1519, 500 years ago, Zwingli gave the first in a series of sermons in Zurich, Switzerland. He was one of the most prominent reformers of his day. He was driven by his study of the Bible having by that stage a knowledge of the Greek. His sermons were not in the language of the established church but in the local language of German so that the Swiss populace could understand.

Huldrych Zwingli was born on 1 January 1484 the third child of probably ten born of a farming family in a Swiss village. It was soon clear he was by far more clever than his siblings so he was sent to his uncle, a local priest, to learn to read and write. At the age of 10 he was sent to Basle, a university city, to learn Latin grammar and then at the age of 13 to become a novice in a monastery. However his father removed him in order to prepare for a secular career so he was taken back to Basle for further study.

Erasmus (1466-1536) who had published the New Testament in Greek and Latin was a great influence on Zwingli. It was not surprising that Zwingli who knew no Greek decided to teach himself that language in 1510. He could then use the original text that Jerome had translated for the Latin Vulgate version of the Bible. He later decided to learn Hebrew.

Starting from the premise that the Bible is the divinely-inspired Word of God he believed that salvation was through Christ, in the importance of faith; the bread and the wine were symbols; the clergy could marry; that people should be free to eat whatever they chose; prayers were to God alone and not to Mary; or the saints of the established church and certain ceremonies were merely traditions and not requirements of the Bible.

The consequences were felt in Zurich and surrounding areas of the Swiss confederation. The monasteries and nunneries were closed. One abbess even returning her nunnery to the local council. The mass was no longer said from 1525. A simple Easter communion service was instituted to include a reading of the Last Supper. Having opened the floodgates and encouraging the people to read the Bible in their native tongue this led to questioning about whether other things, like infant baptism, were consistent with the Bible, or just adult baptism. Therefore a group labelled Anabaptists arose and one in Zurich was killed for his belief. There was great antagonism with the southern states which were Catholic.

On 11 October, 1531 Zwingli, who had taken up arms to fight the Catholic forces which were approaching, was wounded and died of his injuries. His body was burnt as a heretic and his ashes scattered without respect. Luther was said to remark “They that take the sword shall perish with the sword”.

After his death he was succeeded by Heinrich Bullinger in Zurich. He is not to be confused with the much later British theologian known for the Companion Bible.

What impact did this have in England? In the early days of the English Reformation few cases of heresy appear to be from a Zwinglian belief. Mainly they were cases of Lollard or Lutheran belief. Once the reformation had advanced, according to Bindoff, Zwingli much influenced Cranmer who was a great reader and so the second Prayer Book during the reign of Edward VI appears very close to Zwingli's thoughts. For example “Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart by faith, with thanksgiving”. From 1548 over 400 Protestant clergy were to come here from that part of central Europe. John Hooper an English Bishop in 1550 had lived with Bullinger and was much

influenced by Zwingli. Zwingli was one of a group of Protestant reformers of that era who had varied influence over the religious viewpoints in England and also in Scotland.



### **Gaspard de Coligny (1519-1572)**

Protestantism had its own story in France. One remarkable man was born on 16 February 1519 into a noble family and became a leader of the Huguenots. He called for religious compromise and tried to promote Huguenot colonies in the Americas.

He was shot in the street in 1572 following the wedding of protestant Henry of Navarre, later Henry IV and Margaret of Valois, the daughter of a king of France and the sister of the then king whose brothers all died without a male heir. He survived but this sparked the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre two days later in which he was killed. About 8,000 Huguenots were killed in eight weeks in France.

In his day Coligny endeavoured to encourage religious toleration for French protestants. At that time he was not successful but history has left the record that his religious beliefs ended his life prematurely.

*"I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, ...that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God". (1 Tim. 2. 1-3 ESV)*



Liberty. Liberty is a thing you cannot have unless you are willing to give it to others.



Encouragement. A great thing we can give is encouragement.

*Deep Waters and a Bubbling Brook  
Harvest Activities*



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.

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## ARISE AND SHINE

*“The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.” (Isa. 9. 2)*

As we enter another year it is painfully evident that people are still walking in darkness and dwelling in the land of the shadow of death. The great light which shined in the world when Christ came to earth with His message of hope has not yet penetrated all the recesses of terrestrial night. The world is a larger place than it was two thousand years ago and there is more darkness to be dispelled. The men and women of earlier centuries made more of the light that was shining because they realised their need more than does humanity today. Men are so clever now; so exultant at wresting from Nature her most cherished secrets. They can fly faster than sound, can descend into the depths of the seas; they can transmute (change) the elements and measure the distant stars. Now they hope that the secrets of genetics will enable them to do better than Nature herself in the growth and production of plant life and food. Like Lucifer, they aspire to sit upon the sides of the north and be like the Most High. Poor deluded ones; like the antediluvians in the days of Noah, they know not that they walk in darkness and that the end of their godless ambitions and dreams is at hand.

But are all men like this? By no means! Those who proclaim abroad so blatantly the might and power of man, and decry man’s need of God, and deny Him any place in human life, are in the minority. They represent numerically but a tiny fraction of earth’s population. The fact that they enjoy control of the world’s means of publicity—the press, the radio, the ear of governments, and so on, gives their utterances and pronouncements a semblance of solidity out of all proportion to their true magnitude. The rest of the people are waiting for what they know not. They only know that they walk in darkness and in the shadow of death, and that the light is a long time in coming. It ought not to be so, for although that Great Light moves visibly among men no more, there are many lights, shining by reflection, and they should by now be making some impression, for they have been a long time in the world. Perhaps they do not shine brightly enough, for if the reflecting surface is not kept clean and polished it loses its capacity to reflect. Maybe some of the lights have been put under

bushels and cannot be seen. And some have turned away from the Light and so cannot reflect, for the Light is not reaching them at all.

There was a book published many years ago called “*Efficiency in Hades*”, in which an American production expert, visiting that mythical place of torment, and being conducted round by Lucifer, observed to his guide “It does seem uneconomic to burn all these sinners just to provide illumination for a few elect in Heaven!” whereupon Lucifer re-joined meditatively “Perhaps the elect wouldn’t give a good enough light themselves.” That is the world’s condemnation, not of Christianity but of the failure of Christians. The question ought to be asked: Is it being said of us, as individuals or as a fellowship? It is so fatally easy to become satisfied with our own position before God, our own acceptance of His plans for human well-being, and the prospect of the promised future “reign with Christ”. We forget that the validity of our belief in future things can only be attested by the degree to which we endeavour to practice them now. The very essentials of work in His Kingdom is service for one’s fellows and a constant pointing and leading them to Christ and His way of life. We are failing in our duty and privilege if we do not take good heed of those around us who are submerged in darkness and in the shadow of death and do all that lies within our present power to lift them out of it. Neither is it enough to content ourselves with a vigorous campaign of preaching the coming Kingdom as God’s panacea for all present human ills. True, we are called upon to herald that Kingdom consistently and persistently; but what is the practical use of saying to our starving brother “*Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled*” (James 2. 16) if we give him not those things whereby he may be warmed and filled? The words of James might very well be interpreted here to mean that we who have the knowledge and ability to show how the Kingdom is going to work should not content ourselves with just telling people what it is going to be like when it has come. We should show them what it is like, in our own fellowship and by our attitude toward them and our treatment of them. If we all make a sincere and honest-to-goodness attempt to regulate our own daily life and actions toward each other and toward all, by the principles which we profess to believe are the Divine will, and are to regulate life in the Millennial Age, then we shall do more to shine light into the darkness wherein people walk, and dispel the shadow of death, than has been accomplished by all the academic arguments and philosophical discourses that have been delivered from the time of Origen\* until now.

Although that may not alter the Divine timetable for the inauguration of the Kingdom, it will assuredly represent a most substantial contribution to the work of the Kingdom and make the impact of that epoch of justice and righteousness something less of a shock to those who at present understand precious little of either. There is a parable about going out into the highways and byways; without interpreting that injunction too literally, we might do well to think about it a little.

*AOH*

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

### Matthew 6. 9-13

*Our Father which art in  
heaven,  
Hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come,  
Thy will be done  
in earth, as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily  
bread.  
And forgive us our debts,  
as we forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into  
temptation,  
but deliver us from evil:  
\*For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power,  
and the glory,  
for ever.  
Amen.*

### Luke 11. 2-4

*Our Father which art in  
heaven,  
Hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come.  
Thy will be done,  
as in heaven, so in earth.  
Give us day by day our  
daily bread.  
And forgive us our sins;  
for we also forgive every one  
that is indebted to us.  
And lead us not into  
temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.*

\* Sentence not found in earliest manuscripts



## ZECHARIAH, PROPHET OF THE RESTORATION

### 7. Deputation from Bethel

Two years after the visions the word of the Lord came again to Zechariah, this time in the form of a message to his own generation. The Temple was approaching completion, only two more years and the edifice that had been commenced eighteen years earlier at the return from Babylon was finished and dedicated, and the worship of the God of Israel resumed in his own sanctuary. It was the imminent prospect of this long-looked for consummation which inspired the sending of the deputation from Bethel to Jerusalem and so gave occasion for the happenings that are recorded in chapters 7 and 8.

*“Now the people of Bethel had sent Share’zer and Reg’em-mel’ech and their men, to entreat the favour of the LORD...”* This is the R.S.V. rendering of ch. 7. 2 and it is the true one. The A.V. has mistaken the word and rendered Bethel “the house of God”, its meaning in Hebrew, without realising that it was the town of Bethel in Samaria that was intended. The import of verses 2 and 3 is that the Jews living in and around Bethel, for so long the centre of idolatrous worship in Israel before the Captivities and now in the Restoration the most important town in the north, had sent a deputation to Jerusalem with an important question. The leaders of the deputation were these two. Sharezer and Regem-melech, who despite their Babylonian names were certainly Jews. The question was whether the priests and prophets at Jerusalem considered it necessary still to observe the day of mourning associated with the burning and destruction of Solomon’s Temple by Nebuchadnezzar on the tenth day of the fifth month some seventy years earlier, now that the new Temple was almost complete. One would have expected the answer to be almost self-evident; why weep for the destruction of God’s sanctuary now that it was rebuilt? It almost seems the questioners were more concerned with ritual observance than realities; they had always observed this day as one of mourning and lamentation, *“these so many years”* they said, and if the ritual so demanded, were prepared to go on doing it even though the situation which called it into being no longer existed. At any rate, the Lord’s reply transmitted through the prophet showed that He was under no illusion. *“When ye fasted and mourned...those seventy years, did ye...fast...to me?”* He demanded. *“Should ye not hear the words which the LORD hath cried by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited*

*and in prosperity...”* (ch. 7. 5&7). In a few short, sharp words the Lord told them that their mourning was only ceremonial, that they were not really weeping for the desolated Sanctuary and the despite (disrespect) done to God’s glory. They had not listened to the warnings of the prophets in the days of their prosperity, neither were they sincere in their lamentations over the years of adversity, for there was no real remorse or repentance in their hearts. So the first answer from the Lord was a plain and uncompromising intimation that they were not honest in their profession and therefore He was not interested whether they mourned in the fifth month or not.

This was, however, only a first answer. The Lord does not leave his children, even grievously erring children, without guidance and encouragement, and He had a great deal yet to say to these messengers from Bethel. So He expanded his words. As though it might be claimed that the words of the prophets had been forgotten and lost in the troublous times that had for several generations afflicted Israel the Lord gave them a brief resume. *“Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions... oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother”* (ch. 7. 9-10). This was the spirit of the Law, the principles by which, if Israel lived in them, everlasting peace and prosperity would be their portion. But they did not so live, so that at the last there had to be penned the sad, regretful words of 2 Chron. 36. 15-16 *“The LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy”*. So the penalty of the broken Covenant came upon Israel and they were carried into captivity by their enemies. Therefore the words of the old Chronicler were repeated to the messengers from Bethel to Zechariah. *“They refused to hearken”* he said *“and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. They made their hearts as an adamant stone”* (diamond) *“lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent...by the former prophets...Therefore it is come to pass...I scattered them...among all the nations whom they knew not...for they laid the pleasant land desolate”* (ch. 7. 11-14).

Then the Lord turned, and spoke to those messengers in a very different

tone. Gone are the words of reproof for the shortcomings of their fathers and the broken covenant, gone the stern admonition as to their own insincerity and formalism, their own failure to mourn the destruction of the Temple in the spirit of remorse and repentance for the sins which led to that destruction. Chapter 8 strikes a different key, one of hope and confidence for the future, one in which blessing and not judgment is the predominant note. The message was primarily for the people of Zechariah's own day, outlining some of the glories which Israel was shortly to enjoy in her renewed national status, but going on into the far distant future when, in the Kingdom of God, Israel should attain her destiny. It is as though God had cast behind his back all thought of the failures and shortcomings and sins of his people, all the reproofs and the penalties and the rejections, and begun to tell them of his plans for their future in the time of their conversion and reformation.

*"I am returned unto Zion" He said "and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth" (ch. 8. 3). This theme has of course recurred from time to time from the very beginning of Zechariah's prophecy and it refers very definitely to the restoration of Israel in her own land in his day and the flowering of national sovereignty which followed. "Let your hands be strong, ye that hear in these days these words by the mouth of the prophets, which were in the day that the foundation of the house of the LORD of hosts was laid, that the temple might be built" (ch. 8. 9). Those prophets were Haggai and Zechariah, the two spiritual leaders of the nation at this critical point in their history. But the Lord is nothing if not up to date. "Before these days" He says "there was no hire for man, nor...beast; neither...peace to him that went out or came in...for I set...every one against his neighbour" (ch. 8. 10). This is a little picture of the dark days before the Restoration, when the people went into captivity and the land lay desolate, and war and tumult was the order of the day. Now those days were past; they had been ordered of the Lord but now He had turned his face toward his people again. "But now I will not be unto the residue of this people as in the former days, saith the LORD of hosts. For the seed shall be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things...so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing...So again have I thought in these days to do well unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah: fear ye not" (ch. 8. 11-15). A crowning description of the peace*

and prosperity that was in store for Israel appears in vv. 4-5 *“There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof”*.

All this was fulfilled in the resurgence of the Jewish State during the centuries intervening between Zechariah and Christ. These words were uttered in the fourth year of Darius of Persia, 518 B.C. The Temple was completed and dedicated two years later. A considerable Jewish population had returned from Babylon during the preceding twenty years and much of Judea and Samaria was being re-colonised by Jews. During the times of Zechariah and Zerubbabel, and later on of Ezra and Nehemiah, and finally the prophet Malachi, a period of nearly a century, the people were relatively prosperous and enjoyed peace and safety. There were times of backsliding from their allegiance to God but they always returned. Another century of relative peace under Persian rule passed, and then came Alexander the Greek and the end of the Persian empire. But Alexander favoured the Jews and for more than yet another century Judea remained untroubled. Only when the development of the Syrian and Egyptian powers brought upon Judea the terrible oppression of Antiochus Epiphanes was the bright picture shadowed, and although after that there was a short lived period of less than a century during which Judea became completely independent, there began a sad series of wars and tumults which culminated in the annexation of Judea by Rome and the end of all national aspirations and all their glory. For some four hundred years they had enjoyed, in measure, the fulfilment of the promises of chapter 8 but it all came to an end because they did not continue to fulfil the conditions upon which that blessedness depended. The terms were clearly laid down. *“These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates: and let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the LORD”* (ch. 8. 16-17). They did observe these injunctions at first, in the days of Zechariah, when the Temple was new, and the promises began to be fulfilled accordingly; but they slowly abandoned those high standards as time went on, and the promises progressively failed in consequence. The traditional days of national mourning, the fast of the fourth month, remembering the day that Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem; of the fifth, when the Temple was burnt; of the seventh when Gedaliah, the

governor left behind by Nebuchadnezzar, was slain; and of the tenth, when the siege of the city began, all of these, said the Lord in ch. 8. 19 were now to be “*joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts; therefore love the truth and peace*”. So it was, for a time, but they did not continue in the love of truth and peace, so that once again the land and the city knew siege and battle and murder, and the joy and gladness vanished, and the people of the Lord failed to receive the promises, because they would not believe. Once more the fulfilment of the Divine promise had to be postponed because of continued unfitness on the part of those who were destined to be the Divine agents in the final outworking of that promise. Babylon had not been sufficient after all; Antiochus, the Herods, the Romans, all the oppressors of future days must yet come upon the scene to chasten this people that would not learn, and the full import of the promise be deferred.

The Lord knew that. The last four verses of this chapter enshrine his assurance that the time will surely come when this stiff-necked and hard hearted people will have profited aright by their experiences and been forged in the crucible of trouble into a vessel fitted for his use. “*It shall yet come to pass*” He says “*that there shall come people...saying, Let us go speedily...to seek (the favour of) the LORD of hosts...yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem...In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men...out of all languages of the nations...shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you*” (ch. 8. 20-23). The numeral ten is used in the Bible for an indefinite number and too much emphasis should not be read into its use here. Thus we have the ten virgins and the ten talents in the parables of Jesus; ten women shall bake in the oven as a symbol of scarcity (Lev. 26. 26); Israel proved the Lord “ten times” (Num. 14. 22) and Elkanah considered that he meant more to Hannah as a husband than ten sons could mean (1 Sam. 1. 8). So here we have an indication that people of all nations will come to the Jew for their blessing, “*in that day*”, and this is precisely what Isaiah meant when he said that the mountain of the Lord’s house would be established in the top of the mountains and “*all nations shall flow unto it*” (Isa. 2. 2). These few verses, from 19 to 23, lay down the order in which men will turn to the Lord “at his appearing and his kingdom”. First comes Israel in the land, next Israel from the Dispersion, finally the Gentiles, the nations at large. Perhaps the Douay version gives the most intelligible rendering here.

After saying that the various days of mourning, lamenting the destruction of the Jewish polity (government) by Babylon, shall become “*joy, and gladness, and great solemnities*” the Lord continues “*only love ye truth and peace...until people come, and dwell in many cities, and the inhabitants go one to another, saying: Let us go, and entreat the face of the Lord*” (ch. 8. 19-21). Here surely is depicted the growth of the Holy Nation in the territory of Israel, building the old wastes, raising up the former desolations, repairing the waste cities, the “desolations of many generations” (Isa. 61. 4) coming to realise as they do these things that the hand of the Lord is with them, and in the wonder of that discovery progressively casting off their former unbelief and coming to God in faith and trust. The “many peoples and strong nations” will come next and add their quota to the restoration of the ancient land and nation, until at last the whole world of men begins to take notice of this thing that is happening and to a constantly increasing degree begin to ally themselves with Israel and pay allegiance to Israel’s God. “*It shall be said in that day*” says Isaiah again “*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).

But that wonderful climax will be after the scourge of “Jacob’s Trouble” has come upon the Holy nation and purified it leaving it fine gold. The story of Ezekiel 38 and 39, when the host of “Gog and the land of Magog” descend upon the Holy Land and are met by the powers of Heaven, has first to be enacted. That is not mentioned here in Zech. 8. A vivid and detailed picture of that momentous happening came later to the prophet in his old age and is recorded in Zech. Chapter 14. The Lord’s message here in chapter 8 has to do entirely with the final outcome. At the end of time, when all the captains and the kings have departed, the Lord will find humble and contrite hearts waiting for the inspiring and life-giving touch of his Holy Spirit. In the power and wonder of that great moment the new world will be born, and the old one irrevocably pass away. “*And the Gentiles (nations) shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising*” cried Isaiah (60. 3), the man who saw more of that blessed day than any other prophet. “*Saviours shall come up on mount Zion*” said his successor Obadiah (v.21) “*and the kingdom shall be the LORD’s*”. Not one of us can add anything to that.

*(To be continued)*

*AOH*

## PRAYER AND THE BIBLE

### Part 13

#### **The Adversary of God and His Anointed**

Writing to the Corinthians Paul advises them to forgive and comfort an erring brother, that overmuch sorrow should not swallow him up, adding: "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices." (2 Cor. 2. 6-11) The wiles of the Devil are not unknown to us who give heed to the Lord's Word, for since the beginning our adversary has not changed his methods of attack. These devices are outlined in the account of the temptation and fall of Adam and Eve (Gen. 3); and a summary of them will be of advantage to all who desire to gain the victory with Christ.

1. Satan hides himself, the better to deceive the unwary. (2 Cor. 11. 14) He did not appear openly when tempting Eve, but hid behind the serpent. (Gen. 3. 1) Very many are not aware of Satan's existence; but thinking people know that there can be no power apart from personality. The person may be invisible, but his existence is manifested by the influence he exerts. Evil energy is everywhere prevalent; therefore sane philosophical reasoning agrees that there is somewhere an unholy, baleful being of keen mental powers, with whom this iniquity originates. (1 John 3. 8) Unfortunately, because of the inherent weaknesses due to the fall, and the lack of enlightenment, the generality of men are unconscious of the predominance of sin in the world; and they are prone to turn things upside down, and call evil good, and good evil, often not knowing the difference. (Isaiah 5. 20) In the present Age it is only the people of God who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.—Heb. 5. 14

The Word of God speaks plainly of an evil one. Many texts directly name him; and we find passages which indicate him under cover of other names. Ezek. 28. 1-19 tells us of the characteristics of the ruler of Tyrus; verses 1 to 10 speak of him as a prince, and verses 11 to 19 as a king. We perceive in this change of title a hidden reference to Satan as the real ruler, or spiritual king of Tyrus. (See also Isa. 14. 12-15.) If we take the Bible as our guide we will not doubt that the arch enemy of God and His people is an individual, a powerful spirit of great malevolence.

Those who yield to their temptations are not fighting as good soldiers of Christ; and any who play with their temptations leave the way open for a fall. Satan does not flee from such; he takes them captive at his will. (2 Tim. 2. 26; James 4. 7) Some there are who fight their temptations, and overcome them effectually with the wonderful power supplied by God in response to earnest prayer. (Rom. 6. 14; 1 Cor. 9. 27; Col. 3. 5-10) These know by experience that the Bible speaks truth when it declares that our “adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”—1 Pet. 5. 8,9

Though Satan will “roar” at us when, according to the will of God, we *keep our body under and develop acceptable faith and love*, the Scriptures assure us that “he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.” (1 John 5. 18) We are now in the “city of refuge,” and our life is hid with Christ in God. (Col. 3. 1-3; Heb. 6. 18) Satan’s purpose is, if possible, to take out of our heart and mind the peace of God which we have inherited as the reward of our obedient love and faith; and the Lord permits these testings to prove that this peace is real and lasting. (1 Pet. 4. 12-19) The Prophet Isaiah said: “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.” (Isa. 26. 3) It is a peace which passes all understanding; which the world can neither give, nor uproot.—John 14. 27; Phil 4. 6,7

The inspired Apostle declares: “the God of peace shall tread Satan under your feet shortly.” (Rom. 16. 20 margin) If we did know of the existence of Satan as the “god of this world,” how could we overcome him in the name of Jesus? (Rev. 12. 7-11) Therefore the worldly-minded, and the disobedient doubters, have no part or lot in this holy war which is being waged against the evil spiritual rulers in high places by the Holy Nation in Christ’s Name.—1 Pet. 2. 9

2. Satan tries to corrupt our pure minds by suggesting causes for doubt as to the Lord’s love and care for us. This device was successful in Eden, and terrible are the results. The subtle enemy begat doubt in Eve’s mind regarding the love of her Creator in withholding permission to eat of the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” If God loved her, why did he forbid what was so desirable?

Now, doubt of the love of another leads to doubt of the person himself.

And when we doubt we become suspicious. Suspicion naturally gives rise to misunderstanding of motives, although these may be of the best. Because we misapprehend the motives we turn to criticize; and hatred follows criticism without fail unless checked. The sure outcome of unbridled hatred is violence, murder—if not literal then mental. (1 John 3. 15) The tried Christian is apprized of this device of the devil, the antithesis of faith and trust. Experience has taught him the bitterness of doubt; but the remembrance of how the heavenly Father restored his confidence immediately in answer to earnest prayer is a sweet and precious spiritual possession, which he will not relinquish.—Isa. 40. 28-31

3. The Devil is the “father” of lies. (John 8. 44) His greatest lie is that it was unnecessary for Jesus Christ to die as the world’s Saviour. Why? Because he denied the Word of God when he said to Eve: “Ye shall not surely die!” (Contrast Gen. 2. 17 with Gen. 3. 4.) All who fail to comprehend the meaning of the Apostle when he says: “The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6. 23), are easily deceived by this lying device. To maintain that the dead are not dead, but only passed into some continued state or condition of life, is to render meaningless the Scriptural declaration that Christ came in the flesh, and as a perfect man died for all men, that all might have a *resurrection* from the dead. (John 1. 14; Heb. 2. 9,14; 2 John 7) To say that the dead live is a contradiction. This is the “strong delusion” which God permits to come upon those who receive not the truth in the love of it.—2 Thess. 2. 7-12

4. Wrong ambition and pride is another device of the adversary, evidenced at the beginning when he dazzled Eve’s senses with the reward of disobedience: “Ye shall be as gods!” (Gen. 3. 5) Self-exaltation was the cause of Satan’s own overthrow; and it is instructive to note those Scriptures which trace the fall of this great being from the high position of honour he once enjoyed, to his future destruction. In Ezekiel 28. 13-17 we read that Satan, the “anointed cherub that covereth;” was perfect in his ways from the day he was created, till iniquity was found in him. His heart was lifted up when he contemplated his personal beauty; and in his pride he even sought to be like the most High. (Isa. 14. 13,14) Therefore God said he would be cast down; and Jesus exclaimed: “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.” (Luke 10. 18) It appears that this fall was, first, from the freedom of the heavens beyond into the atmosphere of our

earth, there to become the “prince of the power of the air.” (Eph. 2. 2) In Rev. 12. 7-9 he is said to have been “cast...into the earth,” evidently symbolical of a still lower stage in his downward career. He is then bound and “cast into the bottomless pit,” where he is to lie sealed up during the thousand years of Christ’s glorious reign of righteousness (Rev. 20. 1-3); after which, at the termination of a “little season” of liberty, he will be finally “cast into the lake of fire and brimstone,” which is the “second death,” and thus be forever destroyed. (Rev. 20. 7-10; 21. 8) “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.” (1 Pet. 5. 6) In this our supreme example is Jesus.—Phil. 2. 3-11

5. Disobedience to God’s commands is a common device of our enemy. At his instigation Adam and Eve ate that which Jehovah had forbidden. (Gen. 3. 6) Jesus has given us a commandment that we should love one another. (John 15. 12) This is not a recommendation; nor does our Master entreat us; it is a command. Satan suggests very good reasons why, in special cases at all events, we should not render heart obedience.

6. The Apostle says that he knew and was persuaded “that there is nothing unclean of itself”; and that: “To the pure all things are pure.” (Rom. 14. 14; Titus 1. 15) The insinuation of impurity is undoubtedly one of the devil’s devices. He made our first parents wrongly imagine that their unclothed state was shameful. (Gen. 3. 7) God said: “Who told thee that thou wast naked?” There was no occasion for shame if they remained as God had created them. It was Satan’s impure suggestion, successful because the real clothing, that of the pure innocent mind, had been stripped away through the sin of disobeying the Lord’s command. The sin of disobedience had weakened the will, and resistance being now broken Satan’s suggestion gained footing.

The Apostle condemns some of the household of faith for forbidding Church members to marry. (1 Tim. 4. 1-3) Marriage is honourable; but as a matter of judgment he advises the unmarried to remain so if possible, and the married to be as if unmarried. (1 Cor. 7. 26-29, 38) The Lord allows individual judgment; and those who take it upon themselves to forbid marriage do not have his approval, for they evidently imply that, in their opinion, such union between Christians is impure. Suggestions of impurity come from those who have not successfully overcome this device of the evil one; but we who hope to be united with the heavenly

Bridegroom have power to purify ourselves as He is pure.—1 John 3. 2,3

7. “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” (2 Tim. 1. 7) One of the adversary’s devices, and most successful of weapons against the spirit begotten child of God, is fear. The realization of their disobedience made Adam and Eve fear to meet their loving Creator; and they hid themselves.—Gen. 3. 10

Fear may attack us in many ways. Fear of want prevents our hands from doing the Lord’s service. We overcome this by reposing implicit trust in the Lord’s promise that all necessities will be provided when we seek first the Kingdom. (Luke 12. 27-32; Matt. 6. 33) The fear of man brings a snare; but we observe that the fearlessness of Jesus defeated this snare of the evil one. (Prov. 29. 25; Matt. 22. 16) “The righteous are bold as a lion.”—Prov. 28. 1; John 7. 25,26; Acts 4. 13

There are many Scriptures urging all to have godly fear; but we must distinguish between the fear (reverence) which has the approval of God, and the unreasoning fear (terror) which Satan seeks to instil into our hearts. We read that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and wisdom is knowledge applied with judgment. (James 3. 13) The fear instigated by Satan causes panic, which but for the Lord’s grace would overthrow our judgment altogether. Satan will sometimes seize the opportunity, when we are overtaken in a fault, to strike terror into our hearts. His object is to make us imagine we need no longer go to our heavenly Father in prayer, by suggesting that we have committed an unpardonable sin. But while we sorrow greatly over our fault we should not allow it to prey upon our minds, but remember the words of the Apostle: “For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of.” (2 Cor. 7. 9-11) Acknowledging our shortcoming we shall repent and gain the Lord’s forgiveness. We read: “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”—Prov. 28. 13; 1 John 1. 9

The inspired prophet Isaiah says: “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” (Isa. 55. 7; 2 Cor. 8. 9,10) To forsake our thoughts, which are naturally evil, we must substitute for them the thoughts of the Lord; and to

make sure we gain the *Lord's* thoughts, we must "do works meet for repentance." (Acts 26. 20) We know that faith without works is dead. When God perceives our evident sincerity of heart to think and do the right things, he gives us a responsible position in his favour, with grace to hold it. On no account should we give up praying to our heavenly Father in his Son's name, for the more we pray the stronger we become. If we break off communication we cannot get the power; and we require the power supplied by God to enable us to make headway, because the Christian's battle is real. (2 Cor. 4. 7) Ours is a strange warfare; we fight not with guns but with a name—Jesus, our Leader—and by prayer to God. (Eph. 6. 18; Rev. 12. 11) We need not dread our enemies, for the Scriptures promise that: "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength"; and: "The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." (Isa. 30. 15; Psa. 34. 7) "Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread."—Isa. 8. 13

Should we see a fellow-servant labour under fear of the consequences of some shortcoming which, however, we know to be pardonable, we may on request pray to our heavenly Father to relieve our erring and apprehensive brother. (1 John 5. 14-16) This privilege of praying for others, which is the right of the Lord's special representatives, should not be disregarded. (See Gen. 20. 7,17; Num. 21. 7; 1 Sam. 12. 20-25; Job 42. 7-10; Jer. 42; Luke 22. 32; 2 Thess. 3. 1) To be overtaken in a fault is quite different from the kind of sin which merits the second death, and for which, the Scriptures tell us, it is useless to pray. (Heb. 6. 4-8; Heb. 10. 26-31; 2 John 9-11) For such unforgivable wickedness could not be of sudden growth, but must be the outcome of wilful persistence in an evil course which at the first would be intelligently recognized as wrong; and none in close communion with the Lord could fail to discern it.—2 Pet. 2. 10-22; Jude 11-16

The Lord through the inspired Apostle, however, states that he is persuaded better things of us, and things that accompany salvation. (Prov. 24. 15,16; Heb. 6. 9) We are not of those who draw back into perdition, but of those that believe to the saving of the soul. (Heb. 10. 39) Faults are for the most part due to the weaknesses of the flesh, or lack of experience, and are not counted wilful by the heavenly Father. (Psa. 103. 8-14; James 5. 11) Failings are often seized upon by the adversary who, it may be through the mouths of slanderers (Isa. 66. 5), exaggerates their offensive-

ness, and thus leads the child of God into affliction. Satan's object is to discourage us into giving up the warfare by which we overcome him, and serve the Lord; while the Lord permits these trials to come upon his children, not to destroy them, but to burn away the fleshly impediments to their healthy growth as New Creatures. They are blessings in disguise.—Heb. 12. 5-14

To gain the victory we must first put ourselves right with God by prayerful confession and repentance from the heart, after which we may call upon Him to stand by us while, in His Name, we boldly maintain our ground in the presence of our adversaries, knowing that He will put them to confusion who desire our hurt. The substance of our heavenward pleadings is expressed by David: (Psa. 64) "Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer: preserve my (spiritual) life from...the insurrection of the workers of iniquity: who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words: that they may shoot in secret at the perfect...They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search," to see if they can find in their victim's life some justification for their evil and unreasonable surmisings. They are mistaken, for while the Lord's consecrated people were formerly "children of wrath, even as others," (Eph. 2. 3) their sins are blotted out through faith in the atoning blood of Christ; and in accusing them these zealous enemies are really condemning God who justifies the saints. (Isa. 43. 25; 1 Cor. 6. 9-11) Therefore David continues: "God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly they shall be wounded. So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away."—Psalm 64

We submit all such outward contentions to Him who judges righteously (Rom. 12. 19; 1 Pet. 2. 19-23); for as New Creatures in Christ Jesus who hope to bless the poor straitened world in the future, we must prove ourselves worthy of this honour, and hence our present fights are chiefly inward. (1 Cor. 4. 12-14; 9. 26,27; 1 Tim. 6. 11,12; 2 Tim. 4. 7,8) We are instructed to pray for those who persecute us, that we may be called children of the Father in heaven. (Matt. 5. 43-48) Jesus rebuked James and John because they wished for fire to descend and consume the ungracious Samaritans. They then failed to realize that the Son of man came to earth to save men's lives, and not to destroy. (Luke 9. 54-56) But we now understand what is expected of us, and shall earnestly endeavour, with the aid of the Lord, to maintain a loving, kindly disposition of heart even in

the face of the merciless imaginings of our detractors.—1 Pet. 3. 8-18

It is to be noted that the wilful transgressor is not subject to that reverential fear which, like the warning pain in the physical body, acts as a signal to the spiritually-minded when in danger of a grave fault. (Psa. 34. 6-19; 36. 1-4) The habitually unrighteous are latterly given over to dread of a different sort. (Heb. 10. 26-36) It has been well remarked that “Fear is a good watch dog, but a bad master.” Any form of fear taught by deluded men (such as the eternal torment doctrine, one of the “doctrines of devils”—1 Tim. 4. 1; Jer. 7. 31), and which is in violation of Jehovah’s perfect attributes of justice, power, love and wisdom, must be repudiated by all who begin to see the beautiful character of the Almighty. (Isa 29. 13) For the God to whom we pray is not fiendish like the gods of the heathen; and those who preach the “eternal torment” heresy cast dishonour on that Holy Name.

We read that there is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear. (1 John 4. 18) “He that feareth is not made perfect in love”; for effective love is aggressive. In spite of every prejudice against him owing to Satan’s misrepresentations, Jesus when in the flesh steadily pursued his way until he had planted the seeds of truth into this sin-cursed world, and then finally permitted himself to be planted into death in order to lay the foundation (the only possible one) for the great work of winning the world back from Satan’s domination. Nothing can withstand pure love; it is more powerful, more aggressive than any other moral force, because it is fearless.

*Next time—The Revelation of Contests in the Spirit Realm*

ME

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JESUS is the VICTORY. He has triumphed over Satan and all his evil forces. In Him we can exult, for the enemy is under our feet. JESUS says... If you do not see the victory in your situation or in history, it is because you do not yet see from My perspective. Enter into My realm with thanksgiving and into My courts with praise, even if through tears. There you will see...

*At the Name of Jesus,  
Sarah Hornsby*

*“The sting of death is sin, and sin gains its power from the law; but, God be praised, he gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brothers, stand firm and immovable, and work for the Lord always, work without limit, since you know that in the Lord your labour cannot be lost.” (1 Cor. 15. 56-58 NEB)*

**STANDING AT THE PORTAL OF THE OPENING YEAR—A HYMN**

STANDING at the portal of the opening year  
 Words of comfort meet us, hushing every fear;  
 Spoken through the silence by our Father's voice,  
 Tender, strong and faithful, making us rejoice.  
 Onward, then, and fear not, children of the day;  
 For His Word shall never, never pass away.

“I, the Lord, am with thee, be thou not afraid;  
 I will help and strengthen, be thou not dismayed.  
 Yea, I will uphold thee with Mine own right hand;  
 Thou art called and chosen in My sight to stand.”  
 Onward, then, and fear not, children of the day;  
 For His Word shall never, never pass away.

For the year before us, oh, what rich supplies!  
 For the poor and needy, living streams shall rise;  
 For the sad and mournful, shall His grace abound;  
 For the faint and feeble, perfect strength be found.  
 Onward, then, and fear not, children of the day;  
 For His Word shall never, never pass away.

He will never fail us, He will not forsake:  
 His eternal covenant He will never break;  
 Resting on His promise, what have we to fear?  
 God is all-sufficient for the coming year.  
 Onward, then, and fear not, children of the day;  
 For His Word shall never, never pass away.



Frances Ridley Havergal (1836-1879) is one of Victorian Britain's most well-known and prolific hymn writers. This poem was composed on 4th January 1873 in Hastings and was printed in 'Under The Surface' in 1874. She was born in Astley, Worcestershire to an Anglican minister. Other hymns include 'Take my life and let it be' also written in 1874 and 'Like a river glorious is God's perfect peace' written in 1878. She died in the Gower in South Wales.

Here are some scriptures which are reckoned to have inspired her.

**Deuteronomy 31. 6-8** Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.

**Psalms 41. 10** But thou, O LORD, be merciful unto me, and raise me up.

**Isaiah 41. 10** Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

**Isaiah 41. 13** For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.

**Mark 13. 31** Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

**John 7. 37-38 (NKJV)** On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

**Hebrews 13. 5-6** Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

**2 Cor. 1. 20** For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

**Hebrews 13. 20-21** Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

**Matthew 6. 34** Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Common tunes for this hymn are Hermas, St. Alban, St. Gertrude

## LOVE—THE BOND OF PERFECTNESS

Love...Such a little word, yet into it is compressed all that God is. The glories that compose His Name, the motivating Spirit of His Mind, the very atmosphere of heaven itself, love is the sum of all that He is. We speak of divine love, and recognize at once the problem of having to share this term with the world where the word means something very different. Divine love is abounding love, and thus defies definition, for to define a thing means to set and describe its bounds, whereas the love of God, the love that God is, is boundless, overflows all human concept.

To walk with God is to walk with divine love. Indeed, as brother John pointed out, our knowing of God, our walking with God, is reliably indexed by the manifestation of the love of God in our life. The fullness of that love is token of the closeness of our walk. The Lord's people are children of His love. He it was who in love previously marked out His family, sowed the seed in your heart and mine, and husbanded and tended it, then patiently, oh so patiently waiting for its full development. This fruitage is so very precious to the Lord, and even now He watches for that full ripening process to reward His patient care. These are they with whom He plans to spend eternity in closest union, with whom He is at home and at rest forever. Before their course is done their preparation must be complete, their love made perfect. Because we delight in Him, we desire that His wondrous design for us be fulfilled, and it is our earnest plea that He will by all means make us the vessels of His love. The index of our progress, the sign of the closeness of our walk with God, is the manifestation of that love abundantly in our lives.

This calls for frequent examination of our own hearts, our attitudes, and our responses to the varied circumstances of life. None of us are there yet. We count not ourselves to have apprehended. We each know there is more to overcome, and we each long for that full mature ripeness of character, the completion of that wondrous work of His Spirit within, the moment when He will look upon His work in me, and say, "It is done. Come up higher." The glory will be His, the Master Craftsman, the Divine Potter, yet there is an important difference between the materials in the hands of craftsman, the work, metal, or clay, or jewel, and the material in our Father's hands. Wood, and all these other things, are inert, incapable of any contribution of its own. Clay does not need to be told to lie still and

let Him mould thee, for it is unable to do otherwise. With us it is so different. What the Lord is making is a character like His own... “after the image of Him that creates us.” Free-wills are involved, and hearts and minds full of living active thought and feeling. He works upon our ways, and brings them into line with His ways, not by outward coercion, but by His spirit within, by the compelling of heavenly love. The work is His. No glory shall we ever claim. But by its very nature it demands that full response of our hearts. Our goal cannot, must not be any lower than that of our Father for us. He wants, He will have, each one of His own made perfect in love.

So this moment as we look within our own hearts, how much of His likeness do we see therein? How ready am I for the perfect day? Do I find it easy to love that dear sweet soul over there, whose ways are so appealing, and who is warm towards me. Of course I do, yet regretfully I must dismiss this as any index of the closeness of my walk with God. Of course He loves the lovable, but He loves the unlovable too. He loves me...loved me even sinner like the rest. The cross stands symbol to the love that is of God. This is a love that counts as precious even the unlovable...Precious! Precious enough to give much for? We will give little or give much according to the preciousness of something to us. Someone has recently paid one million pounds for a Bible. He got it cheap! How much is that Word worth to me? Can I regard as precious someone who is unlovable, ugly, unpleasant to be with? Can I see such a one as a child of God, be he a Christian brother or in the world? Can I see him as he will be when God has finished with him, completed His design? Can I feel now towards him that he is worth much to me, that I would be willing to give much for him...even give my life for him? The cross stands there for me to lift up to its light the love now dwelling in my heart and ask, is this the same? That love of God in Christ, does it now dwell in me?

Sometimes when learning a subject by means of a text-book we may happen to glance at some future page and find a test set at the end of a later lesson. We shake our heads and know we yet must slowly persevere and work our way through many pages yet before we can with any hope attempt that exam, or we would fail the test. Each time we check our progress with that cross maybe we feel the same. Yet that is the goal. That is what Paul meant by being found in Him. It is to that end He has laid hold on us, and to that end have we laid hold on Him. There will be no

getting by with something less than the love of God in Christ...in me. If we have problems with our love, it is no use, no purpose would be served by forcing feeling, putting on a show, politely hiding our true inward thought, to feign to some a love we do not have. It is no easy test. Where human love asks much this love of God asks all. It gives, and gives again, and what it gives bears no relation to the lovableness or otherwise of its object. If it is there, the glory now is His whose work bear such sweet fruitage to His praise. If not, the answer lies in closer walk with God who is the source, the only source of such a love.

Whatever eloquence we lack in speaking of so glorious a theme as heavenly love, it matters not, for this love is not 'talk', but 'walk'. This is that eternal life. To what degree we have the Lord before our eyes, that all enabling grace, the sacrifice of love divine, and love's compelling claim upon our all, so much do we with purpose now lay hold on life eternal. This is that eternal life, which is (1 John 1. 2) "with the Father..." the word is "pro", "towards the face of the Father..." Our angels are always beholding the Father's face, and so does every saint who knows that closer walk. The mind is centred there, the heart's desire to please, delight to share those sacred things so dear to our Father, now made dear to us... As dear children do we wish to walk, and know a Father's smile on all we think and do? For this is holiness, a realm of beauty, in which all those glorious hues of love combine and with each thought, each wish, and every act entwine. It sounds a bit like poetry, brethren! The word 'poem' means a work, and to our minds conveys the thought of aptness of expression to oft describe in so few words so much. It does this, as does the Word of God, by use of imagery, the colour of figure, picture language. Poetic minds have been at work upon our theme of love and we feel help the mind retain in easily remembered lines inspiring thought. "Love is the filling from one's own another's cup." How true those words, and how much they convey of love distinguished from the world's by total selflessness. "Love is a daily laying down and taking up." It is indeed, the constant attitude of heart and mind, not just reserved for meeting time or place. Its living lies in giving. At day's close it counts its gains in terms of what was spent. And in abundant giving, like the Lord's, reveals its source, and finds abounding joy. We speak not of man's silver or his gold. As brother Peter said to that lame man, we have more precious things to give than ought that money could acquire. The Lord's people are so rich. Their wealth, their treasure house above, will not grow less however much

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they give away, but gains with interest every time the talent changes hands. “A choosing of the stony path through each new day, that other feet may tread with ease a smoother way.” That bears a moment’s thought! We see something advantageous to us, a situation...can be anything! At the checkout in the queue with patience waiting while the payment so far ahead is written out and all the bits and pieces cards and notes are signed. Another checkout opens at the side. We rush for it! Or do we say to that dear older soul behind. “You take it dear, no hurry,” though our basket weighs a ton. So many situations are assessed by love divine, and other souls catch something of the light of our dear Father’s smile, Who notes and says “There goes a child of mine.”

“Love is not blind, but looks abroad through other eyes; and asks not ‘Must I give?’ but ‘May I sacrifice?’ Love hides its grief, that other hearts and lips may sing; and burdened walks, that other lives may buoyant wing. Brother/sister, hast thou a love like this within thy soul? `Twill change thy name to saint when thou dost reach thy goal.”

*DH*

## WHY DON'T YOU KNOW?

### John 3. 12

Like Nicodemus, in the dark,  
Not like Noah—in the ark;  
Some cannot see the healing beams  
Righteous sunlight—golden streams.

His “shining forth,” do you comprehend?  
Do you feel the “bursts” that he does send?  
To let us know his rule has come!  
Jesus Christ—that precious one.

*Where Eagles Gather*



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## DAYS, WEEKS, MONTHS AND YEARS



### Days

From the start the Bible has given us both a way to describe a day and the terms of it. “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, ‘Let there be light’, and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.” (Gen. 1.1-5 English Standard Version)

The terms are given for the seasons or cycles of a year. “God said, ‘Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.’ And it was so. And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars.” (Gen. 1. 14-16 ESV).

### Months

The account of the flood or story of the deluge uses days and months in a year to describe when it began and when it ended. “In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the **second month, on the seventeenth day** of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. And rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights.... The fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained, and the waters receded from the earth continually. At the end of **150 days** the waters had abated, and in the **seventh month, on the seventeenth day** of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat.” (Gen. 7. 11-12, Gen. 8. 2-4 ESV). This shows five months and therefore that each month was 30 days long. This was consistent with the Sumerian Calendar of the years prior to 1500 B.C.

### Years

The Julian Calendar introduced by Julius Caesar fixed a year to be 365¼ days. However this was not entirely correct which led to the Gregorian

Calendar of 1582, which showed a solar year was 365 days, 5 hours, 49 minutes and 12 seconds. A solar month is 30 days, 10 hours, 29 minutes and 4.1 seconds.

### **Lunar Calendar**

However the Bible uses the moon to calculate the first month and length of a month. A lunar month is 29 days, 12 hours, 44 minutes and 2.87 seconds. It therefore follows that 12 lunar months are only 354 days, 8 hours, 48 minutes and 34 seconds.

For Israel the phases of the moon were used to set the time of the festivals starting with the Passover and the exact days that certain things had to be done. The Heavenly Father used signs that they could readily use to set the months of the year, such as the Spring Equinox. Therefore the first month of the spiritual year starts with the first new moon. The direction for this was given in Exod. 12. 2 (ESV) when Nisan was allocated the first month of the year “This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you.”

The Spring Equinox is when in springtime in the northern hemisphere night and day are the same length. Pears Encyclopaedia describes the Equinox as when “the sun crosses the plane of earth’s equator”. It occurred with the ripening of the barley and the flax but before the wheat was ripe. Therefore it provided Israel with a clear sign at which to begin the year with the cycle of the moon for the first month. In this way unlike a British calendar with 12 months there would sometimes be thirteen months in a Jewish year which was called an “Intercalary Month”. Just as the Passover on the 14th Nisan, Easter and Greek Easter are calculated using the Lunar Calendar. Knowing this it is easier to understand why these dates vary from year to year. Whereas the Spring Equinox is either the 20th or 21st March each year in the Gregorian Calendar.

Israel was not alone in using this Lunar Calendar. At this time the Babylonians used this type of calendar starting with their month named Nisanu for the first month Nisan. They also called the Jewish month of Tishri, Tashritu and Adar, Addaru and so on.

### **Day-Year Principle**

The book of Daniel used weeks to prophesy when certain events would

take place. It describes the significant Seventy Weeks in Daniel 9. 24-27. “Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a (the) most holy place. Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and (re)build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time. And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed. And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.” (ESV)

It states when the Messiah, the prince, the Anointed one would come and that he would be cut off in the middle of the week. The Hebrew word *shabua* translated week, which is Strong’s word 7620 and literally means ‘sevens’. Counting would begin from the command to restore and build Jerusalem in 454 B.C. and therefore would end in 37 A.D. One thought was that the initial 7 weeks or 49 years represent the time it took to rebuild the city. This uses the day for a year calculation, sometimes described the “Day-Year Principle” described in Numbers 14. 34 and Ezekiel 4. 6.

The same formula is often applied to the 3½ years that are mentioned in the Bible. This occurs in 3 main forms, as follows;

- 1,260 days – Rev. 11. 3; Rev. 12. 6.
- 42 months – Rev. 11. 2; Rev. 13. 5.
- Time, times and a half – Dan 7. 25; Dan. 12. 7; Rev. 12. 14.

### **Prophetic Year**

This works with the idea that a month is 30 days and as 42 multiplied by 30 is 1,260 then a year must be reckoned as 360 days long, a so-called prophetic year of 360 days.

If a 360 day calendar was used, a bridge was needed to account for the

solar year being 365 days long. This was done at the end of the year by adding 5 non-days and presumably 6 non-days for a leap year.

If one takes a glance at a lunar year of about 354 days and a solar year about 365 days then it also seems reasonable to work with a year of 360 days. Our Lord Jesus' ministry was 3½ literal years or half a week which places the start of his ministry around the time of the Day of Atonement or Feast of Tabernacles which takes place on 15th Tishri, the seventh month of the Hebrew Calendar.

What is the point of all this? God is working to a pattern and there is a code that can be used. The Day-Year Principle that works accurately for the prophecy in Daniel has been used by a number of students of the Bible for the probable date of the Second Advent or the end of this world-age as have other methods. This helps to understand what the Bible states about calculating time when the calendar is quite different from the one we use here in the U.K.

Readers may wish to know that 14th Nisan in 2019 starts at 6 p.m. on Thursday 18th April.

N.B. ESV = English Standard Version

Nazareth iris



## YELLOW FLAG

*Iris pseudacorus* (Iridaceae)



“...and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink” (Exod. 2. 3).

“Can the rush grow up without mire? Can the flag grow without water?” asked Job rhetorically (Job 8. 11). The yellow flag iris certainly flourishes on wet marshy ground. It grows in shallow water on the edges of ponds and streams. The flowers are a deep yellow. It is not a Palestinian plant. Other types of iris, however, such as *Iris nazarena* (Nazareth iris) and *Iris costeti* (Costet's iris), provide some of the loveliest sights of Galilee in the early spring.

*The Flowers and Fruits of the Bible*  
John Chancellor

*Yellow flag iris*

## ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA

### Examination of the facts

The story of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts chapter 5 has been seized upon by critics of the Christian ethic in order to disparage Christianity. What kind of a man was Peter, they ask, that he should strike this man and woman dead for what appears on the surface to be a minor case of deceit? Ananias and his wife had sold a piece of land with the avowed purpose of giving the entire proceeds to the Cause but in reality keeping back part of those proceeds for themselves. Deceit, hypocrisy, yes, but not a crime justifying so extreme a punishment as death. In this modern day of ours it would not even be considered a crime, just an instance of “being smart”. In the hurry thus to condemn the Apostle Peter the story itself is not considered with the attention it deserves.

First of all, the background. The Christian church had just commenced its development. The incident occurred not long after Pentecost, when, by means of the fervent preaching of the Apostles, a nucleus of three thousand people accepted the faith on the first day and came together in spontaneous fellowship. A few days later another five thousand were added. Repeated references to the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the multitude implies that the general atmosphere was highly charged with emotion and excitement. Conviction that Jesus Christ had indeed risen from the dead and ascended to his Father in heaven, and would speedily come again to establish his Kingdom upon earth, was general, and the assemblies of the believers were characterised by intense enthusiasm and zeal for further evangelism. The Lord had commissioned them to preach the Gospel in all the world for a witness unto all nations before his return and the end of the Age, and they were setting about that commission in no uncertain fashion. To that end there was a wholesale selling of land, houses, and any other kind of valuable property, and presentation of the proceeds to the Apostles both for the prosecution (pursuit) of this evangelism and to meet the needs of the poor among their number. Loud were the hallelujahs and expressions of praise to God as each successive donor came forward to add his contribution to the total; in their sincerity and zeal no one thought of doing other than present the whole of the money received from the particular sale.

In such an atmosphere Ananias came forward. He had sold some land and

here was the price received. Secretly, and with the connivance of his wife Sapphira, he had retained part of the money for himself but the onlookers were not to know that; he allowed them to go on thinking that, like themselves, he had given the whole of the receipts to the cause. He stood before Peter, the money in his extended hand, basking in the approbation of the surrounding believers. Peter was not deceived. He knew the truth of the matter although how he knew it is not explained. It may be an example of knowledge imparted by reason of his attunement with the Holy Spirit—as we would say, inspiration—or it might have been his shrewd knowledge of human nature and something in Ananias' attitude which did not ring true. At any rate, he knew.

It is important to notice that Peter did not condemn or pass sentence on Ananias. His words define a clear statement of the offence, nothing more. *“Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God”* (vv. 3-4) The printed record cannot reproduce the tone of the words or the demeanour of the speaker. They may have been spoken in indignation and anger; they may have been uttered in accents of infinite sadness. We just do not know. The consequences we do know. Ananias, smitten either by remorse or terror, fell to the ground and died immediately, to the consternation of the onlookers. Heart failure, obviously, but what caused it? There is no indication or evidence that Peter was responsible, no statement that he called upon miraculous power to strike the offender dead there and then. Neither is there any suggestion that Deity intervened in any way to bring about this unhappy man's death. There is no clue whatever to the cause, only the bald fact that upon hearing the Apostle's measured reproof Ananias fell down and breathed his last.

Here we should recall the highly emotional and excitable atmosphere prevailing at the moment. Ananias' mind must already have been in a state of strain, what with that and also the inward knowledge of his own deception. To that might well have been added one further factor. A believer in Christ and a son of Israel, he would have known the history of his people well. As he listened to Peter's declaration that he had attempted to deceive, not man, but God, did there flash into his mind, from his

knowledge of the past, the story of Achan? Achan, in the days of Israel's entry into the Land of Promise under Joshua, was guilty of exactly the same crime. Israel had been instructed that the spoil of the conquest was to be consecrated to God and offered to him; no man might keep any for himself. Achan coveted a wedge of gold, some silver, and a goodly Babylonian garment, and he kept back these items from the spoil he brought to the general offering, and hid them in his tent. The element of deceit rendered the offering unacceptable to God; disaster came upon Israel and men lost their lives in consequence. The sin of Achan came to light and he was put to death with all his family, and his possessions destroyed, in accordance with the custom of those days. Is it possible that Ananias, in one self-revealing moment, realised that he had defiled this present offering to God in the same fashion, and saw himself as worthy only of the same fate that befell Achan? He had tried to cheat God! That sudden realisation coming on top of the tenseness of the moment might well have been sufficient to induce the heart failure which caused his death.

Three hours later his wife came in. By then the dead man had been buried; the Judean summer forbade delay in such matters. There is a different element in Peter's words to Sapphira. They imply a knowledge of what was to come. *"How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt (test) the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out."* (v. 9) It seems a cruel, almost savage, statement, but here again much depends upon the tone in which it was spoken. The same words uttered sadly, regretfully, slowly, could be those of a man sorely troubled and distressed over the whole matter and conscious only that this woman must in any case now be apprised of her husband's untimely death. It seems certain that Peter was given a foreglimpse of the coming event; the same faculty of prevision which is evident in so many instances in Scriptural narrative was Peter's at this moment and he must have seen in his mind's eye what was going to happen in a few minutes. It need not be thought that he exercised miraculous power to cause Sapphira's death, only that he knew she was going to die—as die she did. The extent to which Peter's words accentuated the shock she would have experienced anyway on hearing of her husband's death is not possible to estimate; she might well have realised that her own share in the plot had helped to cause the tragedy and that had she dissuaded him from the scheme he might yet be alive. The shock

which killed her might not have been altogether, or even in great part, due to Peter's words but to the realisation of her own guilt in the matter and its tragic outcome.

In line with the general level of understanding of the times the spectators would ascribe the happening to Divine intervention. The judgment of God had come upon this guilty pair. The whole thing created a profound impression and without doubt everyone connected with the infant Church took a little more care with their own personal life in the community. To what extent, if any, there was specific Divine judgment in the matter may be open to debate; one has to remember that Judas Iscariot likewise misappropriated funds entrusted to him without any immediate retribution. The narrative states the facts but does not attribute them to any kind of Divine intervention.

Did this lapse affect the eternal destiny of Ananias and Sapphira? There have always been some to insist that the couple are eternally lost; it is possible that the prominence given to their story in the Book of Acts highlights their case more than those of many others who have lapsed from their high standards in this or other ways. There is no reason for thinking that these two were other than perfectly sincere converts to the faith, overtaken by the temptation to win full plaudits from their fellows without meeting the corresponding obligation. The fault was one of greed; it was not flagrant immorality or deep-rooted hostility to righteousness or love of evil. They wanted God to have part of what they had but not all. Many Christians are like that today in things much more important than money. "*Some of self and some of thee*" runs the old hymn, and in a spiritual sense that is much the same thing as the withholding of the portion which led to the premature deaths of Ananias and Sapphira. It does not seem very reasonable to think that the tremendous potentialities inherent in two intelligent creatures to whom God had given life should be vitiated and extinguished by what was, after all, not a very terrible crime, when there is no evidence at all that those two beings were already irrevocably committed to evil. And God has "*no pleasure in the death of him that dieth*" but would rather by far that he turn from his evil ways, and live. Perhaps the right view of this question is that stated by Canon R. H. Charles in his "*A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life*" when he says "*the idea that forgiveness is impossible in the next life has only to be stated in order to be rejected; for till absolute fixity of*"

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*character is reached, repentance and forgiveness, being moral acts, must be possible under a perfectly moral Being.”*

*AOH*

It is by God's permitted trials that he works into our character his divine design.

*Deep Waters and a Bubbling Brook  
Harvest Activities*

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Demonstrated is the intelligence and power of God whose plan includes the resurrection which today gives great hope now and in the future through the death and resurrection of Jesus. This resurrection can be separated into two—an earthly and a celestial one. Then in the fullness of time at a day to come, at last, the world will live in absolute happiness and contentment.

This booklet is available free on request. Please write to the address on the back page or email: [mailing@biblefellowshipunion.co.uk](mailto:mailing@biblefellowshipunion.co.uk)

**NOTE ON PSALM 32. 8**

*“I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye” (Psa. 32. 8).*

There comes a happening in the life which disrupts the orderly course of events and nothing is ever the same again. And the immediate reaction is “Why has God permitted this?” It seemed so unnecessary, perhaps bringing grief and pain. Things may not have been perfect, but how much better if God had left them alone! And in all such reasoning we are forgetting that God is fashioning and directing all our lives for His purpose, controlling and ruling our affairs and circumstances to create in each one of us just that heart and character which will fit us for the place in His creation which we are due to occupy at the end of our earthly pilgrimage. He knows, so much better than do we, the extent to which we, each one, has become transformed into His likeness and so be ready for the call to higher service. He knows, so much better than do we, what in the way of our experiences and of other influences are necessary to us that we might be fully transformed. And all the time He is the guide and instructor. He knows what we need and He knows the way. It is for us to watch diligently and perceive His leading and follow His guidance. He is a true teacher and a sure guide; as He led Israel through the wilderness and brought them safely at last to the Promised Land, so will He surely do with us. If He ushers us outside the door and closes it for the last time, He will open another door into which He would have us enter. If He closes one book because it is complete He will open another that we may begin afresh. And all the time He leads, like the guiding cloud in the daytime and the pillar of fire by night, His eye always upon us that we stumble not or miss the way, until at the last we cross the final boundary and are safely home.

There is so much we do not know, about ourselves and each other, so many reasons why what seems to be utter disaster is after all a manifestation of God’s love and care for His children. *“The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.”* (Deut. 33. 27) If He takes one of His own into those everlasting arms it is because He loves that one and knows what is best. And for we who remain there is the consciousness that He leads, that we might follow; He instructs, that we might learn; His eye is upon us, that we might realise His watch-care over

all our ways and is with us in all the circumstances of life, giving guidance in our perplexity, and strength for our weakness, and that peace of mind which comes from knowing that His hand is in control of all our affairs and will bring them forth for good, all the time that we rest them in Him.

*AOH*

*“Who carried up our sins himself in his own word body to the tree, that we, having died to sins, may live to righteousness; by whose scars you were healed. You were like Sheep going astray, but have now turned back to the Shepherd and Guardian of your lives.”* (1 Peter 2. 24-25 Diaglott)

### NOTICES

#### **BIBLE STUDENTS SEMINAR DAY SATURDAY 26 JANUARY 2019**

#### **CRICK VILLAGE HALL**

Bucknills Lane, Crick, Nr. Rugby, Northamptonshire  
NN6 7SX

**11 a.m.—5 p.m.**

All Welcome

For information, please email [nick.charcharos@btinternet.com](mailto:nick.charcharos@btinternet.com)

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#### **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 shall be put away for ever.

#### Gone from us

Ruth Lightfoot (West Wickham)

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FELDEN LODGE CONFERENCE CENTRE, FELDEN,  
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THEME: SALVATION (PHIL. 2. 12)

Please note the dates, which differ from those previously advertised!

**ANOTHER YEAR, CLEAN AND NEW**

The day was done and in the west  
 The sun was settling down to rest.  
 The saddened earth midst toil and strife,  
 Bereft of Nature's garb of life,  
 Her bosom stained with sin and blight,  
 Was glad to hide beneath the night.

The darkness passed; a glittering day  
 Breaks forth beneath the sun's glad ray.  
 O perfect day! O glorious sight!  
 God's hand hath clothed the earth in white!  
 All Nature sings, while Heaven above  
 Floods a spotless earth with love.

The year has passed and fades from view;  
 God gives another, clean and new.  
 Our sad mistakes are covered quite  
 Beneath His blessed Robe of White.  
 Lord, may we profit by the past  
 And in the coming year hold fast.



Poems of Dawn



**Published by the Bible Fellowship Union**  
**12 Stanley Gardens, Tring, HP23 4BS, U.K.**

email—editor@biblefellowshipunion.co.uk

www.biblefellowshipunion.co.uk