

BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

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All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.

2 Cor. 5:18



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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.
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THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

15 August 2020 marks 75 years since VJ (Victory over Japan) Day which is allied to the recent commemoration of VE (Victory in Europe) Day. As many have said, minds then turned to winning the peace and having a reset for society. Minds therefore, turned to reconciliation so that both sides could live in peace and this has largely been the case with Germany and Japan. However, one former prisoner of war in the East in an interview in 2015 to mark 70 years since VJ day said he was "still making his peace with Japan."

One Old Testament hero of faith, Joseph, had a very eventful life. He suffered much unfairly. He first suffered at the hands of his ten half-brothers, who considered murdering him, placed him in a pit before selling him for 20 pieces of silver. That was not the last they were going to see him through.

Next to do Joseph wrong were the Ishmaelites, the descendants of his grandfather's half brother. Despite the blood ties, which they presumably should have known, they had no problem in selling him into slavery in Egypt and making money from their kinsman. Would any of them find themselves hungry 20 years later? Did they give any thought to one day being reconciled to their cousin?

Joseph was an exemplary servant of Potiphar and soon was a prominent member of his household. Regrettably, Potiphar's wife did not treat him fairly. She made a false accusation against Joseph, which led him to be imprisoned. No record is made of how long his sentence was or if it was a

life sentence. Nevertheless its recorded he was seventeen when he was sold into slavery and thirty when he was made prime minister by Pharaoh. (Gen. 41:40,46) Did she, Potiphar's wife, ever regret her false testimony? Did she ever see him at a later date and benefit from the food she received in due season when there was a famine in and around Egypt?

The whole issue of reconciliation came to the fore when Joseph's ten brothers came to Egypt to buy food when they were hungry due to the famine. At first Joseph does not make any attempt to make himself known to his brothers. On the surface it seems he sets a test or a trap and he keeps Simeon and says he will not believe they are not spies until their tale is verified by bringing him their youngest brother (Benjamin) who was remaining with their father. He hears them say "we are verily guilty concerning our brother (Joseph), in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us and we would not hear" (Gen. 42:21), an acknowledgement of guilt which to some degree helped them accept that one of them, Simeon, should remain behind as a guarantee. Furthermore he places their monies in all their sacks. Was this an act of generosity or a further test? Joseph knew what they did not know that the famine would last for seven years and they would have to come back.

The second time when they returned they had no choice but to plead with their father Jacob that they must return with Benjamin, Joseph's brother. Jacob sends them with a double portion of money for the amount that they discovered in their sacks. This time Joseph sends them away with the food, their money, but also his own silver cup in Benjamin's sack.

The brothers departed the city while Joseph sent his men to follow them and accuse them of stealing the cup. Benjamin may be presumed to be at risk of being punished as a thief. So they are forced to return back to Joseph a third time still unaware that he was their brother, with the allegedly stolen cup. The third time Judah kept his word and asked for him to take Benjamin's place because he feared his father would die if Benjamin did not return with them. (Gen. 44:30,31)

Then Joseph showed them he was their brother and he cried, which shows Joseph's acceptance of their words recognising the change of heart among the ten brothers. They were no longer the cruel, heartless men they were when he was young. So Joseph was reconciled with his brothers. Who knows whether Joseph was ever reconciled to the Ishmaelites and Potiphar's wife. That may have to wait for the Messianic age.

MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

“My flesh...I will give for the life of the world!” (John 6:51)

Often do we interpret these words in terms of our Lord’s crucifixion and death. But Jesus did also consciously fulfil the prevision of Isaiah: *“He poured out his life unto death.”* (Isa. 53:12 NIV) For three and a half years the life of Jesus was given, in every possible sense, that the world might have more life. *“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”* (John 10:10)

This is the call of the Church now, and in this Age. Our mission holds something more than a study of Divine philosophy, a growth in the knowledge of Scripture history and prophecy, a waiting for future glory and felicity. It is to give life that others might have life. It is to offer life *now*, as Jesus offered life *then*. True, we cannot heal diseases by a wave of the hand, produce food from stones wherewith to feed the hungry, drive out demons of hate, fear and all evil by verbal command—but, stay—is it true that we cannot do these things? Is there nothing that we can do for a sick or suffering one that will ease their lot and perchance assist them in their recovery; no power at all to relieve some little part of the hardship on those who suffer physical want in this unfriendly world; no word that can be fitly spoken to lift the mind of someone bound in the “bonds of iniquity” to higher and nobler ideals, and thus at least commence to cast out the demons that possess them? If we can do any of these things, in however little degree, we shall be doing, in our own small way, that to which our Lord Jesus devoted a great part of his life. And we are on safe ground when we find that “as He was, so are we in this world.” (1 John 4:17)



AOH

Matthew 5:24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.



Hebrews 2:17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto *his* brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

Romans 11:15 For if the casting away of them (Israel) *be* the reconciling of the world, what *shall* the receiving of *them be*, but life from the dead?

2 Corinthians 5:20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.

VIRUSES, WARS AND THREATS OF EXTINCTION

“Men fainting (expiring) for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world. (the inhabited earth)” (Luke 21:26 RVIC)

According to the Johns Hopkins Office of Critical Event Preparedness and Response the virus known as COVID-19 first appeared in Wuhan, a city in China, in December 2019. Although health officials are still tracing (as of the beginning of April) the exact source of this new coronavirus, early hypotheses thought it may be linked to a seafood market in Wuhan, China. However, a study conducted in late January noted that the first reported case on December 1, 2019, appeared in an individual who had no link to the seafood market. Investigations are ongoing as to how this virus originated and spread.

While coronaviruses are common in different animals, it is rare that an animal coronavirus can infect humans. These types of viruses can cause colds or other mild respiratory (nose, throat, lung) illnesses. They also can cause serious diseases such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS). COVID-19 is thought to be more like SARS. In 2003, an outbreak of SARS started in China and spread to more than two dozen countries before ending in 2004. The World Health Organization (WHO) listed 8,096 people worldwide who became sick with SARS during the 2003 outbreak. Of these, 774 (9.6%) died.

SARS and COVID-19 illustrate how a disease within a country (mostly in Africa or Asia) can easily spread and grow into a pandemic—an epidemic of infectious disease that spreads through human populations across multiple continents or even worldwide.

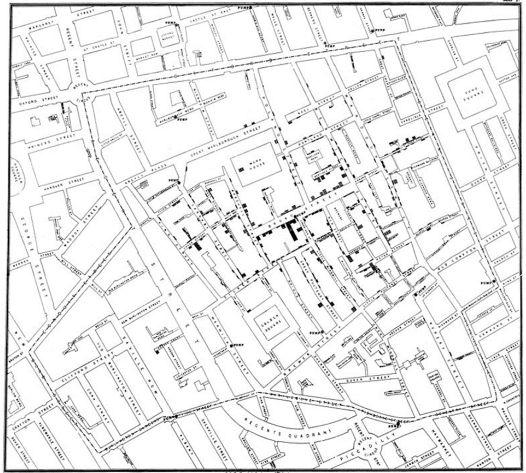
Pandemics in History

The archaeological site now called “Hamin Mangha” is one of the best-preserved prehistoric (approximately 5,000 years ago) sites in northeastern China. Archaeological and anthropological study indicates that an epidemic happened so quickly that there was no time for proper burials, and the site was not inhabited again. The bodies of the dead were stuffed inside a house that was later burned down. No age group was spared, as the skeletons of juveniles, young adults and middle-age people were found inside the house.

The first *recorded* pandemic, the Justinian Plague, came in the sixth

century AD. Eight centuries later came the Black Death pandemic. Both plagues were likely spread by fleas living on infected rats coming into human contact (Bubonic plague). Fifty to seventy million people died of the three-century long Black Death. Multiple pogroms and massacres against minority groups, especially Jews, were launched by those ignorant of the true source of the plagues.

Smallpox, cholera, and bubonic plague became worldwide diseases in the 19th century until English physician John Snow mapped houses in London that were affected by a cholera outbreak. His work showed that the disease developed in, and was spread by, contaminated water.



Lithographed map by Charles Cheffins

Some historians cite the so-called Spanish Flu pandemic in the early 20th century as the most significant contribution to ending World War I. According to the American Center for Disease Control, the influenza pandemic infected one-third of the world population of 1.6 billion and killed over 100 million.

By the middle of the 20th century, many diseases which had caused these pandemics were no longer a threat due to significant advances in knowledge: Edward Jenner developed a vaccine against smallpox; rats and mosquitoes were controlled; and public sanitation was improved. No single discovery was as significant in fighting infectious diseases as penicillin.

Unfortunately, this ease of prevention led to complacency in world preparation against such things as coronaviruses, claims Professor Susan Craddock from the Institute for Global Studies at the University of Minnesota in *Networked Disease: Emerging Infections in the Global City*. With 80 percent of one-year olds in the world now vaccinated, most parents have never seen their child struggling to breathe through whooping cough or unable to walk when polio struck. As an example, when the Soviet Union dissolved, Russia's healthcare systems deteriorated, including the national immunization program. The country soon experi-

enced a serious epidemic of diphtheria that lasted for years.

Post-Coronavirus World Trends

The International Crisis Group (www.crisisgroup.org) works independently to prevent wars and shape policies that “will build a more peaceful world.” The group’s website cautions: “While the COVID-19 pandemic presents a potentially era-defining challenge to public health and the global economy, *its long- and short-term consequences for deadly conflict are less well understood*”.

Henry Kissinger, former U.S. Secretary of State and former National Security Adviser recently wrote, “The founding legend of modern government is a walled city protected by powerful rulers, sometimes despotic, other times benevolent, yet always strong enough to protect the people from an external enemy... As the world emerges from the current crisis, the effort to overcome the effects of COVID-19 plague will require restraint on all sides—in both domestic politics and international diplomacy... Failure could set the world on fire.”

Since the last ISIS strongholds in Syria fell in early 2019, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), a Kurdish-led militia that partnered with the U.S.-led coalition, has largely been left to deal with tens of thousands of ISIS detainees and affiliated family members. Many of the detainees’ home countries refuse to take them back. Humanitarian workers describe these sites as ridden with tuberculosis and perilously overcrowded, with one speaking of “dramatic mortality rates”. This example shows how the global outbreak has the potential to wreak world havoc, trigger widespread unrest and severely test international relations:

According to the Crisis Group, five dangerous trends could arise as the pandemic wanes:

1. Vulnerable populations in areas where war exists may be unable to get relief (Libya, Venezuela, Iran, Gaza).
2. The reduced capacity of international institutions to relieve the population of conflict areas due to the need for domestic issues in their home countries (The Middle East, Africa).
3. Social Order disruptions emerging from ongoing health-care concerns, xenophobic sentiment against immigrants and bias against ethnic groups, e.g. the “Chinese” virus or the Islamic Republic “biological aggression.”
4. Political Exploitation and human rights abuse by despotic governments or jihadist groups.

5. Major Power relations as the global systems realign in areas such as supply chains, humanitarian aid and technical cooperation.

This pandemic has the potential to be long and especially draining on world resources. At this writing we are just beginning to see the impact on unemployment, health care and other key parts of society. How long and how costly will it be? And when will the next such crisis come?

No More Pain

The Bible pictures Jehovah as a Great Physician who cures from disease: *“Who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases.”* (Psalm 103:3 RSV) The prophet Isaiah foretold a time when *“...no inhabitant will say, ‘I am sick’; the people who dwell there will be forgiven their iniquity.”* (Isa. 33:24 RSV) *“Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert.”* (Isa. 35:5,6 NKJV)

Pestilences are the natural consequences of sin and the death sentence passed upon Adam and his progeny. Those who received the benefits of Jesus’ miracles and were healed of their afflictions eventually died. It was not yet time for these miracles to bring eternal blessings. They did, however, offer insight into the miraculous power that will be used on behalf of all people in Jehovah’s kingdom.

Jehovah justly pronounced the curse of death upon mankind. But He intends to remove the curse eventually: *“There shall be no more curse.”* (Revelation 22:3) This is guaranteed through the ransom price provided by Jesus. During this age, the benefits of Jesus’ death accrue only to those invited to share in his sufferings as an offering for sin. When this group, his bride (Rev. 19:7-9) is complete, there will be no need to sustain this present evil world (Gal. 1:4) and attendant sickness, pain, and death. God will reverse these conditions in his kingdom, as described in Rev. 21:4: *“And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”* (NKJV) The apostle Paul says that the reign of Christ and his Church will continue until it has destroyed not only sickness, but death itself. *“For he must reign until he has put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.”* (1 Cor. 15:25,26 RSV) The destruction of death must include the demise of disease as well.

The signs we see on earth today indicate that it, the promised time of deliverance of the world from sin and death, is near. The prophet Malachi foretells that the Great Physician, *“the Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings,”* and he connects it in time to the day of the Lord, or the day of Jehovah. He says, *“Behold, the day (of Jehovah) is coming, burning like an oven; and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up, says the LORD of hosts, that it will leave them neither root nor branch. But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings.”* (Mal. 4:1,2 NKJV)

Jesus said that this day of the Lord (Jehovah), known also as a *“time of trouble, such as never was”* (Daniel 12:1) marks the end of the age, but not the end of the world. (Matthew 24:3 Diaglott) The current experience with the Coronavirus is one more sign that we are now in this foretold time of trouble and of the end of the age. Soon, the healing kingdom of Christ will be established in the earth. All who are in their graves will be raised and given an opportunity for life without disease, without death. (John 5:28,29) All mankind will be granted free access to the one and only true fountain of youth: *“And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.”* (Rev. 22:17 NKJV) To this unmatched promise the great and gracious God of the universe has set his personal seal. *“And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.”* (Rev. 21:5)

No matter how much we see the world’s lack of progress in fixing itself, we can know the outcome. Others tremble, we should not. The phrase “do not fear” or some form of it appears over 400 times in the Bible. It is a daily reminder to us to live without fear. As long as Jehovah permits things to continue, let us be ambassadors for Christ in every aspect of our lives (2 Cor. 5:20):

- Maintain high personal integrity
- Be alert to the dignity of others
- Be objective in our judgments
- Be independent from the world in our thinking (based on Biblical principles)
- Focus on the character development
- Be sympathetic to the major problems of today

“Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life!” (Rev. 2:10 NKJV)

LG

JOHN THE BAPTIST

3. Are You He?

It had been revealed to John the Baptist that when Israel's Messiah appeared, he would recognise him by the witness of the Holy Spirit. (John 1:33) The two men, Jesus and John, may have known each other since they were boys and met when their mothers met. Perhaps John's departure for the desert had meant that they had not seen each other for many years. Now, as Jesus approached the Baptist, John found it hard to understand why his cousin needed a baptism of repentance. Evidently John believed that Jesus needed no such baptism. However, John was about to enact a ritual which added a new dimension to baptism.

When Gentiles had entered the Jewish faith as proselytes, they had been baptised. By doing so, pagans had indicated that they had left their former life behind and had adopted the way of life of the Jews with its Law and ritual. Israelites born into the Kingdom of God as known in the Old Testament required no such repentance. Their moral standards had come to them as children of Abraham and in him they were right before God. If they had failed to live up to those standards, then they may have felt the need to go to John in order to renew their covenant.

The difference between the Baptism of John and the Baptism of Jesus is clarified by the early Church record in Acts 19:1-7. Paul was at Ephesus when he came across twelve disciples who had progressed no farther than the baptism of repentance. The work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts and lives had not yet begun. They had never discovered that when Jesus comes into the life of a believer, it is not just a work of reformation. Baptism in the name of Jesus brings new life with powerful growth that transforms the believer into the likeness of Christ.

When Jesus came to John he was taking a step which no one else had ever taken. He was not asking to be given back the status which he as an Israelite had lost because he had broken the covenant given through Moses. Jesus had never lost that relationship. He was now pointing the way forward to those who would receive resurrection life by God's mighty power. (Rom. 6:5-11) It is this which enables the disciple to conquer sin and do the things which God wants him to do.

The power of the Spirit, so evident in the fellowship and witness of the Early Church recorded in the Book of Acts, was first manifest in the life of Jesus. All who give real evidence of believing that he is the Son of God receive the same Spirit. John's baptism of repentance was now coming to

an end by this act of baptising Jesus; he was able to give his witness to the identity of Jesus.

John began to see the change in the work of God, so he introduced his disciples to his cousin. Instead of the fiery prophet denouncing the evil of his generation in such words as “*the axe is laid to the root of the trees,*” (Matt. 3:10 RSV) he announced Jesus as “*the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.*” (John 1:29-37 RSV) The sacrifice which was now prepared removed not only the sin of one nation, but the sin of the whole world. John began to see that God is not going to remove the sinner but that his heart goes out to the sinner in order to remove the sin.

At that moment too we see the greatness of John, he realised that his work was now almost finished. He accepted that the number of his disciples and the extent of his influence would decrease. He foresaw that the work and discipleship of Jesus would correspondingly increase. Like Elijah before him, he must be swept away from the scene of Divine activity before he could really see the fruit of his work; he must step down from the limelight so that another might shine in the glory of the Father. There was no thought of envy in John but rather a willingness not to stand in the way of God’s work which must go on; he rejoiced that Christ had come to give to the world that which he could never give. Envy there was, among his disciples who remained loyal to him. He began the hardest part of his ministry, that of retiring gracefully. He rejoiced to see Jesus’ success in attracting people to the Gospel but this could only mean his own eclipse in public ministry. As with all those who do God’s work, while his mission was in progress his enemies could not destroy him. Once the work was done and Messiah had come, John had to bear his final witness in prison. What a prison it was. High in the hills overlooking the Jordan valley John could hardly see the wonderful landscape which he must have loved and where he had so freely roamed. He was like a caged eagle, with all his strong, still youthful energy, pent up in chains. All his life he had been free from the confinements of men and stone walls; now he sat brooding upon what had happened. It is not surprising that his mind turned to that other young man, still free to preach and work among men and women, boys and girls. John must have believed that Jesus was establishing the kingdom of God; as Messiah he must surely bring to end, the injustice, the corruption and cruelty of such tyrants as Herod. He might well have asked why Jesus was not judging sinners and bringing the wrath of God upon those who disobeyed His law. Surely those who had borne witness to the Kingdom and purpose of God would be set free. Unable to bear it longer, John sent messengers to Jesus to ask him “*Are*

you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?" (Luke 7:19 RSV) John knew that Jesus would not deceive him; his problem was not trust but confusion. How did Jesus feel when he heard that question? Had others asked it from similar motives? Some had left him after the feeding of the five thousand. (John 6:66)

Jesus invited John's disciples to observe what was going on. This was more effective than sending a harsh reply, warning John to have stronger faith. Jesus knew human frailty and the temptations to which it was subject. His answer to John remains a monumental witness to what Jesus came for and how to judge the work of others. Like many another, John's pious hopes of good people receiving their just deserts, were being dashed. God is never in a hurry; He does not do things in the human way.

As John's disciples watched, they saw Jesus heal the sick and give sight to the blind. They heard how he cleansed some from leprosy and raised others from death. There appears to have been a great deal going on which is not described in the Gospels. Jesus was showing that the only power which can overcome evil is love. The power of the Spirit of Christ would take a long time to dislodge the powers of darkness; love is a slow worker but its results are more lasting than that which would only scratch the surface with human methods of retribution. His rebuke to his cousin was simple and loving. *"Go and tell John what you have seen and heard...and blessed is he who takes no offense at me."* (Luke 7:22-23 RSV) Some did take offence and turn away; another did also and became a traitor. Would that his followers were half as gentle. When John re-opens his eyes in the resurrection there will be no one greater to accept that everlasting love which will conquer the Herods and Neros of this world.

Blessed is he that is not offended in me, said the Lord. (Luke 7:23) Many more were going to be offended by Jesus' method of introducing the Kingdom of God. It certainly did not suit the ears of many in Israel to be told that the Son of God could mix with tax collectors and what they considered to be the dregs of society. It was offensive to Israelites to hear that God sent His prophets to foreigners to bestow their favours, as Jesus showed in the Nazareth synagogue. (Luke 4:25-27) Jesus was different from John. John was an ascetic type whose life was pure and free from the atmosphere of human society; he probably would not have moved among the poorest outcasts or touched those suffering from leprosy. He would never have had a meal with the drunkards. Jesus was different in that he saw something of the heritage of Abraham (and perhaps something of the image of God) in poor depraved sinners. Jesus did not find the company

of the elite rich religious folk comfortable. J. B. Phillips translates the passage in Luke 7:31-35 *“What can I say that the men of this generation are like—what sort of men are they? They are like children sitting in the market-place and calling out to each other, ‘We played at weddings for you, but you wouldn’t dance, and we played at funerals for you, and you wouldn’t cry!’ For John the Baptist came in the strictest austerity and you say he is crazy. Then the Son of Man came, enjoying life, and you say, ‘Look, a drunkard and a glutton, a bosom-friend of the tax-collector and the outsider!’ Ah, well, wisdom’s reputation is entirely in the hands of her children!”* The Jewish people found Jesus and John very disturbing, and like many others, they did not want to be disturbed.

Ordinary people’s comment on the life of the Baptist was *“Though John never performed a (miraculous) sign, all that John said about this man was true.”* (John 10:41 NIV) Would that such comment could be made about everyone who has claimed to follow Jesus. Could it be said of our witness?

Jesus’ epitaph to John has puzzled many. He said, *“I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John; yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.”* (Luke 7:28 RSV) Would John find no place in the kingdom he so valiantly proclaimed? John was numbered with those who proclaimed the Kingdom of God, and like Moses and Samuel, Isaiah and Jeremiah he must have a place in the ultimate purpose of God. John’s greatness, like that of all the prophets, lay in his deep humility and trust.

They remain extraordinary examples to all disciples of Jesus; but those who share the suffering and the throne with Christ are different from those who will be subject to Christ on earth. Because they will be the type of people that they were in this life, they will be completely happy and mature in the place God has assigned to them when they rise from the dead into the Kingdom of God’s dear Son. God does not fail to honour those who honour Him. They who sometimes suffered so much for His cause, will receive a life of peace and joy wherever it is and whatever they are doing.

The final word therefore is left to the writer to the Hebrews who so vividly described the faith of the men and women of the first and “old” order of spiritual things. It was a shadow or type of that which was to come. Now it had come and so the writer completes his picture gallery with the words *“...all these, though well attested by their faith, did not*

receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.” (Heb. 11:39-40 RSV)

The End

AOH



A BOOK REVIEW

BIBLE STUDENT CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS IN WORLD

WAR 1 – BRITAIN BY GARY PERKINS 2016

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The author seeks to elaborate on World War One conscientious objecting with the specific part International Bible Students Association (IBSA) Conscientious Objectors (C.O.) played and whose story has been overlooked by previous books. In addition he aims to recognise the role of those in Parliament and in other places who assisted them even when they did not agree with their stand. Therefore several people are named and details given on what was said and done in the tribunals, the sentences they were given at those tribunals, the categorisation of C.O. and the punishments meted out. There are accounts of how they were treated in France and in the work centres and how they bore those penalties following through right to the end of World War One and the months immediately after.

The scene is set with the early days of Charles Russell and the IBSA in Britain in the short time before the outbreak of the Great War. The book clearly brings out the subtle differences in the mindsets of the Bible Students then to other C.Os, with Bible verses, quotes from those C.Os and other documentary evidence. There are many details that are informative and the surprising number of categories of such men that they were placed into. But they were not alone as there were many other Christian groups who were placed with them such as the Plymouth Brethren, Christadelphians, British Israelites, Swedenborgians and Seventh Day Adventists among other individual Christians.

For readers of the Bible Study Monthly its notable for having a quote from Albert Hudson who was editor of this magazine for decades and there are several names who are mentioned in his book ‘Bible Students in Britain.’ Many names are familiar to those with a background in the Bible Student movement whose parents and spiritual family have talked about over the last decades.

Its an engaging and interesting read especially for those who like reading history and have an interest in the subject matter of pacifism. Some may just enjoy the many details and appendixes. One is drawn into the sufferings of those C.Os, a suffering more than I had been expecting and feel sympathetic toward them for events that only happened about 100 years ago. In the light of the recent marking 75 years since VE and VJ Day it is timely.

The book is easily available for purchase online in the usual places.

SANCTIFICATION

Part 2 Types

In Part 1 the types then which God prepared and provided for their instruction were lost and wasted upon the Jews therefore let them not be wasted now. In Leviticus 8 there is a picture, an illustration, concerning both the consecration and sanctification of the church class in God. Those who took part, Aaron and his sons, the High Priest and the under priests, were drawn from among the Levites, that is the tribe which God had set apart or sanctified to Himself. They had no part or lot in the Land. Our Lord Jesus is the great anti-typical High Priest and his true followers are the under Priests.

Consecration of the Priests

There are some who suggest that because Aaron and his sons did not go out of the door of the Tabernacle for seven days and seven nights, the implication is, that the church class should shut itself away from the world till the completion of the Gospel Age (Christian Era). That is a misrepresentation of the facts, a distortion of the picture. As we look at the picture in Lev. 8 more closely we shall discuss further points which will assist us as we endeavour to make our sanctification true and real.

In the second verse the Lord gives Moses the directions “*Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, and the anointing oil, and a bullock for the sin offering, and two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread*” and verse 4 shows that Moses had everything ready and had done “*as the LORD commanded him.*” Here are the individual elements of verse 2 prepared for the consecration of the priests:

- The Anointing Oil—representative of the Holy Spirit
- The Bullock—representative of Jesus and His body, the church
- 1st Ram (for the burnt offering)—representative of how God receives our sacrifice
- 2nd Ram (of consecration)—representative of the effect the sacrifice will have on the church
- The Unleavened Bread—representative of the actual purity of Jesus and the imputed purity of the church

Verse 6 tells us that Moses brought Aaron and his sons and washed them with water.

- The Laver—representative of the Word of God
- The Water—representing the truth

Thus Moses in that action represented the divine requirements; and the washing in the water in the laver represented or symbolised our Lord’s purity and the church’s imputed purity.

In other words, Aaron represented Jesus, but was actually fallen—Aaron in the flesh—thus, being washed in the laver he symbolised or represented our Lord’s spotless purity. Aaron’s sons also; their washing represented the cleansing from filth and unrighteousness and the imputed righteousness of the church. Our Lord was spotless and pure. The word of God. The living Word.

But so far as the members of the church are concerned, there is a work which must be done, fully done, so their course of sanctification and sacrifice can be completed. The *imputed* righteousness must be transformed into true righteousness. Although whilst still here in the flesh each one has the fallen nature to contend with, every effort must be made to allow that transformation into true righteousness to eventually take place now during our trial walk here. Surely each one who comes to God in consecration and would be fully sanctified to Him, made holy to Him, ready to meet the divine requirements, must realise that he or she must be completely transformed by the renewing of the mind that they may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Surely when the great apostle Paul wrote “*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 (rational) service*” (Rom. 12:1) he had in mind the sacrifice recorded in Lev. 8.

Is there not a great urge, equal to the need, to become like our Head? Our sacrifice, to meet the divine requirement is made here on earth. And our Father requires a true and a pure sacrifice. It will not suffice under any circumstances, to think I am covered by the robe of Christ’s righteousness. (Isa. 61:10) There has to be a daily, an hourly striving to become like Him that at the last we can also say with Paul; “*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.*” (2 Tim. 4:6-8) These words were written as an urge to Timothy to be faithful. Such was the conviction of the apostle in the power and faithfulness of God that he could speak of his death as an urging force to Timothy.

Remember he referred to leaving a work that he loved and to which the whole vigour of his life had been devoted. But his love for God and Jesus and the brethren was such that he was ready to die, to face the unknown, if it were the will of his God. He was confident that the rich and precious

promises of God would be his and he could rest in them.

Anointing with the Holy Spirit

To that end we will just refer to Lev. 8:12 concerning the anointing oil representing the Holy Spirit. Aaron only was anointed. Likewise Jesus, the great anti-typical High Priest He only was anointed. John bore record saying, *“I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him.”* (John 1:32) The followers of the Lord receive their anointing through Him. 1 John 2:27 reminds us *“the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you.”* The picture of the anointing of the Christ head and body is completed for us in Psalm 133:1-2 *“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments.”* Jesus reminded his disciples during his ministry that: *“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”* (John 14:6)

What a wonderful picture is presented to the true child of God in the anointing of Aaron. There was such a copiousness, such an abundance of anointing oil that it poured forth to descend to the skirts of his garments, to his very feet, diffusing a sweet fragrance all around. Such was the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus. He was a sweet-smelling savour before God.

What of the feet members*? How has the Holy Spirit thus poured forth been appropriated? Thus the feet members should continually examine themselves. Are we a sweet savour also before our God? If it is not, then there has been something wrong with our consecration and sanctification.

The psalmist compares that shedding of the Holy Spirit to the dew of Hermon and to the dew descending from the mountains of Zion. (Psa. 133:3) Here surely David had in mind the gentleness, the copiousness (abundance) and vivifying nature of that dew regarding which other writers have had much to say. David as a poet and a prophet is led to use the Holy Spirit and the dew of Hermon as a comparison of the dwelling together in unity of brethren in Christ. Thus the comparison changes to brotherly love—unity—concord—diffusing beauty—abundance—fertility. There the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore; and none of this graciousness is of ourselves.

For whilst we have a record of the Holy Spirit coming upon the followers of Jesus at Pentecost, it was, the result of his own promise to them as

*Feet members means those at the end of this Gospel age

recorded in Acts 1:5 that the Holy Spirit should come upon them “not many days hence.” It is a reminder of our entire dependence upon God and Jesus in all things and of the fact that Jesus made it possible for us to draw near to God; made it possible for God to deal with the Christian church.

Coat of Fine Linen (flax)

The coats of fine linen which God required Aaron and his sons to be clothed in shows our Lord’s spotless purity and the imputed purity of his followers. The significance of these garments and anointing calls to mind Peter’s words: “*what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.*” (2 Pet. 3:11)

The Consecration Offerings

“He brought the bullock for the sin offering: and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the bullock for the sin offering...and he brought the ram for the burnt offering: and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the ram. And he killed it; and Moses sprinkled the blood upon the altar round about. And he cut the ram into pieces; and Moses burnt the head, and the pieces, and the fat. And he washed the inwards and the legs in water; and Moses burnt the whole ram upon the altar: it was a burnt sacrifice for a sweet savour, and an offering made by fire unto the LORD; as the LORD commanded Moses.” (Lev. 8:14,18-21)

This is a reminder of the fact that the church is composed of individuals and these verses also are indicative of how God receives the sacrifice.

- First Moses burned the head—representative of Jesus on the altar of sacrifice
- Then the pieces—representative of the body of Christ
- And he washed the inwards

How Paul constantly reiterates the importance of washing, inwardly. What a wonderful picture he draws in Heb.10:19-25: “*Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) and let us consider one another to provoke 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 the more, as ye see the day approaching.”*

Jesus said to his disciples toward the close of his ministry “*now ye are clean through the word I have spoken unto you.*” (John 15:3) Again, this is a progressive work entailing a lifetime’s devotion to the Lord. Thus it can be appreciated the necessity forever of self-examination to determine whether one is clean and still sanctified unto God. What a deep significance our Lord’s words recorded in Matt. 23:25-28 had in regard to the Pharisees and scribes: “*Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.*” What an indictment, what a terrible condition. Each must ever continue heart searching. Those words were not put there merely as an indictment against the Scribes and Pharisees, necessary as it was. They were put there for our heeding, our learning, our notice, to take to heart and ever seek to walk more circumspectly.

The First Ram

The record continues: “*And Moses burnt the whole ram.*” (v.21) This is a reminder of a complete sacrifice, nothing withheld. Again it is speaking of a continuous ceremony until the whole of it was consumed and to God it was a sweet savour as his word in Exod. 29:18 to Moses states.

Peter’s words here come to mind: “*Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.*” (1 Pet. 4:12-14)

The Second Ram

“*He brought the other ram, the ram of consecration: and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the ram.*” (v.22)

The picture seen here concerns the second ram and subsequent verses show the effect, the way of sacrifice for each member individually. In all the instances the record states that Aaron and his sons placed their hands on the head of the animals. By so doing, it was as though they said “this

sacrifice represents us.” So, in the antitype we must accept that all that happened to the animals from that moment represented what was to be done to Jesus and His body members—“the church.” In the particular instance of this second ram, it states that Moses put some of the blood on the tip of their right ear, the thumb of their right hands and upon the great toe of their right feet.

In thus dealing with Aaron and his sons individually it surely impresses the fact that consecration and sanctification are very individual works and once again, seeing it was done with blood, it speaks of a fully consecrated and sanctified life. (v.24)

Right Ear. It speaks of hearing and heeding the word of life. Our Lord’s words on the matter were very plain. To those who sought to persecute Him He said: *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”* (John 5:24)

To others He said: *“he that is of God heareth God’s words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.”* (John 8:47) To Pilate He said: *“Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.”* (John 18:37)

Right Hand Thumb. As regards the thumb of the right hand. It is a reminder to do with all our might what our hands find to do. To do all with our whole heart and hand: there must be no room for luke-warmness as is the warning to the Laodicean church, referring to our own period: *“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.”* (Rev. 3:15)

Big Toe of the Right Foot. And so far as the great (big) toe of the right foot is concerned it surely is a portent reminder as to how to walk: the seven walks of Ephesians come to mind. (Eph. 2:2; 2:10; 4:1; 4:17; 5:2; 5:8; 5:15) Two of the references tell how Christians should not walk and the remaining five exhorting how. Our Father will see that we are truly sanctified if we walk worthily, in love, circumspectly, in faith, in the light—aye, and even as we have received Christ, so we must walk in him. (Col. 2:6)

Basket of Unleavened Bread. Returning to the picture in Lev. 8:26 it says that Moses *“out of the basket of unleavened bread, that was before*

the LORD, he took one unleavened cake, and a cake of oiled bread, and one wafer.” He placed them upon Aaron’s hands and all his sons’ hands and waved them for a wave offering before the Lord. The waving suggests the constancy of the scriptures, the consecration and sanctification, never ceasing until accepted by our Father, in the finishing of our course. In the unleavened cake the spotless purity of our dear Lord and Master Jesus Christ is shown.

The Oiled Bread shows our Lord as our High Priest filled with the spirit and it speaks of the indwelling of God’s Holy Spirit. No sacrifice could be adequate without it. No sanctification possible without it.

The Wafer. Yes, oh so thin a wafer and yet not broken. Made of fine flour, honey and sweets of paradise; it speaks of our appreciation of Jesus as our glorified Lord even as it represents for us faith and our own hope in the promised glorification on completion of our own sacrifice. (*“No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.”* Heb. 5:4)

Seven Days. The sanctification of Lev. 8 occupies seven days according to v.35. Yes, it is a full lifetime’s work, keeping the charge of the Lord, faithful until the end. That is the picture of the work to be done in each one. The longing of the soul, the being, for God can only make itself felt when all lesser delights and earthly joys are integrated to their rightful place. If we are not conscious of this soul thirst, then it can only be because our heart is trying to find satisfaction from the world or as the scripture says digging wells which can hold no water (Jer. 2:13) rather *“my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.”* (Psa. 63:1)

There are many other points in that picture of sanctification in Leviticus 8 which we cannot touch upon now. Indeed we realise that to all those who are sanctified to God, the Holy Spirit makes known the purport of these lessons and types and we can only hope to stir up one another’s minds by way of remembrance and encourage each one that seeks to walk the narrow way in sincerity and truth.

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*3 Parts of Zechariah 14:12-21 (see page 142)

- i. Zech. 14:12-15 Looking back to Divine intervention that saved Jerusalem
- ii. Zech. 14:16-19 Acknowledgement of the new world government
- iii. Zech. 14:20-21 The Temple a house of prayer for all

ZECHARIAH, PROPHET OF THE RESTORATION

16. The Sword of The Lord

The prophet's work was done. Through a long series of visions he had traced the story of the deliverance of God's people from captivity and oppression, their cleansing from defilement and the exaltation of the purified and dedicated "remnant" to be the Divine instrument for world evangelism. He had told of the restoration and rebuilding of the City of Peace, its investment by the forces of evil powers resisting the incoming Kingdom of Righteousness and the dramatic intervention of God Most High to overthrow the power of evil and take control of earthly affairs. There, at the point where the "*kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ*" (Rev. 11:15) the visions came to an end and left Zechariah contemplating the serene future in which the sovereignty of the Lord God was manifest to all and the knowledge of His glory beginning to cover "*the earth...as the waters cover the sea.*" (Hab. 2:14) But even in this sunlit scene there are some shadows, and the prophet has to take note of them before he closes his book at the point where absolute holiness pervades the Millennial Kingdom and evil is no more.

To this end he divides this final stanza of his story into three parts. In the first (Zech. 14:12-15) he looks back, as it were, to the dramatic intervention from above which has saved the Holy City and its people from the despoilers, and ruminates on the details of their destruction, the nature of the calamities by means of which they were defeated and the comprehensive and final nature of that defeat. Then he turns his attention to the early days of the Messianic era which is to follow, and in vv.16-19 sees the peoples of earth rendering allegiance to their new King and acknowledging earth's new centre of government. At the same time he warns of the consequences incurred by those who refuse to offer that allegiance. But this is only a temporary intermission, for in vv.20-21 he sees holiness and righteousness supreme. The Temple of the Lord has become, as it was originally intended to become, a house of prayer for all nations, and in that house "*prayer...shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised.*" (Psa. 72:15)

So he talks of the judgment which has fallen upon the forces of evil, choosing descriptive symbols suited to the picture he has chosen in which to present that judgment, the destruction of a mighty host outside the walls of Jerusalem. "*This shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; their flesh shall consume*

away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes (sockets), and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.” (ch. 14:12)

This is the first of a threefold judgment; this verse pictures what is obviously a supernatural disaster falling upon the host, the intervention of the powers of Heaven to thwart their objective. Next in verse 13 comes internecine strife whereby the invaders fall upon each other and slay each other. Finally in verses 14-15 the forces of Judah, the defenders of Jerusalem, are pictured as though they advance upon the demoralised enemy and gather all their possessions and equipment for themselves. But the commencement of this three-fold judgment is from Heaven.

Their flesh consumes away as they stand, their eyes as they gaze, and their tongue—significantly singular and not plural, in their mouth. How should this be interpreted? Not literally, for if in verse 12 they thus vanish into nothingness they would hardly be in a position in verse 13 to turn weapons upon each other and destroy each other, neither would there be anyone for Judah in verse 14 to fight. Each verse must be understood as picturing one aspect or phase of this great debacle, and the entire four verses as enlarging in detail upon verse 3 of this chapter, the coming forth of the Lord to “*fight against those nations.*”

The power which executes God’s purpose is celestial, from Heaven, but the hosts against whom it is wielded are very much of this earth. The vision demands that there is in the forefront of the conflict a solid phalanx of armed men surrounding the Holy Land with intention of going in to possess, backed up by all the resources of a world-wide power determined to defy God. It is upon this whole combination that the mysterious catastrophe falls. “*Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet;*” (v.12) that could well refer to their man-power and all their equipment of war, a mysterious whittling away of men, perhaps by spontaneous desertion or flight as in the days of Gideon or by pestilence as in the days of Sennacherib, the immobilising or loss of equipment by reason of adverse climatic conditions. In modern warfare tanks are often held fast in mud and rendered useless, planes grounded due to fog and snow, ships confined to harbour on account of hurricanes. It only needs the impact of some of the forces of Nature—wind, rain, snow, storm—to a degree of unprecedented severity to render all the might of the invading host powerless and frustrate all their fell (evil) designs. Quite possibly this is the manner in which their flesh will consume away as they stand upon their feet, and in line with this it may be expected that the eyes which

consume away in their sockets may well stand for the intelligence service of the host, all their radio detectors and look-out posts, all the means by which they evaluate the forward position and the situation of their intended victims and so plan their course of action. Even today it only needs a severe magnetic storm on the sun to disrupt the world's radio communications for twelve hours; only a super snowstorm blanketing a wide area in white to render the most efficient aerial spy camera useless. The world of Noah's day was brought to an end simply and solely—and most effectively—by the unaided forces of Nature. *“The world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished”* says Peter. (2 Pet. 3:6) And if such unexpected and unexplainable disasters befall the confident host which, in Ezekiel's vision of the same event, boasted that they were going in to an undefended land *“to take a spoil, and to take a prey”* (Ezek. 38:12) what wonder that the tongue is consumed away in the mouth. The tongue, the voice of authority, the power of command, the direction and leadership of the entire adventure—silent, speechless! Is it of some significance that the noun is in the singular here; not “their tongues” but “their tongue”? The supreme control of these forces of evil, frustrated in its purpose by forces it can neither understand nor withstand, stands mute in the face of defeat.

Now this is the first aspect of the threefold judgment; intervention from Heaven. The second is an earthly one; the hosts begin to fight with each other, *“...a great tumult (panic) from the LORD shall be among them: and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour.”* (ch. 14:13) This is a case of history repeating itself: on more than one occasion in Israel's history the people were delivered by reason of their enemies falling out with each other and engaging in fratricidal combat. The case of the deliverance under Jehoshaphat is perhaps the most noteworthy. *“For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another. And when Judah came...they looked...and, behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped.”* (2 Chron. 20:23-24) So in this case: a blind, unreasoning panic born of the inexplicable disasters and defeat they had experienced leads to internal dissension and strife in the multitude and they begin to war with each other. To what extent this conflict extends into the countries of the world from which this doomed host has been drawn it is not possible to say, but it may well be that in this verse we have a terse indication of the rapid break-up and dissolution of alliances and associations between the political powers of this world which signals

the final submission of these powers to the incoming Kingdom. If so, the third aspect of the judgment, the entry of Judah into the picture, is logically next in sequence.

“And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the heathen (nations) round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance. And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule...of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, as this plague.” (ch. 14:14-15) It may seem a little illogical to present Judah in this verse as fighting the enemy when all through the narrative the position is that Judah stands still and leaves the fighting to the Lord. There is no inharmony in reality. It is the Lord who comes forth from His place to render the invaders powerless; it is for the people of the land, here called Judah because that was the name of the people and the land in Zechariah’s day, to accomplish the subsequent “mopping-up,” to use a modern military expression, and to collect the spoil. Here again there is a parallel with the historical deliverance in the days of Jehoshaphat; after the Lord had destroyed the invading armies the people of Judah went out to clear up the battlefield and to gather in the spoil, *“and they were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much.”* (2 Chron. 20:25) So the picture here is that of the people having a definite part to play in the fight, even although that part involved, at first, remaining passive, in faith, in Jerusalem until the Lord had given victory. Then they could sally forth and collect the spoil. This can reasonably describe the aftermath of this great event when all nations on earth shall bring their tribute and offerings to the Holy Nation which has been so signally manifested as the beginning of the Divine Kingdom on earth. *“The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.”* (Psa. 72:10) And of course the greatest and most valuable “spoil” will be the sincere allegiance to earth’s new King of such among these nations as will accept the opportunity and become reconciled to God, in consequence of Israel’s evangelistic fervour. *“The Gentiles (nations) shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.”* (Isa. 60:3) *“Their seed shall be known among the nations and their offspring among the peoples: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the LORD hath blessed.”* (Isa. 61:9 RV)

But all the paraphernalia of war, of strife, of man’s greed and selfishness and cruelty, will be destroyed, offered up to the Lord in a fervour of devotion and repudiation of evil. This is what is meant by the plague upon the horses, mules, camels and so on. In Old Testament days, when Israel had defeated a particularly obnoxious enemy they offered up to God the

captured livestock and other spoils of war to indicate that they themselves were not to be defiled by contact with the accursed possessions of the idolaters. The valuable spoils were devoted to sacred purposes and the animals and perishable things destroyed by fire. A notable case is that of the booty taken by Joshua at the capture of Jericho. The gold, silver, copper and iron vessels went into the treasury of the Lord and the city with all its other contents was destroyed. Achan sinned by abstracting for his own use some gold and silver and a “*goodly Babylonish garment*” and suffered the death penalty in consequence, having “*trespassed in the accursed thing.*” (Josh. 7:1,21) It is for this reason that the Hebrew word *cherem*, meaning properly something devoted or consecrated to God, is also given the meaning of accursed or a curse, because the thing thus devoted is laid under a curse lest any should touch or take it, as did Achan. It has to be devoted to God and utterly destroyed, because it is inherently evil. Now this is the meaning of verse 15. The various beasts here enumerated were all part of the panoply of war—horses for chariots, mules and camels for carrying goods, and so on. As such they were part of the spoils of war and must be devoted to the Lord and destroyed because they are evil things. So the same plague falls upon them as upon the marauding host and thus all evil is destroyed from the land. Only the valuable things, the good things remain and these pass into the custody of the Holy Nation, which itself is already consecrated to God.

But one question has to be asked at this point. Is this very warlike and rather lurid picture of armies fighting each other in fashion of armies today, with all the bloodshed and suffering that is involved, really an accurate portrayal of the literal reality of things when the time comes for its enactment? Is the transition from the rule of the powers of this world to the peaceable and beneficent reign of Christ over the nations to be effected by such warlike means? Must the Lord stoop to human methods of overcoming one’s enemies to win their eventual allegiance? Is it by such artifices that He must effect the purpose expressed by the prophet “*the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever*”? (Isa. 32:17)

There is no denying that many good Christians would see no inconsistency in such being the case. The old obsession of Armageddon, a time of indiscriminate slaughter of the evil-doers and final triumph of the righteous, born, it must be admitted, of the Hebrew invasion of Canaan at the Exodus dies hard. But is this the way of the One who came once as Jesus of Nazareth, the Man of peace, and comes again as the King of peace? Has Heaven no artillery more effective than that of man’s

devising?

A quiet consideration of this passage may suggest that Heaven has. In the first place it is admittedly basic that Israel's defence against what is pictured as a marauding host is not with earthly weapons but in complete trust in and reliance upon the powers of Heaven. The parallel vision in Ezek. 38 & 39 makes this clear. The Judah of v.14 does not fight with carnal weapons but with their faith in God; they dwell in undefended villages and they are supremely confident despite the menacing threat by the rest of the world.

The phraseology of v.12: blindness, deafness, physical inability, suggests a supernatural infliction rather than one imposed by force of arms. The horses, mules, camels, asses of v.15 must be metaphorical for such, customary as they were in the days of Zechariah, certainly have no place in modern physical warfare.

Whatever the reality, it must be one that the attackers can neither understand nor withstand—and whether they withstand or not, a battle fought with literal weapons is one they certainly can understand. The entire passage gives the impression of a concerted attack on the incoming Kingdom of Righteousness as represented in the one nation, Israel, which has taken its stand and pledged its faith in that Kingdom. That could conceivably include a military investment of the Holy Land but even if so Heaven can frustrate the attempt without the shedding of literal blood, and that perhaps is what is implied in this chapter. Behind that, it is more likely that the vision envisages a worldwide attempt to crush, by every possible political, commercial, financial, expedient, this one small nation centred on Jerusalem which has dared to express its utter faith in God by relying on His protecting power and thereby challenged all others.

After all, it does not seem very logical for the Lord God to destroy thousands of human beings in Armageddon only to resurrect them not so very long afterwards to introduce them to the Millennial Kingdom and invite their sincere conversion. Might just as well start the process immediately after their defeat when, with all opposition vanquished, the work of that Kingdom can start getting under way.

This is the end of the rule of evil in the earth. Sin has yet to be cleansed out of the hearts of men and this process will occupy the entire Messianic reign now to commence, but the outward practice of evil and oppression ceases henceforth. *“In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abun-*

dance of peace so long as the moon endureth.” (Psa. 72:7) The enemies of the Lord have been overthrown, but in their overthrow they find that the Victor comes to heal, and with the destruction of all in the world that oppresses and afflicts mankind they are left with the opportunity to rebuild their lives on the principles of truth and righteousness, if they will. So the noble Messianic Psalm goes on “*He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth...He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth...All kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him...men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.*” (Psa. 72:6-17)

So that out of the turmoil and strife of a dying and doomed evil world a new world, wherein dwells justice and love, security and life, is born.

(To be concluded)

AOH



FLAX

Linum usitatissimum (Linaceae)

“A bruised reed he shall not break, and smoking flax he shall not quench, till he may put forth judgment to victory.”

(Matt. 12:20 YLT)

Flax is the world’s oldest textile plant. The Hebrew word *pishtah* refers to the common flax. Linen is made from the stems of this charming blue-flowered annual, which was an important crop in Egypt and also Canaan (Israel)... The harlot Rahab brought Joshua’s two spies “up to the roof of the house, and hid them with stalks of *flax*, which she had laid in order upon the roof” (Josh. 2:6); she later hid them under the flax.

It was the practice to pull up the flax by the roots, tie it into bundles, and soak it in water for several weeks until the outer part decayed. Then by a brushing or combing process the useful fibres were separated from the rest. This was known as “netting.” The bundles were then opened and the “netted” stems spread out to dry.

Jewish priests had to wear linen when officiating at sacrifices. “And the priest shall put on his *linen* garment, and his *linen* breeches” (Lev. 6:10) and, much later, our Lord’s body was wrapped in a linen shroud. (John 19:40)

The Flowers and Fruits of the Bible
John Chancellor

THE GATHERING HOME OF SAINTS

Part 7 MOMENTS OF REFLECTIVE PRAISE

Those mountain peaks of glory, what view will they afford of endless future all in sweet accord. That Lamb of God, that firstborn church, that Judge of all, innumerable hosts of angels who, with holy men below, bring blessedness to earth spread out before our wondering eyes, age after age of sweet surprise from that great creative Mind. Wave after wave of newfound joy, when holiness brings happiness, and perfect oneness seals the bond uniting every mind.

What wonderful possibilities open up beyond all present dreams, and what arresting view will claim our perfect vision from that vantage point of glory. Yet can we doubt there still will be sweet moments of reflective praise, as, looking back from that great height, we trace again the path we trod, and note with perfect insight then along that way the hand of God.

With retrospective wisdom then we will see in that strange maze of life direction from that greatest Mind of all in every step, each joyful hour, each humbling fall. And we shall know at last how many wheels were turned, how many hands reached forth, the overruling in our daily round of tireless Providence. Each circumstance, each incident of life we shall review, and this time see as through a loving Father's eyes, Who, working all together for our good, each pilgrim mile, pursued so great an end. Each day we gleaned the Master's field, each hour discovered in our path what love had placed for us to gather to our heart, handfuls of purpose left for us to find along our way. Thus did He provide that soul-sustaining food that strengthened courage to go on, and each and every time of need had its supply. Thus did we learn to look with grateful expectation to that hand that in response to earnest prayer would open to release its precious load of daily benefits. With mercies new each morning light we came to know His great delight to satisfy, caress, and urge us on to emulate His faithfulness.

How much He longed to bless, then shall we know. Those windows of His heavenly store would open wide, their treasures pour abundantly beyond our need, and more beside. He gave us each the power to prove His promise-keeping love by yielding readily those tiny mites into His treasury, our love, our trust. Such tiny offerings to One so rich, yet all our living, all we were, was represented there. Then shall we know their preciousness to Him Who said, "Give Me thy heart." Shall we like Caleb then look back to that first step of faith to spy the land and taste its fruit,

that trust in power divine the prize to give, faith's victory to win? Then shall we not confess His Spirit's power that kept our hearts alive to God through every year of pilgrimage? Did I so run with dogged steps as Caleb? And did I wear his shoes upon my feet? Without them could I have claimed inheritance? And did my faith stay firm when others faded in the thirsty heat of desert march? And did I learn in wilderness the meaning of the secret place? On heaven's vast resources did I lean when streams of earth ran dry? Each saint will say, the Lord was with me, and therein did lie the secret of renewing strength. The warfare over, fight of faith well won, the victor's wreath was waiting for each saint who testified with Paul, "I thank Christ Jesus my Lord, Who hath enabled me."

With what emotion Joseph took the throne, and thus became the blesser of the men who once despised. He, looking back along that checkered course of light and darkness, the father's love, the pit, the slave condemned for other's sins. How faith was tried when natural sight must contradict the hope of earlier vision. When naught went right, how dark that night, yet Joseph understood, and faith yet triumphed with the knowledge, everything that God permits He means for good. What will my story be when I too realize the end of faith, and find hope's bliss, and know how right the path that leads to this? Shall I not wonder at my Shepherd's care, His skill and understanding of the ways of sheep? How tirelessly He watched, unsleeping eyes forever turned upon each member of His flock, and in His bosom did He bear His lambs. Their safety, each one, lay in His hand, and every hour His keeping power made them secure. He led and fed His own through every age, and found them pasture even in desert land. That rod and staff known to the psalmist were my comfort too, and this I will confess, when, looking back I trace His leading through green pastures, dark ravine, and wilderness.

Dear David knew that enemy within, the senses of failure and estranging sin. The bear, the lion that would take the flock, were no match for the Shepherd. Their presence was to rob. His was to feed and make secure. In vain the spirit's foes encircled and helpless watched from far as He did spread His table for His trusting sheep. How wonderful the Shepherd's care, the love on which we feed in darkest hour, that will not let us go. Each age His sheep will testify His keeping power, the peace that dispelled fear, because He was so near. Each saint will then in glory raise his head and thank his Lord. As each reflects upon the Shepherd's ways, and with the light of perfect day see there revealed full justification of the faith that, when it could not see, yet still believed.

In moments of reflective praise, we shall look back, and fully praise our Saviour's ways.

DH

NOTICES

BIBLE STUDENTS FELLOWSHIP CONFERENCE
HIGH LEIGH CONFERENCE CENTRE
HODDESDON
12—16 AUGUST 2020

High Leigh Conference Centre is re-opening in mid July!

Late bookings may be possible. Social distancing may limit numbers
Mrs. Natasha Ciobra, Flat 2, 1-3 City Road, WINCHESTER, SO23 8SD
or by email—natasha.rolston24@gmail.com

Day Visitors welcome, please check in plenty of time for availability

UK CONVENTION

30 OCTOBER—1 NOVEMBER
HIGH LEIGH CONFERENCE CENTRE

For early enquiries please contact

Dina Hinde—dina6ro@yahoo.com

Dorota Pilch—dorota.broda@gmail.com

Nicholas Charcharos—n.a.charcharos@gmail.com

Please note this convention may be delayed till October 2021

Gone from us

Marjorie Assiter (Southend)
Olive Clarke (Evesham, formerly Rugby)
Rita Constable Buckingham (Whitchurch)
Joyce Foulkes (Warrington)
Bill Start (Blaby)

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.

THREE WOMEN, THREE COVENANTS

Sarah and Hagar were two women, who at various points in time, had a child with Abraham. God used the events in the lives of three women, in order to illustrate and explain three of His Covenants. As we are told, in Gal. 4:22-24 (Diaglott) “For it has been written, that Abraham had two sons; one from the bond-woman, and one from the free-woman. Now, the one from the bond-woman was naturally produced; but the other, from the free-woman, was through the promise. Which things are allegorical; for these represent Two Covenants.”

Here we are specifically told that Sarah and Hagar represent covenants. A “covenant” is an agreement, between two or more individuals. Whereas, an “allegory” is when persons, including events in their lives, personify or represent a concept or idea. In other words, an allegory is an illustration or type, which was lived by people.

God makes Covenants with mankind for various reasons, including: to teach us lessons, to help us understand his Plans and Purposes, and the ultimate purpose being to convey blessings. God chose to use the relationship between a husband, wife, and their children, in order to illustrate His Covenants.

Notice what God did not use, in illustrating His Covenants. He did not use a contract. A business contract is rather cold and impersonal; and is mainly used from a legal standpoint. Neither did God use a Teacher-to-Student relationship. A Teacher-to-Student relationship is mainly one-way; the teacher instructs the student; and it is oftentimes an impersonal relationship; purely from an educational standpoint.

Instead, God chose to use the relationship between a husband and wife (and their children) to give us a clearer and deeper insight into His Covenants. A husband and wife relationship is a close relationship, a lasting relationship, a warm and loving relationship, and a mutual relationship. So are God’s Covenants with mankind!

It is important to have an understanding of God’s Covenants and to know which Covenant we are being developed under, in order for us to better serve God, by knowing the requirements as well as the blessings and rewards offered for the Covenant we are under, if we are faithful unto death. A proper understanding of God’s Covenants also helps to determine where we are, relative to God’s timeline with mankind.

Throughout the allegory recorded in Galatians chapter 4, of Abraham and the three women he had children with, Abraham pictures God. In the Bible there are several scriptures which refer to God as a “husband.” Isaiah. 54:5 “For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name.” Jeremiah 31:32, “...which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD.”

Sarah was Abraham’s first wife. She was not a servant. (Gen. 11:29) Sarah pictures the Grace Covenant, under which the Church class is developed during the Gospel Age; as we read: “Now you, brothers and sisters, like Isaac, are children of promise. Therefore, brothers and sisters, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.” (Gal. 4:28,31 NIV) Truly, it is only because of the grace of God that a little flock of faithful followers is being called, then chiseled and polished by adverse experiences from following God and His righteousness. As the apostle Paul wrote concerning these, “...at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. And if by grace, then it cannot be based on (is no longer by) works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.” (Rom. 11:5-6 NIV)

Paul spoke of this heavenly calling as being a “gift,” writing: “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.” (Eph. 2:8 NIV) This grace extended by God to us, is not because of anything we have done, but rather it was made possible because of the ransom sacrifice of God’s only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. As Paul tells us, “he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy...through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.” (Titus 3:5-7 NIV)

For many years Sarah was unable to have any children. (Gen. 11:30) So also, the fulfilment of God’s promise made to Abraham, that “in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;” (Gen. 22:18) remained barren for many years. Then, when Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah 90 years old, God made a promise to Abraham, “Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.” (Gen. 17:19)

“The LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken. For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called

the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac...and Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him.” (Gen. 21:1-3,5) The promise given by God to Abraham’s son Isaac was, “I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant.” (Gen. 17:19) And that “in Isaac shall thy seed be called.” (Gen. 21:12) In Galatians 3 we are told that Isaac allegorically pictures Christ, “Now to Abraham and his seed (Isaac) were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.” (Gal. 3:16)

Years later, obeying God’s instructions to him, Abraham offered up his only son Isaac, in sacrifice: “And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the LORD...said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.” (Gen. 22:10-12) So also, God gave his only begotten Son (Jesus) to die as a Ransom for All. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.” (John 3:16)

In Gen. 22:6 we are told that Abraham laid the wood for the sacrifice upon Isaac and Isaac carried the wood as the two of them travelled to the place where Abraham would have an altar. If you have ever tried to carry a load of wood in your arms or on your back, you know that wood is heavy to carry. This indicates that Isaac was strong and is a proof that he was a willing sacrifice. He was not a small, helpless young boy; but rather a strong young man. So also, Jesus willingly gave his life as a Ransom sacrifice for All. He tells us, “I lay down my life for the sheep...No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself.” (John 10:15,18)

Years later, when Isaac was in his thirties, Abraham instructed his servant Eliezer, saying: “thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac...The LORD God of heaven, which took me from my father’s house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence.” (Gen. 24:4,7)

The remainder of Genesis 24 tells of the wondrous account of how God led and directed Eliezer in the selection of a bride for his master Abraham’s son Isaac. Stopping at a well of water outside the city of Nahor, Eliezer prayed to God for help and guidance in selecting the bride for Isaac, asking if “the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I

pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.” (vv.10-14)

Before he had done speaking, Rebekah came with her pitcher upon her shoulder and “was very fair to look upon, a virgin.” (v.16) After filling her pitcher with water from the well, Eliezer asked her for some water to drink, which she willingly gave to him. Afterward, Rebekah said to Eliezer, “I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking.” (v.19) She then emptied the rest of the water in her pitcher into the trough and “ran again” to the well in order to draw water, “and drew for all his camels.” (v.20) Eliezer bowed down his head “and worshipped the LORD, and blessed the LORD God of my master Abraham, which had led me in the right way to take my master’s brother’s daughter unto his son.” (v.48)

A camel is not like a horse in drinking, because a camel can drink at one time enough water to last an entire week. One large camel can drink about 18 gallons (80 litres / 21 US gallons) in 10 minutes, almost 10 times more than what a horse can drink, because the camel’s unique metabolism enables it to store the water in its bloodstream. (Contrary to popular belief, the “humps” on the camel do not store water but rather fat.) Rebekah had “a lot” of work to do, in order to give water to 10 camels! She would have had to draw around 200 gallons of water. It must have taken her a long time. Her legs and arms must have become tired and ached, from repeatedly pulling up a heavy bucket full of water from the depths of the well, and then carrying it to the water trough.

Rebekah then took Eliezer to her father’s house. There Eliezer recounted to Rebekah’s father and brother all the things that had taken place. Rebekah was called out to leave her family and homeland, and to journey to meet her bridegroom. So also, during the Gospel age, there is the call of the Church class, to leave behind earthly hopes, ambitions, and goals; to become the Bride of Christ, to become the Lamb’s wife (the Lamb picturing Christ), as we read: “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church.” (Eph. 5:23) “For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” (2 Cor. 11:2)

In Galatians 4, Paul says that the son “by a freewoman” was (born) “by promise,” and that “Jerusalem which is above is free.” (Gal. 4:22,23,26)

So also, there are many scriptures which indicate that the Church class' reward is a heavenly reward. "But you have come to Mount Zion, to...the heavenly Jerusalem...to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven." (Heb. 12:22-23 NIV) "But our citizenship is in heaven." (Phil. 3:20 NIV) "An inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade...kept in heaven for you." (1 Peter 1:4 NIV) "If the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling." (2 Cor. 5:1-2 NIV)

The woman Hagar was "a servant," and therefore not free, and allegorically pictures the Law Covenant. As we are told: "These things are being taken figuratively: the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: this is Hagar." (Gen. 16:1 ESV; Gal. 4:24-25 NIV) Under the Law Covenant, we are told that "Moses was faithful in all his house, as a servant." (Heb. 3:5)

Hagar had a son, named Ishmael, with Abraham before Sarah did. So also, the Law Covenant was made with Israel before spiritual Israel (the Church class) was developed. Abraham was 86 years old when Ishmael was born. (Gen. 16:16) Ishmael pictures the nation of Israel, because of the four specific promises which God gave to Ishmael: as for Ishmael:

- Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful
- will multiply him exceedingly
- twelve princes shall he beget
- I will make him a great nation (Gen. 17:20)

So too, God made these same *four* promises to Israel. God said to Jacob, "Israel shall be thy name...be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee." (Gen. 35:10-11) And God promised there would be "twelve tribes of Israel." (Gen. 49:28)

The incident is recorded when Ishmael mocked Isaac, and as a result Sarah asked Abraham to cast off Hagar and Ishmael. (Gen. 21:9-10) So too, natural Israel as a nation was cast-off for a time, because of their rejection of the Messiah. Jesus said to them, "Jerusalem...Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." (Matt. 23:37-38)

In the book of Exodus, we are told that Moses received the Law at Mount Sinai. (Exod. 19:1-3,8) Thus in Galatians we read: "...the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is

in bondage with her children.” (Gal. 4:24-25)

Keturah was Abraham’s last wife. She is another significant type. She pictures the New Covenant. Prior to becoming Abraham’s wife, Keturah was a concubine and had six sons with Abraham. (1 Chron. 1:32) We are told in the scriptures that Abraham was ten years older than Sarah, and that Sarah died when she was 127 years old. (Gen. 17:17; 23:1) Thus, Abraham was 137 years old when Sarah died. After his mother Sarah died, Abraham’s son Isaac married Rebekah. (Gen. 24:67) Then, Abraham took Keturah as his wife. (Gen. 25:1) We believe Keturah pictures the New Covenant for two reasons.

First, because of the timing when Abraham took Keturah as a wife. Abraham took Keturah as a wife, after Isaac married Rebekah. (Gen. 25:1) So also, the New Covenant will be in operation “after those days,” after the Bride of Christ is completed and after the marriage of the Bridegroom (Christ) to the Bride (the Church class).

In Heb. 8:8-13 we read, “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt... For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days (after the Gospel Age, after the completion of the Church class), saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old.”

The apostle Paul wrote in Romans 11, “Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. ...For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.” (Rom. 11:1, 25-27)

Isaac was the only heir of Abraham, and we are told that “Abraham gave

all that he had unto Isaac.” (Gen. 25:5) So also, the Christ (Head and Body) are the “sons of God” and therefore the seed of promise, as we read in Gal. 3:29, “if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

A second reason Keturah pictures the New Covenant, is what was (and what was not) given to Keturah’s sons. Unto Keturah’s sons, that is, “unto the sons of the concubines...Abraham gave gifts.” (Gen. 25:6) So too, in the kingdom, Israel and the world of mankind will receive blessings (gifts), such as no more sickness, sorrow, or death, (Rev. 21:4) as well as the blessings (gifts) of Peace and Joy. (Isa. 35; Luke 2:10,14) We believe Keturah was not mentioned by name in Gal. 4, because at the time of the writing of the letter to the Galatians, it was not yet God’s due time for the New Covenant to be understood.

In summary, in Galatians the apostle Paul explains to us an allegory, where Abraham (as a husband), pictures our Heavenly Father. Sarah (Abraham’s first wife) pictures the covenant under which the Church class is now being developed. Isaac (the only son of Abraham and Sarah; a willing sacrifice), pictures Christ. Rebekah (called out, to leave her family and homeland to journey to meet her Bridegroom), pictures the Gospel Age heavenly calling of the Church class. Hagar (a servant woman) pictures the Law Covenant. Ishmael (Hagar’s son) pictures the nation of Israel. Keturah (who became a wife to Abraham after Isaac married Rebekah) pictures the New Covenant and her children, from when she was a concubine, picture the world of mankind.

During the present Gospel Age, those who accept Christ as their Saviour and willingly, and fully, offer up themselves in full consecration to God, are under the Sarah Covenant. If faithful unto death, those under the Sarah Covenant will receive a heavenly reward and will be joint-heirs with Christ to bless the world of mankind. After the marriage of the Lamb (Christ) and his Bride (the Church class) is complete, then those upon the earth (Israel and all mankind), as well as all those asleep in death in the grave will all be raised from the dead and will receive “gifts,” kingdom blessings.

MN

Our hope of resurrection and life everlasting is based, not on a philosophic guess about immortality, but an historic fact.

Halley’s Bible Handbook

HOLD THOU MY HAND!—A HYMN

*HOLD Thou my hand! so weak I am, and helpless,
I dare not take one step without Thine aid;
Hold Thou my hand! for then, O loving Saviour,
No dread of ill shall make my soul afraid.*

*Hold Thou my hand! and closer, closer draw me
To Thy dear self—my hope, my joy, my all;
Hold Thou my hand, lest hap'ly I should wander;
And, missing Thee, my trembling feet should fall.*

*Hold Thou my hand! the way is dark before me
Without the sunlight of Thy face divine;
But when by faith I catch its radiant glory,
What heights of joy, what rapt'rous songs are mine!*

*Hold Thou my hand! that when I reach the margin
Of that lone river Thou didst cross for me,
A heavenly light may flash along its waters,
And ev'ry wave like crystal bright shall be.*

*A Hymn, Grace J. Frances
aka Fanny Crosby*

These are the words of Fanny Crosby (1820-1915) who wrote under many “nom de plumes” and was a prolific writer. The remarkable thing about her in light of the above hymn was that at six weeks old she became blind in unfortunate circumstances. For her education she was sent to a blind institute in New York state where eventually she went on to teach for over ten years. But her first work was published as a girl in 1831 and she had a volume of her work published as a young woman. After marrying a blind man in 1858 she went on to write her first hymn in 1864. According to www.hymnary.org “60 have come into common use in Great Britain” such as “All the way my Saviour leads me” and “To God be the glory”.

Here are some scriptures which are thought to have inspired her:
 Isaiah 42:6 I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles.

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

Psalm 37:23-26 The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand. I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed.

1 Thessalonians 2:19 (RSV) For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you?

2 Corinthians 5:7 For we walk by faith, not by sight.

Mark 8:22-25 (RSV) They came to Beth-sa'ida. And some people brought to him a blind man, and begged him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the village; and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands upon him, he asked him, "Do you see anything?" And he looked up and said, "I see men; but they look like trees, walking." Then again he laid his hands upon his eyes; and he looked intently and was restored, and saw everything clearly.

Psalm 17:15 As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

TO KNOW ALL IS TO FORGIVE ALL

If I knew you and you knew me—
 If both of us could clearly see,
 And with an inner sight divine
 The meaning of your heart and mine,
 I'm sure that we would differ less
 And clasp our hands in friendliness;
 Our thoughts would pleasantly agree
 If I knew you, and you knew me.

If I knew you and you knew me,
 As each one knows his own self, we
 Could look each other in the face
 And see therein a truer grace.
 Life has so many hidden woes,
 So many thorns for every rose;
 The "why" of things our hearts would see,
 If I knew you and you knew me.

Poems of the Way

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