

BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

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*They that wait upon the LORD shall renew
their strength; they shall mount up with
wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be
weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*

Isaiah 40:31



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BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

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

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

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THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

"They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles." (Isa. 40:31)

Eagles have caught the imagination of many people over the years. They soar almost effortlessly high in the sky for long periods and to humans that rely on airplanes to fly, do something we can only imagine. The lyrics of Abba's song 'Eagle' bear this out.

*And I dream I'm an eagle
And I dream I can spread my wings
Flying high, high, I'm a bird in the sky
I'm an eagle that rides on the breeze
High, high, what a feeling to fly
Over mountains and forests and seas
And to go anywhere that I please*

The eagle is the supreme animal of the air like the lion is the king of the land animals. It is the top of the food chain in the air. They are powerful, fast, large, with amazing eyesight and prey upon other animals in order to eat and feed their young, nurturing one or two young each season.

In the U.K. the golden eagle is our largest bird of prey with the wingspan of 7 feet and weighing about 5kg, although such eagles are extremely rare except in Scotland. The largest bird of prey most Britons are ever likely to see is the buzzard with a wingspan of 4 feet. Eagles are wonderful creatures as they are described in Prov. 30:18-19.

Speedy is an adjective we can apply to an eagle. It is in this sense the Old Testament uses eagles to describe a foe. (Jer. 4:13; Lam. 4:19; Deut. 28:49) They come so quickly and stealthily that they surprise their prey like a lamb or rabbit in a blitzkrieg.

The eagle is powerful. It can catch and take away animals much heavier than itself with the powerful muscles that move their long and broad wings. World empires such as Babylon and Rome are described as such. (Ezek. 17:3-7; Deut. 28:49-52) Rome used the eagle as their standard for each Roman legion as they did at the siege of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Even in modern times Germany and the U.S.A. have used it as a national symbol to denote national pride and confidence.

Habakkuk uses the eagle to describe the strong enemy that has to be overcome in the final battle at the consummation of this age which only divine intervention will be able to defeat. In a similar way Obadiah compares the eagle to Edom and indeed Satan in its desire to have the power that they have no right to aspire to. (Hab. 1:8; Obad. 1:4)

Eagles and other birds of prey have great and powerful vision much greater than humans. They can point a rabbit two miles away to which they can quickly speed. Jesus uses this picture language in Matt. 24:28 and Luke 17:37. In this case it is more likely to be vultures who prey on carrion. Here in Britain red kites consume mainly dead animals like roadkill. They need to use their vision in order to feed themselves. They are watching and are drawn to a carcass to feed together like Christians are drawn together to feed on spiritual food. Isaiah uses this idea to convey the thought of strength given to those who wait on God being strengthened by the Gospel and given the vision to perceive things hidden from those without such sight.

Despite their power and strength they nurture one or two eaglets every year. They use their large wings to protect their offspring from the rain and cold in the early weeks of their lives. Moses uses language to describe God's care for Israel even if there is no record that any eagle has ever borne her young up on her wings. (Exod. 19:4) Such is the care given to the household of faith now.

THE WAY OF AN EAGLE IN THE AIR

“There be three things which are too wonderful for me, yea, four which I know not: the way of an eagle in the air, the way of a serpent upon a rock; the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; and the way of a man with a maid.” (Prov. 30:18-19)

This is one of the wise sayings of Agur the son of Jakeh. We know nothing else of Agur; he is not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible; but there is some ground for thinking that he lived in the Arab lands at some time between Abraham and the Exodus, his words being preserved in Israel and added to the Book of Proverbs when King Solomon compiled that book.

What a strange little statement it is! Four everyday sights in the world, two connected with the lower creation, one in the air and one on the earth; two connected with man, one in the sea and one on the land. Four everyday sights, common enough, so common as probably not to excite any remark at all on the part of ninety-nine out of a hundred witnesses—but Agur the son of Jakeh was the hundredth, a serious, reflective man, and as he watched, he confessed that in each of these four sights there resided a mystery, a something that went beyond his understanding, a something that stirred his emotions to their depths and left him with a feeling of quiet awe.

The eagle, winging its swift flight through the higher levels of the air, building its nest on high in the inaccessible crags of the highest rocks, swooping down upon the prey its keen sight had espied from far, cleansing the earth from the defiling presence of dead carcasses: Agur gazed upon the spectacle with wonder. The serpent, slithering out from its den to sun itself upon the warm rock, its brilliantly coloured scaly skin scintillating and glistening in the sunlight as it twisted and darted after its prey: Agur must have stood enthralled as he watched it shed that skin and emerge clothed in an even more brilliant and showy one. He beheld the birds and small animals stand petrified with fear, held spellbound by the serpent’s malignant eyes, until it advanced upon them to their doom. The serpent, perhaps mused Agur, brings death to the earth—but the eagle cleanses death from the earth!

Then he lifted up his eyes, and away on the heaving billows of the great sea beheld a vessel, making its way with difficulty and labour through the mounting waves that threatened to submerge it. *“The way of a ship in the*

midst of the sea” indicates that he had in mind a boat caught in a storm, tossing and straining in the trough of the waves, helpless in the grip of the elements. However could it get safe to land, Agur must have wondered; yet in the fulness of time the storm would abate and the crew arrive safely home with their cargo. “*He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.*” (Psa. 107:29-30) And in coming to the fourth subject of wonder there is no need to think other than that Agur conned over what Paul himself called a great mystery, the love of a man for the woman who is to be his wife. Perhaps the son of Jakeh caught some echo of those far-off days when the Lord God brought the woman unto the man, and she became his wife. (Gen. 2:22) In the impulse which drives a man to seek and win the woman of his choice Agur found mystery beyond his ability to solve.

But why are these homely allusions in the text of Scripture? What is there here of instruction or furnishing unto good works for the Christian? Agur may have spoken and written down these words in all sincerity and others may have recorded and preserved them to later generations, but why should they have been taken hold of by the Holy Spirit and granted that immortality which is the lot of every word “written in the Book”? In short, what is there here for us?

We may take it that Agur ben Jakeh had no idea of any deep significance in his words. He spoke as he felt and said exactly what he meant. He intended the application of no other than a strictly literal meaning to his sayings. But the fact that the Holy Spirit enshrined these words in a setting which presents them for the consideration of every succeeding generation of truth-seekers does indicate that some deeper purpose is in fact intended to be served.

A great deal of Bible teaching is pictorial imagery. Everyday scenes and incidents are described, not for the merit or interest of the particular scene or incident itself, but because in the description of the scene or the relating of the incident parallel thoughts of spiritual things are suggested, and the mind is led to be exercised in the “things of the Spirit”. An analogy between the natural illustration and some important spiritual truth is discernible, and although the illustration is at best but an illustration, it has served a valuable purpose in turning the mind more definitely and habitually to spiritual truths in which that mind has already been instructed, and familiarises it with the “things of the Spirit”. The discerning of a likeness between the natural things of this world and what

may be termed their spiritual counterparts brings more reality into our spiritual understanding and accustoms us to look at all things in life from the standpoint of the Spirit rather than the standpoint of the world.

The four “mysteries” of Agur ben Jakeh may be taken as illustrative of the four great mysteries in the Plan of Salvation—the power of Evil, the Redemption from evil, the call of the Church, and the hope for the World. And even if such an application be held to be no more than the use of the text to provide an illustration—well, it is by illustrations often that the deepest of truths are conveyed to our immature minds.

“The way of an eagle in the air.” That downward swoop of the swift-pinioned bird to the earth reminds one of the well-known hymn *“He saw men plunged in deep distress, and flew to their relief.”* The eagle makes its nest in the highest parts of the mountains from whence it can survey the world around. Wisdom, says the 8th chapter of Proverbs, stands at the head of the ways, the chief of the high places of the earth. (Prov. 8:1-2) The personified “Wisdom” of Prov. 8 is thought to describe the Son of God, our Redeemer, prior to his coming to earth for our salvation. From that high place He surveyed the world, seeing death and corruption, and came down to the world to abolish death and cleanse the earth from the defiling influence of sin. The ‘eagles’ of the Bible were in reality great blessings to the land, for they disposed of animal carcasses which otherwise would quickly putrefy in that tropical heat and pollute the land, spreading disease and further death. It is from this standpoint that we must use the illustration. Our Lord, coming to those who were dead in trespasses and sins, *“as the way of an eagle in the air”* descends to earth, takes to himself the burden of death and sin, and leaves the earth clean and free from defilement, corruption and death. *“O death...I will be thy destruction.”* (Hos. 13:14) He transmutes death and decay into life and immortality. Surely to us, as to Agur ben Jakeh, this “way of an eagle in the air” is too wonderful for our human understanding. *“As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the LORD alone did lead him.”* (Deut. 32:11-12) The protecting power of God the Father is shown in this picture of the eagle and its care for its young.

“The way of a serpent upon a rock.” From the very commencement of the sacred history the serpent has been the symbol of Satan and of sin. The seed of the woman is one day to bruise the serpent’s head and righteousness will then be supreme for ever, but in the meantime evil reigns, and that fact is a great mystery not only to the natural man who knows not the

things of the Spirit of God, but also in large measure to those to whom have been revealed much of the Divine counsels and the Divine Plan. The way of evil through world history is like the way of a serpent upon a rock, tortuous and sinuous, a stealthiness of progress, first in this direction and then in that, seeking out opportunities for entrance into the good and pure and holy, that it might befoul with its corrupting influence. “*Your adversary the devil...walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.*” (1 Pet. 5:8) From “*whence comest thou?*” asks the Most High of the Adversary in the story of Job. “*From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it*” answers the Adversary glibly. (Job 1:7) That has ever been the way of Satan, like the way of a serpent upon a rock; and why such a thing has been permitted for so long has been a matter of wonder to men just as the natural case was to Agur ben Jakeh. But evil and the Spirit of evil is earthbound, as is the serpent. Jesus saw Satan fall as lightning from heaven and although he appears to men as an angel of light it is but an earthbound glory; it reflects no radiance to heaven. The serpent cannot follow the eagle into the air; it must forever twist and writhe upon the rock, its sinister beauty dazzling to mortal sight but having nothing in common with the graceful denizens (dwellers) of the air. It emerges from its hole; it suns itself upon the rock and fascinates by its fatal beauty even while it repels; it hypnotises its victims by its baleful stare and strikes death to them before ever they are aware; but its latter end is that it perishes in the dust and is no more. In the new earth which is to be, the nobler animals are to live in peace and concord one with another, but “*dust shall be the serpent’s meat*” (Isa. 65:25)—a metaphorical allusion to everlasting death—for “*they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain*”. (Isa. 11:9)

“*The way of a ship in the heart of the sea.*” (YLT) The ancient peoples looked upon a sea voyage as a hazardous undertaking—as indeed it usually was in those far-off days. The frail ship, with its load of human lives, so utterly at the mercy of the elements, so dependent upon the saving power of God when storm or other danger threatened, very easily became to them a symbol of the uncertainty and difficulty of human life. That symbol is a more than usually apt one. The world of mankind, pursuing its normal course, very generally heedless of God whilst times are calm, becomes transformed into a frightened world when danger and disaster threatens, as it does today. And like the mariners in Jonah’s ship, men then begin to call upon God for salvation. But, through calm and storm, through fair weather and foul weather, alternating between unbelief and faith, indifference and supplication, the world of man, like a ship in the heart of the sea, goes on its way, forging onward to an unknown land,

in imminent danger from the towering waves and yet after each burst of the element's fury is seen to be still afloat, battered and shaken perhaps, but still limping on its way toward the unseen land of promise. That was the wonder to Agur ben Jakeh, that the ship survived at all, that it could still be seen in the far distance until at length, the conflicts and tumults over, it was lost in the calm glory of the far horizon. A fitting symbol, surely, of the way of mankind during this time of sin and death! Not because of their own righteousness, but because of his great mercies, does God save them and bring them at the end into his "afterward of peace". Zechariah, his spiritual vision quickened to perceive the details of that final ending to the ship's voyage, said "*at evening time it shall be light.*" (Zech. 14:7) The way of the ship in the sea, with all the vicissitudes it experiences, is a great wonder, but it ends in the light of the far horizon, the light of the "*land of far distances*". (Isa. 33:17 marg.)

"The way of a man with a maid." There are several words for "man" in the Old Testament, each having its especial significance. There is adam, and "ish", man as an individual, an ordinary being; "enosh", man as a mortal, dying creature; "ben", man as related to his surroundings (as "a man of the city") but in this passage the word is the supreme one of them all, "geber", a "mighty man", a man indeed, a man head and shoulders above his fellows. That takes us at once to the glorious description in the Song of Solomon (5:10,16). "*My beloved is...the chiefest among ten thousand...he is (the one) altogether lovely.*" The last and greatest mystery of the four wonders must surely be the mystery of Christ and his Church. "*Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him.*" (Psa. 45:10-11) That is the "way of a man with a maid", the coming of the Lord from heaven to seek and win his Bride, that He might take her away and present her faultless before the presence of his Father with exceeding joy. We have heard that call and responded to it; we trust that we are of those who "*follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth*" (Rev. 14:4); we talk together, as did Paul to the Ephesians, of the love of Christ for his Church, but, like Agur ben Jakeh of old, we still stand in wonderment before this great mystery. We look forward to the "*marriage of the Lamb*" when the Bride has been made ready; we hear in anticipation the words that are one day to be uttered by the Bride to all the world, "*Come...take (of the fountain of) the water of life freely*" (Rev. 22:17) but still we do not approach to the depths of understanding that must one day be ours when, in the splendour of that marriage feast, and in the overwhelming glory of the Father's presence we look back upon the long story of sin and

redemption and perceive the evidences of Divine love and wisdom in every step of the way. Then, perhaps as never before, we shall understand why, long ages ago, a man of God was inspired to look upon the world he knew and speak of four things too wonderful for him to understand: *the way of an eagle in the air; the way of a serpent upon a rock; the way of a ship in the midst of the sea, and the way of a man with a maid!*

AOH

*Father, grace for grace outpouring,
show me ever greater things;
Raise me higher sunward soaring,
mounting as on eagle's wings.
By the brightness of Thy face,
Father let me grow in grace.
Father, grace for grace out-pouring,
show me ever greater things.*

Frances R. Havergal



*None other could with Him compare
Among the sons of men;
He's fairer, too, than all the fair
Who fill the heavenly train.*

*He saw us in our deep distress,
And flew to our relief;
For us he bore the shameful cross,
And carried all our grief.*

Samuel Stennett

JOHN THE BAPTIST

2. Elijah has already come!

Jesus once asked the crowds *“What did you go out into the wilderness to behold? A reed shaken by the wind?...A man clothed in soft clothing?”* (Luke 7:24,25 RSV) This makes it clear that ordinary people went further than the river Jordan to find John. Was a crowd really attracted by this recluse who so far had shunned the company of men and women? What did they want with him? Some modern critics have suggested that John was a “long haired way-out type” who attracted the dissidents and frustrated members of society. The Gospel records that those who went to John were quite ordinary, law-abiding citizens who needed some practical ways of expressing their faith. John however, lived in the tradition of many of the prophets, who had to be tough enough in body and mind to withstand the trends of society in their own day. His message was perhaps even more alarming to ordinary folk than that proclaimed by his great forebears. He was less like the sedate prophets such as Elisha and Isaiah and was hewn in the same form as Elijah.

The Old Testament closes with the prophet Malachi’s message from God *“I (will) send my messenger to prepare the way before me”* (3:1 RSV). This same man also declared on God’s behalf *“I will send you Eli’jah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse.”* (4:5,6 RSV) Then followed the four hundred years silence until John came. Jesus was quite definite about the fulfilment of this prophecy on two occasions. The first was when John sent his disciples to Jesus with the question *“Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?”* (Luke 7:20 RSV) The second occasion was when Jesus descended the mountain from the Transfiguration with three disciples. They were evidently still pondering the vision of Jesus with Moses and Elijah and asked why *“the scribes say that Elijah must first come”?*

The question then arises as to how John the Baptist was like Elijah? How could they be expected to identify the one who was to turn the hearts of fathers and children to each other? What did the prophecy in Malachi mean? Perhaps the words of the angel recorded in Luke 1:17 gives us a clue. *“He will go before him in the spirit and power of Eli’jah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”*(RSV) It may be that the work of the “second Elijah” is one of reconciliation among families and tribes. However, “fathers” often refers to the patriarchs. The

generation into which Messiah was coming was an evil and rebellious one. The messenger's task was to create a condition of repentance, that reconciliation was to be achieved between First century Jews and the memory of the upright patriarchs. Whatever the meaning of this obscure passage, John was to preach the message "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand". He was a moral catalyst demanding a change in behaviour.

The emphasis was upon "the spirit and power of Elijah". It is fascinating that no two Biblical characters are more alike than John the Baptist and Elijah. They were both lonely men who depended on Nature for their needs. They entered the social world of their contemporaries only when they had a message to deliver from God. They both felt impelled to issue stern warnings to the royalty of their day. Both brought the people of Israel to a moment of crisis when they could choose the way of God or the way of the Devil. In spite of their great spiritual strength, both men knew feelings of despair and failure. For those in John's day who really knew the spirit of the 8th century prophet, the Baptist was a sign of the imminent coming of Messiah. The religious leaders of the First century failed completely to recognise the situation. John's message to Israel was uncompromising. He told the people of Israel that they must prepare for judgment and that they could only avoid the wrath of God by true heart repentance. Through the voice of the prophets God had long demanded a high standard of moral behaviour and spiritual awareness in their worship. John spoke of the separation of wheat and chaff; his point was further emphasised as he spoke of the axe being laid to the root of the tree. God's people as a nation were at risk because of their way of life.

John's spiritual message was supported by the kind of advice which he gave to the people who came to him. Quickly he saw through the hypocrisy of the religious leaders who came out to see him. He called them a brood of vipers, men who had only venom for those with whom they spoke. For centuries Israel had been given the commission to tell God's message to pagan nations; they thought of themselves as being indispensable to God, but John made it clear that this was not so. His answers to ordinary people were not altogether the type that might have been expected. He did not tell the tax collectors to give up their job as well paid civil servants of the Roman Empire. Many of these men were regarded by fellow Jews as traitors. He told them to be honest in their collections. He did not tell the soldiers to leave the army or Temple police force. He warned them not to be violent nor blackmail the religious authorities into giving them more pay. He told all who would hear to be

fruitful in their lives, by sharing what they had with the poor and needy; this had been the recurring theme from Moses to Malachi. Few of God's rules had been broken more than this disregard for those in need.

These ethical principles were not new. John was not stirring up political conflict or making religious division; he was calling Israel back to the faith of their fathers. The one thing that was new was the great proclamation "*The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*". When John had been born people were in expectation of God's intervention in the life of his people; later they had flocked to the desert to hear him. The early disciples of Jesus had travelled from Galilee to hear John; others must have done the same. There was spiritual hunger in Israel. There was recognition of a need for guidance, which the national leaders had failed to give. Their interpretation of Scripture was literal, laying heavy emphasis upon ritual and legalism; in so doing they had missed the spirit of true piety.

Compassion and not sacrifice had been the cry of the prophets; circumcision of the heart, they had warned, was the important sign of their religious life. At the base of national life was the social unit of the family; in John's day family life had reached an all-time low ebb. The rules of divorce, permitted by Moses, had been abused beyond recognition; as a result, women were no longer interested in getting married and starting families. This was brought about not by the dregs of society but by religious men. So John turned on the highest family in the land, son of Herod the Great, and accused him of stealing his brother's wife. It cost the prophet his freedom and eventually his life. But not before he did one last great act in the Jordan.

When John had gone from the scene and Jesus was making his last appeal to Israel in Jerusalem, the priests and lawyers challenged him about his authority for what he was doing. (Luke 20:1-8) Jesus countered them with a remarkable question. He asked them about John the Baptist's authority. If they had answered Jesus' question, they could have answered their own. It is equally clear that the ordinary people believed that John was God's prophet.

(To be concluded)
AOH

He will cover you with His wings. And under His wings you will be safe. He is faithful like a safe-covering and a strong wall. (Psalm 91:4 NLV)

SANCTIFICATION

Part 1

“They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.” (John 17:16-20)

Many Christians appear to think that sanctification is an act which must be performed, once and for all like consecration at the time one gives one's heart to the Lord, having arrived at an appreciation of God's workings and desires. Sanctification like consecration, however, is a continuous and progressive work, difficult to maintain and requiring every effort if one would be an overcomer indeed. How important then to be mindful of the fact that it is a continuous, progressive work. Jesus did not say I have sanctified myself as though it were in the past, rather that “I sanctify myself,” showing He was ever mindful of the matter.

Jesus Christ's suffering in prophecy

Before passing on to a consideration of our subject in detail, what condition was it that led up to that utterance of Jesus as recorded by John? The Jews did not understand the coming of the Messiah from God's viewpoint at all, although his word provided them with every evidence concerning that great event. They only had time and thought for their own viewpoint on the matter. Their view was that whoever should be their Messiah would give them freedom from their oppressors and power over the nations of the earth.

Yet all their prophecies and holy writ spoke to them to the contrary. In Isaiah 53 we see from the following verses, which Jesus applied to Himself, how He knew the suffering which was required of Him: *“He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”* (vv. 3-5) And so much more, so clearly stated in that prophecy.

Jesus in all this rightly divided the Word of Truth. Thus He appreciated that Isaiah 53 referred to His walk of humiliation here below at that first

coming. Knowing how well Psalm 16:10 applied to Him: *“For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption”*; He spoke of His resurrection. Many and definite are the prophecies concerning our Lord’s first advent. And He knew by His utterances that Isaiah 35 referred to the Millennial Age to come.

To Do His Father’s will

Coming to Earth, Jesus said: *“I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me”* (John 5:30) and again: *“for I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.”* (John 6:38) And the doing of His Father’s will brought Him, as it brings every true follower of His, into conflict with the world and the religious representatives of the day. Jesus sanctified Himself to His Father from Jordan to Calvary. He completely did His Father’s will; He pushed against the forces of evil in the world and reprovved them.

Jesus’ words on His suffering and sanctification

Of His suffering and death, He said: *“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son...”* (John 3.14-16) As well as those words of Luke 22:15: *“With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer”* showing how real and intense a thing, this suffering was to Jesus. He felt for them, as He feels for us, as He desires more and more that we should so do as He did, sanctify ourselves to His Father’s will. *“For their sakes I sanctify myself.”* And whilst His reference to suffering in Luke 22:15 which has just been quoted refers to His final sacrifice, one understands full well that His whole life was a life of suffering.

Our sanctification

It becomes clear as we consider the pattern of Jesus’ life that unless we are sanctified ourselves, we could not suffer as He did, for righteousness’ sake. The world suffers terribly in so many instances, but in sin and ignorance and generally in perplexity or meaningless experiences.

Our Lord’s words whilst showing how fully He was acquainted with the fact that His followers would suffer, show also this need for sanctification. *“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”* (Matt. 5:10) *“Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?”* (Matt. 20:22) *“They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think*

that he doeth God service.” (John 16:2) “And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.” (Matt. 10:22)

So it can surely be seen in all this, the need for sanctification, the setting of ourselves apart, making ourselves holy, vessels clean and fit for the Lord’s service. However, by acting foolishly Christians can bring persecution upon themselves, which of course is not a sweet savour to our Father and has nothing to do with suffering for righteousness’ sake.

In the world not of it

Thus the issue is clear, and the incumbency is upon every one who is pleased to consider they are members of the little flock to see to it that whilst they are in the world, they are not of it. Therein lies the force of our Lord’s words in John 17:16-17 *“They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”*

Types-pictures-patterns-allegories

The types then which God prepared and provided for their instruction were lost and wasted upon the Jews. Let them not be wasted now. In Leviticus 8 there is a picture most intense in its 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. They were dependent upon God through the other tribes for sustenance. That is clear from Num. 18:20 and Deut. 10:9 and other places where *“the LORD spake unto Aaron, ‘Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel.’”*; *“Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren; the LORD is his inheritance, according as the LORD thy God promised him.”*

Our Lord is the great anti-typical High Priest and His true followers are the under Priests. Reverting to the picture in Lev. 8, it shows that Aaron and his sons were to abide in the Tabernacle for seven days for their consecration and surely that is a picture of the complete life of sanctification to God. A picture of complete overcoming, abiding under the shadow of the Almighty. It is not a picture of idleness or complacency or being shut away from the world.

Our possessions in His service

Those who are striving to be in this latter category, as under priests, need to see to it that they never boast of earthly possessions. Far better that we realise our dependence on God day in and day out, and year in and year out. And if indeed He sees fit to bless any with earthly possessions, possessions honestly come by, and on which our Father can look with pleasure, it is strictly incumbent on each one that such possessions be first and foremost used in His service, and, in the service of the Lord's true followers.

Acceptance

We can accept that position as under priests or reject it, but it is one of the first requirements of any who would be sanctified unto the Lord. This is really a most important point and unless we are in earnest regarding the principle involved, irrespective of whether we have possessions or not, we never sanctify ourselves at all, that is we never do our part towards it.

Each child of God desirous of so drawing close to Him, entirely and forever sanctified to Him, will be fully aware of their acceptance by God. He leaves no doubt in the minds of any of His Children. The operation of the holy spirit within will fully testify to the acceptance by God of any individual.

Light bearing

Regarding Jesus the great High Priest, the Word tells us: *"the common people heard him gladly."* (Mark 12:37) Then to the followers He said: *"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."* (Matt. 5:14-16) Such is the position of those who truly sanctify themselves and are sanctified to God.

Next time—Pt. 2 Sanctification in the pictures, patterns, allegories and types in scripture
NDC

Galatians 4:22-26 (RSV) For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave and one by a free woman. But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, the son of the free woman through promise. Now this is an **allegory**: these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar. Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother.

ZECHARIAH, PROPHET OF THE RESTORATION

15. Jerusalem Exalted

Following Israel's dramatic deliverance at Jerusalem, marked by the revelation of the Lord from Heaven and his assumption of kingly power, there is a kind of orderly procession of related events which have the effect of leading the whole world into the light and life of the Millennial Kingdom. Here in Zechariah's 14th chapter there is a short passage, verses 6-11, which has its place between the great deliverance and the full establishment of the Messianic reign over all the earth. Only after relating, in symbol, the nature of those happenings does the prophet bring his book to a close in the glories of the Kingdom itself. As with the previous part of the chapter, the physical setting of the prophecy is the literal city and its surroundings, and in fact these verses are closely connected with the earlier description of the besieged city, the advent of Israel's deliverer, and the earthquake.

So, after completing his account of the Lord's coming, with all his holy ones, the defeat of the besiegers and the salvation of the city, Zechariah says (vv. 6-7) "*And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: but it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light.*" Not a very lucid passage, but that is because some of the words have proved difficult to translate correctly, and even today scholars are dubious as to their meaning. It is evident that the verses refer to the entire "Day of the LORD" of chapter 14 so that this darkness followed by light at the end becomes a familiar picture. As Joel says in reference to this same period "*the sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining*" (Joel 3:15) and Amos "*the day of the LORD (will) be darkness, and not light; even very dark, and no brightness in it*" (Amos 5:20). The "one day known to the Lord" of verse 7 is an emphatic expression indicating that this day is a unique day, no other day is just like it; which is just what Jeremiah says in the same connection: "*Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.*" (Jer. 30:7) Very fittingly, therefore, do these two verses stand where they do. All that goes before them is the time of darkness, of battle and tumult and the overpowering of evil forces. That which comes after them is of the new day of light, of healing and rejoicing, of life and righteousness. In a very real sense the next verse, verse 7, can be said to picture the beginning of true Millennial blessing.

This verse is quite evidently relative to the coming of new life to the world. The King is now in control and the powers of his Kingdom begin to become evident. *“It shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.”* (v.8) The “former sea” (the sea in front) in Zechariah’s geography is the Dead Sea, east of Jerusalem. The “hinder sea” (behind) is the Mediterranean, on the west. “Living waters” are perennial streams, not flowing in the rainy season only, like so many rivers of the land, but there all the time, “in summer and in winter” so that they become truly rivers of life to the people. In symbol, therefore, rivers of life are to spring up in Jerusalem, one flowing eastward into the Dead Sea and the other westward to the Mediterranean. Zechariah is not the only prophet to take this theme. Joel, in the passage already quoted, follows the deliverance of Jerusalem by saying *“a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim.”* (Joel 3:18) The valley of Shittim (acacias) was the name of the region where the Jordan enters the Dead Sea (as indicated by Micah 6:5 and Num. 25:1) so that this river seen by Joel corresponds in symbol to the eastern stream seen by Zechariah. Ezekiel likewise saw a river proceeding from the restored Temple and going down into that same valley and so into the Dead Sea *“which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed.”* (Ezek. 47:1-12*) And, of course the vision of John in Rev. 22:1-2 comes readily to mind, the seer beholding a river of water of life proceeding from the Holy City, with trees of life on its banks, yielding fruit for food and leaves for “the healing of the nations.” Quite evidently, therefore, we have here a vivid picture of the place of the restored and now victorious Holy Land and Holy Nation in the purposes of God, the agency by means of which all the Divine blessings, cleansing from sin and impartation of everlasting life, may come to the nations. Ezekiel and Joel saw this in terms of the cleansing of the land; the Dead Sea was to be made sweet that fish might live in its waters and vegetation surround its shores: but Zechariah was universal. He saw a second river of life making its way in the opposite direction to mingle its waters with the Great Sea which encompassed all the earth, so that eventually the whole world of mankind would draw benefit from its life-giving waters. In no more eloquent fashion could the universal power of Messiah’s Kingdom, bringing life and health and freedom from sin to men in every place under the sun, be pictured than by this vision of the two rivers.

It is not generally realised that two such streams do actually at present exist although they are not perennial; they flow only in the winter. The

*Kidron, mentioned often in the Scriptures, rises on the north side of the city and flows alongside the eastern wall of the Temple, past the Pool of Siloam and in a south-easterly direction to the Dead Sea. There is the prototype of Zechariah's stream flowing into the "former sea". Then on the western side of the city, not far from the present railway station, there commences the Wady al Werd, a stream which flows westward, more or less following the railway, joining other streams en route until at last it falls into the Mediterranean, seven miles south of Tel Aviv, as the Wady **Sorek. This is the stream which gave the prophet his figure for that one which flows to the "hinder sea". In other words, he took as his picture two existing streams and made of them a symbolic scene—twin rivers of life carrying life-giving energy and powers of healing to all the world in the day when God turns "*to the people a pure language*", that they may call upon him "*to serve him with one consent.*" (Zeph. 3:9)

There are some expositors who amplify the content of verse 8 regarding the two rivers to infer that there is to be a continuous waterway from the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea via Jerusalem, and onward through the south valley to the Red Sea, so that Jerusalem becomes a seaport controlling world trade between Europe and the Far East. Why the Holy City should thus become involved with mundane world affairs does not readily appear and the connection of all this with God's intention to make Jerusalem the earthly centre of Divine administration is far from obvious. In point of fact the idea is, physically, impracticable. Jerusalem stands more than two thousand feet above sea level, and no city at that elevation could ever be a seaport. The Jordan valley up to the Sea of Galilee is well below sea level so that such a waterway, if it ever came into being, would also flood an appreciable area of the Holy Land. This element of the prophecy is clearly a picture of two separate streams, each having its source in or near the City, flowing outward in opposite directions.

What wonder, then, that the Prophet should break out into the fervent declamation (speech) of verse 9 "*And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one*". He might well have had in mind the noble words of Psa. 46:(6,10-11) "*the heathen (nations) raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. 'Be still...I will be exalted among the heathen (nations): I will be exalted in the earth'. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.*" Zechariah in his vision beheld the reality of which these words were a poetic portrayal. Now the Lord had taken his great power and was reigning as King.

(Editor's comment) *Nahal Qidron

**Nahal Sorek (soreq), in Arabic Wasi es-Sarar

Once more the prophet turns his gaze upon the whole land of Israel, viewing it in his mind's eye much as Moses must have seen it from the top of Mount Pisgah, and he sees the final effect of the earthquake in the promised exaltation of the mountain of the Lord's house above the tops of the mountains. (Isa. 2:2) In this vision he saw the sinking of the highlands of Judea into the plain so that Jerusalem stood proudly erect upon the twin hills of Mount Moriah and Mount Zion in the centre. Physically, the heights of Hebron to the south and Samaria to the north tower anything up to a thousand feet above Jerusalem, so that the expression "*as the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the LORD is round about his people*" (Psa. 125:2) is no figure of speech, but based on reality. Now, symbolically, all the heights of the country sink down to leave the Holy City towering supreme above. "**All the land shall become encompassed as the Arabah*" (the plain of the Jordan valley) "*from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem, and she*" (Jerusalem) "*shall be raised on high, and inhabited in her place*". So is the opening phrase of verse 10. "Rimmon south of Jerusalem" was to the north of Beer-sheba, forty-five miles from Jerusalem, at the southern end of the Judean highlands; Geba—the name of several places in ancient Israel—a town seven miles north of Samaria, now called Jaba, at the northern end of the highlands where they begin to slope down into the valley of Megiddo, some forty miles north of Jerusalem. "*Geba to Beersheba*" is used in 2 Kings 23:8 as an expression indicating the full extent of the land; here in Zechariah it pictures the exaltation of Jerusalem in the Holy Land and in its extreme symbolic sense the prominence of the Holy Nation and the Holy Land in the sight of all the world, as the people and the city of the Great King. Both Isaiah and Micah spoke of Jerusalem being established in the tops of the mountains and exalted above the hills, using the same metaphor as did Zechariah, and in none of the three cases is anything other than the metaphorical meaning intended. Any suggestion that a literal fulfilment is implied would have to take into consideration the fearful havoc and destruction to which the restored and rebuilt Holy Land would be necessarily subjected if something like half its surface area were suddenly to be precipitated between two and three thousand feet downwards into the bowels of the earth.

But there is yet more to come in this cameo picture of Jerusalem's prosperity. The same verse goes on to say that she shall be "*inhabited*" (or abide) "*in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the King's winepresses*". (v.10) What is to be made of this bit of geography? The inference is that the city as thus defined has up to this

time lain desolate, or at least not in the possession of God's Israel, but that from now on she shall be permanently established and take her place as the ruling centre of the land, and, according to verse 11 never again be disturbed: *“men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.”*

There is a certain amount of uncertainty about the precise boundaries of Solomon's and Nehemiah's Jerusalem: the eastern walls were practically those of the “Old City” today, but the northern wall was not so far north as at present, running more or less level with the north side of the Temple area, whilst the southern wall extended more to the south, as far as the Pool of Siloam. Zechariah's description has to be understood in this context.

“Benjamin's Gate”—also known as the Gate of Ephraim—seems at that time to have been located at the western end of the north wall, not far from the present Jaffa Gate. Some distance east of this point there had been in earlier times a gate known as the “Old Gate” or “First Gate”, in Zechariah's time long since blocked up—he calls it “the place of the First Gate” indicating that it was no longer there. There were several points on the wall to which the name “Corner” was applied but the easterly direction implied by this verse seems to demand that the “Corner Gate” here was at the point Nehemiah calls the “Corner”—the eastern end of the wall where it turned south by the Temple area. Today that point is marked by St. Stephen's Gate. Hence the full width of the Old City as it was then, from west to east, was defined.

The Tower of Hananeel, one of the defensive structures on the wall, was about half-way along the north wall, where the Tower of Antonia, the Roman garrison, stood in Jesus' day, adjacent to the Temple. The “king's winepresses” were in the gardens of Ophel, then bounded by the south wall. Hence the full length of the city, north to south, was thus indicated.

In this phrase, therefore, Zechariah is saying that the entire city, west to east and north to south, would be the possession of Israel and never again be disturbed or threatened. There can be no doubt that this promise is to be literally as well as spiritually fulfilled. In the latter respect, it is synonymous with the enduring prosperity of the Holy Nation as the Divine instrument in the earth for world conversion. In the former, Jerusalem has already spread over a greater area than that defined by Zechariah but the promise remains; west to east, north to south, to the utmost extent of the Holy City.

There is a rather intriguing parallel to this passage in the writings of Jeremiah. His celebrated 31st chapter, which speaks of the final restoration in the Holy Land and the New Covenant which God will make with His people, concludes with a promise which, obscure on the surface, well repays examination. *“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the city shall be built unto the LORD from the tower of Hananeel to the gate of the corner. And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath. And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the brook of Kidron, unto the corner of the horse gate toward the east, shall be holy unto the LORD; it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever.”* (Jer. 31:38-40) Both prophets refer to much the same time in history; both take the city of Jerusalem as their stage; what is there in Jeremiah’s words which may add to what Zechariah has said?

“From the tower of Hananeel to the gate of the corner” obviously means the same as the similar expression in Zechariah; this is a promise of the rebuilding of the city, or the Temple, or both. Now Jeremiah departs from Zechariah. From this corner gate, which was at the north-eastern corner of the Temple area, the measuring line is to “go forth” (go straight forward, is the meaning) over the hill called Gareb, sweep round in a curve (the meaning of “compass”) to Goath, and then, including the valley of the dead and the fields of the river Kidron, come to the “corner of the horse gate toward the east”. This corner was the south-eastern corner of the Temple area. The area thus delineated by the measuring line would therefore apparently be the piece of land lying immediately to the east of the Temple—the Kidron valley and the Mount of Olives.

Gareb and Goath, as place names, appear nowhere else in the Bible and not one commentator or expositor, so far as can be ascertained, has done more than suggest they must have been places near Jerusalem. It has been necessary to embark upon a little original research therefore to find some meaning in this passage. The meaning of Ha-Gareb is the “Mount of the Lepers”, the word coming from a Hebrew root defining scabs or scurvy, and used for leprosy in Syriac. The only eminence on the east side of Jerusalem is the Mount of Olives, by which name it was known in the days of David, and again by Zechariah and later. But there is reason for thinking that in between these times it bore a more opprobrious (offensive) name. 2 Kings 23:13, relating to the time of Josiah, knows it as the “mount of corruption”. That at least could be fitting for a place which was the habitation of lepers. The same chapter reveals that Solomon had built, on the Mount of Olives, idolatrous sanctuaries, “high

places”, for Ashtoreth and Chemosh and Molech; Josiah pulled them down and defiled them “with the bones of men”. What more natural that in order to complete their desecration the mountain should at that time, or soon afterwards become a place to which lepers were banished and lived their lives, and so earn the name it bore in the days of Jeremiah?

So the line went out from the north side of the Temple over the Mount of Olives, and curved round to Goath. Another difficult word! It comes from the Hebrew term for the lowing of cattle—cows and oxen. “The place of lowing” would be its literal force. How to find where such a place was located in that day? 2 Kings 23:13 helps again here; the narrator says that the high places of Ashtaroah and the rest stood on the “right side” of the Mount of Corruption, i.e. on its southern aspect. Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians, was usually represented as a cow. The measuring line, curving round Olivet to “Goath”, would come to the place where Solomon built the idol sanctuary. The sanctuary itself was destroyed by Josiah; the place where it stood was still known in Jeremiah’s day, perchance, as the “place of lowing”—Goath. From there a straight line back to the Temple would bring in the countryside leading down to the river Kidron, include the valley running along the east wall of the Temple, used then as it has been ever since as a general cemetery for Jerusalem’s dead and also for the disposal of the ashes from the Temple sacrifices, and finish at the Temple south wall, exactly as described in Jer. 31:40.

What then is the purpose of this geographical exercise? It evidently meant something very real to Jeremiah; can it mean as much to us?

As an addition and a sequel to Zechariah’s vision of the restored city it is full of meaning. Zechariah saw the Lord descend on the Mount of Olives and, as it were, advance upon the city from the great valley that had been created and enter the Temple, never more to depart. The valley itself was closed up, just as in Ezekiel’s parallel vision the East Gate was closed up, because the Lord had entered that way and never again could it be used by others. For all time that way is sacred. Now Jeremiah, seeing the city restored and knowing the Lord has come in, sees the whole tract of land thus hallowed by the Lord’s coming, that whole Mount of Olives, cleansed from its past defilements, measured and marked out and separated from secular uses that it might be, as he says in chapter 31:40 “holy unto the LORD”. When one considers the stirring events in our Lord’s earthly life associated with the Mount of Olives, few would dispute that it could very properly be made a holy place in the new earth that is to be. The spiritual meaning is the more important; the coming of

the Lord has sanctified for ever all that formerly was evil and unclean but now is cleansed and good, but a strictly literal fulfilment of this particular vision would also be entirely proper. Perhaps, one day, when the peoples of earth come up to Jerusalem to worship and go to see the place from which the Lord of all creation ascended to his Father, they will meet, in spirit if not in letter, with the injunction take “off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.” (Exod. 3:5)

(To be concluded)

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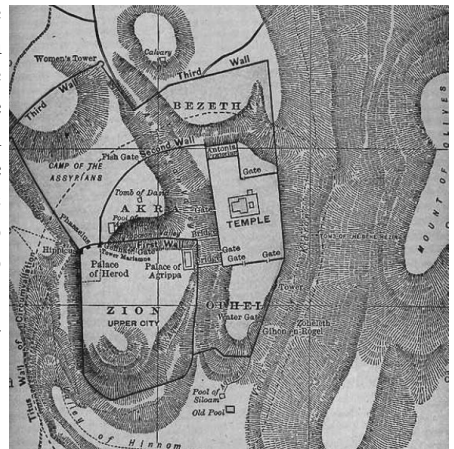


GATES

In Israelite cities, as in their Canaanite counterparts, the gate, beyond its defensive function, also served as an important centre of public life. The gates were suspended on posts, and closed by bars and locks (Judges 16:3; Neh. 3:14) and were roofed over (2 Sam. 18:24). In front of the gate there was an open place (2 Chron. 32:6; Neh. 8:1,3,16), lined with benches where the elders sat, and economic and judicial activities took place. Great crowds gathered in the field in front of the gate, the unusual site of the threshing ground. The inner gate was dominated by two towers (2 Chron. 26:9), containing chambers (2 Sam. 18:33). Above the roof of the gate watchmen were posted to oversee the road (2 Sam. 18:25-27); in case of emergency, they would sound trumpets (Ezek. 33:2-3). Within the gate, on both sides of the passage, were chambers where the guards could rest; these also served as storage spaces (Ezek. 40:7; 1 Kings 14:28). The gates were often richly embellished. The gates of Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem were decorated with “cherubim, palm trees and open flowers on them and overlaid them with gold applied evenly on the carved work” (1 Kings 6:35 NKJV; Ezek. 41:25).

It was at the city gate that Abraham bargained with Ephron the Hittite over the cave of Machpelah (Gen. 23:10,18). A man who had killed unintentionally, and consequently requested admission to a city of refuge, was first interrogated by its elders at the gate (Josh. 20:4). The gate remained an important centre of urban activity up to the end of the Israelite kingdom, but its judicial functions were transmitted to a special building, or a room in the governor’s palace, or in a temple (Deut. 17:8-12; 1 Kings 7:7). Public punishment was administered at the gate to certain transgressors, such as persons who served other gods (Deut. 17:5); a rebellious (Deut. 21:19-21); or a man who lay with a betrothed girl (Deut. 22:23-24)

Wigoder



HABAKKUK

PROPHET OF FAITH

This booklet, last reprinted in 2014, is a reprint from the Bible Study Monthly but now with all six parts in one 48 page booklet. It looks into the prophecy of the musician Habakkuk when he wrote from the days of the kings of Judah to the ultimate deliverance of Israel.

It was foretold to Habakkuk in a day and time when Babylon was a new nation that Babylon would overwhelm them in the way they had feared Assyria in their recent past and that there would be a time of trouble that now is often labelled 'The Time of the End' or 'Armageddon'.

In the booklet a comparison is made between Babylon when it was the main empire of the world to this present evil world; between Babylon glorying in its wealth and brute force to the present elevation of Science to be godlike.

Habakkuk foresaw the great delay in time between his day and many of the events he described. He saw a golden era when Christians would look once more to the second advent of Jesus Christ and the parallel interest for a homeland for the Jews in what used to be called Palestine and today Israel. A process which has been in operation since the 19th Century.

After he saw 'clouds of trouble' in many forms including war and disease and that all nations would be gathered to be judged in two phases, the first being the day of preparation. All this set using events from the past such as the crossings of the Red Sea and Jordan and the flood of Noah's day to give insight as to how events would unfold and what the eventual outcome would be.

Habakkuk saw that all was well with the plan of God and he could rest in the sleep of death till all was fulfilled with the expectation he would see some of the latter events, that Jesus Christ would come with the Christian church.

The promise was given "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea." (Hab. 2:14)

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FROM EVERY STORMY WIND THAT BLOWS—A HYMN

FROM every stormy wind that blows,
From every swelling tide of woes,
There is a calm, a sure retreat;
'Tis found beneath the mercy-seat.

There is a place where Jesus sheds
The oil of gladness on our heads;
A place than all besides more sweet;
It is the blood-bought mercy-seat.

O! whither could we flee for aid,
When tempted, desolate, dismayed?
Or how would hosts of foes defeat
Had suffering saints no mercy-seat?

There, there on eagle wings we soar,
And sin and sense molest no more;
And heaven comes down our souls to greet,
While glory crowns the mercy-seat.



These are the words of Hugh Stowell who wrote many hymns for adults and children. He was born in 1799 on the Isle of Man and after going to Oxford went into the ministry in the Church of England. He died in Salford in 1865 where he had served for so many years.

Here are some verses which are thought to have been on the mind of the author:

Exodus 25:17-22 Thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give

thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.

Mark 4:37-41 There arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

Psalms 45:7 Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God...hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

Romans 3:25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.

Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Ephesians 6:18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

James 5:13 Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

Isaiah 40:31 (LXX) They that wait on God shall renew their strength; they shall put forth new feathers like eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not hunger.

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

1 John 2:2 He (Jesus) is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Common tunes for these words are 'Retreat' and 'Wareham', which are long metres (L.M.)

THE GATHERING HOME OF SAINTS

Part 6

THE ENTHRONEMENT WITH THE LAMB

There stands the queen, radiant in her happiness, the light of inner glory shining through her eyes. And now comes the moment of great triumph for her King, as, seated on the throne of glory, He draws her to His side. *“Sit thou at my right hand, here on my throne.”*

Is it to me He speaks, that worthy Lamb of God? *His* place of royal majesty becomes His *worthiness*. He claims no honour more than faithfulness has won. Those shouts of acclamation as first He took that place, all His the praise as high above each name of every high exalted power His Name was placed. A perfect recognition of His worth, to which the ages of His faithfulness have led.

With me it is so different. Who is, who can be yet, sufficient for these things? Yet has He lifted from the dunghill to set among princesses and princes those who beg for mercy's crumbs and find no cause of pleasure in their flesh. Their only claim on heaven's grace is hunger, the inner aching of the soul for righteousness and freedom from sin's stain. Their heart confesses all its deepest need, and gratefully accept what grace supplies. Yet what wisdom lies beyond the Father's choice of such, whose sinful state confessed, would love Him most, and tell it in their tears. He brings to naught the things that are with things that in their eyes are naught, yet in His sight so dear. All human cause of pride, great intellect or skill, how it would intrude, impede that task of grace, His workmanship of love. As David laid aside ill-fitting armour of Saul's pride, so we with deep relief depend our all upon no fleshly frame nor strength of body or of mind, but on the faithfulness of Him Who never fails but can complete what He began. For never does He ask without supply abundantly of every needed aid.

That queen all glorious there displays no merit of her own supply, but stands a miracle of grace and witness to His skill, not hers. The shouts of praise that rend the heavens now as she ascends that glory throne are not for her but for that love that faced the cross on her behalf, nor would it rest until she shared that closeness at His side. And thus begin the ages all with glory filled, exhibiting His kindness, grace and love towards us in His Son. All that she is, and every grace in her enthroned that will so well equip her for that royal place, is all of Him. It is His glory she displays Whose throne she shares. What depth of satisfaction this must bring each grace-filled heart. For only love divine could plan such bliss for loyal

souls that live to praise their King. How does He then equip ignoble Galilean folk to seat them on a throne far higher than the greatest throne of earth? Earth's princes are in youth prepared for rulership one day with governors, special schooling, university. They learn to live with riches and with power. Beneath each sovereign's shadow do they grow acquainted with intricacies of highest life and protocol. Is that *my* life? How can *I* hope to see upon that higher throne *a place for me*? Thus does He prove my trust that, with the call, the wise almighty God proveth all my training needs. I do not need to fear that He Who draws me near will thoroughly prepare for glory His dear Son, and yet forget to school those who will share that righteous rule.

“Why is this happening to me?” do now we ask, when hard experience, joys and tears, all fill my cup? What purpose lies in circumstance that seems remote from ways that I might plan the discipline of saints? Yet touch-by-touch impression of the Potter's hand prepares the vessel He has planned, and when we see what He has wrought we'll understand. Then, looking back to trace life's pattern we will see how it relates, each tiny need, each taste of grace, to heaven's place prepared, that ministry of grace reserved by name *for me*. Thus 'tailor-made', befitting every saint, the path is formed, and every step ordained to lead to what awaits, a reign of mercy, understanding love, in able hands of those who grace explored while here below. The needs of all mankind are known to her, His queen, and for each need she has discovered grace. She knows the ways of human souls, their very thoughts, and none could warmer guidance know than those responding to her call to “Come”.

What are these qualities of grace that will adorn this daughter of the King of Glory? For none unsuited will receive that final call to share that throne. In that prospectus of the school of Christ, what subjects rate the highest, and which least? And by what standard will she be prepared? What constitutes a “pass” percentage-wise, for those who learn not seven times but seventy to forgive? All this the Tutor knows! Will I get by? Will I scrape through? Is there some easier standard set, some lower grade, some lesser goal? Perhaps a part-time course, for Sundays and the meeting nights? Is there a minimum I just might gain on which realistically to set my sights? And will such standards fit me for the infinite, make me a vessel meet to bear His Name?

Ah no, dear brethren, let us not confuse the modest recognition of our own unworthy state, acknowledgment of fault, ability's deep poverty. Let us not mistake the meaning of His call of such unworthy objects of His

love. We all learn not to live beyond our means, nor build on fantasies a house of dreams, but this is something else. *No* man or woman, *no not one*, could take this honour for himself save for that *call divine*, and have we yet assessed those *means divine* beyond which we must not live? Have we explored the wisdom of our Father's mind, the heritage of each child of His? We are **His** children, Whose likeness will yet shine to testify His Spirit's life within. What do we lack for which faith cannot ask? Have we found room enough to yet receive that heavenly abundance He pours out so liberally, Who 'not by measure' does His Spirit give? There is no standard yet He cannot reach within each sample of a Master's skill. Each finished saint will be His masterpiece, each one a miracle of grace. In each *perfection is His mark*, or He cannot on any sign His Name. In each His fullness is revealed, for by His breath of life is multiplied by that life-force that first live tiny cell of faith, and nurtures until it grows all grace to comprehend. Nor does He rest until that measure full of stature is achieved by holy oil descending from the Head. If such a power now works within our lives, then do we know what end He has in view That Holy Thing that shall be born His child, a son of God.

Our Father does not tease, nor give a stone to those who hunger for the Bread of Life. We barely comprehend the standards set of love, of holiness, of trust, but surely know in each He will achieve an "uttermost". His humblest pupil He will raise from consciousness of failure and ill at ease, through every rising grade to thus pursue the loftiest heights of heavenly endowment, precious skills that only He can teach. The meek delight to learn thus at His side, with all their heart they seek, and knock, and find, those precious treasures of their loving Teacher's mind. Their thirst is all He needs, a thirst that naught will quell but Him alone, their Light, their Fount, their Well. Those who for wisdom cry, and for hid treasure seek with such painstaking care, He promises to fill. So much He waits to share with every child of love. Harken and consider well, thou daughter of a King! Thy beauty He desires, of holiness divine, that He can own as "Mine".

Our Teacher has in hand our every need His end to yet achieve. 'Tis ours to now lay hold, whatever each day unfold, upon that store of grace, accept the cup He gives, and seek our Teacher's face, to know how we should use the privilege bestowed, to serve, to wait, to bear, to praise, to love, to care. Lord help me to respond, my full attention keep, alert to every lesson of each day, that at its close my Teacher's smile will bless my rest.

The queen arrayed in glory realm is well prepared for every human need of earth's great family, and she has learned to live with glory too. Beneath that Sovereign shadow she has sat with great delight, and in His presence tasted that abundant life. In bringing her to glory He causes all his goodness to pass before her. Within her Saviour's face she did behold such glories of His Father's wondrous love. And she, beholding, did that Light absorb, and thus the glory from above she did reflect, until her face, like that of Jesus, shone, although she wist it not. Queen Esther was prepared for that great day when she would be escorted to the throne, by daily bathing in the perfumed oil, adorned in garments well befitting royalty, attended by so many helping hands, though for an earthly sovereign was such meticulous care applied. What then of those who now know heaven's call, and willingly their earthly hopes forsake? Can they be less prepared to share His throne, upon Whose reign redemption's work depends?

The throne of heaven's love, of mercy, and of grace, He waits to share. Without the reign of Jesus *and His Bride*, the ransom paid for all in Jesus' blood would be in vain! Such blessed truths we know, and yet, like Sheba's queen, our breath is taken at the sight of glory's throne above, of Him Who sits in majesty thereon, and *they who share the honour at His side*.

DH

Aaron the priest was anointed with holy anointing oil which was a mixture of myrrh, sweet calamus, sweet cinnamon, cassia and olive oil. (Exod. 30:22-25)

“Hence too He is able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, seeing that He ever lives to plead for them.” (Heb. 7:25 Weymouth)

*He by Himself hath sworn,
I on His oath depend
I shall, on eagles' wings upborne,
To heaven ascend;
I shall behold His face,
I shall His power adore,
And sing the wonders of His grace
For evermore!*

Golden Bells 22

ANIMAL SACRIFICES IN THE MILLENNIUM

Three passages in the description of Ezekiel's Temple are sometimes taken as justification for the belief that the practice of ritual sacrificing of animals to God, as known to ancient Israel, will be restored—and apparently continue permanently. There is no similar reference anywhere else in the Scriptures.

The impression stems from the literal interpretation of the entire passage describing the Temple of Ezekiel's vision and all that is associated with it. Now although it has been fully demonstrated that the Temple as described by Ezekiel is an architectural possibility and could conceivably actually be built it is not necessary to insist that all the related portions of the vision must necessarily be interpreted literally, and cannot be accepted as metaphors for the spiritual truths characteristic of the Age which the Temple represents. In some cases a literal interpretation is physically impossible, as, for instance, in the case of the River of Life which flows from the Sanctuary. That river, says Ezekiel, flows into the Dead Sea and makes the salt water fresh, bringing life wheresoever it comes. That, as an expression of a spiritual truth, is a wonderfully apt simile; in practice no stream running into the Dead Sea could ever turn its saline waters fresh, for that salinity is caused by the minerals carried by the rivers themselves—at present principally the Jordan and the Arnon. The Dead Sea can only be made fresh by giving it an outlet to the ocean and this is not envisaged by Ezekiel.

There are fundamental objections to the idea of animal sacrifices in the next Age. In the first place such an institution would be a retrograde step—such practices were in line with the level of human development three or four thousand years ago but certainly not today or tomorrow. God's distaste for sacrifices and offerings of that nature has long since been put on record and appreciated by devout men. The "*sacrifices of a broken and contrite heart*" and "*the sacrifice of praise continually*" are the offerings He desires and one cannot imagine his deriving much satisfaction from symbols of devotion fitted only to a semi-barbaric people only just escaped from Egypt. (Psa. 51:17; Heb. 13:15)

A more telling point is the fact that in Ezekiel these sacrifices are sin-offerings, burnt offerings and so on, presented as satisfaction for sin. But in that Age all offering for sin has long since been abolished. Christ gave himself for that purpose and from then onwards "*there is no more offering for sin.*" (Heb. 10:18) And in the Millennial Age, as in this present

Christian Age, “*it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins.*” (Heb. 10:4) This points to a symbolic rather than a literal application of these particular verses.

There is also the well-known fact that every prophetic picture of the Millennial Age depicts it as a time when “*they shall not hurt nor destroy*” and the animal creation is at peace. “*The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid*”; “*the wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock.*” (Isa. 11:6-9; 65:25) Such passages are likely to have a metaphorical intention much more important than the literal, but even so the general impression of order and peace without the prevalence of violent death in all God’s earthly creation is predominant. And if there is in fact to exist such a condition of peace and harmony amongst the lower creation and still there persists the practice of animal sacrifice, then man has become the killer whilst the lion has become peaceful and this does not seem very logical.

All in all, it seems that Ezekiel’s description of sacrifice associated with the Temple worship is intended to show in a figurative manner how men will come spontaneously before God to acknowledge their faults and shortcomings of the past and declare their full acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ and their future whole-hearted loyalty to him. The reality behind the symbols is found in those offerings of contrite hearts, of praise and prayer and devotion, which are so much better and mean so much more in the Lord’s sight than offerings of slain beasts.

AOH

This is the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings, which he shall offer unto the LORD.

If he offer it for a thanksgiving, then he shall offer with the sacrifice of thanksgiving unleavened cakes mingled with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and cakes mingled with oil, of fine flour, fried.

Besides the cakes, he shall offer for his offering leavened bread with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace offerings...

He shall offer one out of the whole oblation for an heave offering unto the LORD, and it shall be the priest’s that sprinkleth the blood of the peace offerings.

And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day that it is offered; he shall not leave any of it until the morning. But if the sacrifice of his offering be a vow, or a voluntary offering, it shall be eaten the same day that he offereth his sacrifice: and on the morrow also the remainder of it shall be eaten: but the remainder of the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day shall be burnt with fire. (Leviticus 7:11-17)

The Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand

It was at a time of crisis like the present that one of the most singular figures of history came to the front. John the Baptist was a man of obscure parentage, the son of a priest, brought up in a country village and never moving more than a hundred miles from his birthplace. But his influence upon world history and the fates of nations has been tremendous. The principles he enunciated, the moral teaching he expounded; above all, the startling declaration which formed the chief burden of his message, all have been proven true, gloriously true or tragically true according to the notice men have or have not taken of them, throughout all centuries since his day.

John The Baptist

He was born two thousand years ago, and was executed by a tyrant whilst still a young man. He was thirty before he came into the public eye, but within six months he had an entire province of the Roman Empire waiting on his words. His short-lived appearance prepared men for the coming of the greatest teacher the world has known—Jesus of Nazareth! But the impetus of that forward move which accompanied the birth of Christianity has spent itself, and now the world we know faces an even greater crisis than that which destroyed Israel two thousand years ago.

But the same message can save us!

Human nature has not changed since those far off days; the evils from which we suffer are due to the same human failings and weaknesses; it needs but a re-examination of the message proclaimed by John and its application to ourselves and our world to produce the same results. The message of the Baptiser is the message for every man and woman today!

What is that message?

Expressed in modern English, it is simply:

*Turn from evil,
Believe the good news; for:
Kingship from above is imminent.*



Does the world need such an appeal?

The effects of society's disease are manifest. Crime, vice and immorality are rampant and increasing. Respect for law is vanishing; the most elementary rights of the weaker are habitually denied them by the stronger. Fundamental qualities such as self-denial and generosity are discounted as signs of weakness; selfishness, self-seeking and greed are exalted in their place. Honour in business and political life has given place to intrigue, bribery and corruption. The social fabric is undermined by laxity in the marriage relationship, dishonesty in daily life and excessive

addiction to debasing pleasures and diversions. Twenty-year-olds shoot policemen and gangs of children rob houses. A dry rot permeates society and causes grave concern to all serious observers. And the question comes “Why?”

The peoples of earth—speaking now more particularly of the so-called “civilised” peoples—have renounced God and in the main no longer acknowledge His supremacy. The moral principles of the Bible have been cast aside and many take whatever course their inclinations, desires and passions dictate. There is no real belief in judgment to come, or even in the certainty or likelihood of retribution for their crimes. Therefore many indulge themselves according to their fancy without thought of the consequences to themselves or their fellows.

But the Bible still proclaims the basic principles of creation: that which is evil cannot endure; it may subsist, uneasily, for a time, but it must eventually pass away. It bears within itself the seeds of its own destruction. That is why Paul says in one place “the wages of sin is death” and Ezekiel in another “the soul that sins shall die”, and Peter, referring to the order of things instituted by man upon earth, speaks of a heaven and earth of evil repute, which now exists, being destroyed as by fire and replaced by a new heavens and earth wherein dwells righteousness. The operation of this Divine law implies retribution, judgment, and so a secondary maxim is propounded: “Whatever a man sows, that will he reap”. (Rom. 6:23; Ezek. 18:20 RSV; 2 Pet. 3:10; Gal. 6:7 RSV)

The world must learn their lesson first

The world is reaping a bitter harvest of its own sowing. The ills from which we suffer have their origin in the things we or our fathers have done in times past. There is no escape. It is inevitable that the world should enter into this period of judgment and suffer the calamities that must come upon it. It is futile to blame God. We were created with ability to govern ourselves along lines of benevolence and equity, but we have elected to take the easier way and must find for ourselves that it leads only to destruction. God means to save; He does not will that His purpose in creation should be frustrated; but men must learn their lesson first.

Individual deliverance

Now although there can be no universal deliverance from the judgment of this world, there can be, and is, individual deliverance from the state of mind and way of life that has led to this state of things. That is the first step. Multiplied a thousand, a million, ten million fold, it will bring world judgment to an end and usher in an eternity of peace. But it can only be attained by means of repentance.

Repentance

The word “repentance” is associated with the emotional fervour of 19th century revivalism, conjuring up visions of the old-fashioned “penitent form” in mission halls and impassioned appeals to leave one’s sons at the foot of the cross. Now this does enshrine a fundamental principle, but it is not the whole meaning of the word. To “repent” means to change the mind, to repudiate a previous course of action, to enter upon a new way. Applied to individuals’ consciences that all is not well with the world in which they live, nor with themselves, it means to consider what there is in one’s own way of life that is out of accord with the principles of rightness, and resolve that those things shall be banished and a new way of life adopted, a way which shall have as its object a due acknowledgement of the supremacy of God, and the well-being and happiness of one’s fellows. Since no such resolve can be put into effect to any appreciable degree without close attention to the examples and precepts of Jesus Christ, it follows that such repentance must of necessity involve belief in the sufficiency and integrity of His teaching and acceptance of His leadership in life.

This of itself in not enough.

Many have sought to model their lives after the example of great philosophers and teachers, becoming powerful influences for good in consequence; but they have not banished the evil that is in the world, and nothing short of the elimination of evil can solve the problems which distress mankind. The intellectual acceptance of Jesus and His message involves something more than any other teacher demands. Jesus claimed to have come from above, from God, to bring His world-saving message. He declared the necessity of His death as a man in order that men might be saved, and also His intention of returning again to earth after the lapse of a pre-determined period of time—during which the seed of His teaching was to germinate and spread among the nations—to complete His work of abolishing evil and bringing men into fellowship with God. If Jesus is to be accepted as a reliable guide to a new way of life all this must be accepted too. If He was mistaken in this theological and eschatological (last days) aspect of His message, forming as it does the whole framework within which His ethical teaching is set and upon which that depends, then He was a misled and completely deluded man and no leader in whom men today, with the problems they have to solve, can afford to repose confidence.

Proof comes after acceptance of Christ

Jesus was not mistaken! He came, as He said, from God. He is, as He claimed, the Son of God, and in His Divinity He is supreme over all

created things, and comes again in the glory of that Divinity, to finish His work on earth. There can be no physical or intellectual proof of all this, for these are matters transcending human values and means of measurement. The proof comes *after*, and not before, the repentant individual has “turned” to serve God. Having accepted Christ, not only as a guide to conduct and instructor in morals, but a personal Deliverer from sin and the effects of sin, he becomes increasingly conscious of a new and different sphere of understanding which advances satisfactory and convincing proofs not capable of demonstration by the materialistic arguments of every day.

World Reclamation and the Millennial Age

Repentance, then, *does* involve coming to Jesus in submission as to a Master and leader. It *does* involve claiming Him and accepting Him as a personal Saviour and subordinating one’s whole life and interests to His service. The object is not merely that one may be “saved from the wrath to come”. God does not look with approval on people whose sole desire is to save their own skins, and advance their own interests. The world has seen too much of that already. Rather should one come to God in dedication of life to be used by him in the further reclamation of the world from evil. It implies service, and it implies hard work. The day set aside by God for this purpose is the still future Millennial Age, during which all men, including the returned dead, will be taught the ways of God and be led to choose between good and evil, and decide their future destiny for themselves. Nevertheless there is much that can be done in this present day, before God breaks through into human affairs with His promised Millennial Kingdom. That is why the repentance and dedication to Christian service of any man or woman has an immediate effect upon the prevalence of evil. It is one more blow struck for right dealing and right living, one more influence making for peace and rectitude in the affairs of men and nations, leading immediately to some mitigation, however slight, of the troubles that now afflict mankind.

This then is God’s call

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. And He shall send Jesus Christ...whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things”. (Acts 3:19-21)



Article available as a three-fold leaflet suitable for handing out available free and on request or as a pdf.

JOHN KNOX AND THE REFORMATION IN BRITAIN

John Knox (1505-1572) is the most well-known Scottish reformer of the same period that is also labelled 'the English Reformation.' Also famed for his book in 1558 'The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women'. One cyclopaedia calls him "the famous divine and Reformer, who stirred Scotland to mighty religious impulses in the reign of Mary, Queen of Scots."

He was born in Scotland and educated there before taking holy orders. The reformation in England burst forth when Henry VIII made himself head of the church in England and this was aided by the beliefs in this island from the days of John Wycliffe and Lollardy as well as to those reformers like Luther in continental Europe from the time after King Henry took the throne in 1509. Its not surprising that Scotland had a similar movement.

The political situation was different in Scotland as they were ruled by Mary of Guise, (1515-1560) the powerful French regent and mother of Mary, Queen of Scots. She was catholic and her brother was a cardinal in France. Meanwhile Knox relied on protection from prominent men in Scotland like those whose children he taught. Scotland became a dangerous place though, as George Wishart was burnt as a heretic on 1 March 1546 and then Cardinal Beaton, the last Scottish cardinal prior to the Reformation was murdered on 29 May of the same year. It was in this background that Knox lost his liberty in 1547 under the hand of Mary of Guise.

Henry VIII died in 1547 and was acceded to the throne by his young son Edward who was surrounded by protestant protectors like Somerset and Northumberland and those of his maternal Seymour family. It was this English government who interceded to free him and bring him to England in 1549 where he first served as a preacher in Berwick and then Newcastle where he preached against the mass. He was described as having a 'magnetic character.'

In 1552 Knox was part of a committee of six to set up a code for priests to have a licence to preach and was involved with Cranmer's idea to have articles of religion which finally got royal ascent on 12 June 1553. All the while he was bold enough to speak out at covetousness and pride in the seat of power.

Events were soon to change radically for British reformers when King Edward died in July 1553 and the scheme to place his protestant cousin Lady Jane Grey on the throne failed. Therefore Mary Tudor became the first queen regnant and significantly, she was fervently catholic. Some prominent reformers like Hooper, Rogers, Saunders and Taylor were burned and hundreds of others like Knox fled to the continent to places like Frankfurt, Geneva, Strasbourg and Zurich.

Geneva was the place where Knox attended a ‘school’ under the influence of John Calvin who helped with providing the texts to go with certain lines of thought. Calvin accepted Luther’s justification by faith and is largely linked to the doctrine of predestination though he pressed believers to prove themselves as part of the elect. In exile there was a division between those who supported Cranmer’s 1552 Prayer book and those who felt it needed moulding along the line with Calvin’s thoughts. They suggested abolishing vestments, the litany, oral responses to list a few changes. This debate was rife in Frankfurt and Knox was summoned there from Geneva, where Calvin was, to lead the faction who also stated each congregation should elect its own ministers and deacons. The opposite faction led by Dr. Richard Cox brought conflict in Frankfurt, with Knox.

Knox had written many times against Queen Mary and Catholicism and in his writing ‘Faithful Admonition’ heavily libelled Mary and her husband. To Mary he wrote “if she had been sent to hell before these days, her cruelty would not have so manifestly appeared to the world.” Therefore he had to leave Frankfurt and the scene of this debate and return to Geneva.

Mary’s death on 17 November 1558 and her sister Elizabeth’s accession led to hundreds of reformers returning to England. In Knox’s case this was too risky due to his 1558 book stating the idea of female monarchs was against Biblical teaching. Nevertheless Elizabeth’s reign had an impact on Scotland too. Knox arrived in May 1559 full of zeal to find the prominent Protestants ready to remove the French from Scotland. With Elizabeth’s largely unofficial support, money and lastly military help they had success. In 1560 there was the Treaty of Edinburgh and she removed French influence from Scotland through Knox and his like. Mary, Queen of Scots was powerless to change this. Hence British Protestantism was secure and Knox’s impact felt in all parts of this island.

NOTICES

Bible Students International Convention, Poland, 5-9 August 2020. Cancelled

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Gone from us

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Bumblebees Cannot Fly



Some years ago I met a mechanical engineer, who told me that it had once been proven by the law of aerodynamics—after measuring the body and the wings of a bumblebee—that such a creature could never fly. But the bumblebee could not read, nor could it understand what the learned scientists were saying about it, so it just went right on flying!

*A.C. Frey
Deep Waters and a Bubbling Brook*

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