

BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

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***“You open Your hand; you
satisfy the desire of
every living thing.”***

(Psalm 145:16 ESV)



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BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

FOUNDED 1924

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

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

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Secretary & Treasurer: Nicholas Charcharos

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

Hands are incredible parts of the body. We use them to touch, hold, push or pull, as well as to carry. They are used to clean our bodies and homes. They enable us to write, type, play musical instruments or sow using the thinnest needles or to treat patients at the doctor's surgery or in a hospital theatre.

A baby is able to grip an adult's finger very early although they find it harder to let go. They enable us to gently hold a baby or reach toward a toddler learning to walk.

Pens and pencils allow us to write or draw in fine detail. Sadly weapons of war can do so much harm especially "in the wrong hands!"

We use hands to greet friends and family and display affection. They are used to embrace those we love best as shown in the love displayed in Song of Solomon 8:3 to describe the love between Jesus and his bride and the bride for him, her beloved.

Hands indicate activity; the opposite of idleness. They speak of productivity in the service of one's home, family or brethren. Solomon wrote of this in Eccl. 9:10 in terms of doing good. There is the expression "turning our hand to" something when learning new skills or avenues of service.

The term 'our heavenly Father's hand' is used to express his provision for us. This can be in terms of food or drink, including the provision of crops for food as well as shelter. All needed to sustain the basics of life. But

more than this, He also gives us wisdom, knowledge and joy. (Eccl. 2:24-26) He gives “meat in due season” in relation to temporal and spiritual food. (Psa. 145:15-16) He directs our lives and educates us. He supports us. (Isa. 41:13)

There are other expressions we use that involve the word “*hand*.” We speak of someone’s “*right hand man*.” A right-hand man is the one who acts as their chief assistant and helps and supports them a lot in their work. (Collins) No one fully and perfectly fills this label as our Lord Jesus, the Son of Man, does. In Biblical terms this describes someone who has power and authority to act and rule on behalf of God. (Mark 14:61-62) We look forward to that day when Jesus is revealed to all and is acknowledged as sovereign of this our planet in a much better way than how King Charles III is crowned on 6 May this year.

Another expression is “*at hand*.” It refers to something being near or close in either place or time. Jesus said “Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Matt. 4:17) So it was, from Jesus’ physical presence and his timely message for all who have lived down this present Gospel age. (Christian era). Peter said “the end of all things is at hand.” (1 Pet. 4:7) Peter thought that it was close in terms of time. Indeed the culmination of the “present evil world” is at hand which means the blessings of Christ’s kingdom is at hand too.



O SOUL OF MINE!

O SOUL of mine, be calm, be still,
Submit thyself to God,
In all thy ways yield to His will,
Nor faint beneath the rod.

O soul of mine, like potter’s clay
Within the Master’s hand,
O let Him mould thee day by day,
Till faultless thou shalt stand.

O soul of mine, have faith, believe,
Nor count the cost of strife,
Fight on, faint not, thou shalt receive
At last the Crown of Life!



Poems of Dawn



THE OPEN HAND

'A study in giving'

All references NRSV unless otherwise stated



"These all look to you...you open your hand, they are filled with good things." (Psalm 104:27-28 NRSV).

One of the most persistently reiterated themes of Holy Writ is man's utter helplessness to direct his life without God. At every turn of life man comes up against his need, though it is but rarely that he realizes the extent of that need. The absoluteness of this *need* is not brought home to the heart or mind of man, because of the universal generosity of Almighty God. Only if God withdrew His activities from this planet entirely would man come face to face with the absoluteness and universality of his needs. If God kept back the rains which fall impartially upon the just and the unjust, if He withheld the fruitful seasons (Acts 14:17) with their bounteous harvests; if He locked up His winds in their treasuries; then man would realise the utter helplessness of his position in this scheme of things. The effects of local famines have been serious and have brought ruin and destruction to man and beast. But these famines have usually been relatively local: there has mostly been abundance elsewhere, and relief has often been despatched from the region of the abundance to the place of want. God has never withheld His gifts worldwide. He has never caused the universal harvest to fail. So unfailingly, yet naturally, has the bountiful God bestowed His gifts, that men sow, doubting not for a moment but that they will reap, and call the sowing and reaping Nature's common round. But should God withhold His hand, their sowing would be vain—man may plant, and man may water but without God there would be no increase.

The other side of the question, obverse to man's need, is God's ability and disposition to *give*. These two factors in universal life are complementary to each other. God is the source of unfailing abundance, man the creature of unending need. (Psalm 104). No less is this so in the religious life of man. Here again the persistently reiterated theme of Holy Writ is man's utter helplessness and universal need. Again the other side of the question obverse to man's need, is God's ability and disposition to give. The beginning of God's generosity to fallen men dates from Eden days, when in the act of imposing the sentence required by His broken Law, God promised Mother Eve that her seed should eventually bruise the Serpent's head. (Gen. 3:15) God gave her there a promise; His gift. This form of gift He repeated to Noah, in that He promised summer and winter, seed-time and harvest. To Abraham, God gave that most wonderful promise that is

the basic feature of the whole plan of redemption. By the gift of His promises God gave hope to fallen man. God had promised blessing that gave man hope and expectancy.

God gave Abraham a son, then a nation. To that nation God gave His Word and His Law; those “*living oracles*” (Acts 7:38) that Moses received at Sinai. That Law was the most advanced moral standard of its day, and had it been obeyed would have raised Israel high above the nations around. That sacred gift from Sinai, forms an important section of the Holy Book that we treasure as the Word of Life. He gave Israel a Tabernacle so that He might give them the benefit of His presence in their midst. He gave them the good land on which the eye of God rests with holy delight. (Exodus 3:8; Deut. 11:12). He gave them judges and deliverers when they fell into captivity. He gave them reformers who led them back to their “oracles,” and “seers” who carried their minds forward to higher expectations. God gave them advancement and prominence among the nations, under David and Solomon, when the fame of Israel’s king spread to the distant quarters of the world. The two nations of later days were given the benefit of God’s patience and long-suffering, though they fast became vessels fit only for destruction. (Rom. 9:22) They became inveterately idolatrous so first Israel and then Judah were given the spirit of slumber. (Rom. 11:8). Under the conditions this was a boon to them; for the blindness which came, minimized the degree of their responsibility. So, because God thus concluded them all in unbelief, He will be able in His Kingdom to have mercy upon all, “*and so all Israel will be saved.*” (Rom. 11:26). Isaiah, commissioned to deliver the message of rejection, said “*...the LORD has poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep*” and “*has closed your eyes...*” (Isa. 29:10-16) yet he concludes his denunciation with the statement “*Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field?*” (v.17 KJV). The gift of slumber, while it deprived the two nations of their land for centuries will have kept the national spirit in a state of hunger for the appearance of Messiah as an exalted king.

In due course God gave to the returned remnant nation in Jerusalem His greatest and best gift, His well-beloved Son. This was the gift that lay dearest to His own heart. Jesus came to earth bearing the tidings of the Almighty’s great love for men, especially for those who were children of God’s friend. (Jas. 2:23; Isa. 41:8). What tremendous possibilities God set before that generation in Jerusalem when Messiah came to them! (Dan. 9:25). In the first place God purposed to give *repentance* for their national sins to Israel through His Son. (Luke 1:68-79; Acts 5:31). God

desired to touch the deeper springs of their hearts by the ministry of His well-beloved son, and thus to lead them to repentance.

Again, Jesus was destined to be a bearer of light to His people. God wanted to give understanding to that generation, so that it might comprehend what His higher purposes were; that heavenly things were about to begin. To those who were responsive to the new teachings God gave an understanding of the mysteries of the Kingdom. (Matt. 13:11; Mark 4:11) “*To you it has been given to know*” what was “hidden” from other ages.

God gave Jesus to that people, to be to them as the Bread of Life. In manner similar to wilderness days when God strewed the earth morning by morning with manna, so again God provided *Living Bread* for the children of Abraham. (John 6:27-65). In some supernatural way the words of the Lord would have sustained their deeper life (John 6:63) and led to eternal life. In some special way His flesh would sustain the life of the world. God *gave Living Bread* to those who could eat. (John 6:32,51). Again (to vary the “sustenance” figure of speech) God gave Jesus as the Water of Life of which, if one should drink, it should satisfy his thirst forever. (John 4:10-15).

God gave Israel a shepherd, who would have guided and pastured the flock of God in paths of righteousness. (John 10:1-16). But there was no beauty about Him that they desired Him. They wanted a King, a conquering Messiah; He came to suffer, a Man of sorrows, an offering for sin. The nation rejected Him, but to as many as did receive him God gave the privilege to become His own sons. (John 1:12). To those whose hands were open to take, God gave many other gifts along with and through His beloved Son! Giving, Giving, *Giving* all the time, to those who knew their need.

Even after they had despised and crucified His Son, God still kept the door of opportunity open for such as needed more than the ritual and ceremonial of the Temple sacrifice. To many among them the words of Jesus had opened a new world of possibilities. He told of opportunities and privileges, of which their fathers had never heard. (Matt. 13:35). He set new longings rising in their hearts, but because they had been powerless against the Sanhedrin and Priests, and had not been able to stop their schemes nor their fearful deed, He had been slain. How readily they listened on that wonderful morn when “Peter stood up with the Eleven” (Acts 2:14 NIV) and told the people that God had raised Him from the dead, and again desired through Him to “give repentance to Israel.” (Acts

5:31)

Only a remnant desired that gift of repentance, so God turned to the nations to take out of them a people for His Name. To these also God gave repentance unto salvation. *“If then God gave them the same gift that He gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God?”* said Peter in defence. (Acts 11:17). *“Then God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life”* (v.18) was the brethren’s response. Is repentance the gift of God? It certainly is! They who receive the Word into good hearts are such as are *“opened”* by the Lord. (Acts 16:14). No one comes to the Son except those whom the Father draws (John 6:44,65). The *“faith”* that saves is God’s gift (Eph. 2:8) through the operation of His word (Rom. 10:13-17) and of His Spirit in their hearts. The *“peace”* that garrisons their hearts comes from God too. (Phil. 4:7; John 14:27). This is a precious gift to those who dwell in a tempestuous world. Perfect peace is bestowed upon all who dwell upon the Rock of Ages. (Isa. 26:3-4).

Is love, that most desirable God-like trait a gift from Him? It is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which He gives us. (Rom. 5:5). We cannot add so little as one inch to our spiritual stature by taking thought. It is not impossible to spend too much time talking over the necessity for our growth in love and be all the time forgetful of the fact that Love is a fruitage. (Gal. 5:22-23). It is more a matter of the husbandman’s concern than that of the branch in the vine itself. God is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those that ask Him than any earthly father is ready to give his children food. (Matt. 7:11). The more Holy Spirit power in the heart, the more love to shed abroad in the life. This Love also is a gift from God, for we love because He first loved.

Again, not only is the giving of the Holy Spirit the basis of character development (2 Cor. 3:18) but it is also God’s pledge of the inheritance we hope to receive. It is the token that God has taken us into His service, and that the final reward will be sure, if we discharge our duty faithfully, *“...God...hath...sealed us, and given the earnest of the spirit in our hearts.”* (2 Cor. 1:21-22; 2 Cor. 5:5 KJV). Moreover, the Holy Spirit is an energizing and stabilizing power. It is not a spirit of fear, but of cool reasoned courage, and of a sound mind. It produces the spirit of sanctity blended with sanity in our minds, a well-balanced properly ordered sanctification of life. This too is a gift of God and is by no means the outcome of psychological self-effort. It is God who has prepared for us our resurrection change. The transformation is wrought by His Spirit.

(2 Cor. 3:18). Then in the day-to-day struggle “*He giveth grace*” to such as go to His Throne of Grace, humbly beseeching assistance in their time of need. (Heb. 4:16; James 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5). Thus the whole range of the Christian’s life and experience is called into being and sustained by His gracious gifts, but it does not end even at that, for He will give the complete victory over death, and over the grave. When that which is mortal is swallowed up in victory, the faithful footstep follower of the Lord will see Him and be with Him for evermore. “*Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*” (1 Cor. 15:57).

From first to last, the Christian’s life is one of receiving; for what has he, that he has not received? It is a life of faith with an open hand, with courage to ask and take. It is the story of a great need which grows as it feeds, and which is more pronounced at the end of the way than at the beginning. Thank God, even its deepest need does not exhaust the capacity of the bounteous Giver. Though its demands are presented every day, and yes, many times a day, the riches of His grace are of ample store for each and all that call upon Him.

The story of Divine grace is the record of One who has been disposed to “give,” and “give,” and “give” again, because it pleases Him to dispense of His fulness to helpless needy men. He created man with a great “need” so that He might play the part of a great giver. Man has but to open his hand to take of that bountiful fulness which God opens His hand to give. (Psalm 104:27-28). If God withheld not his well-beloved Son “*shall He not with him also freely give us all things?*” (Rom. 8:32 KJV). Christian experience of this and other days shows without fail that they who are most developed in grace are the ones most conscious of their need. The more one has grown in the things of the Lord, and the more tender and sensitive the heart has become, the more such saints become persuaded of their need for God. The ultimate end of every quest of the more mature heart, is not merely to accept the gifts of God, but to receive with open heart the Giver too.

It is good to accept with open hand the gifts of God; it is better far with open heart to accept the Giver Himself. No wealth of earth is so desirable as the gifts of God; the whole world itself is but refuse indeed in comparison with possessing God.

TH

DANIEL IN BABYLON

9. The Ancient of Days

“I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit.” (Dan. 7:9).

One of the most pregnant sentences in the whole of the Bible! Into those few brief words Daniel infused all the longing and all the hopes and all the faith which had sustained him through so many years. One day God would arise in judgment, and then all for which the righteous had waited would be theirs. The long captivity of man to the dominion of sin and death, his long submission to oppressive evil powers, would be at an end, and the saints of the Most High would possess the kingdom, and rule in equity and justice for ever and ever.

This, the second part of the dream, leaves the actors in the first part still standing on the stage. The four beasts are still there; the fourth, strange and terrible, the latest to rise, dominating the other three certainly, but all four are still there. And now Daniel perceives a gathering tumult in the heavens. The sable curtain of night is lightening; a vivid golden radiance is banishing the blackness. The dark night-clouds turn dimly red and then break out suddenly into blazing cascades of fire, pouring down upon the earth and swelling into a fiery river which threatens to bear away all obstacles in its course. From above that plunging, leaping curtain of light there appears a waving field of white, an army of angels, thousands upon thousands, and ten thousands upon ten thousands, winging their way fast to earth, growing more clear and more perceptible as each second passes. Then the roaring of the thunder, the vivid, searing lightning, and behind those speeding angels a majestic Appearance before which Daniel must have prostrated himself in reverence and awe; he knew well that no man may look upon the face of God, and live. But presently a calm, heaven-sent confidence took hold of him and he looked up to see the Ancient of Days, in all the dignity of kingly power and all the purity of his awful holiness, seated upon his Throne of judgment. The Time of the End had come and the Judge was in his place, the Assizes of Heaven about to begin.

In those first few seconds before the vision passed again into the movement of action Daniel had time to see that there were other, lesser, thrones surrounding that upon which was seated the Supreme Judge, the Ancient of Days. It is not so stated in verse 9, but implied by later verses, (18 and 22), that those thrones were occupied by *“the saints of the Most*

High” waiting to take their destined place in the whole sequence of activities and events that were to be associated with this imminent judgment. The force of this aspect of the vision is obscured by the usual English meaning of “cast down.” “*I beheld till the thrones were cast down*” says the Authorised Version, and it is usually tacitly assumed that Daniel referred to the fall of earthly thrones and kingships at this Time of the End in consequence of Divine judgment. That is not what was intended. The term “cast down” in the original has the significance of being set down or placed firmly in position. This usage appears in the English word “cast” for making solid, firm objects from fluid materials, as in the case of “cast” iron, an object made solid by “casting” from molten metal. The reference here in Daniel 7 is to judicial seats as in Psa. 122:5, “*For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David*” and Matt. 19:28, “*Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*” There is no suggestion anywhere in the Scriptures that the angels are assessors in the judgment; in the vision they are attendants upon the Ancient of Days but not occupants of the thrones, and the only reasonable view we can take of the vision is that Daniel saw the “*saints of the Most High*” seated in the presence of God and ready to play their own destined part in the drama of judgment. That fact should help considerably in placing the time of the fulfilment of the vision.

But as yet the saints on their thrones had no part to play. The focal point of the vision shifted again to the earth, to the earth before the Throne, where stood the four beasts of the vision. The books were opened and the judgment began; the fourth beast, the terrible, unnatural one, was first condemned, and before Daniel’s fascinated eyes was slain and its body cast into the blazing river which still cascaded down from the glory of God and ran, a fiery torrent, away into the darkness of oblivion. The other beasts were not slain immediately; they were deprived of their dominion, but “*their lives were prolonged for a season and time.*” (v.12) Now this expression as it stands can be productive of misunderstanding, as though these three beasts were granted a kind of indefinite lease of life, whereas the truth is the reverse. The word “prolonged” in the Hebrew means to assign or cut off to a determined length. The expression “season and time” in the A.V. is based on the old English expression “till a time and tide,” which was a phrase indicative of a fixed and irrevocable point of time which could by no means be exceeded (hence the English proverb “*Time and tide wait for no man.*”) What Daniel tells us in verse 12, therefore, is that the fourth beast was slain at once and the other three, after being deprived of their dominion, sentenced to die at a certain fixed time not stated but already determined in the mind of the Judge.

Again the prophet's eyes turned heavenward. Somehow or other he realised in his dream that now was to come an important event in the sequence of happenings which he was witnessing, for at this juncture (v.13) he repeats the expression, "*I saw in the night visions*" as though to mark this point with some special indication. Looking back at his words from the standpoint of our later Christian knowledge, the significance of this stage in the symbolism is clear enough, for in lifting up his eyes to heaven, Daniel saw "*one like the Son of man*" (v.13) coming "*with the clouds of heaven.*" The expression is so familiar a one to Christians that we immediately think of the Second Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ for the dual purpose of gathering his Church, and setting up the earthly Kingdom which is to be the desire of all nations; and that, not unnaturally, is the interpretation which is usually and immediately placed upon this verse in Daniel 7. The application seems so obvious that several discordant features are often overlooked, and it may come as somewhat of a shock to realise that the usual interpretation is not quite so fitting as is thought.

In the first place the saints are already, in the vision, seated on their thrones of judgment in the presence of the Ancient of Days, observing the execution of judicial sentence upon the four beasts, and this *before* the "Son of Man" appears with the clouds of heaven. In the second place this "Son of Man" coming with the clouds of heaven, does not descend to the earth but is brought into the presence of the Ancient of Days, to receive a royal investiture, and a kingdom. And in the third place—and this is important to a right view of the vision—the expression "the Son of Man" in the A.V. is not a correct rendering of the original. Daniel actually said that he saw "one like a son of," i.e. one like a human being, in contrast to the Deity above and the beasts below; this man-like being, then ushered into the presence of God and awarded the kingdom of the earth. The translators, reasoning back from their New Testament theology, rendered "*the Son of Man*" instead of "*a son of man*" forgetting that in Daniel's day the phrase "Son of man" as applied to the Messiah was completely unknown and could have had no possible meaning.

Daniel, then, saw a man coming with the clouds of heaven, as contrasted with the raging sea which only brought forth beasts. Daniel and his people had no knowledge of the Messiah, no conception of a Son of God who would exercise all power in heaven and earth as the active agent of the Father's purposes. The prevalent understanding of the Kingdom was that God himself would intervene and destroy evil nations and all evil, and exalt his people Israel. It was for this that Daniel looked and prayed, and

in the vision of the Ancient of Days he must have found his expectations fully realised.

This addition to the vision, therefore, this introduction of another being, one like an earthly man and yet coming from heaven, to receive and administer the Kingdom, started a new line of enquiry in Daniel's mind. This was something he had not thought of before. Like others nearly six hundred years later he must have asked himself "Who is this Son of Man?" That is probably the reason for Daniel's admission at the end of the account (v.28) "*As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me... but I kept the matter in my heart.*" He began to perceive that there was going to be more in this question of the fulfilment of God's promise to overthrow evil and introduce everlasting righteousness than his studies in the Scriptures had until then revealed to him, and, devoted student that he was, he gave this new development serious thought.

We have the advantage, now, of seeing why the vision entered into this aspect. It was on the basis of this chapter and the picture of the relationship between the "Ancient of Days" who awarded the Kingdom and the "Son of Man" who received the Kingdom that our Lord assumed and used the title "Son of Man." It could have come from no other source and the Jews were aware of the fact. (The use of the same expression in the Book of Ezekiel is not in the same category; the Almighty habitually addressed Ezekiel as "Son of Man" in allusion to the fact that he was, in fact, a human being, with no prophetic or symbolic implication whatever. The suggestion sometimes made that in the New Testament the Greek phrase is "the Son of *the* man" referring to Jesus' natural descent from "*the* man," Adam, is based upon misapplication to Greek grammar and does not deserve to be taken seriously.) When Jesus proclaimed himself to be "the Son of Man" all who heard him would instantly connect his claim with the vision of Daniel and understand his words accordingly. This is very clearly shown when in answer to the High Priest's question at his trial, "*Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?*" he replied, "*I am: and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.*" (Mark 14:61-62). That was the statement and the claim that sealed his fate; he had declared that he was the One seen by Daniel in the vision.

That the Jews of Daniel's day and immediately afterwards clearly perceived the vision to teach that one who in some manner was associated with men and made like man, yet a heavenly being, would thus stand in the presence of God and receive from his hands the Kingdom, is very

evident. The Book of Enoch, written several centuries after Daniel's time, has much to say about the Son of Man and the Ancient of Days and that is a good guide to Jewish thought. The coming of the Son of Man to execute the Divine will in the days of the Kingdom was an accepted part of Jewish theology in the days of Jesus.

We are left, then, with the plain fact that in Daniel the coming of the Son of Man "*with the clouds of heaven*" takes place *after* the Ancient of Days has pronounced judgment on the beasts and *after* the people of "*the saints of the Most High*" (v.18) have taken their places on their thrones to observe the execution of that judgment. As the chapter proceeds, we find that the kingdom, and dominion is given to the "Son of man" and to the "saints" simultaneously. Both receive the kingdom; both rule and exert authority in association the one with the other.

In the reality it must be accepted therefore that New Testament references to the coming of the Lord in the clouds of heaven (such as Rev. 1:7; Matt. 26:64 etc.) must generally refer to a time after the Church has been gathered and after the kingdoms of this world have fallen and been destroyed. They must refer to the latest and most spectacular phase of the Second Advent, the commencement of the reign of Christ and the Church and his revealing to all mankind, the time that is sometimes spoken of as "the Kingdom in power." The appearance of one like a Son of Man in Daniel's dream symbolises the last event in the series of events which characterise the transition from the kingdoms of this world to the Kingdom of God, the period of the Second Advent.

So the vision ended where all such visions ought to end, in the light and glory of the Kingdom. The four wild and terrible beasts had been destroyed and obliterated; the raging sea had disappeared. As with John in Revelation "*there was no more sea.*" (Rev. 21:1) In its place the powers of heaven had taken control of earth and the light and glory of the Son of Man irradiated the whole world and gave the promise of the peace and joy that was to be. There is quite a close connection between this vision of Daniel 7 and that later one of the Apostle John in Revelation 19 and 21 in which, after the destruction of the beasts of the earth, the kings and their armies, and the disappearance of the sea, the new Jerusalem comes down to earth with the glory of God and of the Lamb to enlighten it.

There the ancient prophet left the matter. For two more years we hear nothing of him until, in the third year of King Belshazzar, he dreamed again. But this time the dream was not of distant golden days but of the

things near at hand. The empire of Babylon was nearing its end, and it was meet that Daniel be instructed in the events that were soon to come.

(To be continued)

AOH

EXTRACT FROM SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 1983

It is said that Beethoven, when he had completed one of his grand musical compositions, was accustomed to test it on an old harpsichord, lest a more perfect instrument might flatter it or hide its defects. Many are unwilling to put the results of their labours to any such test as this, preferring to be deceived and deceive others with outward appearances. With human character it may be observed that those traits that most entitle us to the love and esteem of men, and which honour us most in the sight of God, are not always revealed on notable occasions and by extraordinary events, but manifest themselves in the quiet course of every-day life. This is the old harpsichord that tries character on its real merits. It is one thing to appear in the midst of popular favour and worldly success, and another to carry a noble, generous and magnanimous spirit amid the worries and anxieties and trials that spring up along the path hour by hour and day by day. Ruskin has truly said that “*greatness is the aggregation of minuteness.*” It is the sum of little things well done that constitutes, as a whole, a really useful and noble life. It is not those who wait in idleness for some chance opportunity to distinguish themselves and do the world a great service who are likely to be the benefactors of the race, but rather those who proceed earnestly about their daily duties “doing with their might what their hands find to do.” There are but few to whom it is given to discover new continents, to do an act that frees a race from bondage, to utter thoughts that stir the heart of mankind, but it is given to each and to all to pass each day of life so well, so nobly, so truly, so faithfully, so near to God, that all life is lifted up, and all the world made better by such living and doing.

AOH

“Whatever your hand finds to do, do with your might; for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going.”

(Eccl. 9:10 NRSV)

Those who see God’s hand in everything, always leave everything in his hands.

Deep Waters and a Bubbling Brook

UNSATISFIED

Citations from NKJV unless otherwise specified

“Thus says the LORD:

*Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths,
where the good way is, and walk in it;*

Then you will find rest for your souls.

But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’” (Jeremiah 6:16)

Why is there so much unrest among people in the world? In the affluent nations, and in fairly-developed nations, no matter what they have, or how much they have, they are unsatisfied and restless. Constantly they are bombarded by advertising that urges them to get something “new,” or “new and improved,” or “new packaging, same great product.” They buy something they have desired for a while, and many soon have “buyer’s remorse;” the product does not satisfy like they thought it would; perhaps it does not work quite as well as imagined; perhaps it needs constant maintenance. So, the striving goes on, looking for something newer yet, something more satisfying. But satisfaction, peace, and rest seldom come. Why? Because everything in this world and this life is imperfect and can never truly satisfy. Can never bring that “rest” that people truly desire.

Some seek escape from life and its problems by pursuing money, sports, gambling, using drugs, seeking “followers” on social media, or themselves chasing every possible new fad. Some join protest marches for social or political causes; but to what end? There is no lasting satisfaction or “rest.”

“All things are full of labour; man cannot express it. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.” (Ecclesiastes 1:8)

“He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also is vanity.” (Ecclesiastes 5:10)

The true source of this dis-satisfaction is, of course, sin and selfishness, which is permitted by God among His creation, for a time. Is God’s own nature like that? Does He constantly crave something new? Is He uneasy? No, I think not.

The “*eye that never sleeps,*” the “*ear that never shuts,*” the “*arm that never tires,*” the “*love that never fails*” [quotes from the hymn—“There is an Eye that Never Sleeps,” by James Cowden Wallace], is not uneasy or unrestful by the machinations and failings of His creatures. He loves what He has created, and enjoys it in its perfection. In Genesis, when God

created various things, it is recorded that God pronounced everything “*very good.*” (Genesis 1:31). Only rebellious creatures now mar His perfect universe, and He will soon fix that situation in the Millennial Kingdom.

There are many in the developing nations who do not have these “first-world problems.” They are concerned with more-basic things, such as finding food for *today*, maintaining a shelter from the elements *today*, obtaining medical treatments *today*. They will be satisfied in the Kingdom arrangements, but most will remain unsatisfied *today*. Pray for them, and the peaceable Kingdom soon to come.

Jesus said to unsatisfied people in his day; people who were burdened and seeking rest; people for whom “*one day at a time*” was about 24 hours too much—

“Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30)

True rest, rest of the soul—not necessarily physical rest—was something that Jesus offered, then and even until now. Rest was to be found in the Messiah that God had sent; rest in God the Eternal; rest in the words of God delivered to Moses and the prophets. In other words, the “*old paths,*” pointing to the true rest to come.

Even before the days of Jesus on earth, God [through the prophets] offered peace of mind, rest, to the Israelite people—if they would accept it.

“The LORD also spoke to me again, saying:

‘Inasmuch as these people refused the waters of Shiloah [Siloam] that flow softly,

And rejoice in [with] Rezin and in Remaliah’s son;

Now therefore, behold, the Lord brings up over them the waters of the River, strong and mighty—The king of Assyria and all his glory;

He will go up over all his channels and go over all his banks.

He will pass through Judah, He will overflow and pass over,

He will reach up to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings will fill the breadth of Your land, O Immanuel.” (Isaiah 8:5-8)

The waters “*that flow softly,*” in a general sense meaning the streams, springs, conduits, and reservoirs that supply Jerusalem and the Temple,

represent the silent unobtrusive presence and majesty of Jehovah; in contrast to the Euphrates—violent, rapid, impetuous, and overflowing, representing the government and might of Assyria.

Trust in me, said God to Israel, and I will give you peace of mind; I will protect you; no need to fear. But they would not accept the less-tangible, but more-certain, help from the God of Promise; seeking rather, earthly help which ultimately solved nothing but only created more problems. God would bring on them the judgments they deserved.

Let this not be the case with the dedicated Christian.

Let us pray for that “*peace of God*,” that peace of mind, that comes from putting our hearts and minds fully in Jesus, the Messiah. (Philippians 4:7).

“I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.” (Psalm 4:8)

“As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.” (Psalm 17:15)

“You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.” (Psalm 145:16)

Let us be satisfied with what God has provided for us now; whether we have much or little, it will all pass away soon.

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.” (1 John 2:15-17)

“But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” (1 Timothy 6:9-10)

Look back and thank God. Look forward and trust God.

The glorified church will be satisfied in heaven; the restored human race

will be satisfied on earth. Jesus will be satisfied with the results of his sacrifice—“*He shall see the labour of His soul, and be satisfied.*” (Isaiah 53:11)

The frenetic craving for something *new* will be gone; the hyper-active push to get *more* will be gone; life will resume a more-natural pace, more in harmony with nature’s rhythms. Time, plenty of time, to reflect on God and what He has provided.

Time to be *satisfied*.

Finally, even God will be satisfied.

*“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth;
And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.
But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create;
For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, and her people a joy.
I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people...”* (Isaiah 65:17-19)

“The LORD your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.” (Zephaniah 3:17)

The ETERNAL singing for joy? May it be so!

LS



The Resurrection

A well-known resurrection text, Isa. 26:19, is difficult to understand in the form in which it appears in the Authorised Version (KJV). It is evident from the italics that the translators were not sure of the precise sense. The Septuagint rendering throws more light upon it and makes its Millennial setting more definite. “*The dead shall rise, and they that are in the tombs shall be raised, and they that are in the earth shall rejoice: for the dew from thee is healing to them: but the land of the ungodly shall perish.*”

January / February 1981

NAIL IN A SURE PLACE

All references NIV unless otherwise stated

“Grace hath been showed us from the LORD our God...to give us a nail in his holy place.” (Ezra 9:8 KJV).

Much has been written on the workmanship, structure, furniture, and vessels of the Tabernacle. In the Holy of Holies were the Ark of the Covenant, mercy seat, table of the shewbread, lampstand and altar of incense; all speak prophetically and typically to us of the manifold roles of the Lord Jesus in bringing redeemed men into the presence of God so that they might worship Him. The elements themselves are but a shadow of the truths and principles behind the true and spiritual worship promulgated by Christ in the gospel age. (Heb. 8:5). Hidden amongst the gold and richness of the glory of God’s dwelling place on earth is an ordinary nail or tent peg. Although easily overlooked it is of supreme importance in the structure of the Tabernacle, and for us as partakers of the new covenant.

This importance is illustrated by a detailed consideration of Isaiah 22:15-24. The account draws a contrast between two people, Shebna and Eliakim. Analysis of these characters emphasises the gulf between the carnal nature and the spiritual man exemplified by Christ.

The account opens with a picture of Shebna, whose name means “youthfulness.” While youth carries connotations of strength and vigour, scripture often refers to its headstrong passions and identifies it as the period of our most wayward inclinations. Paul’s advice to Timothy was to *“flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”* (2 Tim. 2:22) The Lord spoke to Noah in Gen. 8:21, saying that *“every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood.”* Several Biblical characters, including Job, referred to the sins of their youth. Note in passing here that Jesus lived through all the challenges of physical and emotional development, but never succumbed to the sinful passions of youth.

Shebna was treasurer to Hezekiah; he took charge of palace affairs and was steward of the King’s resources. Mankind was originally placed as steward of God’s creation. *“Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea...”* (Gen. 1:28). Man lost his position of dominion and responsibility through sin. Shebna speaks to us of fallen man.

As treasurer, Shebna was an educated man. He would have been used to

careful and efficient administration, making best possible use of resources, time, and energy. Knowing what it was to hold a position of trust and authority, he must have paid care and attention to the disciplines of investment. From such training, one would expect him to be equally parsimonious (frugal) in his own affairs.

Isa. 22:16 reveals, however, that the height of his personal investment was a grave. He marked out and purchased for himself a sepulchre near Jerusalem. He spent money, time and energy in preparation for death. We need to prepare for death, both in ensuring our eternal rest, and in providing for our families. (Prov. 13:22). Shebna's pre-occupation and level of commitment to his grave was dishonourable.

He sited his resting place "*on the height.*" (Isa. 22:16). He chose a lofty place where passers-by would clearly see his sepulchre. In life he held a position above many; even in death he would be of elevated position. In this regard, Shebna shows himself to be a child of Satan; as Lucifer he also aspired to a lofty place. (Isa. 14:13).

Shebna hewed his tomb out of solid rock. It's durability was ensured—generations to come would have to look up to the grave of Shebna. Part of the inscribed lintel from his tomb has been recovered (*Avigad, N, 1953, Israel Exploration Journal, vol. 3, pp. 137-152; Wiseman, D.J., 1958, Illustrations from Biblical Archaeology, p.59*). In death, his name was assured a lasting monument to his greatness, and would be lifted high (cf. also Absalom's pillar in 2 Sam. 18:18). His approach to death was one of great pride, and his post-mortem investment was in a high, deeply etched inscription testifying to his importance.

How this contrasts with the attitude of the Lord Jesus! He came to death with no pride at all. Indeed, "*he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*" (Phil. 2:8 KJV). Far from spending all his energies in preparing a resting place for himself. Jesus was buried in a tomb which was prepared for another man. He took no glory in the grave—he would only require it for 3 days! Rather than spending his efforts toward death, He came to give us life in superabundance. (John 10:10)

Although the resurrection of the dead was a central doctrine, Shebna's expectations of God were very low. If it entered his mind at all, resurrection must have been a very distant horizon. In preparing a rocky tomb, his efforts were for durability and safety for his resting place in death. He was

preparing for a long stay!

He prepared for glory in death, yet we are reminded that there is no glory except for that of *God*. “*Let him who boasts boast about this, that he understands and knows me.*” (Jer. 9:24). There can be no glory in death because it is swallowed up in the victory of the resurrection of the sinless Christ. All glory must go to Him who vanquished death. It is not a tomb that man should labour for and set his ambitions on, but pursuit of God’s kingdom and everlasting life.

The focus of Shebna’s life was the grave. Jesus taught that “*where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*” (Matt. 6:21 KJV). Shebna’s aspirations were limited to death. He valued the grave and accorded death an opportunity for sustained glory. This is a vastly different view to the perspective of God’s children, in which death is merely the wages of sin.

God, speaking through Isaiah, having identified Shebna’s sinfulness, impeaches him with the question, “*What are you doing here and who gave you permission?*” (Isa. 22:16). Hear the righteous indignation in God’s voice at the affront to his established order of priorities! The result is the promise of expatriation, disgrace, and deposition.

It is to Eliakim that God will look. Eliakim means “My God shall establish” or “my servant.” He was son of Hilkiah—“the portion of Jehovah.” These names find their fullest import in the Lord Jesus, the suffering servant who has been established by God in the heavens, having made God his portion whilst on earth. Jesus, the servant of God, came to administer grace to fallen humanity. In a way, he was God’s treasurer, the steward of the riches of glory, liberally distributing the King’s resources amongst his people—sight for the blind, health for the sick, life for the dead, strength for the weary, hope for the hopeless, and redemption for the fallen.

Jesus is, in a sense “*a father to those who live in Jerusalem and to the house of Judah.*” (Isa. 22:21) Because of his death, resurrection, and exaltation, praises ring in the house of Judah (literally, house of praise), and the very centre of the Kingdom of God. In Jesus came the spiritual fulfilment of all the natural order. God’s nation on earth pointed to the spiritual Israel, and the hope of a new Jerusalem with Jesus its creator and sustainer. Further, the mission of Jesus fathered “*many sons to glory.*” (Heb. 2:10). His response to his Father would be to “*declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your*

praises.” (Heb. 2:12, quoting Psa. 22:22).

“I will place on his shoulder the key to the house of David; what he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open.” (Isa. 22:22) The form of this promise to Eliakim recalls those to Jesus, “great David’s greater Son.” He holds the keys to the kingdoms “of death and Hades” (Rev. 1:18), and delivered the keys of Heaven to the Church via Peter. (Matt. 16:19). His also are the keys to the 7-sealed scroll (Rev. 6:1) whose opening releases the 4 horsemen, the souls of the testifying saints beneath the altar, the earthquake, and its attendant signs followed by the sealing of the 144,000, and the great silence followed by the destruction of one third of the earth. The authority of Jesus for binding and loosing is unique and unassailable.

“I will drive him like a peg into a firm place.” (Isa. 22:23). There is no word for “like” in the Hebrew, it being inserted to improve syntax. The implication in the original is that Eliakim himself would be the peg or nail. Bearing in mind the pointers to Jesus, this refers back to our text in Ezra 9:8, that God would provide a nail in his holy place. The prophecy in Zech. 10:4 is also relevant here, *“From Judah will come the cornerstone”* of his Kingdom (Isa. 28:16; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; 1 Peter 2:7 etc.); in Rev. 6:1-2 the conqueror on the white horse was released as the Lamb of God opened the first of the 7 seals, and a battle bow (*Gk. toxon*) was in his hand. Thus, it is not surprising to see Christ represented as the nail or peg in this verse.

Our nail is Jesus, and he is in “his holy place.” By referring back to Exod. 27:19 and Exod. 38:20, we understand that the pins, nails, or tent-pegs (depending on the translation) of the tabernacle were to be made of brass. They were placed in brass sockets and served to secure the tabernacle to the ground in the wilderness. The tabernacle housed the very presence of God. There is a pin which holds the transcendent spiritual glory of the God of Heaven in the proximity of love to His creation. The peg that can hold heaven to earth is Jesus Christ. He is the only means of access from earth to heaven, the one mediator between God and man.

Just as the peg was needed to secure the tabernacle in times of storm, flood, and desert wind, so Jesus Christ is needed as the pinion of heavenly glory in the Church to stabilise against the fierce attacks of the tempter, and the storms of God’s wrath upon man’s sin as laid upon him (cf. Psa. 55:1-8). How could God in all his glory become allied to man with all his shifting sands of mortality, selfishness, changeable loyalties, and sinful

pride? Man lacks the integrity and stability for occupation by the God of the universe. Only the stake of Jesus is sufficient to anchor God and allow his filling of peoples lives, making them temples of the Holy Spirit.

The brass nature of the pegs speaks of judgment (Num. 21:9; Deut. 28:23; Judges 16:21 etc.); brass is a mixture of copper and zinc forged at high temperatures. Only in the perfect man Jesus is there an alloy of earth and heaven fired under the judgment of the Father; only in him are met all the necessary ingredients for the forging of a nail to be placed in the holy of holies.

The Hebrew word for “firm” or “sure” place is *aman*, (Isa. 22:23) a derivative of Amen. *“For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.”* (2 Cor. 1:20 KJV). Jesus is sole means for communicating the fulfilment of God’s promise, spoken from his holy place, to us.

“He will be a throne of honour for the house of his father.” (Isa. 22:23 NIV margin). God has given Jesus the throne of his earthly ancestral father David (Luke 1:32-33; Acts 2:29-30; Heb. 8:1; Rev. 22:3 etc.) and has him rule over the kingdom of his heavenly Father. Honour belongs to the Lamb who sits upon the throne. (Rev. 5:12,13).

“All the glory of his family will hang on him: its offspring and offshoots—all its lesser vessels, from the bowls to all the jars” (Isa. 22:24) the entirety of his adopted family from the greatest to the smallest vessel, to be hung upon him. Only Jesus can bring the eternal weight (kahod) of the glory of heaven and sinful man together in stable union.

“We have....an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf.” (Heb. 6:19-20).

November/ December 1989

Come on! My partners in distress,
Dear comrades through the wilderness,
Who still your bodies feel,
Awhile forget your griefs and fears,
And look beyond this vale and tears
To that celestial hill.

Who suffer with our Master here
We shall before his face appear,
And by His side sit down.
To patient faith the prize is sure,
And all that to the end endure
The cross, shall wear the Crown.

Charles Wesley

THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO ABRAHAM

Gal. 3:8

Justification for believers of all nations during the Gospel Age is the blessing promised in the Abrahamic Covenant, as interpreted for us by the great Apostle. Many have thought this Covenant was a promise of restitution through the seed, but the Apostle shows a much deeper meaning. A careful study of his argument proves that he had no thought of restitution or a Millennial Age blessing. To combat the false brethren who were troubling the Galatian Churches by teaching that circumcision was essential to salvation, St. Paul reveals that the first time the Gospel was preached the Gentiles were promised *the* blessing, namely, Justification by Faith. All who can exercise the *same* faith receive the *same* blessing. “So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.” (Gal. 3:9)

As interpreted by St. Paul, the Abrahamic Covenant contains two great promises. Firstly, to Abraham himself, the promise of a seed from all nations, “So shall thy seed be.” (Gen. 15:5). Secondly, to the seed a blessing was assured. “Now to Abraham were the promises spoken and to (concerning) his seed.” (Gal. 3:16 RV).

This blessing St. Paul shows to be justification and all the wonderful privileges God has associated with it for all who believe whether Jews or Gentiles. Thus seen, the Covenant is not a promise of a blessing *through* a seed, but *to* a seed. When a claim to an inheritance is established the heir becomes the possessor of the estate. In Galatians 3, the apostle is establishing the claim for the Gentiles and shows that if we Gentiles are Christ’s, united with him by baptism into his death, then we are Abraham’s Seed, and can claim the inheritance now.

Thus we have “Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1), and this is beautifully emphasized by the same Apostle in Rom. 15:13: “Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit.” In chapter 4, the Apostle buttresses his argument by showing that Abraham’s experiences with Hagar and Sarah were an allegory. The two wives, he explains, represented the two Covenants. Hagar and her child represent the Law Covenant and the Jewish people. Sarah and her child represent the promise and the Church. Sarah’s work was to produce the seed of promise. So now the work of the Abrahamic Covenant is to produce the *seed*, not seeds, and when the Church is completed the Abrahamic Covenant will be finished. (Micah 5:3)

The question will, of course, arise: what hope then has the world in the Abrahamic Covenant?

The answer is: that neither the unbelieving Jew nor the faithless Gentile has any hope of participating in it. God's provision for the Jew is in the New Covenant, which will be a Law Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 18), and the world will have the opportunity of learning the ways, terms, and conditions of that Covenant in the Millennial Age.

Thus it is the Jew first (Rom. 11:27; 2:10), their neighbours next (Jer. 12:14-17), and all the nations afar off. (Micah 4:3) The parable of the sheep and the goats (Matt. 25:31-46) reveals that many will refuse the Lord's reasonable terms in that day, and this agrees with Isaiah 26:10.

It has been suggested that Gal. 3 is an application of the Abrahamic Covenant because of St. Paul's statement in Rom. 4:13, that Abraham is "Heir of the world." If that were true it would, of course, mean that St. Paul had one application for one Church, and a different one for others. But in Galatians 1:11-13 he shows this grand interpretation came from Jesus himself, to Him as Minister to the Gentiles.

A careful study of Rom. 4:11-17 (See Roth. & R.V.) shows the Apostle's argument here to be, as we should expect, identical with his teaching in Gal. 3. The "World" of which Abraham became heir, is the same "World" the Apostle says has been reconciled, because the Jew was cast off. (Rom. 11:12-15) Since only one nation received the Law, righteousness would have been confined to that one nation, "and the promise made of none effect," (Rom. 4:14) because the promise was, "In thee shall *all* the nations be blessed." Now in Rom. 4:16, we read: "Therefore it" (Justification) "is of *faith*, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the *seed* (singular, as in Gal. 3:16);...as it is written, I have made thee a Father of many nations." (Gen. 17:4-5)

All who believe Abraham's seed are the Sons of God, and the Sons alone are Abraham's seed, and receive the blessing, justification, because they are of Faith. (Gal. 3:26; 4:6).

St. Paul had this one Gospel, of which he was not ashamed. (Rom. 1:16) Glad tidings for all who believe and obey the truth, and the fact that already the awakening has been observed among the Jews proves the Christ to be nearing completion. (Rom. 11:25-27). We, the Church, stand, walk, and overcome by Faith. (Rom. 11:20; 2 Cor. 5:7; 1 John 5:4)

OUR FATHER KNOWS WHAT THINGS WE NEED—A HYMN

OUR Father knows what things we need.
 Each step along the way
 His eye of love doth never sleep;
 He watches night and day.

He knows, sometimes, like ripening grain,
 We need the sunshine bright.
 Again He sends the peace that comes
 With shadows of the night.

Sometimes our pride would fain unfurl
 Ambition's flaunting sail:
 Ah! then He knows we need to walk
 Humiliation's vale.

Sometimes He takes our eager hands
 And folds them on our breast;
 He gently lays our work aside—
 He knows we need to rest.

Sometimes we need companionship,
 Sometimes "the wilderness."
 How sweet to feel He'll know and give
 The state that most will bless!

Then let us leave it all with Him,
 Assured that, come what may,
 Our Father knows just what we need
 Upon our pilgrim way.



Bible Students Hymnal
Tune: Wiltshire, G.T. Smart

The writer of this hymn appears unknown. It was originally printed by the Associated Bible Students, Aldersbrook Ecclesia who met in Wanstead at the Bowling Green (then in Ilford). It was included in a reprint of *Christian Hymns* and came from their *Christian Hymns*, in the Supplement printed in 1932 by Camelot Press.

Has anyone more information regarding the origin of this hymn?

Here are some verses which may have inspired the writer:

Matthew 6:32-33 For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Psalms 33:18 Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy.

Proverbs 5:21 For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings.

Psalms 103:14 For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust.

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Matthew 6:8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

Job 34:21 *ESV* For his eyes are on the ways of a man, and he sees all his steps.

1 Peter 3:12 *ESV* For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.

Isaiah 41:13 *NKJV* For I, the LORD your God, will hold your right hand, Saying to you, 'Fear not, I will help you.'

Eccl. 2:24 *NIV* A person can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in their own toil. This too, I see, is from the hand of God.

Job 12:10 *NRSV* In His hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being.

Psalms 23:1-4 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

NAC

FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS

“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.” (Phil. 3:10)

What is fellowship? Professor Strong defines the Greek word translated “Fellowship” as partnership, companionship, communion.

Paul ever had before his mental vision the fact that we have presented our bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto God. (Rom. 12:1) But suffering of any kind is foreign to the natural desire of all God’s intelligent creatures and the human creation is no exception. One of the most blessed assurances given concerning God’s Plan for the human race is that eventually “There shall be no more...pain.” (Rev. 21:4) That will not be until the close of the millennial reign when sickness and death will be no more.

It is still a suffering and dying world, and the followers of the Master share in the experiences which are common to all. The divine arrangement does not call for a release from suffering simply because we are sons of God. Peter tells us we are not to think it strange concerning the fiery trials of the Christian life. (1 Pet. 4:12-13) Trials to the Christian are not an evidence of God’s disfavour but the reverse. Paul also wrote “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” and that it is through “much tribulation” that we enter the Kingdom. (2 Tim. 3:12; Acts 14:22) Even if some of our trials are in the nature of disciplinary stripes they are still an evidence of God’s love. “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” (Heb. 12:6)

Yet whilst sufferings are a means to mould and shape our characters into Christ likeness they are accepted by God for another purpose as well. When Paul exhorts us to “present our bodies living sacrifices,” it is with a definite purpose in view. In the plans and purposes of God as Paul in Col. 1:24 says that he (and therefore we too) fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in his flesh for his body’s sake. Yes, we have the wonderful privilege of fellowship in Christ’s sufferings. The Twentieth Century NT renders this passage “I supplement the afflictions endured by the Christ.” Paul is expressly saying that he “fills up instead of His Master,” what is still left unfinished as it were of his Master’s afflic-

tions. This is not to imply that our Lord's sacrifice was incomplete but that the church are permitted a partnership.

This does not mean we have a part in the ransom. No! For Jesus was the corresponding price for Adam and he was the exact counterpart for Adam and by his death released Adam and the race from the death penalty. But once out of the grave, released from death, man resurrected with the character formed in this evil world would have but returned to the death state the first occasion he disobeyed the Divine Law.

Another work was necessary therefore before the resurrection could commence. A sacrificial work, similar to the picture of Israel in the Wilderness on its Day of Atonement. On that day *two* animals were sacrificed and accepted by God to reckonedly cleanse the natural Israelites from personal sins during the ensuing year. This is what has been necessary in God's arrangements with regard to the world. They will need a covering for personal unwilful sins while they walk up the Highway of Holiness in much the same way as we now have a covering, the Robe of Christ's Righteousness to cover our sins and blemishes and permit us to "come boldly unto the Throne of Grace." (Isa. 35:8; Isa. 61:10; Heb. 4:16)

When Jesus died the legal condemnation to death in Adam was cancelled, but that was not sufficient to reconcile all to God. For besides the death penalty man has become defiled by sins and these defilements must be cleansed away. When these two things are accomplished:-

- the death penalty is cancelled
 - sin's defilements removed,
- then men can be reconciled to God.

God used His typical people to foreshadow these matters in types. Christians are agreed that the slaying of the Passover lamb which preceded the deliverance of the Israelites from bondage typified the death of Jesus as the *ransom* required before (preparatory to) the redemption of the human race from death.

Those who are brought into relationship with God through faith and consecration during the Gospel Age have received the benefit of the Ransom. They have "passed from death unto life." (1 John 3:14) Should they now sin they need the benefit not of the Ransom, but of the Sin-offering. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus

Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins:" (1 John 2:1-2) not for Adam's sin but ours; those sins we commit while on trial.

This "propitiation" is associated with the mercy seat, the sin-offering, which is for cleansing from individual or personal sins committed while on trial. The writer of Hebrews directs attention to the Tabernacle and speaks consistently, not of redemption, but of *cleansing*. "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge (cleanse) your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. 9:13-14) See Heb. 9:22-23 also.

The word translated "redemption" in Hebrews 9:12&15 should read "deliverance." Now notice Heb. 13:12 "wherefore Jesus also, that he might *sanctify* the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." Here again the writer is speaking of the sin-offering and does *not* say "Wherefore Jesus also that he might 'redeem' the people with his own blood suffered without the gate." It did not need Jesus to suffer without the Gate to redeem the race. Adam and his race were condemned to death, and it needed Jesus to die for their redemption. So far as Redemption was concerned it would not matter by what process Jesus entered the death state. Provided he did enter, the race can be released.

Jesus' sufferings "without the gate" were for another purpose. See Heb. 13:11-12. When Jesus presented himself for sacrifice at *Jordan* his will died to all human aspirations. This was typified by the slaying of the bullock on the Day of Atonement, but Jesus' human body did not die at that instant. This dying was prolonged for 3½ years during which he suffered scorn, misrepresentation, reproach—typified by the burning without the camp. This 3½ years was not to provide a ransom to redeem; it was to qualify him to be a sympathetic High Priest so that he could sanctify, cleanse, purge, purify his members as it says, "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." (Heb. 2:10) Throughout Hebrews it speaks of cleansing, purging, purifying, sanctifying, not redeeming, because he is dealing with the Tabernacle types and these are intended to show not redemption but the means whereby those already redeemed might be cleansed from sins committed while on trial. "For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to *cleanse* you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD." (Lev. 16:30)

According to God's purpose this cleansing is to be performed in two sections:

the first to be cleansed are those who accept Jesus during the Gospel Age and

the second the remainder of the human race who will be cleansed during the Millennial Age.

In the second great work of cleansing, Jesus as the High Priest will have associates, members of His body. They also must have suffered without the Camp. "Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." (Heb. 13:13)

For "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him." (2 Tim. 2:12) With this understanding how fitting it was that in the type the sin-offering should be in two portions: "...the bullock for himself and his house" and "the goat for the people."

It has been suggested that when Jesus appeared "in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:24) he then applied the merit of the ransom. This has caused a difficulty because once in a year the High Priest took blood into the Most Holy twice. This would seem to imply that either the Ransom is in two portions or else that the same sacrifice is applied twice. Jesus is the only one who could provide a ransom and could only die once. If the merit of the same sacrifice were applied twice this would need a scripture. For the blood of the bullock was taken into the Most Holy not twice but once only. When the High Priest went in on the second occasion it was with the blood of another animal. To say that the Ransom was applied twice would imply either that the humanity of Jesus was shown in both the bullock and the goat or else the church are part of the Ransom.

This difficulty is avoided by keeping that when Jesus appeared in the presence of God for us, it was with the merit, not of the Ransom but of the sin offering. So we see that like as Lev. 16:11,15 "Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself." "Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock." Both animals were treated alike.

Just as our personal sins need cleansing whilst we are on trial so will the world as they walk up the Highway of Holiness back into harmony with God. (Isa. 35:8) We are running for the prize of the high calling. But the

ransomed race, redeemed from death in the time when all that are in their graves shall come forth will have a *covering* to cleanse, purge, purify them from their personal sins to enable them to remain on trial under the righteous arrangements of our loving and just Heavenly Father.

Since Jesus suffered and died in order to provide life, it might be expected that those who accept the provision of his blood would immediately be released from suffering and death. But instead they are not. The sufferings of Christ which we are invited to share, were, in part, the bitter persecutions which came upon him and which resulted in his death. He was persecuted because of proclaiming the truth and exposing popular error. He suffered weariness of the flesh because of his vows of consecration. Any sacrifice we can make can only be in the merit of Christ's sacrifice. We have no merit of our own. These sufferings are accepted by God as part of "filling up part of the deficit" of Christ's sufferings.

How encouraging it is to realise that today when, in fulfilment of Paul's prophecy men are "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God" (2 Tim. 3:4), there are still many of the Lord's consecrated people who in addition to spending necessary time and strength meeting temporal responsibilities of life, are happy to work "overtime" as it were, in the service of the Lord. When the unconsecrated are through with their necessary daily toil, they are free to seek enjoyment or relaxation where it suits them best. Actually the Lord's people do the same, but the greatest pleasure of the consecrated is to seek out ways and means of devoting time and strength directly in the service of the Lord. (Col. 4:5)

Jesus suffered sympathetically because of being in the world, although not of it. Being himself perfect, the sinful and imperfect things of the world would be a greater trial to him than otherwise. He was a "man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isa. 53:3) not because of illness, or poverty or failure in business or for any of the ordinary reasons that usually destroy human happiness. The sickness and death with which he was surrounded bore down heavily upon his sympathetic shoulders; as when Jesus stood by the tomb of Lazarus he "wept" in sympathy for the family, and for the whole dying world.

We have taken up our cross and are laying down our lives with Jesus. We also participate, have fellowship in these sufferings of Christ. Due to imperfection not with the same degree of sympathetic understanding that Jesus had to the suffering in the world. Nevertheless, being in revolt against sin and all that follows in its trail, by having consecrated ourselves

to the Will of God, and received the begetting of His Holy Spirit we are to some extent in the same relative position as Jesus occupied, and thus share too in his sufferings along this line.

Does a part of our daily trial consist of the fact that we are pained by the sorrow of others? If this be true, we have one of the most outstanding witnesses of the Spirit that we are the children of God. Such trials should not seem strange to us but they give cause for joy as we realise we have this *evidence of Christlikeness*.

It was because Jesus *loved* the world that he suffered sympathetically with the people. And should this not be the basis of our sympathy toward the poor groaning creation? This feeling should be even more keenly felt toward our brethren in Christ. It was concerning this that Paul wrote in Phil 2:1-2 "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same *love*, being of one accord, of one mind."

Just as Jesus passed through experiences similar to those which try us, and is now able to understand and *succour* us, this should also be true among ourselves. Are we not all running in the same way of sacrifice? Yes and we are all living in the same unfriendly world. We are all subject to the same trials and temptations. Our hearts should go out to one another in sympathetic understanding and in the spirit of true comfort and helpfulness. John said that we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren and this surely involves the outpouring of our love and sympathy to one another. (1 John 3:16) If "one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it" because we are "many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you." (1 Cor. 12:26,20,21)

Also consider all our hardships as indirectly related to our "fellowship of his sufferings." To view our common tasks and our trivial care from this standpoint should transform them into hallowed experiences in which we will see the hand of the Lord directing our destiny and causing all things to work together for our good.

Jesus' sufferings too were a means to teach him *obedience*. He was by this method trained for the position he now occupies as our sympathetic High Priest, and the head of the Royal priesthood which in our Father's

due time will succour the whole world. He was tested in all points as a New Creature similar to the manner in which we are tested as new creatures although only by observation did he become acquainted with the weaknesses of the dying race.

During this Gospel Age the Church is being made perfect or trained to be associated with Jesus in dealing with the sin-cursed world. Because we are by nature sinners it means that the New World's Priesthood will by actual experience as well as by observation be able to deal sympathetically with the people in the next age. Meanwhile they are invited to follow in Jesus' footsteps, invited to suffer and die with him, to have fellowship, partnership, companionship in his sufferings filling up what he in God's overruling left behind. God was wanting us to learn from experience.

Those who understand the Divine Plan for salvation know why God permitted evil. It was because He wanted his human creation to learn valuable lessons from the experience. He is training such to be the teachers to help them understand the full meaning of the reign of sin and death. It is an instrument in our Father's hand.

We rejoice that there is the privilege of fellowship in Christ's sufferings. God could have so arranged matters that Jesus' life of sacrifice alone was accepted for the world as well as the Church as so beautifully pictured in the types of Israel of old in the Tabernacle ceremonies. To keep this thought in mind will help us bear our trials. The Lord said concerning His typical people that when they were afflicted He also suffered. (Isa. 63:9) Surely this is no less true of us. If our faith can grasp this fact, it will help to make every ache and pain whether of mind, or heart or body a sacred experience of priceless value in preparing us for that high position for which we are apprehended of God.

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.” (1 Pet. 4:12-13)

ETN

FATHER, TAKE MY HAND

*THE way is dark, my Father! Cloud on cloud
Is gathering thickly o'er my head, and loud
The thunders roar above me. See, I stand
Like one bewildered! Father, take my hand,
And through the gloom
Lead safely home
Thy child.*



*The way is long, my Father! And my soul
Longs for the rest and quiet of the goal;
While yet I journey through the weary land,
Keep me from wandering, Father, take my hand.
Quickly and straight
Lead to heaven's gate
Thy child.*



*The path is rough, my Father! Many a thorn
Hath pierced me; and my weary feet, all torn
And bleeding, mark the way. Yet Thy command
Bids me press forward. Father, take my hand.
Then, safe and blest,
Lead on to rest
Thy child.*



*The throng is great, my Father! Many a doubt
And fear, and danger, compass me about,
And foes oppress me so. I cannot stand
Or go alone. O Father! take my hand,
And through the throng
Lead safe along
Thy child.*

Poems of Dawn

THE BIBLE'S SONG OF LOVE

Verse by verse through the Song of Songs Part 5c Chapter 7:10-8:4
All references RV unless otherwise stated

7:10 In words of strong, unhesitating confidence, the Bride continues: "I AM MY BELOVED'S, AND HIS DESIRE IS TOWARD ME."

Such confidence comes from heart experience. We can never say this merely on the basis of an understanding of doctrine. This is the assurance which comes of love itself working in our hearts for our Lord not only promised that "He that loveth me...I will love him" but He added "and will manifest myself unto him." (John 14:21)

When His love has borne full fruit in us and produced in us the full stature of His betrothed then we shall be able to take His arm, as it were, and to walk with Him. Hers is the confident expression of a bride who is to live not only in His love but is to share as His marriage partner in all His life work. So He says

7:11 "COME, MY BELOVED, LET US GO FORTH INTO THE FIELD; LET US LODGE IN THE VILLAGES."

"Behold the Bridegroom—go ye out to meet Him," expresses a similar call, for our Lord is here commencing the great work with which His Bride is also to be associated. And He calls to her to look with Him at the first signs of His direct influence in the affairs of men.

"The field is the world." (Matt. 13:38) "The villages" suggest small groups scattered throughout the world. Throughout the Song the Bride has been pictured as being apart from settlements of mankind for hers is a wilderness calling. What then do the villages mean? Is it not a reference to the Millennial work? (Rev. 21:3) It is also significant that the phrase is "lodge in the villages" which gives the same thought of temporary dwelling as "the tabernacle of God is with men." (Rev. 21:3) Is it not implicit in Paul's statement in 1 Cor. 15:25,28? Is it coincidence that the Hebrew word for village is "kaphar" translated elsewhere "atonement" (for it has the meaning of "to cover")? It is certainly appropriate that a picture of the work of the Bridegroom and His Bride should have association with the word "atonement."

7:12 "LET US GET UP EARLY TO THE VINEYARDS;" He continues "LET US SEE WHETHER THE VINE HATH BUDDED, AND ITS BLOSSOM BE OPEN, AND THE POMEGRANATES BE IN FLOWER:

 THERE WILL I GIVE THEE MY LOVE.”

Lodging for the night suggests the short time of our Lord’s second and secret presence whilst His bride is being prepared for the marriage. Getting “up early” would then refer to the early hours of the new Millennial Day. This verse would seem to refer to the restoration of Israel which occupies the “early” period of the Millennial Day. The time has come when the vineyard which has become waste and desolate should begin to “flourish.” The “tender grape” or vine blossom speaks of the promise of fruit which will provide blessing for all the families of the earth.

With what joyful anticipation the Beloved enters upon His work with His Bride. “Let US lodge—let US get up early—let US see etc.” “We are members of His body.”

7:13 “THE MANDRAKES GIVE FORTH FRAGRANCE,” he says thus telling in the picturesque language of the East that the days of barrenness are over, for mandrakes (or love apples) were popularly associated with fruitfulness in natural birth. (See Gen. 30:14-17) Moreover they grow and ripen during the wheat harvest. In this verse do they not symbolise the days of Israel’s revival, particularly as they are found in the days of the wheat harvest—the harvest period spoken of by our Lord? Now is the time when Israel’s barrenness and blindness is to begin to pass away.

“AND OVER OUR DOORS (mar.) ARE ALL MANNER OF PRECIOUS FRUITS, NEW AND OLD, WHICH I HAVE LAID UP FOR THEE, O MY BELOVED.”

What are the precious fruits which He has laid up for His Bride? What is this which is laid up “over the door”? Our Lord spoke of “laying up treasures in heaven.” Our Lord shall preserve them for us or, as Paul puts it “There is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord... shall give to me at that day: and not only to me, but also to all them that have loved His appearing.” (2 Tim. 4:8)

These words of the Bridegroom express Paul’s thought in different words. The fruits laid up are over the doors into which the Bridegroom and the Bride enter into their glorious marriage. It is appropriate that the crown of victory—the crowning glory of the fruits of a life of love for Him should be pictured as being “over the doors”—at the very threshold of the new life in glory.

8:1 The Bride is now so closely identified with Him that her first thoughts are for those who lacked the spiritual growth to stand with her in such grace and favour.

“OH THAT THOU WERT AS MY BROTHER,” she says “THAT SUCKED THE BREASTS OF MY MOTHER!”

This expression of great desire that their relationship could have been closer could not apply to the Bridegroom for with Him she has reached the closest possible communion. This it seems clear continues the thought of the previous verses which refer to natural Israel. The mother of the Bride is the Sarah Covenant and it is to this close family communion that she would that Israel could have adopted.

The same emotions moved our Lord when He wept over Jerusalem “How often would I have gathered thy children together...and ye would not.”

In Romans, Chapters 9, 10 and 11 the Apostle expresses similar sentiments (see particularly 10:1) and shows that such feelings towards natural Israel truly befit the Bride, particularly at this time when we see the beginnings of the return of Israel to favour.

“WHEN I SHOULD FIND THEE WITHOUT, I WOULD KISS THEE; YEA, AND NONE WOULD DESPISE ME.”

Does this not take us back to the typical setting in Gen. 21:9 when Ishmael, who typified the seed of the Law, mocked Isaac the “seed” of the Sarah Covenant? She would have had things so much different. “If *only* thou wert as my brother” and then makes the definition even clearer by adding the words “my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother!” This it will be seen is not suggesting that he should be born of the same mother. “If only thou wert *as* my brother” then, she says, the seed of the Sarah Covenant should not have been despised.

8:2 “I WOULD LEAD THEE, AND BRING THEE INTO MY MOTHER’S HOUSE, THAT THOU MIGHTEST INSTRUCT ME.” (Mar.)

And so the Bride refers gratefully to all she has learned through Israel’s experience of covenant relationship with God. For “the law” says Paul has “been our tutor to bring us unto Christ.” (Gal. 3:24) But there is much that Israel has to learn which can only be learnt in her “mother’s house.”

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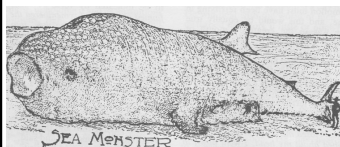
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MISSION OF JONAH
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John Clarke, Evesham formerly Rugby

In Chapter 3 verse 4 the maiden shows the great importance of her mother's house. (*Note.* She does not say Father's house thus emphasising that she realises that her earthly standing is under the cover of the Sarah Covenant.) In that reference she shows that to her the best way to make Him really hers is to have Him with her in the place which typifies her spiritual home on earth. There she received instruction re-emphasising

how important it is that we shall recognise the deep significance of our standing in relation to the covenants. Only from that standpoint can God's purposes be clearly understood.

In that spiritual home she says "I WOULD CAUSE THEE TO DRINK OF SPICED WINE, OF THE JUICE OF MY POMEGRANATE."

In other words she would have been able to give him the fragrant wine of doctrine and the refreshing fruits of the spirit which revive hope. Is that not what natural Israel needs? Does not their spiritual plight make those with bridal love say with Paul "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record (witness) that they have a zeal of (for) God, but not according to knowledge." (Rom. 10:1-2 KJV) It is this knowledge which is taught in her "mother's house."

8:3 In Chapter 2:6 the maiden prays for the rapture of having His left hand under her head, and His right hand embracing her. The Bride uses similar words to conclude this fifth part of the Song but there is a difference. She is now mature and speaks with deep and heartfelt understanding. Now she longs to be entirely with Him.

"OH THAT HIS LEFT HAND MIGHT BE UNDER MY HEAD," she says "AND THAT HIS RIGHT HAND MIGHT EMBRACE ME." (Leeser)

But this loving desire can only be understood in the fulness of Bridal affection so part five closes with a similar adjuration of the Bridegroom to that with which other parts have closed. (Note. Leeser's translation here and in verse 4 does not introduce any new thought but helps the understanding.)

8:4 "I ADJURE YOU, O DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM, WHY WILL YE AWAKEN, AND WHY WILL YE EXCITE MY LOVE, UNTIL IT PLEASE (to come of itself?)" (Leeser) for Christ's love cannot be commanded. It does not derive from what we do but from what we are.

EEA/LB



In God's works we see his hand, but in his Word we see his heart.

Deep Waters and a Bubbling Brook

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email-editor@biblefellowshipunion.co.uk

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