



# BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

Thou, therefore, endure  
hardness as a good  
soldier of Jesus Christ.

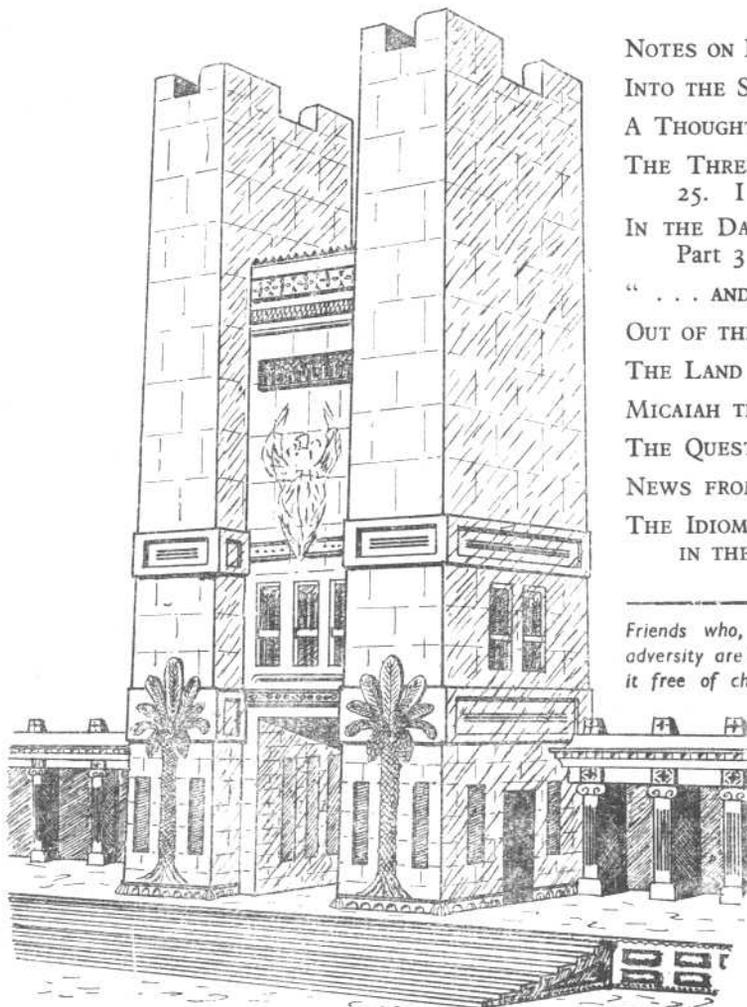
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Lift up your heads, O ye gates  
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors,  
And the King of glory shall come in.

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## NOTES ON PASSING EVENTS

The death of Dr. Chaim Weizman, first President of Israel, at the age of 77, closes the first chapter in the history of the Second Restoration. Although Theodore Herzl is justly acclaimed founder of the Zionist movement which since 1897 has fought for a Jewish homeland, it was the consistent vision of Chaim Weizman which led to its establishment in Palestine. Herzl would have accepted Britain's offer of land in Uganda for the new State; Weizman opposed that plan and insisted that it must be Jerusalem or nothing. Herzl died in 1904 a disappointed man; Weizman worked on until in 1918 the famous "Balfour Declaration" marked the first real step forward in fulfilment of the ancient prophecies and the hopes of the Zionists. In 1948, half a century after Herzl founded the Zionist movement and thirty years after the Balfour Declaration, in which Britain pledged herself to the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, the Jewish State was proclaimed and Dr. Weizman elected President.

The present State of Israel is not the regathered Israel of prophecy. That is to be a theocracy, a kingdom of which God is acknowledged to be King and His laws the standards of the land. This nation is still one of the "kingdoms of this world" and its standards those of any other "civilised" nation. At a private meeting—at which the writer of this note was present—held in London in 1948 to bid Dr. Weizman farewell before his departure to take up his duties as President of Israel, he declared in reply to a question that the new Israel was not to be a theocratic State. He meant that it was not going to be organised as was Israel in the days of the Old Testament. Nevertheless the time is to come when Israel will become just such a State, when, in the words of Zechariah, "the governors of Judah shall say in their heart 'The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the Lord of Hosts their God'." (Zech. 12. 5.)

The present is a work of preparation. Prophecy is being fulfilled in Israel, but we must not expect too much, as yet. There has to be a change of heart and the time when "they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and shall mourn." But that time will come. Chaim Weizman was a man with vision and persistence. In that he was like Moses. Like Moses also he brought his people to the land but they were still a people of unbelief. From the everyday point of view, both men died without realising the aim to which they had devoted their lives. Thank God for our knowledge that one day both Moses and Weizman will stand again upon the soil they loved so much and perceive

how wonderfully God will have used both their lives' efforts to bring about His great work. "I will make thee a light to the nations, that thou mayest declare my salvation to the ends of the earth."

\* \* \*

"Don't rush the Welfare State" was the warning given to the Modern Churchman's conference at Bristol in September last by its chairman, Sir Henry Self. He said in part: "The Welfare State is sound in principle and its first instalment must be welcomed by all right thinking men and women. But its dangers for the spiritual life of humanity are so patent that its premature development would threaten spiritual degradation if pursued as an end in itself. The most grievous tendency of the age is towards a scientific materialism misguidedly seeking as the be-all and end-all a workless heaven on earth for future generations who will have done nothing towards it and will clearly not have attained the perfect state of character necessary for life in a perfect world." That is something to take into account when we picture to ourselves, or attempt to describe to others, the coming Kingdom of God on earth. Men will not inherit Millennial blessings without doing something to earn them. Salvation is definitely going to be by works. Men must be restored to absolute perfection, mentally, morally and physically, before they can be granted entrance into the New Jerusalem. This speaker sees clearly that it would be disastrous to give men prosperity and ease before they have been made fit to receive such blessings. That, after all, was the position in the Garden of Eden. The earth was not completely prepared for man. Our first parents had one little garden in which to make a start, but the subduing and cultivating and organising of the world was left to their efforts, for their training and preparation for eternal life; and even with that moderate and restricted amount of blessing they chose the easy course and fell into sin. How apparent it is that even under the favourable conditions of the Millennial Age men will have a hard road to travel before they can measure up to the Divine ideal. And we, the Church, must be their teachers and exemplars in that day. Unless we tread the hard path ourselves now, how will God be able to use us then?

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"The end of the commandment is love from a pure heart and a good conscience, and an undissembled faith."—I Tim. 1. 5.

## INTO THE SANCTUARY OF GOD

*A plea for  
beauty in worship*

Our God loves things of beauty and dignity. He has ordained His creation to be majestic and awe-inspiring; on this our earth He has devised Nature, fair and pleasing in her outward aspect, so that men may find pleasure and happiness in their allotted sphere. To men He has given attributes and powers, which render them capable of appreciating the dignified and the sublime, and drawing inspiration and enlightenment from the solemn and the serious, as well as gaiety and happiness from the light and pleasant. Therefore, we ought to say that in our worship and devotion we should surround ourselves with that which is beautiful and dignified, that the thoughts and prayers of our hearts may find a suitable setting in the sights and sounds which our senses are conveying to us.

The lack of beauty and dignity in worship is a great loss. To fellowships such as ours, accustomed to meet in secular halls and rooms oft-times inadequately or even quite inappropriately furnished for Christian devotion, custom has begotten indifference, and we do not realise how great is the loss. In the reaction from the empty formalism and excessive ceremonial of the established systems we have gone to the other extreme—quite a natural thing to do—and have forgotten what a stimulus there is to prayer and praise when offered to the Father in surroundings that remind us of Him.

So does our appreciation of the value of worship wax dim. We tend to look upon our meetings as times for the study or exposition of theology, or for listening to words of exhortation laid upon the heart, with union in praise and prayer merely to mark the beginning and the ending of the session. Thus, a great power for Christian growth and development—the power which resides in corporate worship—lies unused. Perhaps that is why we fail so often to recognise our relationship to each other as fellow-members of a mystic Body, and cast away so many golden hours “disputing about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.” Perhaps, after all, there is more than a modicum of truth in the old gibe that we have become “all head and no heart”, because we have failed to give Divine Worship its rightful place in our assemblies.

Those ancient exemplars of ours, the “great cloud of witnesses” (Heb. 12, 1), knew full well

the value of beauty and dignity in their surroundings when they came together to worship. They were well taught by God Himself by means of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, a simple and dignified, yet withal beauteous structure that enshrined in its snowy curtains, its play of colour, the sheen of gold and silver and polished copper, this immortal truth that God loves beauty. It would have been so easy to make the Tabernacle plain and squat and ugly—instead it must have formed a wondrous sight set in its quiet beauty amid the rugged grandeur of Shiloh, and, in the earlier days, amidst the mountains and deserts of Sinai and the road of the wanderings.

Then when Israel's first wildness had been tamed, and as a united nation they came together to worship their God, with what pride must they have viewed the marvellous edifice built by Solomon. Not the beauty of simplicity which they had seen in the Tabernacle, but the majesty and dignity of a House which should fitly be for the dwelling of the Most High. “*The Lord hath said that He would dwell in the thick darkness; but I have built an house of habitation for thee, and a place for thy dwelling for ever*” (II Chron. 6; 1).

In prophetic mood the sweet singer of Israel caught up the strain when he looked on the City of Peace, as yet uncrowned with its loveliest jewel, the Temple, and declaimed: “Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the City of the Great King” (Psa. 48; 2). That is how it must have appeared to Jesus on those occasions when, rounding the bend in the road from Bethany, and looking down, before His eyes:—

*“Like a fair vision in the morning light  
Lay the proud city of Jerusalem,  
In all the beauty of its soaring towers,  
And flashing domes, and marble palaces.  
A diadem on Zion's holy hill,  
The glorious Temple in its splendour shone  
With sheen of gold, and pinnacles of snow.”*

What wonder that the Psalmist felt constrained to cry out in exultation: “*Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion; and unto thee shall the vow be performed*” (Psa. 65. 1). That glorious city, and in later days its still more glorious Temple, was the visible embodiment of Israel's worship, and

pulses were quickened, and hearts beat faster, as men lifted up their eyes to the city wherein God had set His Name.

And who shall say that some lives were not inspired and quickened to more devoted service, and some timid hearts were not encouraged to greater deeds of heroism and sacrifice, after the outward sight of Jerusalem the Holy had been translated into a vision that illumined their inmost soul and remained with them for ever?

But Solomon knew that his beautiful Temple was but a shell, a casket which was of no value except it held the precious jewel. That dead building must be the repository of a living faith and a centre of living worship. "Will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, how much less this house that I have built" (II Chron. 6. 18). So he prayed that his house might become a house of prayer. How clear it is that he expected his Temple to become an inspiration to sincere prayer and devotion for all Israel. Its gold and silver vessels and furnishings, sculptured palm trees and pomegranates, its tapestries and apartments, its ceremonial and ritual, all meant nothing, and less than nothing, except they were conducive to a deeper and more spiritual understanding of God, and to more reverent and soul-satisfying worship on the part of the people. That was his desire.

That he had interpreted aright the needs of Israel is clear from the songs of David. Yearning after just such a place where God could be worshipped in spirit and in truth, the man after God's own heart had sung: "I was glad when they said unto me 'Let us go into the house of the Lord'" (Psa. 122, 1). He was glad! Have you ever felt that quickening of the pulse, that eager anticipation, as you enter the place where your fellows are gathered together to worship the Father in sincerity and reverence? I have sometimes found myself in a strange town where the surroundings seem alien and unfriendly, and have come upon a church, standing silent and serene, and felt a strange little surge of emotion, as though that building were the one place in all that town into which I had a right to enter; for it represented the things of God, and "*this is none other but the House of God, and this is the gate of Heaven*" (Gen. 28; 17); and if perchance one should enter in and become at one with the atmosphere of the place—the quietness, the dignity of ancient things, the soft light stealing through stained glass windows, the great Bible on the reading desk—how easy to come into tune with those fervent words of three thousand years ago: "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts. My

soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God" (Psa. 84, 1-2). That is the true spirit of worship—the intense, deep longing to be in the House of God and engaged in His business. That is our place, our home, and there it is that we shall find rest to our souls. The more that we can take to ourselves the restful spirit of a place of worship, the more shall we enter into communion with our Father.

Do we not well, therefore, to seek the promotion of this spirit of worship by every means within our power, and if our surroundings can be made more conducive to satisfying and restful worship, do we not well to use our Divinely given instinct for beauty and dignity to that end? When the inspired writer voiced those beautiful words in which he exhorted his hearers to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness there can be little doubt that the magnificent setting of the Temple was in his mind. "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name," he cries. "Bring an offering *and come into his courts*. O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; fear before him, all the earth" (Psa. 96, 8-9). Behold the stately progression of worship! Acknowledge God first, the One Who is worthy of all praise and worship; then prepare thine offering. With that offering in thine hand, enter into the House of God, the place that is set apart to Him for worship and devotion. In that setting, and in a spirit of reverence, and with a consciousness of sincerity of heart; trusting in the justification which is by faith; rejoicing in hope of His glory; in such holiness, within and around, "come let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker" (Psa. 95, 6); and in that solemn atmosphere we shall hear the voice that speaketh from Heaven as we have never heard it before.

Having then made our House of God, humble though it may be, as outwardly fitting and appropriate to our worship as circumstances may permit, let us come into it as though the Father Himself waits there to receive us—as indeed He does. That grand old sixteenth-century Danish astronomer, Tycho Brahe, to whom the world owes so much of astronomical knowledge, declared: "I always put on my court robes when I enter my observatory, because when I study the stars I stand in the Court of the King of Kings." What a grandeur of simple dignity. Who shall say that the Father of all men did not take notice of that act of worship performed by a courtly old man who realised, as David of old, that the sublime majesty of the heavens speaks indeed of the eternal presence of God. Grievous loss it is that in these

more hurried and less dignified days even some ministers of God tend to forget the solemnity of the task they undertake week by week. The Rev. Leslie Weatherhead in his book "*How can I find God?*" speaking of typical Sunday services he has known, says of the minister, "*one cannot help feeling that he would collect himself with greater care in order to enter the presence of his doctor.*" How often do we all fail after the same manner!

The finest example of the value of beauty and dignity in worship and of ritual and ceremonial in preparing the heart for personal communion with God is given us in the vision of Ezekiel's Temple. There we have depicted the worship of the Millennial Age, and although it may be urged that the descriptions in those last chapters of Ezekiel's prophecy are symbolic expressions of spiritual truths—as indeed they are—yet there can be none amongst us who do not form a mental image of a wonderful edifice with its River of Life flowing outwards to the Dead Sea, and the Trees of Life on the banks thereof, and look to that as a kind of central feature of the new world that is

to be. The Word tells us that all men will go up to Jerusalem to worship—a formal although spontaneous expression of love and loyalty to the Father of all; and is it not reasonable to conclude that there is much in Ezekiel's vision that will become translated into literal reality, and that, "in days that are yet to be", away there in the heart of the Promised Land, in surroundings of incomparable grandeur and dignity, there will be worship which shall lift the hearts of the worshippers to true communion with God the Father of all. At long last the purposes of God will have been achieved, and there upon Zion's hill, resplendent in beauty and glory, will stand that majestic meeting place which shall visibly symbolise that the dwelling place of God is with men, and they shall have become His people, and He shall have become their God, and He himself shall have wiped away all tears from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither sorrow nor crying, nor any more pain, because the glorious Mediatorial work of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ shall have made "all things new."

## A THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

*"The tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison"* (Jas. 3. 8).

Those are strong words; James the Just intended them so. He knew, perhaps better than any of the other believers, what incalculable damage to the Cause of Christ and to the hearts and souls of His disciples is wrought by the undisciplined and unrestrained exercise of the powers of condemnation which we all possess. It is one of the marks of the mature Christian that he has learned to keep his tongue—and his pen—within bounds when approaching the sphere of other men's failings and shortcomings. It is one of the marks of the Christ-guided disciple that his speech is kept from evil, and his lips from speaking guile (Psa. 34. 13), and that so far as the erring and the fallen are concerned he is much more solicitous for their strengthening and restoration than their condemnation and punishment. In this our day, as in that of James there does arise from time to time some impetuous Jehu who thinks that he has been Divinely ordained to cry out the names of the condemned of God and drag their delinquencies into the light of day for the regalement of the faithful. The tragedy of it is that God does not necessarily condemn the ones we may think ought to be condemned; He knows of factors in the case which are hidden from us. There may be an enthusiasm which of itself is commendable, a zeal that of itself is

beyond challenge; neither enthusiasm or zeal will be of any avail if unjust recrimination, slander and evil speaking blinds to an appreciation of the spirit of the Christ who came not to condemn but to save.

One of the first things we have to learn in the school of Christ is that not one of us is in a position to pass judgment upon another fellow-pupil, either in matters of his doctrine or matters of his conduct. It is true that the saints are going to judge the world, in a day yet future, but they have got to become saints first. And those who are so lacking in the spirit of Christ—and sometimes in the elementary principles of decency also—as publicly to decry another in a manner that might cause uncontrollable and irremediable harm will eventually find that the thrones of the redeemed have steps which are too high to be climbed except by those who have attained the full stature of a man in Christ (Eph. 4. 13). The amateur theologians in our midst who are so ready to denounce, not the convictions of their theological opponents, which is a proper enough thing to do, but the opponents themselves for holding those convictions, are rivalled only by the untrained sociologists who with equal gusto condemn all whose code of conduct does not precisely match their own, and rank them with those whom the Apostle Paul calls the "covetous, extortioners, idolators, of this world" (I Cor. 5. 10).

Such would do well carefully to consider the story of the woman taken in adultery, recorded in the eighth chapter of St. John's Gospel. (The fact that this passage is well-known to be no part of the original Gospel, having been added in or about the 5th or 6th centuries, does not mitigate its value: all evidence goes to show that it is a true record of an incident in Jesus' life.) Confronted with the unfortunate woman, Jesus stooped and wrote with His finger on the Temple pavement, ignoring all the eyes that were fastened upon Him. Why did He do that? He already knew what He was going to say! The most reasonable supposition, most in line with the known character of Jesus, is that He did it out of consideration for the unhappy victim before Him. Acutely aware of her position, burning-conscious of her recent shame, she stood there in the middle of a crowd of hostile and gaping men, the cynosure of all eyes—except those of Jesus. He did not look at her until all the men had gone. His action diverted attention from her while they pressed for His answer. He rose up and faced the accusers, put His startling command, and then lowered His eyes again until they all, convicted by their own consciences, had one by one left the scene. Only then did He face the trembling woman. "Hath no man condemned thee?" "No man, Lord." "Neither do I condemn thee. . . . Go, and sin no more." That does not mean that he condoned her sin or overlooked it. There was nothing said about forgiveness, no admonition to "go in peace". The woman's guilt stood and Jesus' words left that matter still unresolved. But He had taken the whole question of her judgment out of the public arraignment which men had engineered and made it a matter between the woman and Himself.

We fallible mortals are so apt to pass hasty judgment without knowing all the facts. That is bad enough when the only inspiring motive is zeal for the maintenance of the high standards of the Christian faith; unfortunately, the fact has to be faced that even in the Christian family there are some whose minds have not so far escaped the trammels of carnality that they do not relish the opportunity of a bit of scandal. Such people are a menace and a defilement to the House of God. Many years ago there occurred on a certain day much head-shaking and whispering among the elders of a city church, imparting itself quickly enough to the congregation. One of their number had been seen coming through the swing doors of a public-house, and he one of a community to which the use of alcoholic drinks was anathema. The worst was feared and the offending elder was almost as good as unseated when someone dryly asked whether it had occurred to anyone that the individual con-

cerned may have been on the premises in question merely in connection with his employer's business, not to gratify any indulgence!

We are also very apt to criticise adversely those whose standards and customs differ from our own. Let it be clearly stated and understood that not one of us has the right to demand that our own personal way of life and code of conduct must be accepted by all and sundry. Such things differ from age to age and in country with country, from generation to generation and even as between young and old. Abraham had three wives, at least two of them simultaneously, and an unspecified number of concubines; such conduct would not be tolerated in our country and generation but no one thinks of condemning Abraham on that account. He lived his life in full accordance with the customs and the established civil law of his time, a time which was more civilised than those in which we live to-day.

*"One believeth that he may eat all things; another, who is weak, eateth herbs. . . . Let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth, for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. AND GOD IS ABLE TO MAKE HIM STAND!"*

We do well to take the fourteenth chapter of Romans very much to heart, and in this our day, when the ease of communication and the universality of the printed page puts almost fearful power into the hands of any irresponsible zealot who wants to create a stir, we need more than ever to remember the golden rule enunciated many years ago by a wise man of God: "We criticise teachings, doctrines, theories, *always*; individuals, *never*."

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We are to love and cultivate that which is pure to such an extent that that which is impure will become painful to us, distressing, and we will desire to drop it from memory, and this will only be accomplished by continually thinking upon those things that are pure, and avoiding the giving of thought to the things that are impure. We are to recognise true loveliness, and to esteem it. When we would think on the purest of things we must of necessity lift our mental vision to as high a point as possible, and, as nearly as we may be able, discern the loveliness of the perfect character of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ, and proportionately the loveliness manifested in one or another of the followers of Jesus, who walk closely in His footsteps.

## The Three Epistles of John

Comments on the writings  
of the "Beloved Apostle"

Part XXV. I John 5. 6-8

*"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one."* (vs 6-8.)

The great difference between the mission of John the Baptist and that of Jesus was that John came preaching repentance, purification, and preparation for Messiah and the Messianic Kingdom, whereas Jesus was Himself the Messiah and Himself introduced the Kingdom. Malachi, long centuries before, had declared of John *"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me, and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly (immediately) come to his temple"*. (Mal. 3. 1). Jesus, on the other hand, declared *"The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it"* (Luke 16. 16.) But the way into that kingdom could only be through the gates of suffering and death. That new life must of necessity involve the cessation of the old life, a giving up in sacrifice that which by virtue of the sacrifice became the source of life that is to be. Jesus Himself touched on that truth when He said *"Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit"*. (John 12. 24.) The work of John was by water only, the water of baptism, the ceremonial cleansing which betokened the repentance of those who came to him. The work of Jesus was by water and blood. Not only must there be repentance and cleansing and a re-dedication of life to the covenants and the service of God, there must also be a voluntary laying down of life in that service, even unto death, that the disciple may be indeed as his lord. In the case of Jesus there was no question of repentance or cleansing or re-dedication of life. He always did those things which pleased His Father. He was always holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners; yet he insisted on going through the baptismal waters at the hands of John. Was it that the witness of the water might thus be His? Here in John's epistle He is pointed to as the One who came by water, and the water is called as a witness to His Messiahship. Can it not be that the ceremony at Jordan on that memorable day, witnessed as it must have been by many people, and

attested by the descent of the Holy Dove upon His head and the voice from heaven saying *"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"*; can it not be that that ceremony was a symbol, not of our Lord's cleansing from sin, for He knew no sin, but of His innate sinlessness and purity. He stood before Israel, there in the river, without sin, without stain, without blemish, proclaimed by the Father as One in whom resided all perfection. That surely was the witness of the water.

In a sense the water was a symbol of the old covenant, the Law Covenant negotiated by Moses on behalf of Israel at Mount Sinai. The writer to the Hebrews makes reference, almost contemptuously as it would seem, to the period of the Law as one of *"divers washings and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation"* (Heb. 10. 10). John the Baptist was the last prophet of that Mosaic Covenant; he called the people to a renewed observance of that arrangement on the principle that only by adherence to its provisions and requirements could Israel as a nation ever be in the right condition to receive their Messiah and inherit the Kingdom. They failed, of course. *"The Law made nothing perfect"* says the writer to the Hebrews again *"but it was the bringing in of a better hope, by which we draw nigh unto God."* (Heb. 7. 19.) Something more than water was needed; before mankind could be redeemed there must be the death of a willing offerer, the shedding of blood. If Jesus is to be the Christ there must not only be the witness of water; there must also be the witness of blood.

The symbol is so obvious that it hardly needs elaboration. The shed blood of Christ is a witness to His Messiahship. Isaiah seven centuries previously had painted in sombre hue the picture of the One Who would pour out His soul unto death. *"He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth . . . he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken . . . it pleased the Lord to bruise him . . . when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin."* (Isa. 53. 7-10.) The witness of shed blood must have been particularly significant to those early believers of John's own day, accustomed as they were to the idea of the shed blood of the Atonement Day sacrifices being taken into the Most Holy by the High Priest and sprinkled upon

the Propitiatory as a covering for sin. (Lev. 16. 14.) Perhaps in no other way could Jews of the First Century be brought to believe in Jesus as the "Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world" than by the witness of His death on their behalf; their whole training and background demanded that "almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood there is no remission". (Heb. 9. 22.)

But first of all, and most important, is the Spirit's witness. "It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth." John can appeal to no higher authority, for "The Spirit searcheth all things" (I Cor. 2. 10.) It is not possible for any finite human brain to grasp all that is involved in the truth regarding the Holy Spirit of God. To say that the Holy Spirit is the manifestation of the power of God in active operation is at best an inadequate presentation. When we are told in Genesis that "*the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters*" (Gen. 1. 2) we are being told of no less a thing than God Himself, the great Creator, rousing Himself to a mighty work of creation. Just so truly did Elihu, many millenniums later, say to Job "*The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life*" (Job 3. 4) and reveal by that declaration his grasp of the transcendent truth that all men are the work of God's own hands. "*Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.*" (Gen. 1. 26.) The testimony of the Spirit is the testimony of God Himself, and that is just what we have in the story of the Baptism. "*This is my beloved Son.*" What greater testimony could there be than that? Truly it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

Pentecost was a witness of the Spirit that Jesus is Christ; it was the fulfilment of His promise, that power should come upon them after His departure. That power came and has continued with the Christian church ever since. The conversion of Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus; the history of the Early Church, steadfast in persecution unto martyrdom; the experience of true disciples everywhere throughout the Age, even down to the present; the fulfilment of prophecy; the present ever increasing signs of the nearness of the Kingdom; all these are witnesses of the Spirit testifying to the truth that Jesus is Christ and will surely redeem His every promise. The certainty of the twelve apostles immediately after the Day of Pentecost and their steadfast adherence to their faith for the remainder of their lives was a foretaste of the certainty and steadfastness of many thousands of faithful believers in all the centuries since. The Church of Christ in the flesh is itself a witness of the Spirit that Jesus is Christ.

So, says John, these are the three witnesses and these three agree in one. There is no divergence and no difference. The three witnesses speak with one voice. No matter how many false prophets may have gone out into the world, as he says in chap. 4 verse 1, no matter how many antichrists there might be, no matter even how many failures among those who have taken the name of Christ and called themselves His brethren, still the witness stands out and nothing will ever shake it. Jesus is Christ; here is a rock upon which the Church has been built, a foundation so sturdy and strong that even the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Matt. 16. 18.)

We must digress at this point to examine the well-known interpolated passage commencing with the words "in heaven" in verse 7 and concluding with the words "in earth" in verse 8. There is general agreement amongst scholars that the words first appear about the end of the 5th century, being then cited by Vigilius Tapsensis, a Latin writer. They seem to be unknown to any of the Greek theologians before the 13th century and the earliest manuscripts of the New Testament in which they appear are copies of the Codex Britannicus and Codex Ravianus, both dated in the early part of the sixteenth century. Had the expression been in any New Testament at the time of the Council of Nicæa in A.D. 325 it could hardly have failed to have been quoted in the Trinitarian controversy which was one of the features of that Council; yet it is certain that it was not so quoted. Practically every scholar of repute brands the passage as an interpolation, the celebrated student Tischendorf, usually reckoned the greatest New Testament authority of all time, even going so far as to say "*That this spurious addition should continue to be published as a part of the epistle I regard as an impiety.*" The "*Textus Receptus*" or "*Received Text*", on which our present New Testament is based, admitted the words on the authority of the sixteenth century scholar Desiderius Erasmus, who hesitated but accepted them at last on the authority of the Codex Britannicus. Martin Luther, contemporary with Erasmus, refused to accept them and in consequence they were not included in the German Bible until many years later after Luther's death. Their survival appears to be due entirely to the fact that they appeared in sundry Latin translations and in some—not all—editions of the Latin Vulgate.

Fortunately the words are quite unnecessary to John's argument—in fact they read rather illogically, for what necessity is there to witness in heaven to the fact that Jesus is Christ? The citizens of heaven were fully aware of that from the start; the

glorious anthem of Rev. 5. 8-10 is an expression of the voice of heaven giving praise and glory to the conquering Messiah. John's teaching is plain and straightforward when the disputed words are omitted.

There are three witnesses to the Messiahship of Jesus; the Holy Spirit of God, the baptism of Jesus, and the crucifixion of Jesus, and these three give a united and harmonious testimony. "These three agree in one."

*To be continued.*

## In the Days of the Patriarchs

### PART 3.

*An excursion  
into archæology*

The known history of Ur of the Chaldees, Abraham's native city, commences at a time corresponding roughly to the death of Salah his ancestor (Gen. 11. 15). Salah was not a citizen of Ur. It was in the days of his son Eber (who gave his name to the Hebrews) that the great migration of Semites from Syria into Sumeria began. It did not become a serious invasion until over three centuries later. But there are one or two indications that it must have been in the days of Eber that the family of whom Abraham came moved down into its new home. The name "Eber" means "passenger" and the Jews had a tradition that he was a passenger or wanderer along and across the Euphrates—which would indicate migration to a new home. A more positive hint is given in the account of his son. We are told in Gen. 10. 25 that Eber's son Peleg was so named "because in his days was the earth divided". A strange expression; some have applied it to the division of the nations at Babel, and Ferrar Fenton in his translation, with his usual originality, asserts that it refers to the time when the American continent, originally part of Africa split off and drifted to its present position on the other side of the world! In point of fact the Hebrew word "*peleg*" refers to artificially made cuttings in the earth for the purpose of carrying water; in short, canals. Now this is a useful indication. Syria has no canals and never had any. A famous feature of the land of Sumir and Akkad, on the contrary, from very early times right into the present Christian era, has been its wonderful system of irrigation canals with their elaborate dams and sluices and reservoirs and floodgates, designed to harness the floodwaters of the Euphrates and Tigris and use them to irrigate the land. Those canals endured for more than three thousand years until in the twelfth century of this era the Mongol invader Hulagu Khan opened all the floodgates and destroyed the dams, so turning the country into the desert that it is at the present time. All the early Sumerian and Semitic kings were very industrious in building and preserving these canals, which meant so much to the prosperity of their country.

The earliest historical reference to the canal system is in the days of Ur-Nina King of Lagash, about B.C. 2550. From then on they figure increasingly prominently in the inscriptions. That would be about a century after the third of the devastating Deluges for which evidence exists at Kish and Ur. The deluges were caused by uncontrolled floodwaters coming down from the Armenian mountains, and the canals and reservoirs were built to receive and control these floods. Ur-Nina figures in history, so far as can be determined, about halfway through the life of Peleg and thus the cryptic sentence in Gen. 10. 25 "In his days was the earth divided (channelled—canalised) fits naturally into place.

Another Scriptural indication supports the view that this was the time when Eber and his son Peleg migrated into Sumeria from Syria. Peleg had a brother, Joktan (Gen. 10. 25). Joktan's posterity wandered eventually into southern Arabia, where some of the names listed in Gen. 10. 26-29 survive as Arab tribal names to this day—and Joktan is acknowledged among them as their ancestor. Now the historian who compiled the tenth and eleventh chapters of Genesis records Peleg's descendants right down to Abraham, but he knows Joktan's only to one generation. Nothing is said about Joktan's further descendants. Whoever wrote Gen. 11 lost sight of the Joktan branch of the family after that. It is easy to picture the two brothers, Peleg and Joktan, with their sons and possessions, accompanied by their father Eber, leaving the ancestral home in Syria and travelling along the course of the Euphrates until they reached the country of the Sumerians. There Peleg stops; four generations later his great-great-grandson Terah is living in Ur of the Chaldees, one of the southernmost cities of Sumeria. But Joktan goes on, still travelling south, until he settles with his sons in the vast peninsula of Arabia with the Persian Gulf on one side, the Red Sea on the other, and the Indian Ocean barring further progress. There his descendants live to this day, the bulk of the great Arab race. The queen of Sheba, who came to visit Solomon, and her subjects, were of Joktan. So

was Mahomet, the seventh century prophet who destroyed idolatry out of Arabia and who in his attempt to turn the Arabs to the worship of the One True God founded one of the world's greatest religions—Mohammedanism or Islam. The prophet Balaam at the time of the Exodus, foretelling the doom of all Israel's enemies, spoke of a day to come when God shall afflict Eber (Num. 24. 24) and it is fairly clear that he was speaking of the Arab race, posterity of Joktan son of Eber, who are to be rendered impotent in the time of Israel's final prosperity.

Between Peleg and Terah the chosen line evidently lived quietly in Sumeria and equally evidently forgot the God of Noah and Shem and worshipped instead the many gods of the Sumerians. We know from Joshua 24. 2 that Abraham's forebears were idolaters and this would be the most likely period. From Peleg onward we have nothing but names—Reu, Serug, Nahor, Terah, Abraham; and then we find Terah gathering his family around him and leaving Ur of the Chaldees to return to the land which his forefathers Eber and Peleg had forsaken some five hundred years previously.

There is just a flicker of interest in connection with Serug, Abraham's great-grandfather. It has been suggested by some scholars that he was in fact the renowned Sargon of Akkad, described by historians as the first great military conqueror of history. The idea apparently arises from the identity of name, the Hebrew "Serug" being really the same as the Akkadian "Sargon". It is also urged that there is some kind of "military tradition" in Abraham's family. The Ras Shamra tablets, discovered in 1930 on the coast of North Syria near the ancient cities of Tyre and Sidon, make unmistakable references to Terah, describing him as the general of a conquering army and connecting him with the Moon-god (Ur of the Chaldees, whence Terah came into Syria, was sacred to the Moon-god). Abraham himself is shown in the account of his pursuit of Chedorlaomer's army (Gen. 14) and his victory to have been something of a military man also. (The three hundred and eighteen "trained servants" were in reality disciplined soldiers kept as a kind of private army to protect Abraham's possessions. The Hebrew word is a technical one referring definitely to soldiers.) On these grounds it has been thought that the great Sargon, so many of whose triumphant inscriptions survive and whose portrait exists on clay tablets in the world's museums, was in fact the great-grandfather of Abraham the friend of God.

The writer feels that the evidence is much too slender to be taken seriously. It is true that Sargon probably lived at the same time as Serug; so far

as the time feature is concerned there is nothing to make the identification impossible. Sargon reigned fifty-seven years and would have commenced his reign when Serug was between sixty and a hundred years old. Quite recently it has been discovered that Sargon's daughter En-khedu-anna was High Priestess of the Temple of the Moon-god at Ur, which does at least create a link between Sargon and the city of Abraham three generations before the latter lived there; and of course Serug, like all the patriarchs, is said in Genesis (11. 23) to have had daughters as well as sons. It is more likely, however, that Serug was in fact a more or less inconspicuous citizen of Sargon's empire.

Most people will remember the stir caused twenty years ago when Sir Leonard Woolley returned from the ruins of Ur with the magnificent gold and jewelled headdress of the lovely Sumerian queen Shub-ad; and many will have seen pictures of the reconstructed features of this lady, wearing the headdress she discarded nearly five thousand years ago. Peleg, if he did indeed settle in Ur when he came into the land of Sumir and Akkad, must have seen queen Shub-ad in the life. He must have been quite familiar with the luxury and high civilisation of the Sumerian cities, enjoying a standard of life that according to the archaeologists was never attained again in later years. During the space of something like four hundred years that magnificence continued, and it is perhaps not surprising if Peleg, Reu, Serug and Nahor forgot the God of their fathers and the simple pastoral life of Syria and threw themselves whole-heartedly into the manners and the practices and the idolatrous worship of the Sumerians among whom they had elected to live. The ruins of the Temple of Sin, the Moon-god, which to this very day still dominate the desert where Ur once stood, bear mute witness to the nature of the society into which Abraham was born and the city which he eventually forsook. But soon after the birth of Terah there came a change. He could hardly have been more than a lad when Ishbi-Irra, the Semitic king of Nisin, besieged and devastated Ur, and its glory departed. Perhaps that disaster and the failure of so much in which the Sumerian city of the sons of Ham had taken pride for so many centuries was in the Lord's providence a means of preparing the minds of Abraham and Terah for the call that was eventually to come to them to forsake the city and follow God. It seems from Genesis 11. 31 that Terah was by no means hesitant or half-hearted when the time came to leave Ur of the Chaldees and make his way with his household to Haran, back to the land from which his fathers had come, the place where God was still worshipped in spirit and in truth.

For we have to remember that when Abraham had left the idolatry of Sumeria behind him, he found that the worship of the Most High God had been kept alive all the time by those mysterious priest-kings of Salem, of whom the reigning representative was Melchisedek when Abraham came into Canaan. Not all of Shem's sons had gone down into Sumeria with Peleg. Some had remained behind to keep alive the true faith in the earth. By the time of Joshua the worship of the Most High God in Canaan had become hopelessly corrupted and mingled with Baal-worship, as is

plain from the Ras-Shamra tablets discovered in 1930, so that Joshua unhesitatingly slew Adonizedek the last priest-king of Jerusalem (Josh. 10.) But in the days of Melchi-zedek the earlier priest-king, in Abraham's time, it was probably true that Canaan was a place in which God was worshipped in spirit and in truth, so that Abraham, leaving idolatrous Ur of the Chaldees and coming to live within the sphere of influence of Melchi-zedek, could say with Jacob of later time, "*Surely the Lord is in this place.*"

THE END

## “ . . . and Peter ”

A story of the  
tenderness of Jesus

In the grey light of an early dawn three women approached timidly to a rock-hewn vault on an errand of love. They had come, as early as the Sabbath laws and the darkness of night allowed, to complete a work performed in haste during the last hour before the Sabbath day began. When the One they loved and followed had been lowered from the Cross and borne to His quiet resting-place, these ministering souls had enfolded in the winding-sheets some small supply of aromatic spice. The near approach of the day of rest had cut short the embalming work, and the body of the Lord had been laid aside and left until the law permitted this service to the dead to be resumed (Luke 23, 56). With astonishment they found the sealing stone removed; by whom, or how, they did not know. Peering into the dark recess, they thought to see the swathed recumbent form of their beloved Lord, upon which, with busy hands, they hoped at length to complete the needed work. Entering within, they found not the body of the Lord, although the grave-clothes lay in their place. To their surprise a living angel from on high replaced the holy dead, whose radiant form struck wonderment and awe into their hearts.

Sensing their fear, the angel spoke, and told them that their Master was alive again, just as He had told them in earlier days. "Go tell these things to His disciples, and Peter, and tell them He will see them in Galilee." ". . . and Peter! . . ." "To His disciples, and Peter . . ." as though, for his grievous sin, Peter would think he had now no right to esteem himself the Lord's disciple.

These were the angel's words, but they revealed the Master's love. He who told the angel to say that He proposed to meet them in Galilee was He from whom those two comforting words had

come. Jesus did not forget the broken anguished heart which wept so sorely at its fall. Jesus had known His man prior to those searching days. "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" said Jesus to His then braggart friend (Luke 22, 32). Jesus knew His man, even though he failed and fell, and knew how to soothe and heal his broken heart.

But the Lord did more than that. Somewhere before that first day was done, the Lord had found Peter alone, and disclosed Himself to Peter's tearstained eyes. "*He was seen of Cephas*" (I Cor. 15, 5). The Lord is risen indeed *and hath appeared to Simon*", replied "the eleven" (Luke 24, 34) to the returned ones from Emmaus.

What passed between the Lord and the stricken penitent is veiled in sacred obscurity, but who can doubt that no words of chiding or reproof passed from the Master's lips, but words of soothing tenderness that fell like healing balm on Peter's wounded heart.

". . . and Peter!" Let us write it now "and John! . . . and Mary! . . . and Frank! . . . and Harriet! . . . and . . .!"—every one who in times of strain has failed and fallen to the dust. It needs not to have been Peter's grievous sin, but each one's own particular slip—that rapier word! that chilling glance! that wounding act! that seeming wrong! sad sequence of a moment's lack of thought.

When the chastened heart, in retrospect, looks back upon its hasty fall, let it remember that a watchful eye has seen it all, and in assuring answer to its tears will say again, ". . . and Peter" . . . and John" . . . "and Harriet" . . . "and . . . and . . ." And so He keeps His "own" by His own word, in His own way.

## OUT OF THE STOREHOUSE

A collection of  
interesting items

### A Note on John 8.1.11

The incident of the woman taken in adultery is sometimes pointed out as of doubtful authority since it does not appear in the original texts. It is not found in any New Testament Greek manuscripts prior to the sixth century. At the same time, the story itself is so clear-cut and detailed that it almost gives its own testimony as being the work of an eye-witness, perhaps recorded by one of the Apostles, and many scholars have decided on its acceptance on this ground alone. Eusebius, the great Church historian of the Fourth Century, mentions the story and quotes it from the writings of Papias, who lived possibly during the old age of John but certainly not long after. Papias claims to have had much discourse with the four daughters of Philip the Evangelist (See Acts 21. 9) among others of the second generation of Christians. It seems fairly evident therefore that the story was, like a number of other fairly well-authenticated acts or sayings of Jesus, current among the early Christians but was either not incorporated in John's original Gospel or, if incorporated, was deleted at some subsequent early date. St. Augustine, the great theologian of the fourth century, maintained that it had been thus deleted for fear it might encourage laxity of morals. All the evidence therefore goes to show that although the passage is not to be found in any ancient manuscript now existing it is almost certainly a true record of an incident in the life of Jesus and may possibly have appeared in one or another of the Gospels.

\* \* \*

### The Quails

Travellers tell us that in the spring of the year large flocks of quail frequently cross the Arabian Gulf of the Red Sea. They come in great flocks, and, wearied with their long flight across the water, they fly low, so as to be easily within the reach of man. Tristram says, "I have myself found the ground in Algeria in the month of April covered with quail for an extent of many acres at daybreak, where on the preceding afternoon there had been none." The reading of Numbers 11:7 seems to imply that on this occasion the quail were nearly two cubits deep, and infidels have pointed to the fact as an absurdity. It would be entirely possible, however, for us to understand the narrative to signify that the great quantities of quail flew low, even within two cubits of the ground, thus insuring a large catch on the part of flesh-hungry Israelites. The subsequent narrative indicates that the quail

were not sent regularly, but only on rare occasions—so far as appears only here in the wilderness of Sinai and in the wilderness of Paran.—Numbers 11:31-34.

\* \* \*

### Patriarchal Longevity

The declared long lives of the patriarchs mentioned in the Book of Genesis have often been doubted, just because no one has lived so long in historic times. There is some evidence in Babylonian inscriptions that others beside the patriarchs lived unusually long lives in times contemporary with them. And in addition, forty years ago or more, skeletons found in Louisiana (U.S.A.) when examined by anthropologists, were concluded from certain signs—the flattening of shin and leg bones and condition of the teeth—to be those of men who had lived probably for nearly a thousand years. One by one, each apparently incredible Biblical statement is being found in this modern day to be not so incredible after all.

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### Ministry of Reconciliation

*"My flesh I will give for the life of the world!"*

Often do we interpret these words in terms of His crucifixion and death. But Jesus did also consciously fulfil the prevision of Isaiah: "He poured out his life unto death." For three and a half years the life of Jesus was given, in every possible sense, that the world might have more life. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

This is the call of the Church now, and in this Age. Our mission holds something more than a study of Divine philosophy, a growth in the knowledge of Scripture history and prophecy, a waiting for future glory and felicity. It is to give life that others might have life. It is to offer life now, as Jesus offered life then. True, we cannot heal diseases by a wave of the hand, produce food from stones wherewith to feed the hungry, drive out demons of hate, fear and all evil by verbal command—but, stay—is it true that we cannot do these things? Is there nothing that we can do for a sick or suffering one that will ease their lot and perchance assist them in their recovery; no power at all to relieve some little part of the hardship on those who suffer physical want in this unfriendly world; no word that can be fitly spoken to lift the mind of someone bound in the "bonds of iniquity" to higher and nobler ideals, and thus at least commence to cast out the demons that

possess them? If we can do any of these things, in however little degree, we shall be doing, in our own small way, that to which our Lord Jesus devoted a great part of His life. And we are on safe ground when we find that "as He was, so are we, in this world."

\* \* \*

### The Kingdom Within You

A Christian Church ought to be an exhibition of heaven upon earth—a manifestation of Christ below—a witness for God in the midst of the world, so that the world looking at the Church may be able to say: "This is a specimen of what that which is called the Gospel can do; this is a model of what the Christian teaching can achieve." And so all with whom we come into contact in our intercourse in life will say: "That man does not say much about his Christian beliefs when transacting his business, but there prevails in all that he does an integrity, a singleness of eye, a simplicity of purpose, a faithfulness to his engagements, and a superiority to trial, that proves he must have some fountain of peace and comfort and joy that we have not; we will go and hear what he hears, learn the lessons he has learned, and taste, if it be possible, the happiness which we see in his character." Such a one becomes to mankind either the salt that silently keeps a society from corruption, or the light shining on the hilltop that illuminates the earth with a ray of the glory of heaven.

(Forest Gate Bible Monthly.)

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### The Happy Man

The Happy Man was born in the city of Regeneration, in the Parish of Repentance unto life: he was educated at the school of Obedience, and now lives in Perseverance: he works at the Trade of Diligence, notwithstanding he has a large estate in the country of Christian Contentment, and many a time does jobs of Self-Denial: he wears the plain garment of Humility, and has a better suit to put on when he goes to court, called the Robe of Christ's Righteousness: he often walks in the valley of Self-Abasement, and sometimes climbs to the mountains of Heavenly-Mindedness: he breakfasts every morning on Spiritual Prayer, and sups every evening on the same: he has Meat to eat which the world knows not of, and his Drink is the Milk of the Word of God. Thus happy he lives and happy he dies.

Happy is he who has Gospel Submission in his Will, Due Order in his Affections, Sound Peace in his Conscience, Sanctifying Grace in his Soul, Real Divinity in his Breast, the Redeemer's Yoke on his Neck, a Vain World under his Feet, and a Crown of Glory over his Head. Happy is the life of such a man; to obtain which, believe firmly, pray

fervently, wait patiently, work abundantly, live holily, die daily, watch your hearts, guide your senses, redeem your time, love Christ, and long for Glory!

\* \* \*

### God is Love

There is a common belief—outside our own fellowship—that the God of the early Israelites was a blood-thirsty, war-loving Deity, the "tribal God of the Hebrews," as He has been called. The Book of Exodus presents the opposite view; the God Who led them through the wilderness told them to place their entire trust in Him, and eschew fighting and war, and He would lead them into the Promised Land. It was the people who were bloodthirsty and warlike, and they would not heed His words. Interesting confirmation of these statements in Exodus is afforded by the Greek writer Strabo (54 B.C.-A.D. 24), who says of Moses ("Geography," Book 16; 36): "Instead of arms, he taught that their defence was in their sacred things and their Divinity" (i.e., their God).

\* \* \*

### Superstition

Words have been called "the indestructible vesture of thought." The original thought may have become corrupt, obscured, or obsolete; but the word remains "indestructible," and by it we may recover the thought. "Superstition" is such a word. It originally meant something standing over or above—something that remains or has taken the place of something else. It is, therefore, akin to supersede and super-imposed. So the tree stands over or above the root out of which it has grown; so other subsequent cities have stood over and buried out of sight the genuine Homeric Troy. But as the something to which the word refers is always false or delusive in distinction from the true, so (we may say) does the fungus "stand over" the fallen and decayed tree in whose substance it is rooted. Nature and the world, like wheat and the corn field as well as religion, are full of such false parasitic outgrowths, bred from the decay of higher organisms which only exist in lower and degraded forms—*superstition*.

\* \* \*

### Living Faith

How much is your faith worth? George Muller of Bristol, whose children's homes and schools were such an outstanding achievement of the nineteenth century had no money but a faith worth over a million pounds in the Bank of Heaven—at least, that was the amount which that Bank put into his hands during the fifty years or so of his stewardship. Paid out in instalments as required, of course. There were times when he and his helpers had no food in the house for the next meal of the day, and no money to buy any—yet the wherewithal always came in time and they never lacked.

# The Land of To-morrow

*Pen-pictures of the  
coming Kingdom*

"I would not have a millennium without Christ, but rather Christ without a millennium. The believer's safety is in Christ, the believer's heaven is in Christ, but where-ever Christ is, in the firmament above or in the earth below, it matters not—there I desire to be, and there perfect happiness will be. But I believe it will be upon earth. I believe that we shall enjoy a felicity and a glory and a peace on this orb, renovated and restored, which poet's imagination never dreamed of, and which painter's pencil never attempted to embody. I believe that the groans of this wearied world shall cease. I believe that the *miserere* that has risen a perpetual *minor* from its inhabitants shall be stilled for ever. I believe that it shall cease to be an aceldama of the living or a charnel house of the dead. I believe that the simoom shall no more sweep its soil; that the *lightning's flash shall no more rend its trees*. I believe that the earth shall put off its ashen garments, and doff its raiment of sackcloth; and creation cast aside from its eyes the dark shroud of sorrow that has dimmed them; and we shall see amid the glorious Apocalypse, the sun that shall rise to set no more. "*Come, Lord Jesus, even so, come quickly!*" I believe that our poets shall lay aside their mourning garments, and put on their priestly robes; and philosophy shall be the handmaid ministering at the altar of the Gospel; and all literature, and all science, and all knowledge, shall become instinct with glorious inspiration, and shall blend their voices in deep-toned and perpetual harmony, "*Blessing, glory, and honour, and thanksgiving unto God, and to the Lamb who was slain, for ever and ever.*" (Rev. John Cumming, 1848.)

\* \* \*

Will nothing end this state of things? Is creation to go on groaning and travailing forever after this fashion? Thanks be to God, the Second Advent of Christ supplies an answer to these questions. The Lord Jesus Christ has not yet finished his work on behalf of man. He will set up a glorious kingdom, in which the consequences of sin shall have no place at all. It is a kingdom in which there shall be no pain and no disease, in which "the inhabitants shall no more say, I am sick," (Isa. 33; 24.) It is a kingdom in which there shall be no more partings, no moves, no changes, no good-byes. It is a kingdom in which there shall be no more deaths,

no funerals, no tears and no mourning worn. It is a kingdom in which there shall be no quarrels, no losses, no disappointments, no wicked children, no bad servants, no faithless friends. Where is the Christian heart that does not long for this state of things to begin? Bishop Ryle 1880.

\* \* \*

A vision of the future arises. I see a world where thrones have crumbled and where kings are dust. The aristocracy of idleness has perished from the earth.

I see a world without a slave. Man at last is free. Nature's forces have by science been enslaved. Lightning and light, wind and waves, frost and flame, and all the subtle powers of earth and air are the tireless toilers for the human race.

I see a world at peace, adorned with every form of art, with music's myriad voices thrilled; where lips are rich with words of love and truth; a world in which no exile sighs, no prisoner mourns, a world on which the gibbet's shadow does not fall; a world where labour reaps its full reward, where work and worth go hand in hand.

I see a world without the beggar's outstretched palm, the miser's heartless, stony stare, the piteous wail of want, the livid lips of lies, the cruel eyes of scorn.

I see a race without disease of flesh or brain—shapely and fair, perfect harmony of form and function—and, as I look, life lengthens, joy deepens. Love canopies the earth; and over all, in the great dome of Heaven, shines the eternal star of faith.

(Robert Ingersoll, agnostic 1833-99)

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When Satan no longer has power to deceive men and to put good for evil and evil for good; when the eyes of their understanding have been opened to see and appreciate "the true Light"—until "every man that cometh into the world" has been thus enlightened (John 1. 9; 1. Tim. 2. 6); when the knowledge of the Lord fills the whole earth as the waters cover the depths of the sea, when the Lord's Kingdom shall have come and His will is done on earth as it is done in heaven—instead of the message of the Gospel being limited to a few, all will know the plan of God; and the evidences of its truth will be so clear and convincing that none will have excuse for disbelief.

(C. T. Russell 1900)

## MICAIAH THE TRUTHFUL PROPHET An Old Testament story

In order to understand the account given in 1 Kings 22, we need to consider first the conditions prevailing at the time. Ahab King of Israel is at war with Syria. In 1 Kings 20, Benhadad, a luxurious and insolent braggart, has demanded the unconditional surrender and plunder of Samaria and Ahab has refused. A prophet of God assures him of successful resistance. It would seem that Jezebel's influence has temporarily waned, for we find prophetic authority being exercised and a large school of the prophets in existence. Apparently Baal worship has declined and the worship of Jehovah in a very imperfect way has been restored.

The Syrians are defeated twice with great slaughter and the King, Benhadad, captured. Some of the leading Syrians come in abject humility to Ahab to plead for the best terms possible. Ahab shows an unexpected clemency, makes a treaty with Benhadad and, after extracting a promise from the Syrian King to restore certain cities to Israel, lets him go free.

Instructed by the Lord, a prophet disguises himself as a wounded soldier with bandage over his head and appears before Ahab with the strange tale that while the battle was raging a Syrian prisoner had been entrusted to his care, with the warning that if the man was allowed to escape the keeper's life would be forfeited, and the disguised prophet says, very naively, "And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone". The King very naturally replies, "Well, you have pronounced your own fate. Your life must go for his life". Then the prophet takes off the bandage and his disguise and discloses himself as a prophet and explains his acted parable. "Thus saith the Lord, Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life and thy people for his people." The historian adds "And the King of Israel went to his house heavy and displeased and came to Samaria".

It is three years later that we come to the events of 1 Kings 22, the story of Micaiah the son of Imlah. During these years there had been reigning in the neighbouring kingdom of Judah a man of a distinctly different type, Jehoshaphat. He was a good king, walking in the righteous way of David his ancestor. The Lord prospered his reign and he became rich and powerful, but during this rise to prosperity he had thought it wise to cement a friendship with his powerful ally Ahab by marrying

his son Jehoram to Ahab's daughter Athaliah, and now, eight years after that event, Jehoshaphat goes down to Samaria on a friendly visit. Ahab receives him with royal hospitality, kills sheep and oxen in abundance. This is part of a deliberate plan for obtaining Jehoshaphat's co-operation in the projected campaign against the Syrians. Ramoth Gilead, an Israelite town, was still in the hands of the Syrians, who, according to the unfortunate treaty made with Benhadad, had agreed to restore it but had not done so. Ahab asks Jehoshaphat if he will join with him in the expedition and Jehoshaphat consents but would like to have prophetic advice. Ahab probably thought this a foolish weakness of his ally but strove to humour him, so four hundred prophets are summoned. These would not be Baal prophets or those of Ashtaroth such as Elijah had contended with. These spoke in the name of the Lord, as verse 12 indicates, but Jehoshaphat was not satisfied. Perplexed by the din, it is clear that they were not in his view true prophets of Jehovah. He was accustomed to enquiring of the Lord through the person of *one* man, the High Priest at the temple. They had used the word *Adonai*, which might mean the Supreme God of any religion, and Jehoshaphat, struck with their shrinking from the distinctive name *Jehovah*, asks, "Is there not here a prophet of Jehovah; One who is not ashamed or afraid to speak in His awful name?"

Ahab's keen discernment read at once Jehoshaphat's secret dissatisfaction. He knew where to find such a prophet but he would not willingly produce him. He had had some bitter experience with that man Micaiah. He recalled to mind the day when he had sent Benhadad away in peace and had been suddenly confronted by a prophet. How often the words had recurred to him since "thy life shall go for his life". No wonder with a burst of anger Ahab says, "I hate him, for he doth not prophesy good concerning me but evil". Jehoshaphat's courteous disclaimer is an irresistible demand for his presence, so Micaiah is summoned, probably from prison. An officer is sent to fetch him.

Elijah's trial at Carmel was in some respects easier than Micaiah's. In that case it was the servant of Jehovah against the sham gods, Baal and Ashtaroth. Elijah had stood single handed against four hundred and fifty prophets, the King and his

court, and triumphed. Micaiah's test was far subtler of approach and so far more difficult, for these men professed themselves prophets of the Lord. In the name of Jehovah they had uttered their predictions (*verse 12*). Probably to many, if not to all of them, there had been a time when the true voice visited them; the gift, like all God's gifts, could be turned by the receiver to evil use. He might trifle with it, dumb its utterance through fear of man, pervert it for gifts and rewards, like Balaam, and as he thus trifled with the great power he drove away its presence and an evil spirit came and dwelt there. He became a false prophet, a prophet of lies. We read not so much of the false prophets prophesying consciously a lie as of their seeing lying visions and so uttering deceits. Micah portrays this condition of things in Micah 3. 5-7.

While the officer has gone to fetch Micaiah, *verse 11* tells of one of these false prophets, Zedekiah. As the name means "Righteousness of Jehovah", it is quite possible that he was once a true prophet of God but had lost the true vision by a desire to curry royal favour. Anyway he joins in the unanimous voice of the other prophets and declares that the expedition against the Syrians will be successful. Their united reiteration of the cry, evidently with increasing excitement, reminds us of the repeated, "O Baal, hear us" of Mount Carmel and stands in similar contrast with the calm stern utterance of the true prophet.

In *verse 13* the man who has gone to summon Micaiah appears to give the prisoner friendly advice. He acquaints him with what is going on, tells him of the united advice of the prophets and advises him for his own safety and possible release from prison to agree with the popular voice. There is in the whole incident, especially in the words of this officer, evidence of the strange confusion of ideas so common in superstition at all times, which in some sense believes in the inspiration of the prophets as coming from God, yet fancies that they can direct it as they will and that accordingly they can be bribed or beguiled or coerced to speak smooth things. The extreme form of this infatuation is exemplified in the case of Simon Magus, who believed the Apostles were the medium for conferring the highest spiritual gifts from God and yet madly persuaded himself that this power could be bought for money (*Acts 8. 18*). The delusion is silenced by the stern reply of Micaiah, "As the Lord liveth, what Jehovah saith unto me, that will I speak".

Micaiah is brought out of the darkness of his prison into the full glare of a Syrian noon day sun. It is a magnificent scene; there are the two Kings resplendent in their robes of silk and purple and

gold, surrounded by all the glint of pomp and ceremonial display. Courtiers, magnificent in their dress and overbearing in their pride are numerous, and at a respectful distance are the prophets keeping up their repeated adjurations to the Kings to go up to Ramoth Gilead and prosper. All around are the people and probably the troops.

Amidst this crowd the single prophet stood. To him the dull stillness of the dungeon has been suddenly exchanged for the eager interrogation of the King, the angry taunts of the prophets and the deep expectant hum of the people. All around an eager sea of faces. A weaker heart might have fainted under the heaviness of the burden laid upon him. Not so Micaiah; he was strong in the power of Jehovah and felt no fear.

The King puts the formal question and Micaiah repeats the refrain of the prophets with their exact words, "Go, and prosper, for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the King". Micaiah is a true disciple of Elijah in the defiant irony of the tone in which he takes up and mocks the utterance of the false prophets so bitterly as at once to show Ahab his scorn of them and him.

In *verse 17* Micaiah drops the bantering tone and prophesies the defeat of the army which has become leaderless, and the King's worst fears are confirmed; Micaiah has as usual prophesied evil. But Micaiah is not finished; he has more to say from the Lord (*verses 19-23*). "Now therefore, behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee."

Zedekiah shows his contempt by striking Micaiah on the cheek. He professes indignation in words of blasphemy against God and of contempt for His prophets and sarcastically enquires how Micaiah came to know the secret dealings and counsels of God, with the idea of turning Micaiah's words into ridicule, but Micaiah ignores his words and merely declares the shame and terror with which Zedekiah shall find out, hereafter, the truth of his words.

Ahab's affectation of disbelief, which his subsequent conduct shows to be but affectation, simply draws down a plainer and sterner prediction accompanied by an appeal to the whole assembly to bear witness of it. "If you return at all in peace, Jehovah hath not spoken by me. Harken O people, everyone of you."

What courage, what bravery! He was resolute in face of danger. A few hours later all was accomplished. The session is ended, the royal train rolls proudly back to the ivory palace of Ahab, the company of the prophets whose voice of counsel has prevailed sweeps triumphantly away and the crowd

melts and disperses. The one man with whom was Jehovah's presence is led back, dishonoured, smitten and reviled to eat prison bread and drink its water.

A few days later, a King, dying on Gilead's

mountains, an army slaughtered and scattered and fugitive attested the truth of Micaiah's words "If thou return at all in peace the Lord hath not spoken by me".

## ? THE QUESTION BOX ?

*Q.* "There are also celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another" (1 Cor. 15: 40). What is the meaning of the words "celestial" and "terrestrial"?

*A.* In plain English heavenly and earthly. "Celestial" comes from the Latin "caelestis", meaning heavenly, and "terrestrial" from the Latin "terra", the earth. It would seem that the translators of the Authorised Version used the Latin words as rather more appropriate to the loftiness of the Apostle's theme. In the Greek the words are *epourania* (belonging to the heavens) and *epigeia* (belonging to the earth), so that in "celestial" and "terrestrial" we really have very correct Latin translations of the Greek. With our own understanding of the distinction between human and spiritual natures it may be that these words are more descriptive than the every-day "heavenly" and "earthly". To speak of a heavenly being may easily call to mind the picture of a glorified man descending from the skies, somewhat along the lines of the old idea that the spiritual body is merely a glorified physical body. The terms "celestial being" and "terrestrial being" may better fit the fact that there are two separate and distinct planes of being, each having its own characteristic inhabitants, fitted and adapted to their own environment and ordained by God to be for ever the glory of those environments—angels, "celestial beings" in heaven, and men, "terrestrial beings" on earth. But in reading the passage, we are certainly literally correct if we use the every-day English words, and read: "There are also heavenly bodies, and bodies of earth; but the glory of the heavenlies is one, and the glory of the earthlies is another".

\* \* \*

*Q.* At the Council of Jerusalem recorded in Acts 15 there was "much disputing". Had the apostles and elders so soon fallen from the high ideals of John 17?

*A.* By no means. The usage of the word "dispute" has changed a little during the four hundred years since the A.V. was prepared. We associate the term to-day with wrangling and acrimony. The Greek word "*suzeteo*" used in Acts 15 has no such significance. It implies a

mutual or co-operative seeking or discussion together. Our own word "discussion" would be a good equivalent. The same word is used in Acts 28: 29, where the Roman Jews, after hearing Paul's witness, departed and "had great reasoning among themselves". The Council where "the apostles and elders came together for to consider this matter" was evidently an assembly of grave and sober men who discussed the problem before them in the spirit of Christ and under the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit—and their decision, as shown by history, was blessed accordingly. Would that in all our own discussions on debatable matters we could manifest the same disposition?

\* \* \*

*Q.* What is the meaning behind Jesus' words to Mary Magdalene "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father" (John 20: 17)?

*A.* The hazy ideas of many Christians concerning our Lord's resurrection body have led them to a somewhat superstitious view that He could not or should not be physically touched, hence this word which, they think, was in the nature of a prohibition. Now we know that our Lord, Who was raised from the dead a glorious celestial being, must needs assume a body of flesh for the purpose of appearing to and conversing with His disciples, and on this occasion He appeared to Mary in the guise of a gardener. Directly Mary realised that it was indeed the Lord, and loving Him as she did, her first impulse would certainly be to embrace and cling to Him in happiness, as though she would never let Him go. Nothing less could be expected from this warm-hearted, devoted woman after the events of the previous few days. The verb rendered "touch" is the Greek "*hupto*", which means to cling closely and tenaciously, especially of two persons embracing each other. The scene should be easy to reconstruct—Mary in an ecstasy of happiness holding close to her Lord, so wonderfully restored from the dead, and Jesus saying gently to her, "Do not be clinging to Me now, for I have not yet ascended to My Father, but go and tell My disciples . . ." etc. He was not going away just yet; Mary would see Him again, and now He wanted her to haste away and tell the others the glorious news.

## NEWS FROM THE FELLOWSHIPS

### Assembly of Witness at Bolton

The Annual North-Western Assembly of Witness was held at Bolton on 4th and 5th October. It marked the close of another year's activity bearing witness to our Father's purpose.

Bro. F. Hindle (*Accrington*) welcomed the brethren with suitable words. Then followed a baptismal service, a goodly number gathering at John Street Baptist Chapel for the ceremony, which was conducted by Bro. F. Musk (*Rosendale*), who also gave the address. Bro. F. Quennell (*Warrington*) baptised the candidates, who thus symbolised their consecration to the Will of God. It was a simple, impressive and very happy ceremony.

The public meeting on Saturday evening was addressed by Bro. A. J. Lodge (*London*) who showed what is meant by the "Day of His Wrath", and what is the hope for all people. Important features of God's purpose—the Ransom, the Call of the Church, Divine dealings with Israel, and the coming Kingdom, were clearly presented.

The usual Question Meeting was held on Sunday morning, a number of brethren taking part. Many expressed their appreciation of help received.

On Sunday afternoon Bro. A. Kirkwood (*Glasgow*) spoke on "Witnessing for Jesus". He said that there had been witnesses for Jesus for over nineteen hundred years but the commission was still up-to-date, and pointed out that four important facts must be recognised: (1) The presence of the Lord "Lo, I am with you always"; (2) The programme of the Lord "Ye shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, and Judea, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth"; (3) The power of the Lord "Ye shall receive power"; (4) The protection of the Lord, as seen in the life of Paul.

At the final session Bro. G. H. Jennings (*London*) addressed the brethren on "Occupy till I come". Dealing with the Parable of the Pounds, he showed that they really represent goods, possessions, interests, of the nobleman, who in turn represents our Lord, who has entrusted His goods to His servants. Turning to the Parable of the Talents, he showed that this concerns things to take place at the consummation of this Age; that it is faithfulness in using that which is entrusted to us that is pleasing to the Lord. Those who are sent forth between His going away and His return are the ambassadors of the Divine purpose in the world.

The Lord richly blessed the ministry of His Word, and our fellowship. The Assembly was a season of refreshing and renewal, and gave all concerned great encouragement to press on.

### West Wales Convention

The West Wales week-end Convention held at Swansea on 25th and 26th October was a happy

Home-Gathering bringing the scattered friends of the district together in Christian fellowship. The Y.M.C.A. authorities—in whose building the meetings were held—were most cordial and co-operative and their ready assistance in the catering was much appreciated. The spirit pervading the assemblies was characteristic of those representing our Lord and Master Jesus Christ. The addresses were mainly of a devotional character, dwelling on the liberty we enjoy in Christ, on the faith by which we live, and in the closing session, on the walk of holiness to which we are called. During the course of the sessions the 23rd Psalm was expounded and there was a talk on prophecy, and on Sunday afternoon a Christian sister in the Lord enhanced the solemnity of the worship with two sacred solos—a much appreciated ministry of song. Finally came the concluding hymn "God be with you till we meet again". So memory now keeps afresh this occasion of rapt praise and concentration for holy living and watchful prayer.

The Convention was followed by a public meeting at a neighbouring village, where an interesting and scriptural address on the subject "This Gospel of the Kingdom" was given. A number of interested listeners handed in their names for further contact, and, encouraged by this, arrangements have been made for a series of three successive meetings. So do the friends thus working together in West Wales rejoice in proclaiming that "the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" and to welcome such as will be saved by repentance and conversion to Jesus Christ and dedication of life to His Service. To Him be the blessing, the power and the glory.

### Warrington

The friends at Warrington announce that the usual Easter Convention is to be held in that city. Further information and programmes will be available in due course and brethren desiring to know more may communicate with Bro. F. Quennell, The Glen, Knutsford Old Road, Grappenhall, Warrington, Lancs.

### London Fellowship

There will be usual meetings at Caxton Hall in January and February. A meeting is planned for the third week in March and further details of this meeting will appear in the next issue of the "Monthly".

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## Gone From Us

Bro. F. Oakley (*Forest Gate*).

Bro. J. Smith (*Woodbridge*).

"Till the day break, and the shadows flee away."

## IDIOMATIC USES OF "SABBATH" IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

(Reprinted from "Bible Student Inquirer")

Besides the ordinary use of the word sabbath (Gr.—*sabbaton*) corresponding to our English usage, we find that word used at times by some writers of the New Testament in a special idiomatic sense which forbids its literal translation in our Bibles. Failure to recognise these idiomatic uses results in a faulty translation, and from this cause some of the renderings of *sabbaton* in one version are erroneous and even preposterous. While some of these errors of translation are relatively unimportant, others bear directly upon the time of our Lord's resurrection and merit some attention.

There are two special uses of *sabbaton* which should be carefully noted. The first of these is that construction in which the plural is put for the singular. In such cases the plural form of a word is used, but the singular is meant. This usage is common in the New Testament and many examples can be cited. Names of cities are not infrequently in a plural form, although the meaning is, of course, singular. To illustrate, Jerusalem is the singular *Hierousalem*, but also very often the plural *Hierosoluma*. The name Gomorrhah also appears in both singular and plural, while Sodom and Athens always have a plural form in the original Greek. Some other words which in English are used only in the singular number (East, West, right hand, left hand, etc.) appear in a plural form in the original. In these cases the Concordant Version, like other versions, has recognised this idiom of "plural for the singular", and has correctly rendered these plural forms by the singular.

This idiom appears also in names of festivals, in such words as marriage and birthday, and in the use of the word sabbath. In many occurrences of these words the plural form found in the Greek text is not a real plural, but merely an idiomatic usage—the plural used with singular meaning. That this is no mere assumption but a conclusion well founded on New Testament usage, will appear from a comparison of certain parallel passages in the Gospels. On the form of *sabbaton* compare Matt. 12. 1 and Mark 2. 23 with Luke 6. 1; Mark 3. 2 with Luke 6. 7; Matt. 12. 12 and Mark 3. 4 with Luke 6. 9 (Rev. Greek text). An examination of these passages discloses (1) that the plural form is used even though one particular sabbath is referred to, and (2) that here the usage of Matthew and Mark differs from that of Luke, who uses the ordinary, singular form of *sabbaton*, while the first two use the plural (idiomatic) form. With due consideration for the idiom, the translation of *sabbaton* in all these passages will agree, being in the singular number.

The other special use of *sabbaton* (sabbath) is that in which it means a week, there being no other word for "week" in the Greek Testament. In this usage the word is either in the singular or plural. Examples may be found in these passages: Matt. 28. 1; Mark 16. 2; Luke 18. 12 and I Cor. 16. 2. Prominent among these is the phrase, "the first day of the week" (*Mia toon sabbatoon*), used by all four Evangelists in their accounts of the Lord's resurrection.

There is a reasonable and authentic explanation of this idiom. Aside from the seventh day, the Sabbath, the Jews did not have names for the days of the week, but used ordinary numbers, e.g., the first, second, third day of the week, etc. The seven day period between the sabbaths came itself to be referred to as sabbath, i.e., a week. This explanation, confirmed by Talmudic usage (see Robinson's Greek Lexicon), is the linguistic basis of the traditional rendering of the phrase *mia toon sabbatoon*. The correctness of the rendering, "the first day of the week", is made apparent by its agreement with the several contexts in which the Greek phrase occurs. At the same time it will be seen how unsuitable and even impossible is the literal translation, "one of the sabbaths", which one version has in those passages.

Note the sequence of events as narrated by St. Luke in the Gospel in 23. 55, 56; 24. 1. First, the women, having watched the placing of Jesus' body in the tomb, return and prepare spices and ointments; second, the following day being the Sabbath, they rest on it "according to the commandment"; third, very early on the next day, which is the "first day of the week", the women come to the sepulchre bringing the spices with which they intend to prepare the Lord's body for its permanent burial. With *mia toon sabbatoon* taken as an idiomatic expression for first day of the week, the Evangelist's account is perfectly clear and self-consistent. But what happens to it if we inject into the narrative the rendering "one of the sabbaths"? Then it stands thus: (1) late in the day of the crucifixion the women return and prepare the spices, (2) they rest the following day, the sabbath, and (3) in the early dawn of "one of the sabbaths" the women come to the tomb, bringing the spices. It is obvious that the change in reading makes the narrative confused and self-contradictory. In one verse the women rest on the sabbath "according to the precept", but in the next verse they came to the tomb early on one of the sabbaths, prepared to go to work! This confusion is un-

necessary and results from failure to grasp the idiomatic use of *sabbaton* in the phrase used by the Evangelists.

A good example of the idiomatic use of *sabbaton* in a sense of "week" is found in Luke 18. 12, where the Pharisee is reported as saying, "I fast twice in the week (*dis tou sabbatou*). This rendering makes good sense and is in harmony with what we know about the Jewish custom of fasting in those times. A standard authority, Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible* (article "Fasts"), says, "weekly fasts were observed on the second and fifth days of the week; fasts were not observed on the Sabbaths" (compare Luke 18. 12; Mark 2. 23 and Luke 14. 1).

It remains to be noticed how a mistranslation of *sabbaton* in Mark 16. 9 is sometimes set forth as a proof that our Lord was raised from the dead on a Sabbath morning—not on the first day of the

week as generally believed. A literal translation of the Greek original would read: "on the first (day) of a sabbath", a meaningless expression and therefore impossible. Having then to abandon the literal rendering of *prootee sabbatou* there is only one logical course left. We must recognise in this phrase the idiomatic use of *sabbatoon*, just as in the similar *mia toon sabbatoon*, both phrases meaning exactly the same thing—"the first day of the week".

Perhaps this verse Mark 16. 9 ought not to be quoted as part of the inspired record, since the writing of Mark almost certainly ends with the preceding verse. However, the concluding verses (9 to 20) are a very ancient fragment, being quoted already by Irenæus, in the Second Century, and the time of the resurrection as stated in verse 9, "early the first day of the week" may well be the earliest tradition of the Church.

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# BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

Thou, therefore, endure  
hardness as a good  
soldier of Jesus Christ.

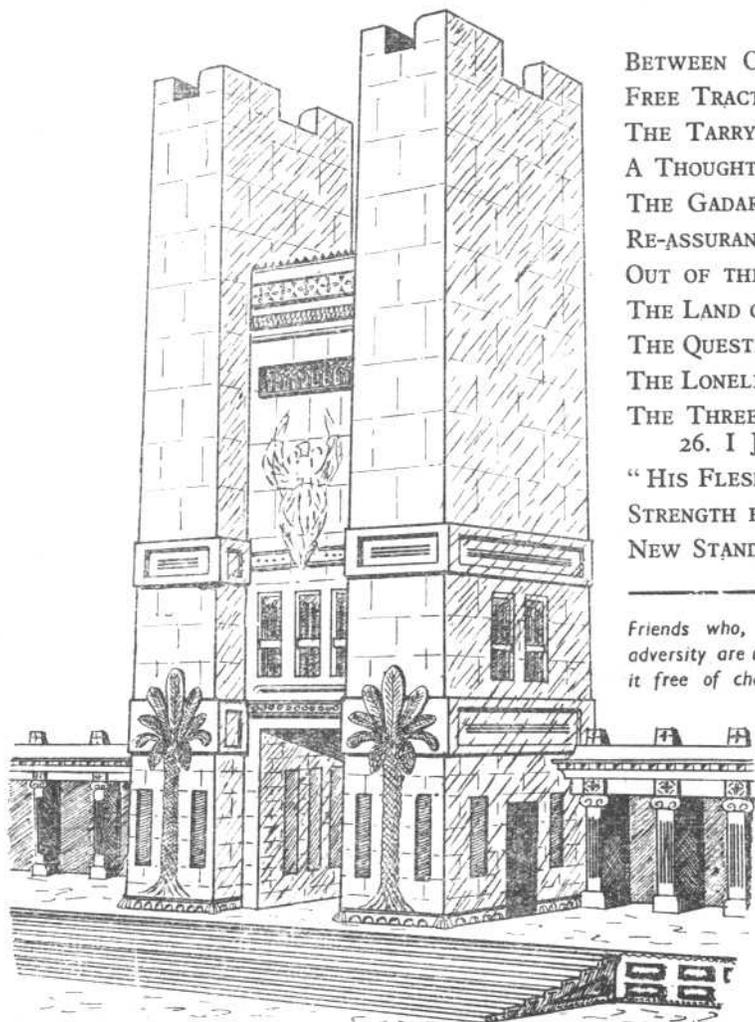
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FEBRUARY, 1953

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adversity are unable to pay for this journal may have  
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And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors,  
And the King of glory shall come in.

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## NOTES ON PASSING EVENTS

Lovers of Weymouth's modern English translation will be glad to know that after quite a long time out of print, this well-known translation is once again available in several editions, both pocket and library sizes. This new edition is without notes. Any bookseller can obtain copies for those interested, but for the convenience of our readers we are holding in stock the 7½ in. x 5 in. edition, cloth bound, at 9/6 post free (£1.50). This is a handsome book, cloth with gold lettering on spine, with dust jacket, 458 pages, and makes an acceptable gift. More expensive editions in various bindings are available and can be obtained to order if desired, as follows:

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\* \* \*

The February meeting of London Fellowship at Caxton Hall will be held on Saturday, 21st February, at 6.30 p.m., the speakers being Bros. S. H. French (*Forest Gate*) and A. O. Hudson (*Welling*). A very warm welcome is extended to all who can be present on that occasion. After some discussion at the December meeting it was decided that these gatherings shall continue in their present form at least until June.

The friends at Warrington announce that the usual Easter Convention is to be held in that city. Further information and programmes will be available in due course and brethren desiring to know more may communicate with Bro. F. Quennell, The Glen, Knutsford Old Road, Grappenhall, Warrington, Lancs.

\* \* \*

The Benevolent Committee request that we acknowledge through the medium of our columns the receipt of an anonymous donation of 10/- from Northumberland, with an expression of the sincere appreciation of that Committee.

\* \* \*

Brethren who are able to send in items of Scriptural interest suitable for our "Out of the Storehouse" feature are warmly invited to do so. This feature has appeared for several months now and our readers have been able to see the type of item that is useful; one of the ways in which even the humblest "member" of the "body" can help fellow-members is by looking out for such little items of interest to a wider circle. Original writing is preferred; if anything is copied word-for-word from any existing publication or book, please state the name of such publication and author's name when sending. In general the results of personal study of the Scripture are likely to be most interesting to our brethren.

### FREE TRACT FUND—FINANCIAL STATEMENT

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A sharp decline in the funds made available for this work is obvious compared with preceding years and if this is an indication that this type of activity is intended by our Master to be restricted or to close down we all will be perfectly content to follow His leading. Our present stock of free literature is almost zero so that this is an appropriate time to close this section of our work if that is to be.

## THE TARRYING VISION

A talk for  
the times.

*"The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry."* (Hab. 2. 3.)

The splendid faith of the prophet Habakkuk shines down the ages, a standing reproof to all who have allowed the slow passage of many years to undermine and finally destroy their faith in the coming Kingdom. There is not much consolation in the thought of a world wherein dwelleth righteousness that is still many thousands of years away. The great incentive that led so many despairing souls in the First Century to fling away their sadness and come rejoicing into that wonderful missionary society that was the Early Church was their fixed conviction that the time was at hand and the Kingdom of light was at the doors. The splendid imagery of the Book of Revelation was full of that theme to the early Christians. Little did they reckon of the two thousand years that must yet elapse before the New Jerusalem would in fact descend to the earth to the blessing of all mankind. They interpreted the mystic symbols to refer to their own day and the events of their own times—as they were intended to do—and they fell asleep in the secure conviction that the days of evil were numbered and the Rider on the White Horse all but ready to cleave the heavens in His meteoric descent to the salvation of men. In their admittedly partial and incomplete understanding of the dispensational features of the Plan of God they found all that was necessary to Christian fortitude and steadfastness. In that faith they lived, and in that faith they died.

So it was throughout the successive centuries of this Gospel Age. There has hardly ever been a time when the Second Advent of Christ and the speedy ending of this present evil world has not been looked upon as an imminent event. There were times—round about A.D. 500 and again in A.D. 1000 and to a lesser extent in A.D. 1600 when that general belief increased to the dimensions of a well-nigh universal expectation. On each such occasion the belief was founded upon chronology and each time the chronology was proved to be erroneous; but the impetus thus given to a whole-hearted and zealous "watching for His appearing" was on each occasion the cause of much blessing. It is not the failure to discern rightly the details

of the vision that is the cause of falling away from faith and hope, but the failure to discern any vision at all. The inaccurate details can be replaced by more accurate ones as fast as the passage of time reveals their inaccuracy without disturbing our view of the vision itself; nothing can fill in for us the details of a vision that has faded into nothingness.

In our own day we need to remember these things. It is not that we have just the same basis for concluding that maybe we ourselves are equally mistaken with those of five or ten centuries ago and that the world is doomed to continue yet for an unspecified length of time before the transition to the Kingdom becomes an accomplished fact. There are factors in the case that did not exist before. It is reasonably evident to-day that humanity, left to itself, will fairly soon destroy itself from the earth unless there be some intervention from outside. It is reasonably evident to-day that the continuing increase of earth's population will in a very short time render the fulfilment of the Divine promises physically impossible, if the end is not to come soon—assuming that our own understanding of the Scripture doctrine of salvation is the true one. It is true to-day, as it has never been true before in the Age, that the Divine promises to "Israel after the flesh" have commenced to be fulfilled, and that the preparation of that Holy Nation which is to declare God's salvation to the ends of the earth has commenced. It is true to-day, as it has never been true before in the Age, that this Gospel of the Kingdom has been preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, that no corner of the physical inhabited earth remains into which Christian missionaries have not at one time or another penetrated with their soul-saving message. All these things are signs of the End; and so for the first time in history it has been possible to anticipate the imminent Second Coming of our Lord and the consequent speedy setting up of His Kingdom on earth on a basis other than that of chronology. That is a most important thing. Whatever may be the merits or demerits of any particular chronological scheme, none will deny that the signs of the times and the inexorable logic of events constitute a far more sure and reliable basis on which to found our expectations. Therefore it is with serene confidence that we in this Twentieth Century

ought to take our stand, as did Habakkuk of old, upon our watch tower and view the close approach of those things for which Christians all through the Age have longed and prayed and waited.

Fine words, these, say some! Logical, and perhaps difficult to refute from the standpoint of reason. But our lives are not altogether governed by reason, and oft-times the discouragements and difficulties of the way and the more immediate appeal of every day happenings makes it hard to take and hold to ourselves arguments such as the above, logical and truthful though we know them to be. That was how the children of Israel in captivity to Babylon felt. They knew, in a theoretical sort of way, that after seventy years in Babylon they were going to be restored to their own land and all the glorious promises of God to their nation come true. But that belief had not become so much a part of their lives and an object of assured expectation that they could hold it unsullied against the background of their present miseries in Babylon. So they invented that proverb which has become the catch-word of all who could not "stay the course" through all time since. "*The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth.*" What utter hopelessness and despair is embodied in those eight words! Nothing left of all the rosy promise of youth, of all the zeal and enthusiasm with which one set out, maybe many years ago, to serve the Lord God as an ambassador of His Kingdom. The commission renounced, the service abandoned, the hopes dashed, the future—black. Disappointment; bitter, keen disappointment, was the lot of many in Natural Israel in those dark Babylonian days, and it has been the lot of many in Spiritual Israel in these latter days also. This past century in Christian history has been a grand epoch of watchfulness and expectation, a time of Bible exposition and understanding, of evangelism and revival, of missionary endeavour and Christian activity of every description, but for many that wonderful experience has proved fruitless. They have consecrated their lives to the Cause, have borne the heat and burden of the day, have done mighty and wonderful works in His Name and perchance have led others in turn to the feet of the Saviour—and then in evening time they have abandoned their hope and faith in the face of unfulfilled expectations. The Bridegroom has tarried—has seemed to them to tarry, for in fact He does not really tarry; He comes "at the due time"—and the test of waiting has found the chink in the armour which all other tests had failed to penetrate. So they sought "other salvations", or have gone to the world and its mundane affairs and petty interests—or glittering attractions—for consolation, or have

retired into their own shells to lament the apparent futility of all their life's work. "*We see not our signs; there is no more any prophet; neither is there any amongst us that knoweth how long.*"

But some there are, you know, who do keep the vision undimmed. Some there are who endure to the end, "as seeing him who is invisible," and these are they who perceive the hidden truth which explains all things. These are they who know that God once looked out upon a wild chaos that was "without form, and void" and because He had faith in Himself took up the great work of making it a home for mankind. These are they who know that God once looked down upon a human creation apparently wrecked and ruined through sin, condemned to return to the dust from which it had been made—but because He had faith in man, continued the development and outworking of His great redemptive plan. He knows that despite the apparent hopelessness of the case, mankind one day will win through to the full standards and standing of the sinless and everliving sons of God. And His faithful ones know that too.

Habakkuk was one of these. His noble words have been an inspiration to the perplexed and discouraged, time after time. No one will ever know, this side the Vail, how many despairing souls have been induced to pick up the broken remnants of their faith and piece them together and struggle on still to keep the vision in sight. "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." (Hab. 3. 17-18.) That was the spirit which led the prophet Joel, looking forward rapturously to the Kingdom that shall be, to break out exultantly "your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions". (Joel 2. 28.) That word really belongs to the Millennial Kingdom itself but there is a very true sense in which the principle it enshrines is applicable now. We who have enjoyed the inestimable blessing of knowing about the coming Kingdom in advance, as it were, of mankind generally, can surely take to ourselves some of the Millennial insight which will be granted to men and women of God in that day. We too, according to the tale of physical years or maturity of Christian character, or both, can be of those who "dream dreams" or "see visions". Be it remembered that in the meaning of this verse the "dreamer of dreams" is the one to whose Spirit-filled mind God can reveal Himself and make His purposes known, as He did to Joseph and Daniel

and the Apostle Paul. The "elder" who dreams dreams is the one who by reason of long experience in the Christian way and a steadfast faith that has survived the years does habitually "walk" and "talk" with God. He is one whose ministry is a spiritually profitable and acceptable ministry, one who can interpret aright the outward signs of the development of the Divine Plan and explain the apparently obscure or contradictory features that seem to deny rather than confirm our expectations for the future. The "younger" who sees visions is the one who, only recently having started on the Christian pathway, directs all his enthusiasm and all his zeal and all his faith into a heartfelt and active consecration of life and all that life holds to the service of God in the interests of His Kingdom. The trials of faith have not yet come to test the staying power of his consecration. All he has is zeal and enthusiasm—and the vision! God grant that all such may hold firmly to their first resolve

until in their turn they become of the "old men" who can "dream dreams" because they have learned to walk with God.

So the vision leads on, never standing still, never appearing quite the same to any two people or at any two moments of time, but ever enduring a sure and faithful guide to the heavenly city. Lose the vision, and all is lost; we wander aimlessly and blindly in a darkened world indeed. "Will ye also go away?" "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Hold fast to the vision and it will lead on with beckoning fingers, the light growing more intense and the outlines of things to come more definite, until the day of fulfilment has dawned and faith is swallowed up in sight.

"As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall have no occasion to use this proverb any more in Israel. Say unto them, 'THE DAYS ARE AT HAND, AND THE EFFECT OF EVERY VISION.'"

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## A THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

"Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine". (1 Tim. 4. 13.)

The admonitions and instructions written by the Apostle Paul while in prison in Rome to his son-in-the-faith Timothy have always been considered of the highest importance to Christian ministers and pastors and teachers. The skilful blending of the pastoral with the didactic, of Christian conduct with Christian doctrine, sets a pattern which we should all seek carefully to follow. Unfortunately, we are, none of us, so well balanced in mind on these things as was the Apostle Paul and we tend to fall more or less heavily on either the "devotional" or the "doctrinal" side of the fence. Happy are we if we can combine the two into a fully balanced and spiritually profitable ministry. So much depends on those to whom it falls to guide the minds and lives of the believers. The office of a pastor or an elder is a supremely important one and it is no wonder that St. Paul declares, "If a man desires the office of an elder, he desireth a good work". An elder then "must be blameless . . ." and so on (1 Tim. 3. 1).

The pity of it is that so many who lay supreme stress upon the doctrinal aspects of the Divine Word and the importance of an accurate intellectual understanding of the philosophy of the Plan of Redemption are themselves such poor advertisements for the efficacy of the things in which they believe, and which so dogmatically they claim that a goodly

number of the flock are repelled and driven over to the purely devotional side, to their own loss and damage to the cause which we all serve. If it is true—and it is true—that "my people perish for lack of knowledge" then we cannot afford to ignore those things in the Word which are generally classed as doctrine. But unless we can hold each other's divergent conclusions on such matters in proper respect and so arrange our affairs that we can both make proper progress in our own personal understanding of doctrine and at the same time preserve the essential "unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace", which is the hall-mark and evidence of our Divine sonship, then neither doctrine nor devotion will do us any good at all. The attitude that is manifested all too often by the more bigoted of the Christian fellowship reminds irresistibly of St. Paul's words, "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another". (Gal. 5. 15.)

Perhaps we can learn a lesson along this line from Moses, in Israel's opinion the greatest man who ever lived or ever would live. With all his tenacity and strength of character, all his knowledge ("learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" and in the lore of God besides), all his walking and talking with God, one whom the Lord "knew face to face," he was so intrinsically modest and humble that he was known as "the meekest man in all the earth". Does that fact persuade us that knowledge of doctrine, of the Divine mysteries, essential as it

is in one who is called to be a Christian minister, is effectual only when it is combined with, and subject to, sincere humility and an abiding submission to the wisdom of God? So too, St. Paul himself, who more than any of the Apostles has defined and expounded the doctrines of the Christian faith, described himself as "less than the least of all saints", "not meet to be called an apostle". (Eph. 3. 8., 1 Cor. 15. 9.)

The Book of Proverbs was not preserved and included in the Bible without purpose. Perhaps part of that purpose was for the instruction of those whose minds are exercised along these lines. There is a long exhortation to seek Divine wisdom in the early part of the Book which is familiar to most of us. "*Incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding. Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as hid treasure; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God*" (Pro. 2. 2-5). The "wisdom" chapters of the Book of Proverbs—and, too, their counterparts in the "*Book of Wisdom*" in the Apocrypha—are well worth reading and re-reading, studying and taking to heart, for these are the things by which we must live and do our duty before God.

It has been said that Christian belief is a lake in which elephants can swim as well as antelopes drink. Whether elephants can in fact swim is a matter outside the present writer's zoological knowledge, but he can certainly testify to the truth of the simile. After all, the God who designed both elephants and antelopes is capable of making some disciples with a considerable capacity for doctrine and others with much less, and yet each able to make his or her calling and election sure by means of that which they do have the capacity to assimilate.

We do not have to think that those who attain entrance to the heavenly Kingdom must all attain to the same degree of knowledge even although they do have to attain the mark of perfect love. At the same time, just as it is obvious that an elephant who persisted in drinking no more water than would satisfy an antelope would soon cease to count for anything in this world, so one who has the capacity and ability and desire for an extensive understanding of the intellectual and doctrinal features of the Divine Plan must of necessity pursue that aspect of the Christian life to the full extent of his powers. Of such come those who stand as lights to the Church in the onward progress of understanding and enlightenment. It is to the clear-sightedness and intellectual insight of such that the Church owes the periodic advances in the Truth, the coming of new light on the Word of God, which have marked certain significant points in the history of the Age. It may be no exaggeration to say that the devotional leaders preserve the faith and steadfastness of the Church against the wearing down processes of daily life, whilst the doctrinal leaders beckon on to new heights of understanding which in turn gives new grounds for hope and expectation. All are members one of another and we shall find at the end that the processes of both head and heart will have played their part in bringing us to the glory land.

And, coming back to those elephants and antelopes, we have to remember that in the Millennial visions of Isaiah the peaceable animals pass into the earthly paradise unchanged; the lions and tigers only at the cost of discarding their carnivorous appetites and making their peace with the creatures upon whom they once preyed. Which brings us again to St. Paul's words above quoted about people who bite and devour one another.

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## TO WHOM ARE COMMITTED ORACLES OF GOD

"As a Christian group, we have been blessed with a wonderful increase of light upon God's Word. Prophecy and type have been made clear, and the great mystery of God has been understood more fully, perhaps, than ever before, with the possible exception of the early Church. We have had pointed out to us evidence that indicates that we are living in the time of the Lord's second presence and kingdom. Has all this blessed light humbled us and filled our hearts with gratitude? Or has there been a tendency to glory in our knowledge—to flaunt our superior wisdom? Doubtless, we our-

selves are ignorant as to what extent we may have been guilty of these things and of how far we may have gone in despising less favoured groups. The tendency toward Babylonish characteristics of bondage and organisation became so marked that God's call of 'Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues' became again the test of true discipleship. And again we have been made to realise that no strong earthly organisation can retain the spirit of humility and Christlikeness."

(*The "Herald of Christ's Kingdom."*)

## THE GADARENE SWINE

*An examination of a well-known story.*

The story of the Gadarene swine who were, by permission of the Lord Jesus, possessed by a legion of demons and were in consequence drowned in the lake is an interesting sidelight upon the general Scriptural presentation regarding the "fallen angels". The incident itself is well attested, having been recorded by all three synoptic writers—Matthew (8. 28-36), Mark (5. 1-20), and Luke (8. 20-34). The three narratives agree in all main points except that Matthew declares there were two demoniacs involved and the others tell of only one. The probable explanation is that two men were in fact concerned but one became the centre piece of the incident and the demons spoke only through this one.

This short note will not touch upon the general subject of demon obsession, which would require much more space for anything like adequate treatment. It will merely be remarked that according to the New Testament it was a very real thing, and trained observers in this present century have come across cases in their own experience where it has been a very real thing also. It is not suggested therefore, that the unfortunate victims in this incident were simply cases of epilepsy or psychological unbalance. Their brains were in sober fact under the control of malevolent spirit creatures, angelic beings living in a state of active rebellion against God and only deterred from their evil course by such restraints as God has placed and enforced upon them.

The wider view of this matter is well known to students of the Old Testament. There has been at some remote past time a rebellion against God and righteousness by certain of the angelic creation, which rebellion was dramatically arrested by the Most High at the time of the Noachic Deluge. The story in Genesis 6, coupled with various New Testament allusions affords a sufficiently detailed picture of what happened. The angels concerned, already in a state of rebellion, "kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation" to use Jude's words, and after materialising into physical bodies lived a lawless life as men upon earth. The Flood came and thereafter they were deprived of the power thus to materialise again, but at the same time were excluded from the spiritual world which is the place of the Divine throne (see Jude 6, I Pet. 3. 19-20 and 2 Pet. 2. 4). The history of witchcraft and spiritism through the ages since has been largely the

history of these disembodied spirits endeavouring to break through the restraints that have bound them, and continue their evil ways. Hence these two men, like so many before and since, having at some time or other willingly given themselves over to the influence of the evil spirits, found their brains so controlled by them that they no longer had any will-power or volition of their own. Outwardly they manifested all the characteristics of incurable and violent insanity; but the insanity was not the result of a physically diseased brain. It was due to the operation of many supernatural intelligences—a "legion" we are told in the accounts—all working simultaneously on the one human organism.

This was the state of the crazed wretch who met Jesus as He walked up from the shore of the lake. The local inhabitants would be keeping their distance; the madman had been kept habitually manacled but such was his demoniac strength that he continually broke free from his fetters and probably did quite a lot of damage before he could be overpowered and restrained again. He appears at this time to have been free and the impression given is that he rushed upon Jesus immediately the latter had stepped ashore from the boat. Perhaps there was in the madman's dark mind some glimmering realisation that here was the means of deliverance from his fearful plight if only he could get near to the Man of Nazareth. But to speak of his own volition was evidently beyond his power. When his lips did move, the words were controlled by the evil influences that possessed his mind and they were words not of pleading but of resentment. "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?"

Now that is a most important statement in Christian theology. "Before the time"; what means this frank avowal, first of Jesus' Divinity and Messiahship at a time when His own friends and followers had not as yet realised the fact, and second of the fact that a future judgment awaited them but that the time had not yet come? "Torment" in all three narratives is "*basanizo*", which means trial and testing and judgment as well as the execution of the consequent sentence. These evil angels, speaking through this crazed man's lips, admitted their knowledge that the Man before whom they stood was indeed the Son of God and

tacitly admitted His authority over them. They admitted their realisation that judgment and sentence upon their evil course had yet to be passed but asserted that the time was not yet. In short, they accused Jesus of coming upon them for judgment before the time that had been pre-set in the Divine purposes. All of that implies that we are dealing here with definite super-human intelligences who, despite their admitted evil, did possess some detailed foreknowledge of the Divine Plan.

The Apostle Paul had some such knowledge when, twenty years or so later, he told some of his disciples that, if faithful, they were destined to "judge angels" (I. Cor. 6. 3). He was thinking of the "time" to which these referred in their question to Jesus, the Millennial "Day of Judgment" when not only evil amongst mankind but evil amongst the angelic creation is to be rooted out and all wilful evildoers, human or angelic, finally destroyed.

A significant expression in this narrative takes us back to very early times in human history. Two out of the three accounts represent the evil spirits as using the expression "the Most High God" in referring to the Deity. "Jesus thou Son of the Most High God." It is significant because so far as men are concerned this particular name for God dropped out of use several centuries before Christ. It seems to have been the earliest appellation by which men knew God, in its Hebrew form of "*el elyon*", being succeeded then by *El Shaddai*, "the Almighty", and later by the incommunicable name quite incorrectly transliterated into English by "Jehovah" but meaning "the Eternal". These fallen angels, addressing Jesus, used the term that was current in the days that were before their restraining, the days before the Flood. It is significant that the angel who appeared to Mary at the Annunciation (Luke 1. 32-35) and those who sang to the shepherds (Luke 1. 76) used the same expression (Greek *hypsistos*, equal to the Hebrew *el elyon*).

So the demons, perceiving that Jesus intended to bring their domination of this unhappy man to an end, "besought him" according to Mark "that He would not send them away out of the country", but according to Luke "that He would not command them to go out into the deep". Be it noted there was no attempt at defiance or resistance. They recognised the authority of Jesus and would obey, but they endeavoured to get the best terms they could. In Mark, "country" is "*choras*", meaning one's own proper place or where one should rightfully be, hence, one's own country. In Luke, "deep" is "*abyssos*", the English "abyss", the same as the "bottomless pit" of Rev. 20. 1,

into which the Devil is cast for the whole period of the Millennium. Neither Mark nor Luke were present at the time; all their information must have come from one or other of those disciples who were there. It may well be that both expressions were used; the accounts are quite likely to be abbreviated and Mark may have had his information from one, and Luke from another, of the witnesses.

By the "abyss" the demons may well have meant the same thing as Peter refers to in 2. 4, of his second Epistle "*God spared not the angels that sinned but cast them down to "tartarus", and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment*". *Tartarus* in Greek mythology was the prison of the Titans, who rebelled against the gods and were overthrown and imprisoned forever in a place "as far below Hades as earth is below heaven"—an apt description of the "bottomless pit" or "abyss". It would almost seem from these and other allusions in Scripture, that these "fallen angels" are constantly seeking to evade their restraints and sometimes partially succeeding. In this case it would appear as if Jesus acceded to their requests not so to use His power to return them to "*Tartarus*" or the abyss, but definitely to command them no longer to obsess the man. So the "legion" of spirits "came out", and in the absence of any prohibition by Jesus—with His permission—they took possession of the nearest living creatures in view, a herd of swine which happened to be feeding in the vicinity.

Whether this is a unique case of demon obsession of brute beasts and just what such a thing involves we have no means of knowing. It can only be assumed that, as with the men, so with the beasts, the effect in the brain was similar to that of madness. The herd exhibited all the signs of sudden terror and panic and in a mad gallop they raced over the greensward, over a little cliff, and into the water, where they quickly drowned. Mark, with all his usual passion for descriptive detail, tells us there were about two thousand of them.

The question has often been asked; is such a proceeding in keeping with the known character of Jesus? Was it thus necessary to encompass the death of two thousand dumb creatures? In another place Jesus had said not even a sparrow can fall to the ground without the Father's knowledge. We may not intrude into the Saviour's motives for acting as He did, but we can assemble a few related facts.

How did the swine come to be there? The use of swine's flesh was forbidden to the Jew and even though the religious observance of many had become perfunctory their inherited antipathy to swine's flesh remained. The explanation is that

the district around the sea of Galilee was largely cosmopolitan; five sizeable towns contained a considerable Greek and Roman population and there was a good demand for pork. Here in Gadara certain not over scrupulous Jews were making a good living rearing pigs for market. The quick death by drowning of this particular herd only anticipated a much more painful death that would have been their fate a little later on. Viewed against that background, Jesus' act was one of mercy.

But the people of the district thought otherwise. They came to Jesus and they besought Him to depart. They evidently feared He would do the same thing to more of their herds and they were more concerned over the preservation of their vested interests than the casting out of demons from the obsessed. It is an ironic comment on the hard heartedness of mankind that whereas at first they all went in fear of the madman who infested their cities they now went in fear of the One who had delivered them from that scourge. In their eyes the remedy was worse than the disease. The casting out of demons was one thing, and a very acceptable thing it was, and all honour to the stranger who had landed on their shores to do this thing. But when it came to touching their financial interests and causing them to lose trade and money the whole attitude changed. That was too heavy a price to pay, and so "the whole multitude" "besought Him to depart from them".

That part of the story is a parable indeed. There are plenty in this world to-day who would gladly be delivered from the bondage and oppression of sin, but when they learn what the after obligation will be they turn away. True it is that the saving power of God is free to all, but then that is not the whole of the story. God does not just forgive sin so that man can make a clean start and sin again. God created man in the first place to have definite obligations toward Him and to assume definite responsibilities in and towards God's universe. No man will ever attain everlasting

life without willingly taking upon himself those obligations and so fitting into the pattern of life which God has devised for him. So, after deliverance, there is a price to be paid, and even although the service of God is perfect freedom, it is still service and man must enter and remain in it.

The man who had been healed realised that. The story closes with the one-time demoniac, clothed and in his right mind, sitting at the feet of Jesus. He, at any rate, having come in contact with the power of God which is unto salvation, was not going to lose touch with it again. Luke tells us (8. 38) that this man also besought Jesus. But it was not that he "besought Him to depart from them". He "besought Him that He might be with him". He wanted to give his life, for what it was worth, to Jesus. He wanted to be a disciple.

Jesus accepted him. It is true that the text says "but Jesus sent him away, saying, return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee", but that does not mean that Jesus rejected his proffered service. He accepted it, and sent the man straight away to be a missionary to his own people. Obviously his preaching would be much more effective in a circle where his past history was known than in a strange environment where he was just another convert to Jesus of Nazareth.

There the story ends, as so many of these stories do end, on a missionary note. The man who is first sighted coming forth out of the dead world of the tombs, exceeding fierce so that none could approach him, naked and demented, is last seen going forth into the world of living men, childlike and peaceable, clothed and in his right mind, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of peace. Jesus has done that same thing for so many in every generation. "Come unto me, ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest". There is a price to pay, yes, but "take my yoke upon you and learn of me . . . for my yoke is easy and my burden is light, and ye shall find rest unto your souls".

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## REASSURANCE

*I woke in the night, the stars were hid,  
The skies were cold and grey,  
My soul grew sick with a nameless fear,  
And I scarce had faith to pray.*

*I thought of the day's mistakes with tears,  
Of wrong that outmeasured right,  
When lo, from a rainwashed tree near by  
A bird sang in the night.*

*So soft, so low, so fearlessly,  
So full of glad content,  
Of a faith that knew the day would break,  
Though the wet boughs o'er her bent.*

*I said in my heart, Behold, a sign,  
Heart, let us read aright  
That faith is easy and hope is sure,  
To him who sings in the night.*

## OUT OF THE STOREHOUSE

A collection of  
interesting items

### A Familiar Hymn

*"There were ninety and nine that safely lay  
In the shelter of the fold  
But one was out on the hills away  
Far off from the gates of gold  
Away on the mountains wild and bare  
Away from the tender Shepherd's care."*

The words are familiar to many Christians; but the story behind them is not well known. Elizabeth Clephane, a Scottish girl of twenty-one, was stricken with grief at the news of her ne'er-do-well brother's death after a drunken carousal in Canada. The tragedy occurred in 1851, when it was the general belief that such an one was hopelessly lost. Elizabeth accepted the belief of her times but her heart told her that if she so loved her prodigal brother, then her Saviour must love him in even greater degree. In the midst of her grief she penned the words of this hymn. Not thinking it to be of interest to others she kept it locked away, a secret between her Lord and herself, but after her death it was discovered and sent to a Scottish editor for publication.

*"God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform."* Twenty-three years later, the two evangelists, Moody and Sankey, were waiting on the station platform at Glasgow. Ira Sankey had purchased a weekly newspaper in the hope of finding some news of his homeland, America. Disappointed in that expectation his eyes fell upon this little poem, published for the first time. Cutting it out, he placed it in his pocket book. At the end of the meeting, the commencement of Moody's work in Scotland, Moody turned to his colleague and asked him to sing an appropriate solo. Somewhat troubled at having nothing immediately ready, Sankey bethought himself of the poem, and, crossing to the piano, he improvised a tune as he sang. At the end of his singing a great sigh went up from the audience; some were in tears; and that night saw the birth of a great revival in Scotland.

\* \* \*

### On Study

*Bear in mind that fundamental principle of all sound reasoning, that the superstructure of any system can only be brought to the same level of credibility as the premise or foundation with which*

*it starts, and upon which it is built.* If, therefore, the foundation is wrong, the whole superstructure is erroneous; and every moment of precious time spent in studying the fine-spun theories of such a system, which one has thus already proved to be erroneous, is time taken from the study of the truth, from putting on the armour of God; and is filling the mind with subtle sophistries of the Adversary, instead of the sound logic of Divine truth, and thus preparing the way for the overthrow of faith instead of establishing it in sound doctrine.

\* \* \*

### From the Past

We do not easily realise how great is the debt we owe to some of the Assyrian monarchs whose names are familiar in the Old Testament. The Israelites were chiefly concerned with those ruthless invasions which made the Assyrian name feared and hated throughout Canaan; and the Scriptures tell us little about these men beyond recounting their victories and defeats when they came into contact with the chosen people. But many of them were men of literary tastes, and accumulated vast libraries which have survived in part to our own day. Much of our knowledge of ancient peoples, their history, their ways of life, and their origin, has come to us from such records, and from these things has come much light upon the Bible record. The great library of Agade, founded by Sargon I, who lived several centuries before Abraham, was stocked with thousands of books, many of which had been translated from earlier tongues. There are catalogues now in existence instructing the readers in Sargon's library to write down the number of the book required and hand the tablet to the librarian, for all the world like a reference library in any of our great cities to-day.

\* \* \*

### Prejudice

Luther, who was used so mightily to uncover and publish the splendid truth of Justification by Faith, gave vent to the following words. *"People give ear to an upstart astrologer who strove to show that the earth revolves and not the heavens of the firmament, the sun and the moon. Whoever wishes to appear clever must devise some new system, which of all systems is of course the best. This*

*fool wishes to reverse the entire science of astronomy, the sacred Scripture tells us that Joshua commanded the sun to stand still and not the earth."*

The man referred to in this quotation was Copernicus, one who did much to give to the world a truer and more complete picture of the universe. Since that time many more facts concerning the movements of the heavenly bodies have been discovered and in the light of the present day Luther's words seem more childish than childlike. No doubt he felt strongly on this matter and said what he thought was right, and yet the view that he expressed has been shown to be false, whilst Joshua no doubt referred to the apparent motions of the heavens and not their motions as science conceived them.

\* \* \*

#### Unity and Uniformity

Does oneness mean uniformity? We answer, "No." Variety is the keynote of all we see around us. The botanists have divided the vegetation in the world into families according to their individual characteristics. In the same natural order we may have creeping plants, upright plants, climbers and other varieties. What then is his reason for putting these in one definite order. It may be the shape of the leaf, or the way the leaves may grow on the stem. It may be the shape of the flower or how it grows on the stem. Some plants, though different in flower, may be grouped together according to the veining in the leaf. Nevertheless there is a general principle in all plants which is true of all, but only in this aspect is there a oneness.

Variety also is manifest in all the other beauties of nature which frequently pass unnoticed.

The human family is even more diversified than the vegetable or animal kingdom, yet they have much in common. They all come from our first parents. Whatever the colour of skin or mode of life, they are all subject to the same natural laws. The law of heredity affects the black as well as the white races. They have all one blood (and it is interesting to note that the blood of human beings is different in composition to that of animals). Their organs are the same, their bodies function in the same way, the only difference in their make-up is the question of education, religious belief or the development of the mind.

\* \* \*

#### Society of Encouragers

Some one has spoken of the great "Society of Encouragers" who do so much to help encourage

and uplift the footsore and weary in the pathway of life. It is not a great society so far as members are concerned, but it is a great society from the Lord's standpoint and from the standpoint of all who have been helped and encouraged by it. Spike-nard Mary might have been said to have been a prominent member in this society of encouragers. We may well imagine that as our dear Redeemer was thinking of the severe trials, including the cross, of the week already begun, Mary's manifestation of love and devotion would come to him as a special encouragement and refreshment of spirit. So few seemed to understand him! Even his disciples did not appreciate the situation. Here was one who at least loved him, had confidence in him. No doubt it gave him courage for the remaining days of his journey.

\* \* \*

#### Greater Works

Jesus said, "*Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto my Father.*" Have any of the Lord's disciples done any greater miracles than Jesus did so far as healing physical ailments are concerned? We have no record of greater works of this kind than are recorded in the Gospels. Have any of the Lord's disciples at any time done as great works according to the flesh as Jesus did? Have any of them ever waked the dead? Surely none except the Apostles have done this wonderful work. What then could our Lord have meant by this expression, "Greater works than these shall ye do?" We see that Jesus in His ministry dealt only with the natural man, and could not communicate to natural man respecting spiritual or heavenly things except in parables and dark sayings, which could be but imperfectly comprehended until after Pentecost gave the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. The greater works, therefore, that have been done by the Lord's followers since the ascension have been such works as related to the hearts of men rather than to their bodies. The whole creation is groaning and travailing in physical discomfort, but the worst of all groans and pains comes from the anguish of the soul—broken hearts. The Lord's followers, in proportion as they receive of His Spirit, may communicate it through His word and bring to wounded and broken hearts peace and joy and blessing, regardless of physical conditions or discomfort, so that, as the Apostle explains, they may rejoice even in tribulation, knowing what the tribulations are working out for them in the way of greater glory and blessing and association with the Lord in His Kingdom.

# The Land of To-morrow

*Pen-pictures of the  
coming Kingdom*

God never obliterates His own creations. The dissolving fires of which Peter speaks are for "the perdition of ungodly man," and not for the utter depopulation and destruction of the whole world. They may consume cities, destroy armies and effect some important meteorological and geological changes; but men and nations will survive them and still continue to live in the flesh. The earth is to be renovated and restored from its present depression and dilapidation, and thus become "the new earth" of which the Bible speaks. It is to pass through a "regeneration" analogous to that through which a man must pass to see the kingdom of God; but there will be a continuity of its elements and existence, just as a regenerated man is constitutionally the same being that he was before his renewal. It will not be another earth, but the same earth under another condition of things. It is now labouring under the curse; but then the curse will have been lifted off and all its wounds healed. At present, it is hardly habitable—no one being able to live in it longer than a few brief years; but then men shall dwell in it forever without knowing what death is. It is now the home of rebellion, injustice and guilt; it will then be **THE HOME OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**.

It is now under the domination of Satan; it will then come under the blessed rule of the Prince of Peace. Such at any rate, is the hope set before us in the Word of God, and this I hold to be "the world to come" of which the text speaks. It cannot be anything else. It cannot be what is commonly called heaven, for the word *oikoumene* cannot apply to heaven. It is everywhere else used exclusively with reference to our world. Neither can it be the present Gospel dispensation, as some have thought, for that began long before this epistle was written and could not, therefore, have been spoken of by Paul as yet "to come." We are consequently compelled to understand it to mean *our own habitable world in its Millennial glory*. And as the prophecies concerning the Messiah's eternal kingship are here referred to as having their fulfilment in the subjection of the Millennial world to his dominion, we are furnished with another powerful argument of Scripture in favour of the doctrine of Christ's personal reign as a great Prince in the world. Indeed, the Bible is so full of this subject and its inspired writers are so constantly and enthusiastically alluding to it that I am amazed

to find so many pious and Bible-loving people entirely losing sight of it. Ever and anon the Scriptures return to it as **THE GREAT AND ANIMATING HOPE** of the Church in all her adversities and depressions, and it does seem to me that we are depriving ourselves of much true Christian comfort by the manner in which we have been neglecting and thrusting aside that glorious doctrine. My present object is to show, from the Scriptures, and by just inferences from them, what sort of a world this "world to come" is, and to describe, as far as I can, what we are to look for when once this earth has been fully subjected to that Divine King whose throne is for ever and ever, and the sceptre of whose kingdom is the sceptre of righteousness.

*Rev. J. A. Seiss, D.D.*

*Be glad, thou thirsty desert: let the wilderness exult, and flower as the lily. And the desert places of Jordan shall blossom and rejoice; the glory of Libanus has been given to it, and the honour of Carmel, and my people shall see the glory of the Lord and the majesty of God.*

*Be strong, ye relaxed hands and palsied knees. Comfort one another, ye faint-hearted; be strong, fear not; behold, our God renders judgment, and He will render it; He will come and save us. Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall hear. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the stammerers shall speak plainly; for water has burst forth in the desert, and a channel of water in a thirsty land. And the dry land shall become pools, and a fountain of water shall be poured in to the thirsty land; there shall there be a joy of birds, ready habitations and marshes. There shall be there a pure way, and it shall be called a holy way; and there shall not pass by there any unclean person, neither shall there be there an unclean way; but the dispersed shall walk on it, and they shall not go astray. And there shall be no lion there, neither shall any evil beast go up upon it, nor at all be found there; but the redeemed and gathered on the Lord's behalf shall walk in it, and shall return, and come to Sion with joy, and everlasting joy shall be over their head; for on their head shall be praise and exultation, and joy shall take possession of them; sorrow and pain, and groaning have fled away.*

*(Septuagint translation of Isa. 35.)*



## THE QUESTION BOX



**Q.** How do we harmonise Heb. 9. 6, where the High Priest is said to enter into the Most Holy once in every year, with Exod. 25. 22 and Num. 7. 89, where Moses at least is said to have entered into the Most Holy and talked with God?

**A.** It is recorded that Moses entered the Most Holy only once in his life. It was when the Tabernacle had been completed and erected but before Aaron and his sons had been constituted to minister the sacred things. Moses, as the Mediator of the Covenant between God and Israel, was then the only one who could properly approach God on their behalf, and he did what was clearly the Divine requirement for him at that time, he went into the Most Holy, alone, and heard the voice of God from between the cherubim giving him instructions about the priesthood. The command regarding the reservation to the High Priest of the right of entry into the Most Holy did not come into effect until after Moses had retired from the Divine presence and had instituted all things as he had been commanded. Exod. 25. 22 clearly states that God would meet with Moses in the Most Holy in order to give him these commandments.

According to the 4th chapter of Numbers, Aaron and his sons were to enter the Most Holy when the Tabernacle was being taken down for journeying and were to cover the sacred Ark with the Veil, and wrap that in turn in a blue cloth. Then it fell to the sons of Kohath to carry the Ark to the next stopping place in the wanderings. Not until it was safely covered were they permitted to come forward, lest their eyes should fall upon the sacred emblem and they suffer death for seeing that which no man was permitted to see. In like manner all the sacred furniture was carried by means of staves after being wrapped up, the bearer being forbidden to touch the articles themselves under penalty of death. Thus did God seek to teach the great importance of reverence and respect for those things which have to do with His great Plan of redemption.

\* \* \*

**Q.** Why does the writer to the Hebrews say, in Heb. 9. 4, that the Incense Altar was in the Most Holy, when the Old Testament declares it to be in the Holy?

**A.** Many commentators have remarked upon this seeming discrepancy. In the first place, it cannot be argued that the expression "golden censer" in Heb. 9. 4, refers, not to the Incense Altar, but to a censer which was taken into the Most Holy, for the word used (*thumiaterion*) refers to any article of furniture used for the burning of incense, and is used for the incense altar by Josephus and other First Advent writers. Some have suggested that a slip of the pen on the part of the writer was responsible; Bible students will hardly accept that view readily. The writings were overruled by the Holy Spirit and such slips are hardly to be expected under those circumstances.

It is probable that the writer was not thinking so much of the *location* of the Incense Altar as its position in the symbolism connected with the ceremonial. The golden table and the lampstand both had to do with the priests—picturing the sustenance and enlightenment of those in the "Holy" condition, the Church in the flesh. The Altar, on the other hand, had to do with the presence of God, and on the Day of Atonement the incense was placed on this altar and burned, the resultant cloud of smoke preceding the High Priest into the Most Holy in order that his entry into the presence of God might be acceptable. Hence it was as essential a part of "Most Holy" symbolism as the Ark of the Covenant itself. So the writer to the Hebrews, thinking of the symbolism of the Tabernacle rather than its "geography" would naturally associate the Ark, the Cherubim and the Incense Altar together in his mind, and *think of the Altar as belonging to the Most Holy although it actually stood in the Holy*. In the description of Solomon's Temple it is described (1 Kings 6. 22, when correctly translated), as the "Altar that *belongs* to the oracle" (the Ark).

The symbolism of Revelation has a similar thought. In Rev. 9. 13, we read of the "golden altar which is before God" and in Rev. 8. 3-5 of the "golden altar which is before the throne". So in Isaiah 6 the prophet sees the Lord upon his throne and an angel takes a live coal from the altar which is before Him. In each of these cases the idea in the mind of the seer is that of the Incense Altar standing in the presence of God, the means by which His people can have access to Him; for the incense represents the prayers of saints.

## THE LONELINESS OF JESUS

*A glimpse of  
our Lord's life*

Almost the first concern evinced by our Lord on entering upon His public ministry was for companionship. He gathered round Him selected companions, "that they might be with Him" (Mark 3, 14). His choice was made mainly from the working classes, men of action, men who toiled for a living with their hands, men who had no resources apart from what they could earn, men who had looked life in the face and knew its hardest facts.

He had little interest in rich men as such, nor in the complexities that riches bring. He desired simplicity, "plain living and high thinking," but, above all, He sought fellowship, for His life was lonely. Human relationships had been discarded; "My brother, My sister and My mother," said He, "are they who shall do the will of My Father in Heaven" (Mark 3, 35). Apart from such, He had no intimates in life. How lonely is a life without a soul with whom one may converse in loving intimacy; such human loneliness was Jesus' lot. Did He find fellowship in those He called about Him; did they fill His need, understand Him, and sympathise? Were they not, on the contrary, self-centred, self-occupied and self-concerned?

Hear them as the storm raged about them on the Lake of Galilee: "Carest Thou not that we perish?" Listen to Peter, as with astonishing self-complacency he remarked: "Behold, we have forsaken all and followed Thee. What shall we have therefore?" (Matt. 19, 27). Was there ever such a speech made to One Who had left the glory of Heaven for the sake of sinful men? Toward the end of His ministry, after more than three years of intercourse, precept and holy example, what must He have felt as He came upon them quarelling among themselves who should be the greatest? No; He had no "brother, sister or mother" fellowship; to the last He walked a lonely path. How often we read: "He was alone upon the land" (Mark 6, 47); "Jesus was left alone" (John 8, 9); "He departed into a mountain Himself alone" (John 6, 15). Not that the disciples meant to withhold from their Lord the fellowship He so much desired. Indeed when many went back and walked no more with Him, the twelve refused to go away, and He gladly recognised this. "Ye are they that have continued with Me in My temptations," He said. They continued with Him, but, oh, how self-occupied even in that companionship!

At length they set off on that last sad journey to Jerusalem. The end was in His view, though not

in theirs. Must He face this alone also? Tenderly He opened the subject to them as they went together. Surely this would draw out their loving sympathy, so He told them what was about to happen, that "He must suffer many things, and be killed, and be raised again the third day" (Matt. 16, 21), but He was met by a rebuke; they refused to believe the news. It was so utterly opposed to all their hopes. Was such a calamity to end their cherished visions of a glorious Messianic reign in which they were to share? Impossible; it would not be! So our Lord was left alone to His thoughts and sorrows, and they walked with Him wholly out of fellowship with what so moved His heart.

With infinite patience later on He tried again (Matt. 17, 22-23). He unfolded the coming betrayal and the dreadful killing, and then the rising again. They listened in silence, and deep depression fell upon them all; "they were exceeding sorry"—sorry that, after all, the calamity must come, that it must be accepted as inevitable, that their prospects were an illusion, and hope was gone. They did not understand; they were so taken up with themselves that they did not enter into what it meant to Him.

Again a third time (Matt. 20, 17), Jesus took them apart in the way and told it all again, adding this time the mocking and scourging, as though appealing to their hearts for sympathy. Did they extend it to Him? They had had time to think and talk together, and a new aspect of the matter dawned on them. All was not so dark; He would rise again; the Kingdom would come after all. They had not followed Him in vain, and while He dwelt on the betrayal, the mocking, the scourging and the death, their self-centred hearts were occupied with their place in the Kingdom that would follow! At such a time as this, two of them actually came forward with a request for first place. Jesus continued His path to the valley of the shadow alone, with no human heart to sympathise or understand or share His sorrows.

"Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come," said He to them on the last evening of His earthly life, "that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone," "And yet," He added, "I am not alone because the Father is with Me" (John 16, 32). One heart fully understood and cared and sympathised with the Saviour, and one heart alone—the Father's.

When the three who were nearest to Him went

with Him to the garden they failed Him even there. They could not watch one hour. He withdrew Himself—He was alone.

Thus the Lord sought fellowship with His own who were in the world—His own whom He loved to the end; the uttermost, yet whose response was so meagre, and whose love so cold. Such was His experience then; what is it now? Jesus still seeks the fellowship of His people; we who are called unto the fellowship of Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor. 1, 9). Does He receive the fellowship He seeks, or do we fail to give it to Him? Is our contact with Him after all mainly selfish? Do we seek Him only for what we can get for ourselves, pardon, protection, help, guidance? Is our need our first concern, or is our real objective that of Paul, "that I may know Him and the fellowship of His sufferings"? Are we prone to forget that our Lord seeks something from us, that, apart from us, He is still alone in relation to men, and that

He longs for our co-operation in His plans and purposes, even to the extent of our suffering on behalf of others, as He set us an example? Like the disciples of old, we can be so taken up with ourselves, even though, like them, we have left all to follow Him, that His thoughts and purposes and yearning desires take a minor place, and our needs and hopes fill all our thoughts, and even our prayers. We are so selfish in our spiritual outlook that even our most holy things are sometimes tinged with it. How often it is we seek our own, and not the things that are Jesus Christ's (Phil. 2, 21), and the Lord looks to us often in vain for that understanding, sympathy and fellowship with Him in His world plans, in comparison with which our little personal concerns, hopes and fears are insignificant indeed.

May He forgive us, and teach us how to enter into a life of real communion with Him in the days that yet remain to us.

## The Three Epistles of John

Comments on the writings  
of the "Beloved Apostle"

Part XXVI. I John 5. 9-12

*"If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater, for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."* (vs. 9-11.)

We have come to what is virtually the end of John's First Epistle. The three-fold witness of Chapter 5 verses 6-8, the Spirit, the water, and the blood, constitute the climax to all his arguments and all his exhortations. There is really nothing more to say after he has invoked those three witnesses. The remainder of this final chapter, from verse 9 onwards, is in the nature of an orderly descent from the mountain-top which he had reached in the earlier part of Chapter 5. All the argument, all the exhortation, all the warnings, of the earlier chapters culminate in the Witnesses. The Word Who is life, the life that is light, the light that banishes darkness, of chapter 1, all are illuminated once and for all by the Witnesses. The darkness that is sin, the sin that is death, of chapter 2, are condemned once and for all by the Witnesses. The love for God and love for fellow that leads eventually into the love of God, of chapter 3, are inspired by the Witnesses. The whole of John's

Epistle leads up to this theme, that of the three Witnesses to the one central and all-embracing fact of Jesus' Messiahship. When John has led us to that point he has achieved the aim and object of his Epistle. His work is done and he has but to round off the discourse with words that both sum up in brief what he has already said and lead us gently back into the commonplaces of daily life. Our period of sojourn with him on these lofty themes is ended and we are about to step outside the golden sanctuary. In so doing he reminds us that if we are prepared to receive the reliable testimony of men as to the Messiahship of Jesus—as many did in John's own day from those who had known the Lord in the flesh—we must acknowledge that the testimony of God is infinitely more reliable and convincing and we should be correspondingly the more ready to receive and accept it. The Revised Version has it "*The witness of God is this, that he hath borne witness of his Son*". The very fact that God has borne witness, as He did do at the Annunciation, at Jordan, at Calvary, and above all at Pentecost, should be sufficient and more than sufficient for each one of us. "God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." (Heb. 1. 1.) The witness of God concerning Christ is given to us through Christ! Is that what Jesus

meant when He said (John 8. 17-18) "It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me". That mystic oneness which subsists between the Father and the Son and which, define or explain it how we will, is ever too deep and profound for us to understand utterly, is manifested in this witness as in so many other aspects of our Lord's revelation of the Father to the sight of men.

It is quite a natural consequence of this understanding that leads John to tell us next that the one who truly believes in the Son of God has the witness within himself. If believing were merely an intellectual exercise of the mind that statement would not necessarily be true. It is because believing on Christ—or "into" Christ, as some would have it—is an affair of the heart as well as of the mind that immediate results follow the act of believing. Justification by faith is the immediate consequence; the entry of a new power into the life that at once commences a transforming work. "If any man be in Christ, there is a new creation; old things are passed away; behold, all things become new." (2. Cor. 5. 17.) It is the realisation that such a change has taken place that constitutes the inward witness. No one can truly come into Christ and realise the grace that has filled his life without knowing also that he has this witness within himself, that Jesus is indeed the Son of God. In like manner the Roman centurion, beholding with affrighted eyes the signs and portents that accompanied the tragedy of Calvary, looked up into the heavens and cried aloud his involuntary testimony "Truly this man was the Son of God". So must all who have experienced the power of the risen Christ coming into their hearts and lives make the same confession, a declaration to their own selves and to others that by the power of Jesus of Nazareth they now stand whole and entire in the grace of God.

And he that believeth not? John has a word to say about him also; but it is the same word that he has elaborated so much previously in the Epistle. He hath made God a liar! The evidence is so clear and plain, the power of the Spirit so manifest, that for one who has received it to throw it back is tantamount to giving the lie to God. It comes to this, says John, that God has given to us eternal life, and the evidence of that gift is manifest and overwhelming, and here is a man who sees this wonderful thing and refuses to admit that it is so. And because he will not believe, it is impossible that he share in the precious gift; and because he does not share in the gift he has no witness within his own self as to its truth. So again it all comes

back to the old question of belief or unbelief. There was the evidence, brought back on the shoulders of twelve strong men; the fruits of the land, fruits such as Israel had never seen before, fruits that bore out in every detail and to the full what God had told them concerning the land toward which they journeyed. But still they disbelieved; could not bring themselves to think they could ever win the land for themselves, even although God had told them they had but to march forward and all opposition would melt away. And so they never did enter in, "because of unbelief". So it must ever be with all who approach the sacred things. They are there to be grasped, and once grasped the evidence of their reality is inherent; but without that primary belief which is faith they cannot even be grasped.

So verse 12 becomes both a summing up of what has gone before and an enunciation of a great law in the fabric of God's dealings with those who would come to Him, one might say, *the great law*, for it enshrines the most important truth of all. "*He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life.*"

That text has been used in the past to separate the sheep from the goats and point the respective pathways to Heaven and Hell. It does not have anything to do with that subject at all. It has nothing to do with the final judgment on the world of men—except as an expression of a principle which will always be valid. John is here speaking only of the Church of this Age, the "footstep followers" of Jesus, who have set their hands to the plough, including those who, in the Lord's expression, "look back" and hence are "not fit for the Kingdom of God". (Luke 9. 62.) It is of these, probationary members of the Millennial Age "Royal Priesthood", he says, only those who "have the Son" are possessors of the eternal life that ensures their entrance into the everlasting Kingdom. Some there are who, like those in the parable, will claim to have eaten and drunk in His presence and to have listened to His voice in their midst and yet to whom He declares "I never knew you; depart from me". How evident it is that this whole matter is one of the heart's utter and unreserved dedication to God, without condition and without stipulation, like Isaiah "Here am I—send me"; or the Psalmist "Lo I come, to do Thy Will, O God".

So the high song of exultation is partnered with a solemn note of warning. The lofty mountain peak reaching up so near to God, serves also to reveal the dark and deep chasm beneath. We can attain to the highest salvation in this wonderful power that is given to us—we can find ourselves thrust

down to the sides of the pit. John's very next words reveal his confidence that those to whom he writes will not thus make shipwreck of their faith; he does not fear that his brethren and friends themselves stand in so perilous a position, but he recounts

these truths that they may be reminded of the things from which they have so clearly escaped, and may be inspired to hold fast to their faith that they fall not after other men's examples of unbelief.

*To be continued.*

## "HIS FLESH UPON HIM SHALL HAVE PAIN"

*An Examination of a curious Text*

*"His sons come to honour, and he perceiveth it not; they are brought low, but he knoweth it not of them. But his flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn." (Job 14. 22.)*

If any Scripture could be said to support the eternal torment doctrine, this surely is the one. Taken as an isolated text, it stands as a bald statement of the condition of man after death—a condition of conscious pain.

That it supports the traditional idea of Hell is a position that cannot be maintained when one reads this entire chapter—the 14th of Job. The chapter is devoted to expressing the brevity and unsatisfactory nature of human life, and this final verse is made applicable to all men without distinction. Since not even the most convinced of "hell-fire enthusiasts" will claim that all men, good and bad alike, must go to hell, the verse must be rejected as a statement of the fate of the wicked. It is rather a statement of the fate of any and every man, irrespective of their worthiness of everlasting bliss or otherwise.

We should connect this chapter, which is part of Job's answer to Zophar, with the latter's words in chapter 11. Zophar's argument, founded upon worldly wisdom, is that if Job is really a righteous man he will be rewarded by earthly felicity, and go into the grave in a ripe old age after a full and prosperous life. This is a similar argument to that of Eliphaz in chapter 5, who maintained that the righteous man will see the prosperity of his posterity, and end his life in full satisfaction with the world and everything in it.

Job, on the contrary, in this 14th chapter, stresses the unsatisfactory nature of a life which, after all the toil and suffering which comes to man, ends in death, and, from the human standpoint, no further interest in the world and its affairs. The righteous man is not necessarily prosperous, and, like Job himself, he may be cut off by disease and death without any assurance of the prosperity and happiness of his posterity. He may even, again like Job, have his last hours darkened by the know-

ledge of misery and loss upon his posterity. So that, from the worldly standpoint, unilluminated by Divine wisdom, man concludes an unhappy and unsatisfactory life by going into death without seeing or enjoying any of the things for which he has laboured. Whether his sons come to honour or grief, he knows not, lying unconscious in *sheol*. Death comes at the end of a life which is only pain and mourning, so that, as Barnes has put it, man goes "lonely and sad to the land of shades and of night separated from his family and friends". "*Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.*"

In striking contrast to this hopeless creed is the faith of Job himself, expressed in this same 14th chapter. He has already expressed the common view of the unbeliever, "*there is hope for a tree, if it be cut down, it will sprout again . . . through the scent of water it will bud and put forth boughs . . . but man dieth, and wasteth away . . . man lieth down, and riseth no more*" (vs. 7-12). He then voices his own belief in the Divine promise of a resurrection: "*Oh, that thou wouldst hide me in sheol, that thou wouldst appoint me a set time and remember me. If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee; thou shalt have a desire to the work of thine hands*" (vs. 13-15).

The expression "if a man die shall he live again?" is clearly a rhetorical question on Job's part designed to fasten his hearer's attention to the important truth he was about to utter. Only in the promise of God that there will be a future life, and that that future life is attained by means of a resurrection from the dead, is Job able to give a satisfactory answer to the riddle of existence. Not by any system of rewards for a good life now, nor by the satisfaction of following the results of one's works, or fortunes of one's posterity, from the world beyond the grave, does Job attempt to satisfy the instinctive cry for justice. He faces up to the fact that this world is evil, and that man's life is oftentimes wholly unsatisfactory—but he knows that

a life to come, when the reign of evil has run its course, will continue the life begun under these unsatisfactory conditions, and give to every man the desire of his heart.

The pain and mourning, therefore, belong to this life. It is before the man has died, whilst he is

descending into the grave, that "his flesh upon him shall have pain and his soul within him shall mourn". Then comes death, a quiet, dreamless sleep, from which Job expected to be awakened in God's own time. "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come."

## STRENGTH FROM ON HIGH

A word for  
a quiet moment

*"For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; in returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." (Isa. 30. 15.)*

It can safely be said that none save the consecrated child of God realises the utter truth of this statement, "In confidence is strength, in returning and rest is salvation". It is upon this and like promises that the Lord's people rely more and more in these days of stress and turmoil. How contrary to God's ways are the ways of fallen man; strength to-day is measured in a very different manner. Calm, quiet confidence and rest in God is not considered strength and finds no place in unregenerate hearts. It was ever thus, for we read in the very next verse the reply made by Israel of old to this wise counsel from God, "But ye said, No (we will not return) for we will flee upon horses." They preferred their own way rather than the way of God, and God's answer to them was, "thereof shall ye flee".

The horse in Old Testament usage is a counterpart of the modern tanks and guns. It was their idea of confidence and strength. Egypt was distinguished for producing fine horses and the Egyptians used them much in war. God knew this and had forbidden the kings of Israel to multiply horses (Deut. 17. 16) and in prohibiting them He designed to distinguish His people in all respects from the Egyptians. It was not His purpose for them to rely upon horses for strength and deliverance but solely upon their God, who had promised them victory over all their enemies on condition of faithfulness to Him. Psalm 20. 7 says, "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God".

In spite of God's warning through Moses in Deut. 17. 16, to those who would afterward become the kings of Israel, we find Solomon grossly violated this law, for 1 Kings 10. 26 says, "Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen". He had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen, and verse 28 says that Solomon had horses brought out of

Egypt. This course finally led to Solomon's downfall and the downfall of his kingdom as shown in the next chapter (1. Kings 11. 9-12).

Among the heathen nations the horse was dedicated to the sun and driven in processions at the festivals of sunworship. The ancient Persians, who were sun worshippers, dedicated white horses and chariots to the sun and it is supposed that other nations derived the practice from them. The sun was supposed to be drawn daily in a chariot by four wondrous coursers. That even Israel had become contaminated by this particular type of idolatry is shown by 2. Kings 23. 11, for Josiah, in instituting his wonderful reformation, took away the horses that the Kings of Judah had given to the sun and burned the chariots of the sun with fire. In view of this we can well understand the fitting rebuke of Isa. 2. 7. "Their land is full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots. Their land is full of idols, they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made."

Isa. 30. 16 continues, "We will ride upon the swift, therefore shall they that pursue you be swift". Alas that man still, as Israel in Isaiah's day, should rely upon the "swift", and his pursuers have access to the same "swift", whatever it be, whether the horses of the ancients or their modern counterparts, and it is still necessary for the Lord (as in verse 18) to "wait that He may be gracious". Yet how our hearts rejoice as we continue this passage, in verses 19 and 20. "For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem, thou shalt weep no more; He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry, when He shall hear it He shall answer thee. And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers", and, even as we apply to ourselves now the words of verse 21, "This is the way, walk ye in it", so, soon we believe, God will say with authority, "Stand still, and know that I am God", and mankind will then no longer have any trust in horses, but will in "quietness and confidence" wait for the word of our God.

## THE NEW STANDARD REVISED VERSION

After sixteen years' diligent work the body of scholars to whom has been entrusted the task of preparing the second great revision of the Authorised Version have completed their labours, and a few months ago the new Standard Revised Version was published simultaneously on both sides of the Atlantic. The Authorised Version of 1611 was made by English scholars at the command of King James I and the Revised Version of 1881 by a combined group of British and American scholars, certain differences in their respective findings leading to a separate American Revised Version in 1901. Now this latest revision, which is expected to be accepted equally by all English speaking peoples, has been prepared by a panel appointed by the National Council representing the leading denominations of America. In consequence of that fact, and that the printing plates have been made in the U.S.A., we have to accept American spelling of a few words such as "labor" for "labour" and "defense" for "defence". Apart from that, the English is perfectly good English, harmonious and euphonious to British ears and more reminiscent of the Authorised Version itself than the somewhat pedantic phraseology of most "modern English" versions.

A preliminary survey of the book has yielded much to be approved from our own point of view. The endeavour has been, as with the R.V. which it is intended to supersede, to make as little change as possible from the A.V. But the style has been brought really in line with modern speech and idioms without the ponderousness of Moffatt or the eccentricities of Ferrar Fenton. The book is a pleasure to read because it is basically still Elizabethan English. One outstanding feature is the replacement of words that have changed their meaning since 1611 by modern words which more accurately represent the original thought. There are more than three hundred such words in the Bible. Thus "let" now becomes "hinder" or "restrain": "He that now letteth will let until he be taken out of the way" in 2. Thess. 2. 7 is rendered "He who now restrains will do so until he is out of the way". "Prevent" becomes "precede", "conversation" becomes "conduct", "ghost" becomes "spirit" and so on. "Hell" is in most cases left untranslated, as "sheol", "hades" and "gehenna" which is useful to the student. The old English pronouns "thou", "thee", "thy", etc., have been modernised into their present equivalents "you", "your", etc., but not in all cases. Where the

dignity of the passage would be lessened by modernisation the old terms are retained. Most of the Psalms are left untouched in this connection, but in straightforward narrative the modern words are used and this one fact does more perhaps than anything else to mark the restraint with which the work has been carried out.

The basis of the version has of course been the comparison of the Authorised Version with all Hebrew and Greek sources that have come to light in recent years, beside the bringing to bear on the established manuscripts the light of modern knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek languages. We have to remember that the accuracy of a translation depends not only on the antiquity of the manuscripts from which it is made but also on the translators' knowledge of the original languages. Much more is known about the grammar of the old tongues now than was known in King James' time and all this wealth of learning has been brought to bear on the new version. In spite of this it is noteworthy what little difference there is between this and the A.V. The most striking changes are in passages which were always obscure in the A.V. and have now been illuminated by a better grasp of the original language.

The book is set out in paragraph form, two columns per page, with chapter numbers boldly displayed and verse numbers inserted in the text. Poetic parts such as occur in some of the prophets, Job, etc., are printed in the style of "blank verse" and the Psalms are set out in stanzas almost like hymns in a hymnbook—which of course is what the Psalms really are. Speech and quoted sayings are set out with quotation marks which certainly add tremendously to the ease of reading and understanding.

The style of the translation can be judged from the following examples which have been chosen at random from texts usually of significant interest to us.

Gen. 2. 7 "Man became a living being."

Dan. 7. 9 "As I looked, thrones were placed, and one that was ancient in days took his seat."

John 1. 5 "The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it."

Acts 17. 29 "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all men everywhere to repent."

Acts 26. 24 "Festus said with a loud voice 'Paul, you are mad; your great learning is turning you mad'."

Rom. 2. 1 "Therefore you have no excuse, O man, whoever you are, when you judge another; for in passing judgment upon him you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the very same things."

Rom. 6. 5 "For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his."

Rom. 8. 3. "For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh."

I Cor. 15. 49 "Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven."

I Thess. 4. 15 "For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first; then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air . . ."

Heb. 9. 15 "Therefore he is the mediator of a

new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred which redeems them from the transgressions under the first covenant."

Rev. 17. 9 "This calls for a mind with wisdom: the seven heads are seven hills on which the woman is seated; they are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he comes he must remain only a little while."

The book measures 8½in. x 6½in. x 1½in. and has 1,300 pages, and includes a preface setting out in brief the history of the A.V., R.V., and S.R.V. The type setting is in 9 point (very slightly smaller than the 10 point in which the "Monthly" is set) and is therefore much more readable than most A.V. Bibles. There is a cloth edition at 30/- and a rexine edition at 37/6, the latter being an eminently handsome book with the title "The Holy Bible. Standard Revised Version" gold blocked on the spine. The publishers of the work on both sides of the Atlantic are Thomas Nelson of London and New York.

For the convenience of readers the "Monthly" bookroom is holding the rexine edition in stock for immediate delivery, at 39/6 (\$5.50) post free.

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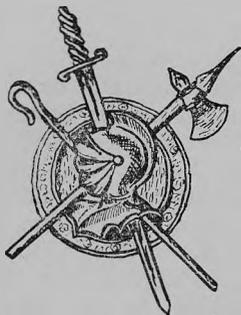
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# BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

Thou, therefore, endure  
hardness as a good  
soldier of Jesus Christ.

Vol. 30, No. 3

MARCH, 1953

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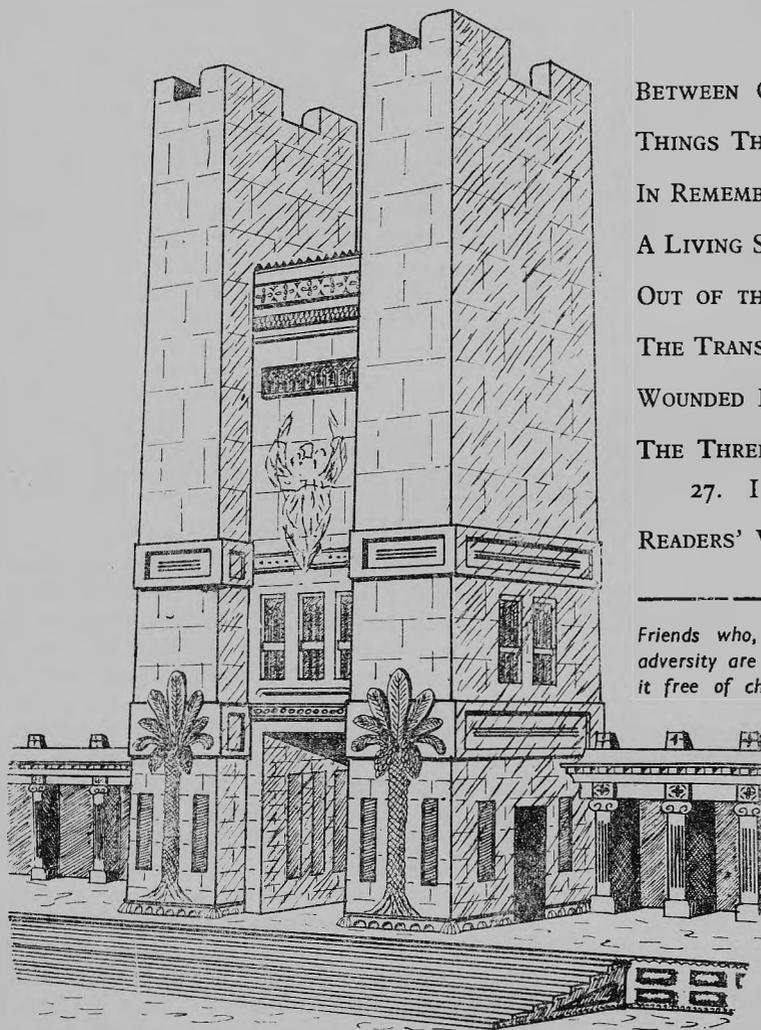
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Lift up your heads, O ye gates  
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors,  
And the King of glory shall come in.

## BETWEEN OURSELVES

The Memorial service will be celebrated this year on Sunday, 29th March; on that date brethren in all parts will gather together to remember especially the supreme sacrifice by which our Lord opened the way to reconciliation with God and everlasting life for "whosoever will," and to rejoice with each other in that communion of saints which is the inheritance of all who have given themselves to the Lord in full dedication of life.

\* \* \*

The March meeting at Caxton Hall will be held on Saturday, 21st March, at 6.30 p.m., the speakers being Bros. A. Spain (*Gravesend*) and L. F. Shephard (*Swansea*). A warm welcome awaits all who can attend.

\* \* \*

Public Meetings are to be held at Sale (*Lancs*) on 9th and 16th May, at Prestwich on 13th and 20th June, and at Warrington, at the time of the Annual Assembly to be held in that city on 10th and 11th October. Details of all these meetings can be obtained from Bro. F. Musk, 14, South Street, Newchurch, Rossendale, Lancs.

\* \* \*

The Annual General Convention will be held during the August holiday season this year at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1, and arrangements are now in hand. Sessions will commence on the afternoon of Saturday, 1st August, and conclude at the end of the afternoon on Mon-

day, 3rd August. Programmes will be circulated in due course and in the meantime details can be obtained from the Convention Secretary, Bro. D. Parker, 13, New Road, Langley, Slough, Bucks. Applications for accommodation should be addressed to Bro. H. Charlton, Ryvers Farm, London Road, Langley, Slough, Bucks. It is hoped to hold a baptismal service in connection with the Convention and brethren desiring to take advantage of this opportunity are asked to advise Bro. Parker at as early a date as possible.

\* \* \*

A new feature entitled "*Readers Views*" commences in this issue, with the intention of reproducing some of the questions and comments upon the contents of the "*Monthly*" which come in from our readers, and the response of the authors concerned, or on occasion the Editor. It will not be possible to print more than a few of the communications that are received, and in any case nothing except that which is written in a considerate Christian spirit will find place. We shall doubtless hear from our readers as to whether the new feature is sufficiently appreciated to warrant its continuance, after it has appeared for some little while.

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### Gone from Us

Sis. Rachel Lardent (*London*)

*"Till the day break, and the shadows flee away."*

---

## THINGS THAT ARE BROKEN

God uses most for His glory those people and things which are most perfectly broken. The sacrifices He accepts are broken and contrite hearts. It was the thorough breaking down of Jacob's natural strength at Peniel that got him where God could clothe him with spiritual power. It was by breaking the surface of the rock at Horeb by the stroke of Moses rod, that it let out the cool waters to thirsty people. It was when the three hundred elect soldiers under Gideon broke their pitchers, a type of breaking themselves, that the hidden lights shone forth to the consternation of their adversaries. It was when the poor widow broke the seal of the little pot of oil, and poured it forth, that God multiplied it to pay her debts and supply means of support.

It was when Esther risked her life and broke through the rigid etiquette of a heathen court that she obtained favour to rescue her people from death. It was when Jesus took the five loaves and broke them that the bread was multiplied in the very act of breaking, sufficient to feed five thousand. It was when Mary broke her beautiful alabaster box,

rendering it henceforth useless, that the pent-up perfume filled the whole house. It was when Jesus allowed His precious Body to be broken to pieces by thorns and nails and spear, that His inner life was poured out, like a crystal ocean for thirsty sinners to drink and live.

It is when a beautiful grain of corn is broken up in the earth by death, that its inner heart sprouts forth and bear hundreds of other grains. And thus on and on, through all history, and all biography, and all vegetation, and all spiritual life, God must have "Broken Things".

Those who are broken in wealth, and broken in self-will, and broken in their ambitions, and broken in their beautiful ideals, and broken in worldly reputation, and broken oftentimes in health, and those who are despised and seem utterly helpless and forlorn, the Holy Spirit is seizing upon, and using for God's glory. It is the "lame that take the prey" Isaiah tells us. It is the weak that overcome the Devil. God is waiting to take hold of our failures and nothingness and shine through them.

*Selected.*

## “In Remembrance of Me”

*Thoughts on the  
First Memorial*

How truly wonderful it is to be able to hold things in remembrance, and to live again to-day with the events of yesterday, partaking once more of the thrills or pathos of that hour which gave those memories birth. All memories do not afford pleasure, for there are some things in every life which we would rather forget. That fall under temptation; that unkind or bitter word; that cold and icy look! How we would prefer to forget it and tear it from memory's page! But that side of memory's store notwithstanding, it is truly a most wonderful boon to be able to call forth from the depths of memory's chambers those episodes of life which reclothe themselves in joy and delight, whensoever time and circumstances carry us back on wings of good desire to the sights and scenes of yesterday.

Do we ever pause to think what life would be without remembrances? How different it would be if each day's experiences were faded or wiped out with every setting sun, and there were no impressions to carry forward to another day. Imagine how barren the daily round would be if there were nothing gained, nothing learned, nothing achieved, nothing experienced save the drab monotony of existence at the low level of a limpet or an oyster! No love of parents or offspring; no appreciation of home or country; no regard for truth or righteousness; no delight of colour or harmony—none of these things to call to mind, to think upon, or to link us with the past.

The chambers of remembrance are the storehouses of all the real riches of life, the treasury of sweet thoughts, ennobling influences and inspiring motives, precious far beyond gold and rubies or wide verdant acres, for thereby we are linked with our God, and with Jesus, home, and loved ones, and everything that is worth while.

It is greatly desirable to remember intensively, notwithstanding that the ability to remember intensively is not a self-created acquisition. Some people are blessed with good memories, or, shall we say, with good capacity for remembering. They do not have to develop remembrance by constant repetition of things or facts, nor by any patent rule-of-thumb methods.

Quality and intensity depends primarily upon the natural endowment bestowed by heredity or parentage—that is, upon the density and receptivity of the impression-cells of the brain with which we

are born into this world of sensation and experience. Something, too, depends upon the general state of health—a tired, run-down brain being unable to receive or register adequately the sense-perceptions from external sources. The first of these situations cannot be remedied, if deficient or lacking. Something may be done to correct the second and thus make the best use of Nature's equipment.

There is one factor that compensates, no matter whether we be well- or ill-equipped by natural aptitude. That factor is “interest”. Remembrance depends more upon interest than any other single factor in life. When the whole being—heart, mind and soul—is caught up by the written or spoken word so that every pulse and desire is set throbbing and vibrating with warm sympathy and response, the impressions then received register themselves more sharply and deeply on the brain, and, thereafter, in proportion to the depth of the registration, so will be the ability to remember and recall at will. Who has not seen and felt the magnetising effect of some wholly-engrossed gifted tongue as the spoken message draws the listener from his comfortable relaxed position till he is sitting forward, eyes and ears and body alert to catch every word, and note unconsciously every ardent expression in the messenger's attitude to his theme. These are the occasions which trace themselves deep on memory's tablet.

What supremely serious things affected the disciples on that tragic night in the upper room to enable them to “remember” their Lord and Master! Was ever such an occasion as this? Was ever such a speaker as this? Did ever so much depend upon the faithfulness of one Sufferer? What solemn words were spoken! What serious things were done! What impressive eyes looked out upon the little band! Think what that little gathering meant. The established religious usages of sixteen centuries were coming to an end, and were to be memorialised for the very last time. They were to be replaced and superseded by the first observance of a new and better memorial arising from the “better” features of God's great Plan. For those few pious souls which God had given into Jesus' keeping the old order was beginning to pass away, and a new order to come in.

This night, as throughout the span of one whole Divinely-appointed Age of time, the call to re-

membrance had carried back the minds of godly men to that dread night in Egypt's oppressive land when the sword of God flashed through palace and hut, leaving its trail of death behind. Thirty to forty generations had lived and died with that dread memory behind them, but none had dared to interfere or change the order which Moses had caused to be established there. So far as all outside that little room were aware, thirty or forty, or even hundreds more might be expected to pass away, and all may come and go while still calling to remembrance that same dark tragic night in Pharaoh's land. The constitution founded by God, under Moses, in Jewish belief was to be eternal. Established upon the Law of God, they could not rise to the thought that its authority could ever pass away; and they were sure that even the coming of their Messiah would only settle it upon an even surer foundation.

The little band of disciples who had come aside with Jesus into this little room had been cradled and reared to manhood in that belief, and even their learning at Jesus' feet had not eradicated it from their minds.

Now they had come to the conjunction of the Ages, and this little room was to be the sanctum of one of the greatest changes the world was ever to know.

Already they had come to this quiet room with strange thoughts and memories rushing through their minds. On the way up to Jerusalem they had heard Jesus dwell repeatedly upon His coming death, and though they had not comprehended fully what He meant, still they had heard His words. He also had invited them to share with Him His Cross, His Cup and His Baptism. They had been with their Master when the hot words of righteous reproof had been administered to self-righteous Scribes and Pharisees—words such as Jesus had never used before. They had seen Him drive money-changers and merchants from the Temple Courts, what time He charged them with sacrilege in the House of God. They had heard Him say that that Holy House was to be henceforth left to them desolate—the Holy House wherein God had placed the only earthly memorial of His Holier Name, and from which alone in all the whole wide world, He had been pleased to accept the incense of worship! Now it was to be left desolate!

Not comprehending the deadly seriousness of what He said, they called His attention to the stately magnificence of its stones, only to be told that a day was approaching when one stone should not be left upon another stone, so utter and complete would its desolation become. Stunned and

amazed by their usually compassionate Master's words, some of them broke into His sad reverie as He sat looking from Olivet over the doomed city, to enquire more particularly what His solemn words might mean. Responding to their solicitude, He gathered together the testimony of their holy books, and showed them what God had spoken about the overthrow of Jerusalem. They heard Him speak of wars and rumours of war, of famine, pestilence, and persecution. He told of an abomination that would stand in the Holy Place, and of a period of tribulation such as had not been since man lived on the earth. He likened the overthrow to the catastrophe of Noah's day, and to Sodom's fate, and dated it by telling them that that generation would not pass away till all was fulfilled.

What a strange miscellany of sights and sounds the recent days had brought into their lives, and into this night, and into this room! Away from the madding crowd into the quiet seclusion of this upper room Jesus brought His little flock to keep first the memorial of Egypt's tragic night and then to institute an ordinance to be remembered in coming days. A solemn seriousness rested on the Master throughout the night, as He spake quietly and slowly of what was on His heart. Reverently He led their memories in the accustomed way, and then, taking a portion of the remaining bread, He invoked Heaven's blessing thereupon, and passed the bread to them, saying, "This is MY body, take it and eat it". Then He took a cup and, blessing it, said, "This is MY blood of the covenant, take it and drink it". Then they heard Him pray—a prayer never yet heard by mortal ears!

How reverently and sacredly impressive this quiet ceremony would be! Those gravely searching eyes; that quietly arresting voice; and the strange newness of what He did! Could they ever forget that little room? Then those words: "This do . . . in remembrance of Me". Throughout the days and years that followed they did remember Him. He was to them the Lamb of God; the Prince of Life; the Lord and Master of their lives. They counted not their lives dear unto them so they might lay them down in His service!

And what of these days, and of ourselves in this remembrancing? Only in spirit can we share that experience in the upper room, but it is still true that according to the "interest" that grips our hearts, so will the measure of our "remembrancing" be.

These many years we have come apart into our own upper rooms, and at the appointed time have taken the emblems of His broken body and spilt blood, and "remembered" Him! We have shown

to each other our "interest" in "the Lord's death". We have accepted the benefit to ourselves of His life and death, and have covenanted also to become "dead with Him". Again, the appointed hour draws near—what will it mean to us? Again, a world-order is tottering to its doom. Can we go forward into the unknown future with nothing more than Him? Is He of such "interest" to our hearts that we would willingly surrender all for Him? Is there one thing else that can share our heart's "interest" with Him? Does the torch of remembrance burn fiercely in us for Him alone? If so, then the measure of our "interest" will

reveal how much we shall desire to remember Him! For what have we to remember Him? Is it not for everything that is worthwhile in life? Is it our redemption and reconciliation, for our safe-keeping day by day; for our comfort and consolation in tribulation; for the hope of attaining to a share in an inheritance in joint-heirship with Him; and for the possibility that we may be found acceptable to enjoy His eternal friendship and companionship! Is there not here sufficient cause to awake the interest of the deepest springs of our life, and lead us to remember Him for the things of yesterday, to-day, to-morrow, and for evermore?

## A LIVING SACRIFICE

*A consideration of the consecrated life*

The attitude of consecration to righteousness and truth in word and act, is an attitude which God will one day claim the right to command. God will no longer adopt the passive or permissible attitude to the sinner or his sin. Failing to respond to the imperative claims of the Divine Law-Giver, the sinner will forfeit his opportunity to enter into life—and death will overtake him.

But during this present permitted reign of evil, God's relation to consecration is that of an "Inviter", not of a "Commander". He has not yet said that any man "must" consecrate, but He has made it known that under certain definite conditions a man "may" consecrate himself. Concerning this advanced stage of consecration the Apostle says "No man taketh this honour unto himself but he that is called of God . . ." (Heb. 5. 4); and many are the Scriptures which speak of God's prerogative to call and choose whom He wills for this or that part in His eternal purpose. Even Christ "glorified not himself to be made an High Priest" (Heb. 5. 5) but accepted the opportunity in response to His Father's invitation and call.

Thus, there is a limit to what man, by the free swing of his own will, can aspire to accomplish in the plans of God. No man can find himself a "place" or thrust himself unbidden into the ranks of those whom God will be delighted to honour in the special specific places, in the outworking of His purposes (Mark 10. 40).

In the higher Christian life, as in the case of Aaron's call, every member of the body of Christ must be "called according to His purpose". Otherwise, if God has not called, no man has any special consecrated standing before God. Now, if

acceptable consecration to-day calls for something more than the swing of any man's own will, it is also evident that the observance merely of the righteous balance and just measure is likewise not sufficient for the higher stage of consecration. It is not enough under these present conditions, merely to pay twenty-shillings-in-the-£, or to be strictly just and upright in the "give and take" of the daily round and common task. The present requirement in the consecrated response is that of self-sacrifice and self-denial—the voluntary yielding and surrender of something which no feature of either Divine or human law can compel, but which can be yielded only at the *invitation* of One who, while maintaining the claims of Universal Law, can legislate above it, and thus solicit a degree of surrender and propose a degree of reward not incorporated in the general laws of His dominion. It was thus in God's dealings with His well-beloved Son. He who had been with God from times eternal was not *compelled* to leave that glorious estate to come to earth and die for man. He was a willing volunteer. He accepted with ready heart the opportunity God set before Him, and bowed humbly down to death so that His Father's purposes might be accomplished. There did not rest on Him (any more than on other holy angelic citizens of Heaven) any obligation to cast aside His heavenly riches in order to taste earth's racking poverty; but because He did willingly humble Himself even unto death, God hath highly exalted Him above every name or authority, now and for all time.

The same treatment above the law of righteousness is held out by promise to those who willingly follow in His steps, and lay themselves down before

God in whole-hearted surrender and sacrifice. "If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me" was Jesus' invitation, on His Father's behalf, to His little band of followers. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God . . ." is the way the zealous Apostle continues and presses home the same invitation.

"A living sacrifice"! Almost a contradiction in terms, unless there be a deeper way of reconciling the differences. All animals, when become a "sacrifice", were no longer alive, but prepared for the altar flames. There is a way, thank God, whereby these differences can be reconciled.

"Let him deny himself"! That is, let him deny his self-hood—his self-choice, his self-desire, his self-effort—clasp himself to a cross, willingly and voluntarily. A cross is the symbol of death. This, beyond all controversy, is a call and invitation greater far and more exacting than the do-good-to-my-neighbour standard of consecration which will be operative and imperative in the Age to come.

A singular thing about the New Testament writers is that they do not once describe this deeper response to God as "Consecration". In fact, that word occurs in our Authorised Version but twice, and both cases are in connection with our Lord. One of these is in Heb. 7. 28, where we read that the word of the Oath made the Son a Priest, "who is consecrated for evermore". This word, however, would be better translated (as in the margin) "perfected". It reveals the fact that the Exalted Son had been fitted and prepared for His Priestly work to a degree that He could have never known as a man. God wrought upon Him, and developed Him according to the ideal which God had in His own omniscient mind; and the "perfecting" work had accomplished its designed end, for the Son was "perfected" for ever.

The other occurrence is in Heb. 10. 20 . . . . a new and living way which He hath consecrated for us . . ." This word means "to make anew—to renew". An old "way" into the presence of God had been found faulty, because of the frailty of man. Through Jesus' sacrificial death that way to God was renewed on a better, surer basis.

There is no other actual occurrence of the word "Consecration", but there are many instances where the actual idea embodied in the Old Testament sense of the word occurs. Romans 12. 1 is a case in point. The sacrifice that does not terminate in a few moments of time, but which yields itself up just as fully, yet in constantly

repeated acts of surrender and self-denial, over a life-time's span, is the thought connected with the Old Testament act of consecration. The same thing is set out in Peter's words (1 Pet. 1. 15-22). He exhorts his brethren to purify their souls, even more than they had done, and enjoy their freedom from their old "vain conversation" (or manner of life) obtained for them by the precious blood of Christ, and in doing so, become more holy, even as He that had called them was Holy.

In order to understand the life of consecration it is necessary to go back to Old Testament days, and pick up the thought there. Then, with this thought defined by the circumstances under which both the word and the attitude it stands for before our mind, it will be possible to trace these passages from Old Testament to New Testament times, and to realise what they mean in the higher Christian life.

The origin of this idea is found in Lev. 8, though prior to this particular day of ceremonies God had given to Moses, on the summit of Sinai, the outlines and details of, as well as the reasons for, all this ceremonial. The idea of consecration thus originates with God Himself. God set the standard of life, which He was pleased to call "Consecration"—and He outlined the installation ceremony to express the idea He wanted to teach. ". . . thou shalt gird . . . Aaron and his sons, and thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons" (Ex. 25. 9). Then (verses 19-37) the instruction is given to Moses how to proceed with the consecration ceremony.

Then in Lev. 8, we have the record of the consecration ceremony, based on the instruction given to Moses on the holy mount.

Reading the account through carefully, it will be seen that the consecration ceremony was one ceremony among others which led to a certain definite conclusion at the end of the day. "As He hath done this day, so the Lord hath commanded to do, 'to make an atonement for you'" (Lev. 8. 34). On account of thus being brought into at-one-ment with God, Aaron and his sons must abide at the door of the Tabernacle for seven days, to keep the charge of the Lord.

The tabernacle had just been erected, and everything set in its place. This was done on their New Year's day, exactly one year after leaving Egypt (Ex. 40. 1-17). Some nine months had been spent in making ready so that the whole structure could be erected quickly and promptly when the New Year's day had come.

No sacrifices of the required kind had therefore been previously offered, for there had been

no Priest to make them. The first thing therefore to receive attention, was the dedication of the Tabernacle and all its furnishings. This was performed by Moses as the Law-Giver-representative of God. All this is recorded in Ex. 40. The brief reference to the sanctifying of Aaron and his sons (Ex. 40. 12-15) is expanded and amplified in Lev. 8, where the whole ceremony of sanctification and consecration is described.

The story of the washing and robing of Aaron and his sons, of their anointing with oil, of the slaying of a bullock for a sin-offering, of one ram for a burnt-offering and another for the consecration offering, is set out at length, culminating with the reminder by Moses that all that had taken place was to make "an atonement" for them. The ceremony of consecration was thus one item among others, which brought them into "at-one-ment" with their God. *That they were not accounted unclean sinners at the beginning of this day is evidenced by the fact that they were robed in their special vestments before any blood was shed*—in Aaron's case, he was clothed in the robes of glory and beauty. That investiture is sure proof that God already accounted them as separated from Israel, and enjoying a special relationship to Himself. But, though thus separated, they were not sufficiently at "one" with the Holy One of Israel to enter into His purposes. They were not yet fitted and prepared to represent Him, nor cooperate with Him before their fellow-men. He would require proof of their fidelity to Him, and of their obedience to the "charge of the Lord" which He was laying upon them. Hence their participation in all these ceremonies constituted a test of their obedience. If obedient throughout, they would then be accounted to have reached the "end" God had in view in arranging their participation in all these ceremonies. They would be "at-one" with Him. In New Testament language they would be "teleioo" (Heb. 5.9)—"made perfect". They would have reached the "end" or "consummation" of the sanctifying experience. They would have reached the standard (on the typical plane) which God set before Himself and them, to fit them to express and exemplify His own Spirit to Israel, and through Israel to the fundamental principles of holiness and sin.

The form of the ceremonies revealed to them the primary object of their call. First, Moses was instructed to bring a bullock which was to be slain in the manner prescribed for a sin-offering. Aaron and his sons were instructed to lay their hands on its head. Then Moses was to slay it.

The act of Aaron and his sons, in the oft-repeated language of the tabernacle, represented their identification with the bullock. This principle of identification (by laying on of hands) was practised in all cases where a man presented his offering to the Lord (Lev. 3. 2, 8, 13. Lev. 4. 4, 15, 24, 29, 33) and its language was intended to say "This represents me".

When Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the bullock's head, it was as though they said "This represents us—what happens to this, is accounted as happening to us". The slaying of the bullock would then represent the sacrifice of the whole priestly company. Its sacrifice, according to the law and practice of a "sin offering" would proclaim the fact that the primary object of this priesthood was to offer collectively, a sacrifice for sin—whereby to bring cleansing to those for whom they were called to minister—i.e. Israel. This is a point which should have careful attention, for its language is unmistakable. The under-priests had equal participation in all this ceremony with their glory-robed High Priest. But the fact that it was performed on behalf of Israel only, puts the question on an altogether different basis from that of Adamic sin, and of the "Ransom for All".

In this sacrifice (slain by the Law-Giver, Moses) the Holy One of Israel showed most unmistakably what the Divine Law required of those who had previously been called and appointed to the Priesthood in Israel. It was a pictorial representation that God—after accepting them into the Priesthood—required of them the full and total surrender of their lives, not singly, but as a whole; as a united company of priests without distinction as to which was most important or least important.

Next followed the whole burnt-offering. Again Aaron and his sons placed their hands on this victim's head. Every vestige was burnt in the fire on the Court Altar. This taught them that everything must be surrendered to God—without reservation. Then came the ceremony which represented their consecration. Again Aaron and his sons placed their hands upon the victim's head. Then after Moses had killed it, he took some of its blood, and with it touched the tip of Aaron's right ear, then the thumb of his right hand, and after that the great toe of his right foot. Then Moses did exactly the same to each of Aaron's sons. The remainder of the blood he sprinkled round the altar.

Then Moses took certain parts of the animal, and all its fat, and one unleavened cake, and a cake of oiled bread, and one wafer, and placed all

these together into Aaron's hands, who waved them before the Lord. Taking them from Aaron, Moses placed the whole pile upon each of Aaron's sons' hands in turn, who likewise waved them before the Lord. That accomplished, Moses then burnt all these things together upon the altar-fire, as a sacrifice of consecration; as a sacrifice of sweet savour unto the Lord. Thus the essential meaning of consecration is brought out. It means a "filling of the hands".

Now, let these ceremonial details be considered relatively to each other. First, the ram was set before the Lord and "devoted" to Him. The object of its life and existence was thus, once for all, determined. The ram may not henceforth be set free to mingle with its fellows, nor to feed its fill in luscious meadows, nor to become the sire of frolicsome lambs. It was separated from its kind to be "devoted" to the furtherance of God's designs. Here we find correspondence with the commonly accepted definition of consecration, i.e. it was devoted to a holy purpose. Then Aaron and his sons placed their hands on its head, thus associating themselves with its object and destiny in life. This act placed them before God in the same light.

The ram represented themselves, or rather, they were represented in the ram. Its death represented their death sacrificially—yet under such conditions that it could be represented as a "living sacrifice" held up and waved to and fro before the Lord for the requisite time. Something was accounted dead, yet in some sense they who were accounted dead (in the limbs and inward parts of the victim) were also accounted alive in the persons of the Priests, and able to present their members to God, by waving them to and fro. They were the custodians of their sacrifice, which filled their hands to the full. Of the sacrificed victim a portion was returned to them, so that by it, they might "wave" it in the presence of their God. This was representative of an acceptable sacrificial service before God, until the time came for their mutually-concerned sacrifice to be burned.

This is the germ, and at the same time, the basis of all truth underlying consecration. Its primary thought is "the hands filled full"—the hands filled full "by God", the hands filled full by God with the very thing sacrificed to Him! The application of the blood to ear-tip, thumb and great toe, indicates the members particularly involved in the sacrifice and subsequent stewardship. The ear represents hearing, the thumb, service, the toe, the "walk" and deportment through life. Thus Aaron and his sons were *devoted* to hearing the instruction of God, to engaging in the service

of God, to walking in the way of God. Consecration, then, meant the yielding up to God the devoted life in tiny dribblets; day by day and hour by hour, through a right understanding of His Will, and a right exercise of service, through a right walk in life. Thus that stewardship which He returned to His anointed ones as a sacred charge, when first they surrendered themselves to His Will, was yielded up bit by bit.

But to have all this unique experience true in their lives, they must first have been called of God; and having been called they must have been anointed with holy oil, and thus separated from their brethren; and thus separated unto God. They are therefore represented as dual identities—one represented in the sacrificial animal, the other represented in the anointed white-robed priest.

Herein are the germs of truly wonderful truths—but true only of those who are New Creatures in Christ Jesus. None else stand before God as having made sacrifice of themselves, and yet as being alive. None else have received from God their "two hands" full as a sacred charge to be returned and yielded up to Him bit by bit in kindly act and loving deed; in sanctified hearing; in holy service; and in a consecrated walk through life. None else are yet being thoroughly at-oned (or attuned) with God, with His loving spirit, with His wide gracious purposes, and with His unsullied holiness. None else are yet being made perfect by their sufferings. None else are yet being developed so as to attain to the "end" (the *teleioo*) which God has in view.

How beautifully Paul catches up all these ancient things in his mighty appeal to his brethren to live the consecrated life. "*I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice (as dead, yet alive) holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to the world; but be ye transformed (made over to God's design) by the renewing of your mind (the blood-tipped hearing) that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God (that ye may be attuned to Him in perfect measure, and not only know, but be ready to express the spirit of His great eternal designs).*"

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The friends at Ossett (Yorks) announce a baptismal service to be held on Saturday, 28th March, in the South Ossett Baptist Church, at 6.30 p.m. Any friends wishing to take advantage of this opportunity are requested to write Miss E. L. Robinson, Laburnum Cottage, Dewsbury Road, Ossett, Yorks. Free accommodation for the night will be found.

## OUT OF THE STOREHOUSE

A collection of  
interesting items

### The Flood

A tablet giving a list of medical remedies, found at Ur of the Chaldees and written about the time of Abraham, states that its contents were first given "by the mouth of the ancient sages who were before the flood, that was in the city of Shuruppak". The man who takes the place of Noah in the Sumerian legends of the Flood was said to have been a citizen of Shuruppak (a city on the Euphrates midway between Babylon and Ur) and here it was, these legends say, that he built the Ark which afterward drifted to Mount Nizir in Armenia. These stray finds, one after another, help to corroborate the Biblical story, and create a link between the historical times which we know and that dim time before the Flood of which no real details survive—not even in the Bible.

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### The Widow's Mite

These words are part of the commendation Jesus uttered concerning the poor woman who cast her two mites into the Temple treasury. Rich men, out of their abundance, were casting therein lavish gifts, but they still had a plentiful reserve. This poor woman cast in all she had (Mark 12. 44).

We may be inclined to take it for granted that she was old—and alone—as well as poor. But that need not be the case, for there is poverty to-day in Palestine among the young, of equal intensity to this of the poor woman of whom Jesus spake. One such, whose husband had been killed in some rioting, was left with four young children, whose "whole living" consisted of just "five olive trees".

No widow's pension or government relief was available to meet her need, and all she had to meet the requirements of five appetites was the produce of the five olive trees. One day an Englishman, passing near a group of Arab women, heard the very phrase, in Arabic, which, in the Arabic-Version of the New Testament translates the words of both Mark and Luke. Voices carry far in the clear air of Palestine, and only a deaf person could fail to listen to some conversations. These Arab women were discussing the predicament in which a young friend had been placed by the death of her husband.

She was left with nothing more in the world than a small share in a vineyard, and that, said the speaker, was "*kull ma'ishitha*"—the exact phrase of Mark and Luke rendered into Arabic.

Two mites was the entire income of the poor Jewess whom Jesus praised. From what source it came we do not know, but be that as it may, this meagre sum was her "all". Out of her dire poverty she gave more than they all.

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### On Melchisedek

Delaporte, in his "*History of Civilisation*" (page 221) remarks that "the terms 'father' and 'mother' in the sense of superior or brother, meaning colleague, friend or equal, were already beginning to appear" (in 1400-1500 B.C.). "In the epistolary style of the New Empire they were frequently employed". The Tel-el Amarna letters, written from Palestinian chieftains to their sovereign in Egypt at the time of the Exodus, contain among them a great many from one Abdi-Khiba, priest-king of Jerusalem, who claims that neither by father or mother but by the power of the Most High God he held and exercised his office. All this throws some light on the reference in Heb. 7. 1-4 to Melchisedek, the priest-king of Jerusalem (Salem) in the days of Abraham, some six centuries before the Exodus "*without father, without mother . . . abideth a priest continually*". The expression meant that he had no equal among the other petty kings around him: he was "priest of the Most High God" and held his authority from Him. So the New Testament writer goes on to say "now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham paid tithes". This confirmation of a solitary expression in the book of Hebrews by a clay tablet which lay buried in the soil of Egypt from the days of Joshua until the year 1887 is a striking evidence of the accuracy of Biblical allusions in even such apparently trivial matters. Many theories have been woven round the phrase, some even propounding the fantastic view that Melchisedek, having no father or mother, must have been the Son of God Himself, on earth in fleshly form. The above discovery tends to show that the expression means no more than that Melchisedek in his day had no equal; he was supreme

among men on earth, being a King and Priest, Priest of the Most High God, a Priest upon his throne.

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### The Pharisees

The Pharisees had their rise in the days of Ezra, about five hundred years before Christ, and were at first a body of high-principled men devoted to preserving the purity of Israel's worship and the knowledge of the Law. The name itself means "the separated ones". It was in the time of the persecutor Antiochus Epiphanes, who endeavoured about 168 B.C. to make Israel pagan, that the movement had its greatest impetus and all who had reverence for the God of Israel either joined it or at least supported its aims. During the time of Israel's temporary freedom from foreign oppression about 130 B.C. the Pharisees resolutely opposed the national tendency to join up with foreign nations on the ground of the corrupting influence such alliances would involve. In this manner the Pharisees, by the time of the Roman annexation, about 60 years before Christ, had become the dominant party in the country's political life, essentially the party of the common people, who looked to them for guidance. The Pharisees believed intensely in the coming of a Messiah who would deliver them from the pagan yoke, hence their early interest in the mission of Jesus and their later rejection of Him when it became apparent that He was not going to lead an armed insurrection against Rome. By His time the movement had become formal and corrupt and many Pharisees were hypocrites. A few retained the high principles of the early founders of the sect—Nicodemus, Gamaliel and Saul of Tarsus were all Pharisees and it is recorded that many Pharisees did believe in Jesus even although in John 7. 48 there were some who doubted the fact.

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### On Amos 5, 26

Obscurely translated in the A.V. it reads "Ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves". The S.R.V. has it (vs. 25-27) "Did you bring to me the sacrifices and offerings the forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? You shall take up Sakkuth your king, and Kaiwan your star-god, your images which you made for yourselves; therefore will I take you into exile beyond Damascus". The Hebrew "sakkuth" is the Babylonian "sakkut", the name for their god Ninuras, the planet Mars. Likewise,

"kaiwan" or "chiun" is the Babylonian "kajamana", their god Nergal or the planet Saturn. (In the A.V. the word "sakkuth" is translated "tabernacles" from its likeness to "sukthoth"; and "melech", king, is rendered "Moloch".) The new version, compared with the old Babylonian terms, shows that Israel had adopted the star-worship of the Babylonians and accepted the gods of Babylon, hence the strong condemnation Amos passed upon them.

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### Alongside God

A. C. Haddon, (died 1941), was known to his scientific colleagues as the "Head Hunter" because of his scientific researches in the Torres Straits (north of Australia). One of his native workers in that primitive part of the world, a Christian, described him as being a man "close up alongside God." A simple testimony, but how eloquent! What a witness to the cause of Christ must have been given by this man, who, in the midst of his researches in things to do with the "wisdom of this world" so impressed the simple mind of a Christian native that he came to be regarded as a man "close up alongside God"? The fruits of Haddon's work are to be seen to-day in our museums, in the shape of skulls and other relics. Those fruits of his life's labours are as dust, doomed to perish; but there is also surely something of more enduring value which, in order that it may bring forth more fruit, in due time, has been preserved "close up alongside God."

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### The Stars Also

Writing in "Nature" of June 30, 1943, and outlining a thesis regarding the origin of the earth, Sir James Jeans reaches a conclusion which is expressed, happily, in plain terms. The evidences are of no moment to us, but the conclusion is interesting when viewed in conjunction with our own beliefs. He says: "A far larger proportion of the stars than we have hitherto imagined must be accompanied by planets; life may be incomparably more abundant in the universe than we have thought." The chances of a system of planets being formed from a central "sun," he says, are about one in six. Compare this with the conclusions of scientific men of little more than a generation ago, who were convinced that this polar system of ours was unique in the universe, and could not be repeated elsewhere, and see how modern thought is moving steadily forward toward confirmation of our own views regarding the Creator's intentions as to ultimate abundant life throughout His material creation.

# The Transfiguration

*A foreview of Kingdom glory*

One of the strangest incidents in the Gospels is the Transfiguration. In its nature it seems to belong to the Old Testament rather than the New and to be revelation of the kind we normally associate with the Hebrew prophets rather than Christian apostles. That it was given for a purpose there can be no doubt, and that the happening deeply impressed itself upon the minds of the three witnesses is obvious from the unanimity of the versions in each Gospel. Matthew, Mark and Luke all record it and in much the same words. Memory must have been very clear as to the precise details of what happened on that eventful day.

It was about half way through the ministry of Jesus that His disciples had this strange and thrilling experience. They had already followed Him through two journeys in Galilee and the north, beside attending Him on one visit to Jerusalem. He was becoming well known by now and the authorities were taking notice of His movements and His message. Jesus Himself knew that the sands were running out and He must begin to prepare His disciples for the grim realisation that their immediate hopes were going to be dashed, He Himself put to death, and the golden promise of the Kingdom recede into an indefinite future. But more than that, He must also commence to instil a consciousness of their lives' mission in their minds, to give them the groundwork upon which after His death they might go forward in confidence to proclaim His message in Jerusalem, and all Judea, and to the uttermost parts of the earth. He must needs implant in their minds a vision that would never fade while life lasted, and the means He chose to achieve that end was a vision of another kind impressed upon their natural eyes.

The Pharisees and Sadducees had already been to Him, asking a sign from heaven, a request which He refused (Matt. 16. 1-4.) That incident had passed as it were almost unnoticed, but it served to show that the forces of the enemy were beginning to marshal themselves and Jesus knew that the time would not be prolonged. So he tested His disciples, "*Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?*" (Matt. 16. 13.). There was a variety of answers. Apparently some had thought He was John the Baptist, raised from the dead, others, Elijah, or Jeremiah, or another of the prophets. Still others surmised that He was the mysterious

unnamed one of whom Moses had spoken, "that prophet" who would be raised up like unto Moses, but who, unlike Moses, would be heeded by all the people. But all the opinions and reasonings had one basis; the One standing among them was a man and no more than a man, one who may have been a great man of God and a great champion of righteousness in time gone by, but nevertheless a man still, of Adam's race. It was when Jesus turned to the disciples and put His second question "*But whom say ye that I am*" that a great light dawned on Peter and he spoke out, impulsive as ever, "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*" "Son of man"; they had been accustomed enough to that title and thought no more of it than when they read in their Scriptures of the same appellation being bestowed upon the prophet Ezekiel. There was in Jewry at that time no real realisation that Messiah Himself would be anything more than a man; a great man raised up by God admittedly, but for all that only a man. It was at this point of time that Peter saw in a flash of inspiration that Messiah was more than man; He was in verity the sent of God, come down from heaven to take human form to execute His Divine mission. He was not only Son of man; He was also the Son of God.

That sudden frank declaration was the beginning of the whole spiritual understanding of the Church. All that we, any of us, comprehend or understand of the unseen things within the Vail have their source in Peter's historic reply. Until then the ideas and thoughts, and consequently the hopes and aims, of the disciples and all of Jesus' followers were exclusively earthly. From that time their progress in the understanding of spiritual things began, and that is why Jesus, rejoicing in spirit at the evidence thus afforded Him that His work was at last bearing fruit, exclaimed "*Blessed art thou, Simon . . . flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto you, but my Father who is in heaven.*" A new phase of His ministry was entered upon there and then. In a very real sense Jesus began that day to build His Church. Even although Pentecost must come before that Church could be formally inaugurated by the descent and baptism of the Holy Spirit upon those first believers gathered in the Upper Room, it was here that Jesus began the gathering out of the first few. It was here that

He found some who manifested the attitude of heart and beginnings of an understanding mind that was to make them fit recipients of the Holy Spirit when the time should come. It is a very significant thing that this passage contains the first occurrence of the word "*ecclesia*" in the New Testament. "Upon this rock," this rock truth just enunciated by Peter, "I will build my church" (Gk "*ekklesia*") said Jesus. It is customary to denote each separate little assembly of the consecrated followers of Christ an "*ecclesia*" but the term also, and more properly, denotes the entire assembly of Christ's disciples the world over, the whole "Church in the flesh" at any one time. So it is very appropriate and very significant that here for the first time Jesus avows His intention to "build His Church."

Not less significant is the fact that immediately after this revelation of Peter's grasp of this great truth and the indication thus afforded that the minds of the disciples were getting ready for spiritual instruction, Jesus began to speak of the deeper things of His mission. Heretofore He had worked miracles, preached the Gospel of the Kingdom, and discoursed with His disciples on the virtues of His way of life, the "fruits of the Spirit" as we might call them, the inherent value of love and joy and peace and mercy and humility and so on. Now He embarked upon a totally different style of instruction. "From that time forth" says Matthew in verse 21 "began Jesus to shew unto his disciples . . ." the things regarding His presentation of Himself to the Jews as their Messiah, their rejection of Him, His condemnation, His death and His resurrection. They did not comprehend fully what He was endeavouring to teach them, Peter even going so far as to say "Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee" but the fact that Jesus deemed it a suitable time to speak of these things is evidence enough that they were at least in a fit condition of mind and heart to appreciate them partially. As the weeks and months passed by they became the more fully receptive to this aspect of our Lord's teaching and although even at His death they had still not sufficiently understood it all to retain complete faith in the face of that supreme tragedy, nevertheless they had imbibed enough to turn the scale when the events immediately following the Resurrection restored their faith and opened to them new vistas of revelation. The work whose beginning is narrated in Matthew 16 achieved its consummation in Acts 2, and the fruit of that which was sown at the Transfiguration was reaped at Pentecost.

One thing yet was necessary to establish their

faith in these necessarily unsubstantial and unreal spiritual promises. Although they did not, as did the Pharisees and Sadducees a little while previously, ask for a sign as evidence of His authority, Jesus knew, none better, just what tremendous value a sign would be to them at that juncture. Some visible manifestation upon which their physical senses could fasten would become a landmark in their memories to be recalled in after days and remembered as an evidence for belief and a foundation for faith that could not be overturned. And it was because of that necessity that they were given the vision of the Transfiguration.

It was vitally necessary that the disciples' hope and understanding of Jesus' teaching be intimately related with the prophecies of the Old Testament. In after days the whole development of Christian doctrine was going to be dependent upon a full and accurate knowledge of the writings of Moses and the words of the prophets. So Jesus proceeded at once to relate His mission and their hopes for the future to the apocalyptic visions of olden times. "*The Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.*" (Vs. 27.) That is about the earliest New Testament prophecy of the Second Advent that we have—in fact it is remarkable how much of the origins of Christian doctrine is to be found in embryo form in this sixteenth chapter of Matthew and the corresponding accounts in Mark and Luke. The disciples were of course quite familiar with the old prophetic visions. They knew that Moses had predicted the coming of a greater than himself to whom the people would hearken and by whom they would be saved. They knew that Malachi had prophesied of the same one in different terms, a Son of Righteousness who would arise with healing in his wings; and they knew too that Malachi had also promised that God would send Elijah the prophet to Israel before the great day came, to initiate a preliminary work of turning the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children to the fathers. They knew all this, and they knew also that God would appear in glory and power to execute judgment on the wicked and bestow rewards upon the righteous, at the Last Day. So many of the prophets had described the events of that Day in symbols more or less lurid and they could not but have been acutely aware of the vision seen by Daniel where the Ancient of Days was manifested in fiery glory and one like a Son of man was brought before Him to receive honour and glory and a kingdom that would never pass away. Now Jesus was clearly referring to that prophecy and telling them in effect that He Himself was that Son of man who would

eventually come in that glory and receive that Kingdom. They had already realised the fact and Peter had expressed it for them in words. And there was something more. They all knew of the stirring passage in the Book of Enoch where the Lord was depicted as coming with ten thousands of His holy ones to execute judgment upon the ungodly. He was not coming alone; He would be accompanied by His faithful disciples. Daniel too had spoken of the holy ones of the Most High who would possess the kingdom in companionship with their Lord, the Son of Man. It was all very exciting and thrilling and what was needed now to seal their faith was some kind of outward evidence that all these hopes were well founded and would not be disappointed.

And it was just at that point that Jesus said to them—surely He must have said it very quietly, letting the words sink into their minds . . . *“Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.”*

There have been endless discussions as to precisely what Jesus meant by those few simple words—for it is manifest that all the disciples have long since tasted of death, but still the Son of Man has not come in the glory of His Kingdom. So some have interpreted the words to mean the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and others the inauguration of the Church on earth, the incipient Kingdom of heaven, whilst its members are as yet still in the flesh. And some, critically, have said that Jesus Himself expected to return in power within a few years but that He was mistaken and so the disciples were misled and disappointed, but those who say such a thing are grievously wrong. Jesus had just been talking about His appearance in glory at the day of His “appearing and kingdom” at the commencement of the Millennial Age when His saints would be with Him and the world ready to receive Him and His words cannot logically be taken to refer to anything else. Without any doubt at all the few men who heard those words uttered must have taken them to mean that within the foreseeable future, while as yet they lived, they would see with their own eyes that which He had just been telling them would surely come.

So there passed, in eager anticipation, six days; then Jesus called three of them, Peter, James, and John, and led them apart, up into a high mountain. Tabor is the traditional mountain where the incident is said to have taken place, but since Tabor was crowned by a Roman fortress at the time it is

unlikely to have been the spot. More likely one of the slopes of Mount Hermon in Galilee was the place where this strange and thrilling scene was enacted.

Before their astonished eyes the Jesus they knew was transformed into a glorious Being whose countenance shone as the sun and whose whole form blazed with a dazzling white radiance. The description is so startlingly akin to that of the vision which Saul of Tarsus saw on the road to Damascus that one is forced to the conclusion that Peter and James and John saw exactly what Paul saw on that occasion. Then, in company with this transfigured and glorious Lord there appeared two other figures, apparently not so glorious yet evidently not of this earth. In some mysterious way not explained in the accounts, the onlookers knew these two to be Moses and Elijah. How did they know? Possibly they were not able to explain that even to themselves. They just knew that they were gazing on Moses and Elijah discoursing with the Lord of all glory. They heard enough of the conversation to gather its general drift. It was to do with the “decease” of Jesus. That is an unusual word in the New Testament and it does not mean death. It is the Greek word “*exodos*” which means a going out or an outgoing, the leaving of one place to go to another. “Decease” meaning “to die” is a wholly improper translation. Used only three times in the New Testament, one occurrence is in Heb. 11. 22 referring to the “*departing*” of the children of Israel out of Egypt, where “departing” is “*exodos*.” (From this of course we get the name “Exodus” for the second book of the Bible.)

So they discoursed not of Jesus’ death, but of His “outgoing.” The significance of that may become more apparent presently. But in the meantime Peter, quick of mind as ever, grasped, or thought he grasped, the meaning of what he saw. Here surely was the fulfilment of words spoken six days previously. Here at last was the Son of man appearing in the glory of His Kingdom, and Moses and Elijah were attending Him as supporters and witnesses. Here was the sign for which Pharisees and Sadducees had asked, a sign none of them would dispute, backed as it was with all the authority of Israel’s two greatest men, Moses and Elijah. What wonder that Peter, with all his usual impetuosity, immediately proposed that “tabernacles,” booths of branches and leaves, be at once erected to shroud some of the glory which human eye could barely endure, doubtless with the further intention of bringing all of Israel who would come to pay homage to the glorified

Lord and be among the first to accept His Kingship and His Kingdom.

There is not much doubt that the vision was at the first thus understood by the three disciples. They must have thought that the Kingdom was about to be proclaimed and here was the first appearance in glory. Thoughts must have raced through their minds . . . the spectacle of the three glorious Beings descending the mountain in solemn state, joined perhaps by a retinue of angels such as appeared to the shepherds of Bethlehem; the running of many people to see the sight; the gathering of the twelve around their deified Master; the submission and tribute of the scribes and Pharisees and priests, of the Roman legions and of Pilate . . . their quickly-woven fancies abruptly disappeared. A radiance, brighter than before, swiftly approaching and engulfing them, so filled them with awe and perhaps fear that, like Saul in later times, they could do naught else than fall prostrate on their faces. As thus they lay, a Voice came out of that blinding Radiance "*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.*" . . .

How long they thus lay, with covered eyes, awe-stricken and reverent before the Presence Whose majestic Voice they had heard, they could not have known. The moment was too solemn, the happening too tremendous, for any thought or sense of time to intrude. Peter's hasty words were forgotten; their suddenly awakened thoughts of the Kingdom were forgotten; they only knew that they were face to face with the Almighty.

A light touch, a familiar voice; "Arise, be not afraid."

*"And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only."*

It was a thoughtful trio that made its way down the mountainside, with Jesus, as usual, in the lead. There was no glory now, no voices, just Jesus as they had always known Him. And He was saying to them "*Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.*" So the Kingdom had not come in power after all! They were still in this present evil world and the Son of Man must yet be crucified and slain, and rise again the third day. One would have thought that the sudden transition back to everyday matters and the sudden shattering of brief hopes would have destroyed all faith. Strangely, it did not. We find the disciples in a more thoughtful and serious mood than ever before. They wanted to know more about the promised sending of Elijah. They apparently understood at last the peculiar mission

of John the Baptist. All the evidence goes to show that in the weeks immediately following the Transfiguration the disciples went about their duties with at least the faith they had immediately before. The impression we are left with is that the vision achieved just the purpose that it was intended to achieve.

Thirty-five years later Peter looked back to this day as a red-letter day in his life and the one that was to him the most powerful witness he had to the truth of his faith. "We have not followed cunningly devised fables" he said, ". . . but were eye witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount." (2 Pet. I. 16-18.)

"Majesty - honour - glory - excellent glory!" These are attributes of the Second Advent, of the Kingdom in power. Yet Peter says he saw them back there in the First Century. After the development and consideration and experience of thirty-five years he still insists that he and his companions saw the glory of the Kingdom and heard the voice of God. And that is exactly what Jesus had promised in Matt. 16. 28 he would do before he died.

That verse becomes completely understandable and literally true if we consider that Peter, and James, and John, on that memorable day up there in the mountain, were miraculously given to see an incident in the days of the Kingdom which has yet to take place. Paul was taken up into the "third heaven," the "world to come, wherein dwelleth righteousness" and shown in advance scenes in a world which has not yet come into existence. What wonder if to these three men was granted a similar privilege? Is it not to be expected that when Moses and Elijah are raised from the dead they will in their capacity as "princes in all the earth", "Ancient Worthies" as they are often called, hold converse with the Lord of Glory in respect to matters concerning the administration of the Kingdom? And if so, what more likely than that they will talk of the great theme that is the means by which the Kingdom has become possible, the death of our Lord at Jerusalem? But will they think of it and talk of it as "death"? From our human point of view, looking at the matter from this side of the grave, it is indeed death, for at the Cross He left this earth and vanished from the sight of men. But

what of those who themselves are on the other side of the Vail. To the angels, waiting, that which was His death to us, was to them a home-coming, a return to His own abode. "*I leave the world, and go to the Father*" He said himself. Was that strange word "*exodos*," "outgoing," used deliberately? Is it that Moses and Elijah, talking to the Lord in the dawn of the Kingdom Age, speak of His "outgoing" from the world of men to the world of the spirit, back there at Jerusalem? If so, this would be an incidental corroboration of the thought that what the disciples saw in the mount was not just a kind of tableau or symbolic representation of the Kingdom, but a glimpse in advance of an actual Kingdom scene in which Moses and Elijah will yet definitely figure, two thousand or more years before it happens. And if this be the true thought, then of course the three disciples did actually see the Son of man coming in the glory of His Kingdom, even though what they saw was a prophetic foreview of an actual

incident that has not yet happened, but will definitely happen on a day still future.

The Most High, Who sees the end from the beginning, can assuredly grant such glimpses, or "pre-views", as we might call them. There is nothing difficult of acceptance about that.

It is noteworthy that Peter in his Second Epistle, when referring to this incident, refers to his own "decease" (2. Pet. 2. 15), using the same word "exodos", the only other occasion beside Heb. 11. 22 where the word is used. The recollection of the happening still meant so much to him that he could not use the word "death" in the same breath; he had to say "outgoing" because he also felt so near to the Kingdom.

No wonder that in after days these men had to tell their judges "We cannot but speak the things that we have seen and heard." Who could do else, after such a glorious manifestation of the realities that lie "beyond the Vail"?

## WOUNDED FOR OUR TRANSGRESSIONS

*A Memorial  
meditation*

"*He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities . . . by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities.*" (Isa. 53. 5 and 11.)

The great depth of our Redeemer's love for mankind is nowhere more eloquently expressed than in this fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Too often do we take the surface meaning of the well-known words and content ourselves with the thought that Jesus has taken the sinner's place and accepted in His own person the penalty of sin which should rightfully come upon guilty man. Too often do we sing—

*"Christ gave His life for me  
His precious blood was shed  
That I might ransomed be  
And quickened from the dead."*

and accept the matter as settled without need of any further realisation of what the death of Jesus really means to us.

There is much more in the doctrine of the Ransom than the acceptance of Paul's words regarding the *anti-lutron*—the purchase of all the human race by Jesus at the cost of His own human life. Isaiah 53 tells how intimately the story of the Ransom is bound up with the "suffering ser-

vant" of whom the prophet speaks so eloquently. From the twenty-second chapter, where Jehovah's "servant" is first mentioned, the theme is developed until it reaches its climax in the fifty-third chapter. Man can only be redeemed and reconciled to God by means of one who would be prepared to "suffer" in order that the compelling power of that suffering might lead men to the only course of life which can bring them happiness and the purging of their sins. The old law of Israel was "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." That law is still the principle upon which nations and systems are founded to-day, and which leads to strife, violence, war and death. Isaiah was used by the Holy Spirit to introduce a new theme to man, a theme which must be put into practice amongst men before the troubles of this world can be solved. There must be one, whether man amongst men or nation amongst nations, willing to become a servant instead of an oppressor, seeking to do good to men by serving them instead of oppressing men by ruling over them; one willing to suffer in his service that others may be glad, rather than be an exactor of suffering from others in retribution for their faults; one that will eventually *win* men by love, instead of *compelling* men by force. That is the ideal which God has planned,

the principle upon which the work of the Millennial Age will be carried on, the principle which accomplishes the work of the Good Shepherd amongst His own sheep during this Age, and the principle which Isaiah declared would be exemplified by "He that shall come."

So Christ came as a "suffering servant". He said so Himself. "*I am among you as one that serveth.*" "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10, 45). "He gave Himself a Ransom" (1 Tim. 2, 5), and He was also a "sin-offering"—an offering on account of sin. The blood of bulls and goats can never take away sin—yea, and neither does the blood of Christ remove sin, *unless* the sinner, passing through the successive stages of repentance, faith and justification, takes to himself the benefit of that offering made "once and for all" and in whole-hearted surrender to the saving power of Jesus becomes reconciled to God.

The power of the sin-offering, then, lies in its compelling force, drawing men first to an appreciation of what Christ has done for them, secondly to remorse for their sinful condition and repentance for their sin, thirdly to faith that the work and sacrifice of Christ can be efficacious on their behalf upon their acceptance of Him as their Saviour, and finally sincere acceptance of Him and consecration to His service. That consecration brings such believers into a position where the work of the Holy Spirit, through restitution processes in the future, can eliminate the effects of sin, and place the believer in a position of absolute perfection before God. Because the consecrated believer of this Age is begotten to a new and a spiritual life, he is reconciled to God at the time of his consecration, when "old things are passed away and all things have become new," and it is the new spiritual factor in his personality that is "clothed upon" with a spiritual body in the First Resurrection. With the world of mankind in the Millennial Age the case is different. Their calling is to earthly perfection; it is their earthly resurrection body that is to be made perfect in the sight of God; hence their acceptance of Christ and consecration to His service is but the beginning of a work of progress toward human perfection which must be completed before they are declared reconciled to God. Hence, they are in the hands of a Mediator, Christ Jesus, until the time of their presentation to God and reconciliation with Him. Not until any man has accepted the Law of Love as the guiding principle in his life, is wholly devoted to the service of his fellows even at the

cost of suffering to himself were that necessary, is prepared to be servant of all if by any means he may save some, can he even commence in the way that culminates in human perfection at the end of the Millennial Age.

Men in Isaiah's day did not realise that to be the only way. Neither did they at the First Advent. Neither do they now. Because of their lack of understanding, it was necessary that there be a great Exemplar to show them the way by walking in it Himself. So the prophet cries: "He was wounded *for* (on account of) our transgressions. He was bruised *for* (on account of) our iniquities. By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many *on whose account* he shall bear iniquity."

Rotherham says:

*"He was pierced for transgressions that were ours,  
Was crushed for iniquities that were ours,  
The chastisement for our well-being was upon him,  
And by his stripes there is healing for us."*

and the Septuagint renders vs. 5 and 8:

*"He was wounded on account of our sins and was bruised because of our iniquities . . . Because of the iniquities of my people he was led to death."*

Is it not true that Christ's footstep followers, the Church of this Age, are associated with Him in this great thing? Consecrated Christians now, buried with Him by baptism into His death, suffering with Him, are also "suffering servants", seeking nothing better than to serve mankind in the good things of God which shall be for their salvation. This course in life brings suffering now, a suffering gladly borne, because it is pointing the whole world to the only way by which it will eventually attain its destiny. We suffer, not "for" the sins of people in the ordinarily accepted sense of that word, but most certainly "on account of" the sins of the people—for were there no sin in the world there would be no suffering for righteousness' sake, and no necessity for it. Thus we may rejoice, knowing that our suffering is working out, not only a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory for us, but salvation for all the world, "in due time".

*"He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied."*

*"In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."*

## The Three Epistles of John

Comments on the writings  
of the "Beloved Apostle"

Part XXVII. I John 5. 13-15

*"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."* (Vs. 13.)

"You that believe," "Ye may know," "Ye may believe"; all these affirmations of conviction crowd one upon another in this verse and those immediately following. We are coming very rapidly now to the end of the epistle and John's thought is entirely for those who have so given themselves to God in whole-hearted surrender that they are now members of the Divine family. No room in these last intimate passages for the world. No time left now to consider those who have never accepted Christ. John is not heedless of them and their needs but he knows that a day yet to come will give all such every possible opportunity to repent of their past heedless ways and come at last into lowly surrender. God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." (Acts 17. 31.) So that although John knew full well that the time had already come when God "commandeth all men everywhere to repent" and had played his own part in proclamation of the Gospel of the Kingdom as a "witness to all nations" he now turns away from that general work and devotes himself to the deeper interests of the inner circle of disciples. Full well did John know that, as with Paul, so with himself, after his departing grievous wolves would enter in, not sparing the flock. And John desired, as did Paul, to finish his course "free from the blood of all men." He wanted to render a good report of his stewardship, so that his last words to the Church on earth are words of Christian counsel and exhortation and encouragement, words that give strength and stamina to Christian character, that those who receive may neither run nor labour in vain. That is why John talks so much about believing and knowing in these last verses. The belief and knowledge is not that of intellectual things but that of the heart and life. These of whom he says they have believed on the name of the Son of God are not those who have believed *about* Jesus. The knowledge they possess that in John's view is of such supreme importance is not the knowledge of *how* Jesus redeemed them

and all the philosophy of the Ransom, but the knowledge that Jesus *has* redeemed them. It is not so much the knowledge precisely *how* we, the Church, are joint-heirs with His glory and sharers in His sufferings and by what process of legal form we have attained to that position, but the knowledge that we *are*, in sober fact, associated with Him in all that He is and does. We have as it were placed our hands in His and given Him our trust and we know that henceforward all is well. Therefore, in John's own phrase, we know that we have eternal life, and nothing of all the arguments and sophistries of man can rob us of that unshakable conviction.

*"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."* (vs 14, 15.)

This is going back to the words of Jesus yet again. No less than four times did John record those words in his Gospel. It is clear that Jesus must have repeated that assurance many times during His ministry and clear that John must have been quick to pick up the words. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." (John 14. 13-14.) "I have chosen you . . . that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it to you." (John 15. 16.) "In that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." (John 16. 23-24.) So often have there been long and serious debates over the scope and extent of this promise. Did Jesus mean literally anything that we could conceivably ask? If there is a limit, what is that limit and why is it not defined in one or more of these many texts? As it stands the promise is definite enough. Whatever we ask, provided it is in His name, will be granted to us. That would seem to include everything, even things that might not be good for us or might even react against our endeavour to walk worthily of Him who has called us to His kingdom and glory. The secret, of course, lies in the obvious fact that

none of those addressed are of the class who would misapply the promise anyway. All to whom the words are spoken can already be trusted to make intercession "according to the will of God". (Rom. 8. 27.) "Thy Will be done!" "Nevertheless not as I wilt, but as thou wilt" is always the unspoken element in every supplication that goes up to the Majesty on high.

There is a more intimate aspect of this matter that we do well to consider at this point. We can picture to ourselves the total immersion of our own wills into the will of God so that we can honestly say we as independent individuals have subordinated our own aims and impulses and desires to the overruling dictation of our God, but then there is a mystic but very real sense in which we are no longer independent individuals. In coming into Christ we have become one with Him and one with His Father; and that oneness can only be attained and maintained if our wills are so closely attuned to His that we begin to think and speak and act as He does. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" is the Apostle's admonition and it is not an empty one. It implies a unity of mind which is much deeper and more intimate than the position of two independent minds who merely happen to think and react alike. Jesus prayed that His disciples might be one—one with each other and one with Him and with His Father. "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us . . . that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one . . ." (John 17. 21-23.) Those were not meaningless words; they were uttered to give expression to a truth too profound for any of us fully to comprehend in the flesh, even although we may glimpse something of its ideal and seek in our own imperfect way to make some progress toward it. There is something here that touches the fundamental relationship between God the Creator and Life-giver, and the creatures to whom He has given life—and from whom He can withdraw life. "In him we live, and move, and have our being" declared Paul to the philosophers of Athens. "Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created, and thou renewest the face of the earth" sang the Psalmist (Psa. 104. 29-30.) The spirit, says the Preacher in Ecclesiastes, returns to God who gave it. What really is the relation between man and His Maker? What is this life that pulsates in our bodies and makes thinking, intelligent beings out of a mere collection of chemicals shaped like a human body? To what extent is it still a part of the Divine life? It certainly is entirely dependent

upon the decree of God? He bestows and withdraws at will: He can give everlasting life or relegate to eternal death. Can it not be therefore that in some very real sense we who have become joint-heirs with Christ have entered into a true oneness with God which finds its deepest expression in this present time in the spiritual communion that we have with the Father, and will in future days beyond the Veil enlarge into an even closer oneness that now we cannot even begin to visualise? Perhaps, after all, one reason that the things we pray for are always in harmony with the will of God is this very fact, that we have become so much one with Him that the mind which frames the prayers and the will that prompts the requests are already so fully in tune with the mind and will of God that it is not possible for us to ask for things that are contrary to His will. That at any rate is an ideal to be striven for and the more we seek to make such a condition a reality in our lives the more we shall find that these few verses in John's epistle are truly descriptive of our own experience.

Of course this does not imply that all the things we might at first impulse request are going to be automatically given to us. There are so many petitions we could—and do—present on the basis of our old natural outlook that sober reflection would compel to the admission are not good for us. There is always the heartfelt appeal inspired by some deep and dear earthly love that ascends to heaven in perfect sincerity but finds no affirmative reply. But many a time that is only the immediate stress of our human affections and desires looming up strongly before us and crying for some consideration. Behind the immediate urgency of the petition there is always the background thought "Thy Will be done". The stress of the moment may infuse a sharp note of appeal into the prayer but behind the urgency there is a calmness that comes from knowing that our God is "too wise to err; to good to be unkind", and as we rise from our knees we know that whether the plea be granted or whether it be refused, it is still true that "we have the petition that we desired of him". So many have thanked God in after days because the answer was "No". They have realised, looking back, how much better it has been that it was so. So the One who knoweth what things we have need of before we ask Him will always answer our petitions, not according to the words of our lips, but according to the desires of our hearts. As He did with Ezekiel, He may take away the desire of our eyes at a stroke, yet we shall be able to say "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good". And that is not a weak, spineless acquiescence in the decree of One whose power cannot be chal-

lenged, but an intelligent and willing union with Him in what He has decreed shall be done. We have the petitions we ask of Him because we are one with Him, and what He will have, we will have too. John calls this "the confidence that we have in him". He could have chosen no better word.

We have confidence, from the human standpoint trusting where we cannot see, and so willingly accepting His decision; from the spiritual standpoint, entering into His decision and identifying ourselves with it so that it becomes our own decision also.

*To be continued.*

## READERS' VIEWS

### On Chronology

"Reference the articles 'In the days of the Patriarchs' in October issue, in which it is stated that the Septuagint chronology is assumed to be nearer the truth than the Masoretic, I would like to ask the writer please to state his reasons for 'assuming the longer period to be nearer the truth'. The longer period has been known for a hundred years to be wrong in itself because it makes Methuselah survive the Flood by fourteen years, and we know that only eight persons were saved alive in the Ark. The Hebrew (Masoretic) chronology shows that Methuselah died the same year as the Flood. Methuselah's name means 'When dead it will be sent' or as some other philologists have it 'He dies and it is sent'. His father was the prophet Enoch as we know."

(H.W.D.)

Without claiming anything like complete accuracy for the Septuagint chronology, there is no doubt that the period it allows for the space of time between the Flood and Abraham must be nearer the truth than that given in the Hebrew manuscripts on which the Authorised Version is based. A hundred years ago there was little external evidence to support the Septuagint and no knowledge of ancient nations to give any reason to doubt the Hebrew. Exploration in Mesopotamia and Egypt had hardly begun; all that was known of history before Abraham was that which is recorded in the Bible, and 427 years was ample for the few incidents narrated in Gen. 10 and 11. To-day the position is different. The first wild guesses of archæologists, based upon the scattered records found during the latter half of the nineteenth century, made the history of Babylonian and Sumerian and Egyptian civilisation go back to some three thousand years before the time of Abraham. A much more scientific approach to the matter during the twentieth century and the benefit of a tremendous increase in the number of records unearthed has enabled scholars to piece together a tolerably well-connected history going back to some five centuries before

Abraham, at which early time the Sumerian and Egyptian cities were in an advanced state of culture. At least three or four centuries would have to be allowed for this state of civilisation to be reached from the first eight persons emerging from the Ark into a desolated world, so that the Septuagint period of about 1,100 or 1,200 years (the Vatican Ms. gives 100 years more than the Alexandrian) is quite within the bounds of possibility.

The Vatican Ms. makes Methuselah survive the Flood by fourteen years; the Alexandrian makes him die six years before the Flood. It would be foolish to claim precise accuracy for the chronology as set down in the Septuagint; no man knows what vicissitudes the versions have undergone since early times; but on the whole it is much more in conformity with what has evidently been the course of true history.

The suggestion that the name "Methuselah" means "When he is dead it shall be sent" and that this was a prophetic name bestowed by his father Enoch and referred to the coming of the Flood was first advanced, the writer of this note believes, by Arthur Gook in a small work called "*Can a Young Man trust his Bible*" some forty years ago. It is not wise to place too much reliance upon name meanings unless the name itself is a regular Hebrew word. In this case it is not. "Methuselah" is a compound word and we have to remember that all the vowels in the Old Testament were inserted by the Masorites in the early centuries of the Christian era and that no one either then or now knew or knows exactly how the words were actually pronounced in the original Hebrew. As first written the name was MTHSLH, and almost certainly is compounded of "Meth" (Man) and "Salah" a verb meaning to be quiet, peaceful, prosperous, careless, negligent, and so on, with the genitive "us" (of) in between, thus meaning, probably, "Man of peace" or "Man of prosperity". The originator of the other suggestion apparently took "Muth" meaning death, and compounded it with "Salach" a verb meaning "to

send" without noticing that he had mistaken the Hebrew letter for CH with that for H, and so produced a word which could be rendered "death of sending" which is meaningless. Even so the name would have to be spelt "Muthusalach", a form for which there is no warrant. A more likely explanation, in keeping with the known character of the family line concerned, is that if the name has any meaning at all, it is "Man of peace".

### An Interesting Suggestion

"The article on the 'Thought for the Month' (January) reminds me of a little bit I imagined, and added to the story of Jesus and those Pharisees who brought the woman.

"When Jesus stooped down and wrote in the sand, I filled in, that He must have written a name that the oldest one recognised, so he walked out; then Jesus wrote another name, and the next oldest one walked out, and so on, until all had left! Otherwise, why should they leave in that order, from the oldest one down? Jesus had the power to know, anyway! Just a bit of my own imagination.

What will those Pharisees feel like when brought back in the resurrection, with their guilt facing them, of trying to tempt Jesus that way? I try to comprehend what it will be like for every one whose 'sins follow after them' then! It will be a blessed time for some, and a 'purgatory' for others." (L.O.).

Whilst our sister modestly calls the above a bit of imagination, there may well be a reasonable explanation of Jesus' action revealed here. The suggestion is novel; it may be the true one; certain it is that such a quiet way of showing each one present that He knew the guilty secret of each one, by writing in the sand the name of the partner with whom that one had sinned, would well fit the expression "and they, being convicted by their own consciences . . ." It has often been said that the word "He that is without sin among you . . ." in the Greek bears the sense of this particular sin which was under discussion, and although there is no indication whatever as to what Jesus did write in the sand, this is a thought that seems worth mentioning while this subject happens to be before us in the "Monthly".—(Ed.)

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103	Day of Judgment.	111	Armageddon.	107	The Son of God.	115	Satan.
104	Where are the Dead?	112	Restoration of Israel.	108	The Holy Spirit.	116	Angels that Sinned.



# BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

Thou, therefore, endure  
hardness as a good  
soldier of Jesus Christ.

Vol. 30, No. 4

APRIL, 1953

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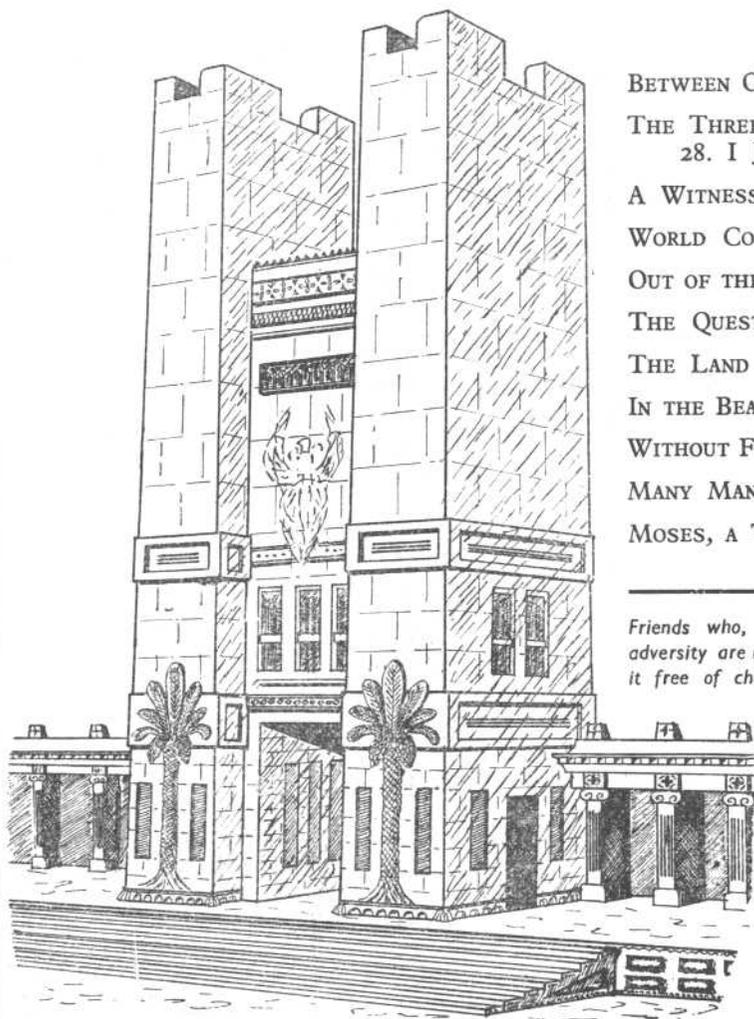
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*Lift up your heads, O ye gates  
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors,  
And the King of glory shall come in.*

## BETWEEN OURSELVES

A Whitsun Convention is being planned for Yeovil, Somerset, and brethren who are interested may write to Bro. W. F. Fox, 34, St. Michaels Road, Yeovil, for details, which will be forwarded as soon as plans are complete.

\* \* \*

The Midland friends are arranging for the usual Whitsun Convention, which this year is to be held in Leicester. Will brethren desiring particulars please write to Bro. W. R. Walton, "Beirnfels," New Road, Common Lane, Kenilworth, Warwicks.

\* \* \*

The Annual General Convention will be held during the August holiday season this year at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1, and arrangements are now in hand. Sessions will commence on the afternoon of Saturday, 1st August, and conclude at the end of the afternoon on Monday, 3rd August. Programmes will be circulated in due course and in the meantime details can be obtained from the Convention Secretary, Bro. D. Parker, 13, New Road, Langley, Slough, Bucks. Applications for accommodation should be addressed to Bro. H. Charlton, Ryvers Farm, London Road, Langley, Slough, Bucks. It is hoped to hold a baptismal service in connection with the Convention and brethren desiring to take advantage of this opportunity are asked to advise Bro. Parker at as early a date as possible.

\* \* \*

Brethren in U.S.A. will be interested to learn that arrangements for the 1953 Unity Convention, to be held at Macatawa as before, are in hand, and announcements giving details will shortly be available. Write to Berean Bible Students, P.O. Box 125, Cicero 50, Ill. U.S.A.

It is desired that announcement be made in the "Monthly" to the effect that the meetings which have been held at Caxton Hall for some time are now to be discontinued. The March meeting was the last one and there are at present no plans for continuing the meetings. It is felt that the purpose for which this gathering was organised is no longer being served and in the circumstances it is thought, though with regret, that there is no alternative to terminating the arrangements. It will be appreciated if brethren seeing this notice will make it known to friends who may not see it.

\* \* \*

The article "*In the Beauty of Holiness*" which appears in this month's issue considers the question of outward environment in respect to worship from an angle other than that taken in the recent treatise "*Into the Sanctuary of God*" which appeared in the January number. It is hoped that many of our readers will be interested in this fresh consideration of the subject and that good will come from the comparison of these two differing presentations.

\* \* \*

"Readers' Views" has had to be omitted this month on account of lack of space.

---

## Gone From Us

\* \* \*

Sis. M. E. Clark (*Cambridge*).  
 Bro. N. Hall (*Gateshead*).  
 Sis. E. Pyecroft (*Manchester*).  
 Sis. B. Smith (*Shepherds Bush*).  
 Sis. H. Spain (*Burton, late Dartford*).

*"Till the day break, and the shadows flee away."*

---

## AMBASSADORS

He has chosen us to be His ambassadors in the world, invested with power to speak and act for Him, and to draw upon all His resources. An ambassador is one of the most important officers of the Crown. To be successful he must be able to let his own personality and his own thoughts and opinions sink into the background, so that he may be open-minded, able to place himself in another's position and see things through his eyes. His first concern must be to know his King, so that he may get a clear conception of his mind, the direction of his thoughts and desires. so that he

can identify himself with his royal master; because in the capacity of his representative at the foreign court, his sovereign will be identified with him. The power of the King, the resources of the King are behind him, as long as he faithfully represents him. And he must have complete faith in the King and also in his resources. Doubt anywhere would hinder perhaps ruin his chances of success, for if he doubted he would not be able to speak with that assurance which creates confidence.

*From "Evidences of things not seen."*

## The Three Epistles of John

Part XXVIII. I John 5. 16-21

Comments on the writings  
of the "Beloved Apostle"

*"If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he shall pray for that. All unrighteousness is sin, but there is a sin not unto death."* (vs 16-17.)

A great deal of discussion—much of it not very well informed—has centred itself upon this subject of the sin unto death. John's words here appear at first sight to imply that sin can be separated into two categories—that which can be forgiven and that which cannot be forgiven. For the sinner who comes within the first, prayer can be made with some certainty that a favourable answer will be forthcoming from Heaven. For the one whose sin is embraced by the second, prayer is useless, and the thoughtful disciple is not recommended to pray for such an one. Now that is a most perplexing position for those who believe that God has appointed a future day of trial in the which He will give to all men everywhere a full and fair opportunity to repent of their evil deeds and come to Him in repentance and dedication of life. These words of John immediately pose the question: What is the sin that, committed during this Age, while as yet the "present evil world" is running its course, is of so heinous and irremediable a nature that it debars for ever from the opportunities that redeemed humanity of the Millennial Age are to have in such abundance?

Fortunately, perhaps, we do not have to find an answer to such a question. If there is in fact a sin that cuts the offender off from all hope of repentance and salvation, either now or in the world to come, we who are still in the flesh will not be able to pronounce judgment upon it. On thing is very certain; only God Himself, who sees into the heart, can ever say whether or not any individual is beyond hope of reclamation. Even in the next Age, when the secrets of men's hearts will be laid open for all to see in a fashion never known in all the history of this present world, it will only be God the Judge of all who passes the final sentence. So that when John says that if any man *sees* his brother sin a sin which is not unto death . . . or is unto death . . . he shall pray for it or not pray for it accordingly, he must be talking of something else than the case of the man who is already lost to all hope of redemption. He must certainly be *talking of a distinction and a judgment which is in our power properly to make.*

The expression "sin unto death" was in common use among the Jews in John's day; it referred to certain specified sins that were considered more than usually serious, which, under the Law Covenant, were punishable by death, "cutting off from among the people". Thus in Num. 18. 22 the rash Israelite who committed sacrilege by entering the Court of the Tabernacle and approaching the Holy had thereby committed a sin "unto death" and was cut off from among the people. In Lev. 22. 9 the priest who denied his calling by profaning his priestly office similarly committed a "sin unto death". In New Testament usage the expression really means a sin that calls for immediate and outwardly observable punishment in the same fashion. Thus Paul's condemnation of the immoral member in I Cor. 5, and his excommunication of the offender, is a case in point. This man had committed a sin unto death, a sin that implied a much greater measure of wilfulness and deliberateness than did the many common faults and failings of daily life in the Church. There was no question of his being eternally lost, but he was rigorously excluded from the fellowship and worship of the "ecclesia" until he had repented and reformed. Likewise on another occasion Paul declared that he had delivered Hymenaeus and Alexander over to Satan that they might learn not to blaspheme. (I Tim. 1. 20.) In such cases it would seem that treatment other than prayer was necessary—not that there is any admission that prayer is of lesser avail than other measures, but that prayer for the sinner implies at least a measure of sorrow and repentance on the part of the sinner, and prayer then is made that strength against future temptation may be given and the sinner restored to a position of peace and reconciliation with God. Where the sin is so wilful and deliberate that there is, at the moment, no repentance and no sorrow, no regrets, then, says John, he does not insist that we should pray for the offender. Even so he does not forbid prayer being made; only that prayer is not laid upon us as an obligation in such case. And in all these instances there is no suggestion that the case is hopeless even though it be not an appropriate one for prayer at the moment. The corrective judgments of God may yet bring the sinner to an appreciation of his position and his eventual reconciliation, even as it did with the man in I Cor. 5.

There must be a difference between this case of

the disciple who is said to commit a sin unto death and the position of those spoken of in Heb. 6 who cannot be renewed to repentance. It has been said that it may well be possible for human beings steeped in willing sin to destroy their own capacity for repentance, as though they have come to the point where there is absolutely nothing left on which God can work to bring them back to Himself. Be that as it may, it is clear that in Heb. 6 we have a clear description of some such state of apostasy but no indication that any earthly observer is given power to say when that point has been reached in any particular case. One would think, however, that sufficient outward signs of such an apostasy would be evident to justify the withdrawal of the term "brother". Such an one must surely have come to the point where he is quite evidently no longer one of the "brethren in Christ"; the nature of his apostasy would at least demand that. And these in John's epistle, even though fallen into sin, are still brethren. "If any man see his brother sin . . ." It seems clear therefore that the two cases are not the same.

It comes then to this, that in our prayers for the recovery and reconciliation of the erring ones in our midst we may have confidence that in general our prayers will be affirmatively answered and life given to the fallen in consequence of our prayers, but not in every case. There may, and will, be some instances where God—not we ourselves—can see that the sin is of a nature that needs stern remedial treatment—judgments—before reconciliation can be granted, and when that happens, if unwittingly we have prayed for such an one, our prayers will not be answered affirmatively—not at once anyway. And as though to assure us that even though this be the case there will always be ample scope for our prayers the Apostle tells us in rounding off this little allusion, "all unrighteousness is sin, but there is a sin not unto death". There will always be plenty of faults and stumblings and failures to reach up to the mark which can form the burden of our prayers.

*"We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not."* (vs 18.)

This verse goes back to verse 9 of Chapter 3 and tells us practically the same thing. It evidently comes in here again as a reminder; after talking about the sinners and their reclamation, John tells us that the ones born of God do not sin at all! It sounds very contradictory but of course it is not really so. It is in the spirit of our minds and intents of our hearts that we do not sin; in our flesh there are still the old processes working and

leading us from time to time to do the things we would not, and these are the things for which we need the prayers of our brethren, which is exactly what we are told in verse 16. Paul explained this apparent paradox very clearly when he said in Rom. 7. 25 "With the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin". "The good that I would I do not" he said earlier in the chapter "but the evil that I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." That is exactly what John means when he says that the one born of God sinneth not, and in the same breath he tells us to pray for the brother who has sinned.

*"And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."* (vs 19.) The last word should really be "wicked one"—the Devil. "All the world is under the influence of the Evil One" says the 20th Century version. In these few words John sums up the whole situation. We who have given ourselves to God and repudiated the Devil and all his works are the only representatives on earth of God's Kingdom. We are on the Lord's side. Everybody else, whether they know it or not, are on the other. We represent the outposts of the army of light in the enemy's country. The time is to come when the Rider on the White Horse will descend from heaven with His armies and do battle with all the evil powers of earth and utterly to overthrow them, but for the present we few who still remain are His only representatives. Glory be to God that the time will not be much longer delayed and that, the Evil One bound so that he may deceive the nations no more, the world will no longer lie in the Wicked One but stand erect in the glorious liberty of the children of God.

So we come to the end. The aged Apostle has said all that he has to say, of doctrine, of exhortation, of warning, of reproof, of encouragement. He has put forth his every effort to instruct his disciples, knowing how much they need that instruction. His eye looks down the Age, not discerning how long it must be before the signs of the end appear and men realise that the coming again of his Lord is actually taking place; but he realises that all he has said must be for the instruction of the Church in all generations until that time. He has done all he can, and now in a final brief recapitulation which reads almost like a benediction he tells us in a few well-chosen words just what is the basis of his faith and our faith, and leaves us there, secure in the knowledge that his Lord will never let go the hands of those who have put their hands into His, and continue to keep them so.

"And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life."

"Little children, keep yourselves from idols."  
"Amen."

THE END.

Notes on the Second and Third epistles of John will appear in the May and June issues.

## A WITNESS FROM THE CATACOMBS

The pagans of Rome often remarked on the strange living hope which transformed the lives of those from among their number who became converts to Christianity. Nowhere is this contrast between the living faith that is Christianity, and the dark despair that characterised paganism, more marked than in the epitaphs set up by pagan and Christian over their dead. The Christian sentiments, of which many examples are found in the Catacombs at Rome, breathe a spirit of calm and even joyous confidence for the future. The pagan epitaphs reveal utter hopelessness and resentment against a fate which offered them no recompense for the trials and vicissitudes of life. Here are a few examples, all belonging to times between the year A.D. 74 and the seventh century.

PETRONIA, A DEACON'S WIFE.

THE TYPE OF MODESTY.

IN THIS PLACE I LAY MY BONES.  
SPARE YOUR TEARS, DEAR  
HUSBAND AND DAUGHTERS, AND  
BELIEVE THAT IT IS FORBIDDEN  
TO WEEP FOR ONE WHO LIVES  
IN GOD.

BURIED IN PEACE ON THE THIRD  
BEFORE THE NONES OF OCTOBER  
IN THE CONSULATE OF FESTUS.

Another one, much more brief, but how eloquent—

VICTORINA,

IN PEACE,

AND IN CHRIST.

Against this, read a pagan epitaph, brief in its tragedy of a pagan father who has lost a well-beloved daughter, without hope of re-union:

I, PROCOPE, LIFT UP MY HANDS  
AGAINST GOD, WHO SNATCHED  
ME AWAY INNOCENT.

SHE LIVED TWENTY YEARS.  
PROCLUS SET UP THIS.

Not so the Christians who set this brief word on the stone of a pilgrim who had reached the end of the way,

THE DORMITORY OF ELPIS.

To us a dormitory is a sleeping-place. To the early Christians the grave was but a dormitory. Our own word "cemetery" is the Greek "*koimeterion*", meaning the same as "dormitory", a place of sleep. So two loving Christian parents, many centuries ago, laid their child to rest in a

grave far below the streets of Rome and inscribed upon her stone—

HERE SLEEPS PORCELLA IN PEACE,  
SHE LIVED

3 YEARS 10 MONTHS 13 DAYS.

That peace was denied the sorrowing mother who knew nothing but the hopeless creed of paganism, and poured out her heart's anguish in these bitter words—

CAIUS JULIUS MAXIMUS  
AGED II YEARS 5 MONTHS  
O RELENTLESS FORTUNE  
WHO DELIGHTEST IN CRUEL DEATH.  
WHY IS MAXIMUS SO SUDDENLY  
SNATCHED FROM ME?

HE WHO USED TO LIE JOYFULLY  
ON MY BOSOM.

THIS STONE NOW MARKS HIS TOMB.

BEHOLD HIS MOTHER.

How different is the affectionate remembrance and calm submission of these parents, believers in Christ, who inscribed—

NAVARINA.

IN PEACE.

A SWEET SOUL,

WHO LIVED 16 YEARS AND 5 MONTHS.

A SOUL AS SWEET AS HONEY.

THIS EPITAPH WAS MADE BY HER PARENTS.

Peace, peace: that is the constant refrain of these rejoicing believers as they laid their loved ones to rest. This last example is perhaps the record of a Christian matron, well spoken of for good works and labours of love in the service of the brethren.

CONSTANTIA,

BURIED IN PEACE

ON THE LORD'S DAY THE SIXTH

BEFORE THE KALENDS OF JULY

IN THE FIFTH CONSULATE OF

HONORIUS AUGUSTUS

TO THE WELL-DESERVING,

IN PEACE.

How well these brethren of ours must have learned the truth contained in Paul's triumphant words: "So then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Truly, we who follow in their steps are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, men and women, who, in their lives and deaths, manifested the reality of that faith which was in them.

## WORLD CONVERSION — WHEN ?

That grand old Christian statesman, George Lansbury, once visited Lenin at Moscow in the course of an endeavour to promote friendly relations between European powers. In his book, *"My Quest for Peace"*, he told how the Russian leader listened sympathetically while he spoke of Jesus Christ and His saving power, how that no nation that rejected God could hope to be truly prosperous in the long run, and then said quietly "Lansbury, go back to England and convert your own people to Christianity—then come and talk to me again !"

Lansbury never returned to Russia—and England as a nation is still unconverted to Christianity. In January 1953 five African chiefs from Nyassaland came to England to voice their peoples' protest against forcible inclusion in the new political amalgamation of East African territories. Said their spokesman *"the British won Nyassaland at the first, not by military weapons, but by the Bible. Now the British have abandoned the Bible—but you will not hold Nyassaland with guns and bayonets."* That is a damning indictment of the change that has come over the affairs of our country in little more than a century. Only that much ago British missionaries were penetrating almost every part of the non-white world with the Bible in their hands and the love of God in their hearts. They braved dangers innumerable; perils of Nature, ferocity of man, but they kept at their task, and they planted the seed of the Gospel in a myriad dark places where it sprouted and blossomed and brought forth its fruitage of light.

In those same lands to-day the tide of Christian faith is receding. It is no use blinking eyes at the fact. Even the hardest of missionary societies are being forced to withdraw. The prevailing tendency to-day in almost all countries—of no matter what ideology—is to make the nation's Churches instruments of State policy and exclude foreign influence. Hence some great Powers, whilst giving every facility for the organisation and continuance of native "national" Churches, have banished "foreign" missionaries and Christian connections entirely or almost entirely from the spheres under their control. The withdrawal from China of what is perhaps the most famous society, the China Inland Mission, is a notable case in point. The taking over of Christian institutions in India by the State is another. It is not that Christianity has

been suppressed in such lands—in most cases the national Churches are healthy and vigorous and able to go about their work within their own borders unmolested and often with considerable help from the State—but two of the essential characteristics of the Christian Society have gone; that fellowship of Christians which transcends national distinctions is interrupted, and missionaries, aflame with zeal to win more hearts and lives for Christ, no longer cross the frontiers.

In our own country each successive generation of this Twentieth Century includes a smaller percentage of convinced Christians than its predecessors. That religious background to daily life, which three hundred years ago was the distinctive mark of Britain, cannot by any stretch of the imagination be said to exist to-day. The ideas concerning religious faith held by many can only be described as appalling. Not long ago an observer overheard a snatch of conversation between a young soldier and his girl friend, as they stood looking into a shop window. The girl's eyes lighted on a crucifix. "Look at that little figure of a man on a cross" she exclaimed. "I've seen it before. There must be some story behind it! I wonder what it is?" "Something to do with the Bible, I think", replied the soldier vaguely, and the pair moved off. Recent questions put to a group of secondary school students in their teens revealed that one in every five did not know what event Good Friday is supposed to commemorate. Example after example like this could be quoted but these few are enough. All the facts go to show that despite the efforts of organised Churches and the many evangelical campaigns that are conducted, Christianity in England is fast becoming the faith and guiding principle of a pitifully small number of people, and they increasingly found among the more elderly in years. The little bands of young Christians in their teens and twenties and perhaps thirties, battling manfully against increasing odds, have need of all the youthful enthusiasm and vision they can summon, and even so must surely oftentimes ask themselves where all this is going to end.

That is the great question to-day. Is world conversion an ideal that will eventually be attained, despite the apparent present general apathy and disinterest in the Christian faith, or is it an im-

possible dream, a hope that will never be fulfilled? Is the present state of materialism and reliance upon human philosophy and scientific achievement going to continue until the life and death of Jesus Christ and the deeds of His apostles become dim legends as shadowy and unsubstantial and unrelated to modern life as our own English stories of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table?

Let it be said at once and without any equivocation at all that such a tragic end to the great thing that had its beginning in the Roman province of Judea nearly two thousand years ago is entirely and altogether out of the question. World conversion WILL come; this earth with all its teeming millions WILL be the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; those who have spent time and effort and life itself in bringing men and women to Christ, whether in far-off heathen lands or right here in our own country, WILL share in that triumph and find that none of their efforts have been in vain. The world WILL be converted; but it may not come in the way we think.

The inspiration and incentive for all Christian missionary work springs in the first place from the words of Jesus, spoken after His death and resurrection, when He was about to leave His disciples. "Go into all the world—and preach the gospel to the whole creation." (Mark 16. 15.) "Go therefore" He said again "and make disciples of all nations, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you . . . and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Matt. 28. 19, Acts 1. 8.) A pretty comprehensive mandate! We have a saying in our day "*The sky's the limit*". That is how it must have seemed to those men, simple, untravelled Galilean peasants and fishermen, given a commission which took in its scope the whole of the earth.

But although there is no doubt about the universal nature of this commission to evangelise the world, Jesus did not give any guarantee that His followers would achieve universal conversion as a result. In fact He indicated just the opposite. "When the Son of Man cometh" He said on one occasion "will he find faith on earth?" (Matt. 18. 8.) Judging by the catalogue of disasters and wickednesses, apostasies and waxing cold of love, which crowd some of His foreviews of the events of this Age, as narrated for example in Matt 24, it is obvious that He did not expect so to do. The apocalyptic pictures of the Book of Revelation, a Christian reflection of the prophetic visions of the Old Testament, make it perfectly plain that the Age which opened at Pentecost will see at its close,

not a world fully converted and living at peace and in the glorious liberty of the children of God, but a world facing catastrophe and held in more vigorous bondage to sin and the effects of sin than ever before. If the Bible has any message for us at all in this present perplexing day, it is that the Lord Jesus Christ will return to earth as He promised, not because His Church will have saved the world without Him, but because His own personal presence is necessary to the world's salvation, even although He will use His Church in the process.

That is the secret behind this apparent failure of Christian missionary effort to-day. It was never expected or intended that Christians should convert the world in this Age, before the return of our Lord. It was intended that they should prepare the way for His return and preach the Gospel in all the world *for a witness*. The final phase in God's redemptive Plan, the salvation of all of the world who will accept salvation, is to come later. The present Age is a time of witness during which the true-hearted disciples of Christ are being trained and disciplined for a much more extensive missionary work that is to come in the next. James the Just, half-brother of Jesus and first Bishop of the Church at Jerusalem, thus summed up the matter at the Council whose deliberations are recorded in the fifteenth chapter of Acts: "God first visited the nations to take out of them a people for his name . . . 'after this' (quoting the prophet Amos now) 'I will return, and I will rebuild the dwelling of David which has fallen' (the habitation of Israel) 'that the rest of men may seek the Lord, and all the nations' . . .". There is a three-fold Plan outlined here. First, God will make a selection from among all nations of those who are peculiarly called by His name—devoted Christians of all nations and generations, in all the years that must pass between Jesus' First and Second Advents; second, the restoration of the national polity of Israel, in preparation for the new centre of world administration under Divine control, and thirdly, a time when all men everywhere will turn and seek the Lord. That latter time is obviously the time of world conversion for which we look.

In harmony with this, we find that for the first two centuries of Church history there was no expectation that Christians must convert the world and present the finished work as it were to God at the end. Rather there was a fervent and fixed belief in the early dissolution of the institutions and powers of this world in face of the coming and appearing of the Lord Himself in power and glory—the Second Advent. It was after that event that

the Church, exalted to all power by Jesus the Lord, was to enter upon its destined work of bringing all men to reconciliation with God. Hence the universal belief in those days in the Millennium, the Age of Christ's reign upon earth, when wars would be made to cease and evil gradually eliminated from the hearts of men, until death itself had vanished. (Rev. 21. 3-4.) That was the hope and conviction of the Early Church.

During the Second and Third centuries certain heretical sects began to put grossly sensuous and material interpretations upon the Millennial prophecies and in consequence this aspect of the original Apostolic teaching passed under a cloud and was largely banished from "official" theology. The teachings of St. Augustine in the Fourth century paved the way for what became a very general thought in orthodox Christendom, viz., that the thousand-year reign of Christ in which He vanquishes all His enemies and hands over the Kingdom to the Father that God may be all in all (I Cor. 15. 24-28) is during this Age *before* Christ comes, and not in a future Age *after* He has come. That theory sounded all right at the time it was formulated, when Paganism was rapidly giving way to Christianity in the political sphere as well as the religious, and it looked as though the Church was destined to sweep on from triumph to triumph until it had conquered the world. It does not look so convincing to-day, when, from the outward and natural viewpoint, Christianity is in retreat almost all along the line and the prospect, not only of winning new ground, but even of regaining ground already lost, is bleak indeed. It is becoming more and more obvious that the Church of the first two centuries was entirely right and that our calling is to continue with our missionary work with as much, or more, ardour as in our best times, not in expectation or hope of converting the world now but certainly in the firm conviction that we are sowing the seed which is to result in world conversion after Christ comes.

There is a very significant remark in that comprehensive answer which Jesus gave to His disciples in response to their question as to how they would know when the time of His return and the consummation of the Age had arrived. (Matt. 24.) Amongst the sequence of wars and rumours of wars, famines, pestilences, persecutions, and so on that was to characterise the successive centuries of the Age, we find this statement. "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come." (Matt. 24. 14.)

The importance of the statement is shown in its setting. Up to that point, Jesus was speaking of

the characteristic events of the Age. "You will hear of wars and rumours of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet." But after that point we are in the time of the End itself; there are signs and portents and events associated with the transition period during which the "kingdom of the world becomes a kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever". (Rev. 11. 15.) It would appear therefore that this "preaching the gospel of the Kingdom" must be carried into the whole world, not at this time for their total conversion, but "for a testimony to all nations" *before the end can come*. In other words, in the outworking of this great Plan of redemption the full comprehension of which is locked deep in the "determinate wisdom and foreknowledge of God", the Age for world conversion cannot and will not come until the gospel has been preached first for a testimony "to the uttermost parts of the earth".

Such an understanding of the matter should give greater impetus than ever before to every effort for Christian witness. If the essence of present-day evangelism is to take the Gospel to places where it has never before been, and failure to convert all who have in past time been reached does not of itself imply any thwarting of the Divine purpose, then the closing of doors that have been open for a century or five centuries past need not occasion undue despondency. The Gospel *has* been preached; the testimony *has* been given, a few have retained the seed in their hearts and even if the doors do close upon them and we see them no more, we may have confidence that those same doors will swing open again, never more to shut, at "His appearing and His Kingdom". Even if faith in a country such as our own is at a low ebb and all the signs are that it will sink still lower, yet our country has had the testimony and a few remain witnesses to the saving power of God in the life. The tide will turn again—when Christ returns. That is the great hope and expectation to sustain faith and zeal while as yet our missionary work goes on. *He promised to return*—and then under the administration of His Kingdom Christian evangelism will soar to heights previously undreamed.

There are Christian observers who point out that in a geographical sense the statement in Matt. 24 has now, albeit recently, been fulfilled. The disciples set out from Jerusalem full of their commission and speedily carried the name and message of Christ throughout the Mediterranean world. Successive generations of evangelists pushed on, but it was not until the phenomenal increase of missionary work in the 19th and 20th centuries

that the utmost limits of the world were reached. It is now an established fact that the Gospel *has* now been preached "in all the world" "to all nations" "for a testimony". That being so, we may be much nearer to a tremendous change for the better in earth's affairs than is generally thought or hoped. No one will dispute that a change is necessary—and if the present appalling prospect that faces mankind is in fact destined to be resolved by some kind of Divine intervention, saving men from the worst consequences of their own folly and putting the Christian Church in a position of immeasurably greater influence than it has enjoyed for a long time past, well, few will be found to criticise the change except those whose interests lie in the maintenance and perpetuation of evil and evil things.

Speaking to the philosophers of Athens, St. Paul declared that God "has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all men by raising him from the dead". (Acts 17. 31.) Christ Jesus is that man, the time, clearly, that of His Second Coming, and the day, consequently, the one that Jesus referred to when He said "Truly I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man shall sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel". (Matt. 19. 28.) Such a statement cannot be referred to this present Age when the last thing a Christian disciple expects to experience is the occupancy of a throne or the prerogative of judging anything or anybody. The Apostle Paul expressly relegates the time of ruling and judging to the future, as in I Cor. 6. 2 "Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?"

The preaching of St. Peter at Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts 2 and 3, associates the coming of the "last days" with a great opportunity for salvation and a time of world conversion. "In the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh . . . and I will show wonders in the heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath . . . before the day of the Lord comes, the great and manifest day. And it shall be that whosoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Acts 2. 17-21.) Associated with this declaration there is a call to repentance as preparation for the coming of this future day of grace. "Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the

time for establishing all that God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old." (Acts 3. 19-21.) These passages obviously pre-suppose a time at the end of the Age, at the Return of Christ, when there will be a great outpouring of the Gospel upon the peoples of earth and a correspondingly great response. There is a definite basis for this belief in the Old Testament. For instance, Zephaniah says (3. 8-9) "'Therefore wait for me' says the Lord 'for the day when I arise as a witness . . . to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out upon them my indignation; for in the fire of my jealous wrath all the earth shall be consumed. Yea, at that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call upon the name of the Lord and serve him with one accord'." All of this indicates very clearly the Divine intention that a day of grace—and a most successful day of grace at that—is to succeed the day of judgment which brings this "present evil world" to an end. The Book of Isaiah is eloquent on this subject. The great Hebrew statesman saw very clearly the nature of that day which is yet to be, when all missionary and evangelistic effort will converge into one great work of reclamation and reconciliation among all mankind. The figure of the Messiah is predominant in all his pen pictures—the "shoot from the stump of Jesse" of Chapter 11, the king who will "reign in righteousness" of Chapter 32, the one who is to "feed his flock like a shepherd" of Chapter 40, the "servant" who is to "bring forth justice to the nations" of Chapter 42, the anointed One bringing liberty and healing to the captives of Chapter 61. The promise is that "they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea". (Isa. 11. 9.) "It will be said on that day, 'Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation'." (25. 9.) "And the effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust for ever." (32. 17.) "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." (35. 10.) "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together." (40. 5.) "Behold my servant, my chosen in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him, he will bring forth justice to the nations . . . he will not fail or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth." (42. 1-4.) "For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is

sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations." (61. 13.)

This is only a fraction of the vast store of Biblical evidence that a glorious future is before Christian evangelical work, and a programme that envisages

a definite endeavour to reconcile to God every member of the human race who has strayed away from Him or never known Him. The apparent failure of to-day is only apparent; the Advent of the King will change the entire situation and set the stage for the conversion of the world.

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## OUT OF THE STOREHOUSE

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A collection of  
interesting items

### Creative Days

Astronomers in 1943 reported remarkable activity on the planet Jupiter, activity which commenced early in February, and continued. Jupiter is enshrouded with "belts" which are thought to be of the same nature as the canopies which at one time encircled the earth, and which, collapsing, played their parts in the order of events which are briefly outlined in the first chapter of Genesis. The vast distance which separates Jupiter and the earth makes it difficult to determine clearly what is the precise nature of the observed activity, but such phenomena as can be studied are in harmony with the idea that what is going on there at the moment is just such a local "downrush" of canopy material on to the face of the planet as must have occurred many times in the history of this earth. The significance of all this to the Bible student is immense; it indicates that the story of earth's preparation for living beings is perhaps being repeated out there in the depths of space. It is already known that earth's next door neighbour, the planet Mars, has arrived at the "fourth creative day" stage, the appearance of vegetation and access of the sun and moons' light—Mars has two moons—to its surface. (See B.S.M. for February, 1941.) It might well be that astronomers in 1943 witnessed, all unwittingly, "second creative day" operations on our farther neighbour. Who knows what wonders of material creation, what varieties of intelligent living beings, will grace some of these other mansions in the skies when at last the Divine Plan for human redemption has been completed and the curse of evil has been banished from the Universe for ever? And if these astronomical wonders men now discern with such difficulty do indeed indicate that other homes for other races of beings are in course of preparation, is that not an earnest of God's own sure knowledge that His Plan will arrive at its fore-ordained consummation just at the appointed time? "As truly as I live, saith God, the whole earth shall be filled with the glory of Jehovah."

### Discipleship

*"Whosoever doth not bear his Cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple."*

We who follow the Crucified are not here to make a pleasant thing of life; we are called to suffering for the sake of a suffering, sinful world. The Lord forgive us our shameful evasions and hesitations. His brow was crowned with thorns; do we seek rose-buds for our crowning? His hands were pierced with nails; are our hands ringed with jewels? His feet were bare and bound; do our feet walk delicately? What do we know of travail? of tears that scald before they fall? of heart-break? of being scorned? God forgive us our love of ease. God forgive us that so often we turn our faces from a life that is even remotely like His. Forgive us that we all but worship comfort, the delight of the presence of loved ones, possessions, treasure on earth. Far, far from our prayers too often is any thought of prayer for a love which will lead us to give one whom we love to follow our Lord to Gethsemane, to Calvary—perhaps because we have never been there ourselves.

Lord we kneel beside Thee now, with hands folded between Thy hands as a child's are folded in its mother's. We would follow the words of Thy prayer, dimly understanding their meaning, but wanting to understand. . . . "That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

\* \* \*

### Little Points in a Big Programme

- (1) A little more love for everybody.
- (2) A little closer cleaving to God's Word as my guide.
- (3) A little wider open purse in helping to support God's cause.
- (4) A little softer heart towards sufferers around me.
- (5) A little more readiness to see the viewpoint of others.

- (6) A little more freedom from the poison of prejudice and ignorance.
- (7) A little better remembering of the Lord's Day (every day) as a day of spiritual privileges.
- (8) A little more time spent in prayer and meditation in the Scriptures.
- (9) A little more obedience to the commands of the Lord in His Word.
- (10) A little sweeter heart towards those who antagonise me.

\* \* \*

### "He That Overcometh"

Surely it takes years of Christian experience and overcoming to be able to say from the heart that "All things come of Thee". There is no second cause to the true child of God, but rather the daily faith that every experience is ordered of the Father because He sees that it works out for our highest good, now and hereafter.

But the difficulty is sometimes properly to value an experience and so the Lord is patiently teaching us in the hope that we will soon be able joyfully to accept His providences in our life and gladly embrace them, knowing that they will work out the peaceable fruits of righteousness in us.

\* \* \*

### Not as the Scribes

In striking contrast to our own confidence and assurance in the revealed word of God stands the hesitant manner in which the "Higher Critics" attempt to explain how the Scriptures came to be written. Here is a typical extract from a recently published book (italics are our own) dealing with the 13th chapter of Mark, one of the chapters in which the Lord gave us the signs of His Second Advent. The passage was intended to be a sure guide to Christians living at the end of the Age. Here is what the Critics make of it.

"This chapter is different from the rest of the book. An apocalyptic tract, *perhaps* written some years earlier, *seems* to have been incorporated by St. Mark, *perhaps* with some alterations. The two main themes of the chapter, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the world, are *interwoven in a perplexing way*. Three paragraphs, vs. 7, 14-20, and 24-27, *may* represent the original leaflet; these *seem* to have been combined with some sayings of our Lord . . . it is *not always easy* to decide between actual words spoken and the author's interpretation of them. But the *main* teaching of the chapter is clear, and *must have meant much* to the persecuted Christians for whom St. Mark was writing."

The concluding sentence seems hardly in accord with the dubious and uncertain tone of the preceding words. How different Paul's confident words to Timothy: "All Scripture, given by inspiration of God, is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3. 16-17).

\* \* \*

### Well Doing

How true it is that if the wisdom of a keen intellect, a fluent tongue or a ready pen were of real avail in the things which most deeply affect the inward life of man, the world would to-day be on the high road to enduring prosperity—for there were never so many intellectual giants, able and anxious to envisage and solve society's problems, as now. And yet, written plainly for all to see, in letters of fire that are burning themselves into the very soul of the human race, is the one word "Failure". Failure in every attempt to right the world without God—for the wisdom of this world is foolishness to the Eternal. Happy are we if we can not only perceive, but make a part of our very life, this knowledge that in the apparently insignificant, trivial efforts of some to hold forth the Word of Life and exemplify the teachings of Christ lies the seed that will one day "blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit". Be not weary in well doing, in even the little things, for in due season ye shall reap, if ye faint not.

\* \* \*

### Divine Guidance

A very great mistake which some have made, in view of the conflicting ideas as to what is truth, has been to discard every human instrumentality and expect God's guidance through the Bible alone. Such forget that God gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ; that we are exhorted to build one another up in the holy faith and to esteem the servants of God for their work's sake. Ever since the Church has had an existence, God has raised up from its midst as special servants of the body, some who have special teaching ability. Blessed is that servant who at the Master's appearing is found giving the meat in due season to the household of faith (Matt. 24. 26), and no less blessed are they of the faithful household, who, like the "noble Bereans" of old, search the Scriptures daily to see of these things be so—who prove all things, as the apostle exhorts, and hold fast that which is good.

## ? THE QUESTION BOX ?

*Q.* 2 Cor. 3. 13 reads, "Moses put a veil over his face for the sons of Israel not to gaze intently to the end of that being abolished" (Diaglott). I have always understood that the veil was to prevent injury to those sons of Israel who had to look at him, the brightness being too much for them. I understand that another explanation, that "Moses was ashamed of the glory" is now current. What is your opinion?

*A.* Without further details it is difficult to see anything worthy of discussion in the alternative suggestion. The account in Exodus 34 makes it perfectly plain that Moses at the first was quite unaware that His face carried a permanent reflection of the glory of the Lord and it was the fear of Israel to approach him that led him to put the veil on his face, which he wore while talking to the Israelites, but removed every time he went in to speak before the Lord. The Apostle's usage of the incident, in 2 Corinthians, likens this veil to the obstruction of hardness of heart that prevented Israel in his own day from perceiving the glory of God in the Christian Gospel. When they shall turn to the Lord, he says, the veil shall be taken away. It seems perfectly plain from both of these considerations that the questioner's own understanding of the matter is the correct one.

\* \* \*

*Q.* Jesus said: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the deeds of your father ye will do." Are there then two seeds in the world? Did not Jesus purchase the whole world of mankind when He gave His life a ransom for all?

*A.* Yes, Jesus did purchase to Himself the whole race of mankind that He might lead "whosoever will" back to reconciliation with God. But there are many of the human race who at present have a greater sympathy with evil than with good. They do consciously practise wrongdoing for the sake of some worldly advantage it brings them. Some of the Pharisees in our Lord's day were like that. Such were termed by our Lord "children of the devil", not that the Devil was literally their father, but that they partook of his spirit and disposition. We are termed the "seed of Abraham" (Gal. 3. 29), but it does not follow that we are literally descended from Abraham, and in point of fact there will be many members of that "seed" who are not of the literal stock of Abraham. So in this matter. The evilly disposed are the seed of the Devil in a theological sense only. Should they repent and

become reconciled to God they will cease to be of the Devil's seed. They are all children of Adam, owing their human life to God through him, and will owe their renewed life to God through Christ.

\* \* \*

*Q.* John 17. 12. Jesus said to His Father: "Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition." Who is the son of perdition?

*A.* Judas. Jesus said on one occasion: "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (Jno. 6. 44). Paul tells us that men live and move and have their being in God (Acts 17. 28), and when a man comes to Jesus it is because a little of that original bond which linked the perfect man to his God has remained and begun to draw that one toward his Father in heaven. That feeble turning of the heart to things Divine is the "drawing" of the Father which brings the repentant one to Jesus. Now the disciples, including Judas, were all men who had hoped and waited for the coming of Messiah, and, unlike the majority of their fellow-countrymen, saw in Jesus of Nazareth the One Who would redeem Israel (Luke 24. 21). It was natural, therefore, that the Father should give these men, already in a consecrated attitude, to Jesus for His first and closest followers. When we read that Jesus chose His twelve disciples, we can be sure that it was only after prayer and communion with His Father on the matter, so that He was undoubtedly guided in His choice from above.

Now at that time Judas was as sincere as the others. Jesus could not possibly have taken him otherwise. It was afterwards that Judas allowed other considerations to undermine his sincerity and to draw him from good to evil. The word "perdition" means destruction. He was the "son of destruction" in that instead of ranging himself with Jesus on the side of the things that are life-giving and preserving, he chose to ally himself with the forces that make for death and destruction. Instead of following out his wonderful opportunity to become a life-preserver to mankind, he became a destroyer, and is therefore fitly spoken of as a "son of destruction". The expression does not refer to his eventually eternal destiny, but to the position he assumed at the time of his great sin. (For an exposition of the question of Judas, see "The Tragedy of Judas" in the B.S.M. for June, 1942.)

# The Land of To-morrow

*Pen-pictures of the  
coming Kingdom*

It has been our careful endeavour in all that we have said, to keep within the limits of the record, and to offer no other remarks than those which may fitly be suggested by the circumstances, that a new earth is to be created, as well as a new heaven, for the future accommodation of the righteous.

It altogether holds out a warmer and a more alluring picture of the elysium that awaits us, when told that there will be a beauty to delight the eye; music to regale the ear; and the comfort that springs from all the charities of intercourse between man and man, holding converse as they do on earth, and gladdening each other with the benignant smiles that play on the human countenance, or the accents of kindness that fall in soft and soothing melody from the human voice. There is much of the innocent and much of the inspiring, and much to affect and elevate the heart, in the scenes and contemplations of materialism—and we do hail the information of our text, that after the dissolution of the earth's present framework, it will again be varied and decked out anew in all the graces of its unfading verdure, and of its unbounded variety—that in addition to our direct and personal view of the Deity, when He comes down to tabernacle with men, we shall also have the reflection of Him in a lovely mirror of His own workmanship—and that instead of being transported to some abode of dimness and mystery, so remote from human experience as to be beyond all comprehension, we shall walk for ever in a land replenished with those sensible delights, and those sensible glories, which, we doubt not, will lie most profusely scattered over the “new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

“But though a paradise of sense, it will not be a paradise of sensuality. Though not so unlike the present world as many apprehend it, there will be one point of total dissimilarity betwixt them. It is not the entire substitution of spirit for matter that will distinguish the future economy from the present. But it will be the entire substitution of righteousness for sin. It is this which signalises the Christian from the Mohammedan paradise—not that sense, and substance, and splendid imagery, and the glories of a visible creation seen with bodily eyes, are excluded from it—but that all which is vile in principle, or voluptuous in impurity, will be utterly excluded from it. There will be a firm

earth, as we have at present, and a heaven stretched over it, as we have at present; and it is not by the absence of these, but by the absence of sin, that the abodes of immortality will be characterised. There will be both heavens and earth, it would appear, in the next great administration—and with this speciality to mark it from the present age, that it will be a heavens and earth, “wherein dwelleth righteousness’.”

*Dr. Thomas Chalmers (1780-1847).*

In Britain, when summer is at its height, excursions are made to the Arctic Circle, to view the midnight sun. It is a fascinating spectacle. The sun barely dips beneath the horizon, and there in the same heavens it is possible to see on the one hand the dying glory of the evening glow bathing the clouds in the rich hue of sunset, and on the other the pale lustre of the dawn silvering the slight cirrus cloudlets with exquisite beauty. So we who are living to-day are watching the evening glory of the closing years of “the times of the Gentiles”, and in the sky there are symptoms of the approaching day, the age of which Virgil dreamed and which Isaiah foretold.

It is not within our province to detail the essential features of that age, except to say that He who died as Saviour will come to reign as King, and that the malign spirits who have operated “in the heavenlies” for evil will be replaced by the redeemed who will reign on the earth. Human life will go on then as now, but the invisible forces which will condition it will no longer be malign and evil, but pure and holy. Whereas men now live amid influences that tempt to evil, they will then live amid those that tend to good, and this shall last, we are told, for a thousand years.

*(Author unknown.)*

The teachings of Jesus regarding the “Kingdom of Heaven” have reference, not only to the heavenly, spiritual phase of the Kingdom, the ultimate portion of consecrated Christians, but also to the earthly Kingdom in which all evil and sin will be gradually eliminated from the hearts and lives of men, so that at the end only the wilfully sinful will be demonstrated unworthy of life, and will suffer sin's penalty, death.

## In the Beauty of Holiness

Some considerations  
regarding worship

*"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and the spirit of God dwelleth in you . . . for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."* (1 Cor. 3. 16, 17.)

In these words the Apostle states very plainly that the temple of God in this Christian dispensation is not one "made with hands" but one composed of "living stones", with whom and in whom God dwells.

The place where Christians meet for devotion, to study the Word of God or hear it expounded, is often spoken of as "the House of God", as though He in a particular sense dwells there. For this reason it is sometimes claimed that our meeting-places should be so furnished and decorated as to give them the atmosphere of quietness and dignity usually associated with "the House of God". Whilst all would agree that the places where we meet should be suitably furnished and decorated it is certainly a great mistake to think that any amount of "sacred" furnishing and decoration of these could add any beauty and dignity to the *real* house or temple of God, or to His true worship.

The spirit of God moves powerfully where His people assemble in true reverence, regardless of their material surroundings. His house is not a building, however beautifully that building may be furnished. He dwells with His people, and by His spirit dwells *in them*. In the words of the well-known hymn, "*Such ever bring thee where they come, And going, take thee to their home*". Wherever the Lord's people meet to study His Word in sincerity, as they perceive the glory and majesty of their God and the wonders of His grace, their material surroundings are of little concern to them. Their one desire is to know Him better, to serve Him more perfectly, and to bring forth *fruit* in their lives which shall be to His glory (John 15. 8; Gal. 5. 22, 23). This *fruit* is the beauty that the Lord desires to see to-day in His temple of "living stones".

Paul says, "We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. A minister of *the sanctuary* and of *the true tabernacle*, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Heb. 8. 1, 2). The Lord Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, *there am I* in the midst of them" (Matt. 18. 20). He also said, "Ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the

Father . . . the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him" (John 4. 20-24). The prophet Isaiah tells us, "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit" (Isaiah 57. 15). No mountain, city or building, marks the particular place for the worship of God, but "In every nation, he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him" (Acts 10. 35). The worship and devotion of such consists of a life of full, joyous, consecration to God, and He dwells with them. They *are* His temple and precious in His sight. As such, we "have boldness to *enter into the holiest*" (not made with hands—Heb. 9. 24) "by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the House of God" we may draw near to God *in full assurance of faith* (Heb. 10. 19-22). If we love the Lord Jesus and keep His commandments, His sure promise is that we shall be loved by the Father and by Him, *and they will make their abode with us* (John 15. 21, 23). Where the Father and the Lord Jesus *dwelt*, there is the true temple—the *Sanctuary of God*.

The early Christians in time of bitter persecution did not have or need specially furnished buildings in which to worship God. We know that they served and worshipped Him even when hiding in the catacombs. Faithful ones of the past worshipped and served God whilst they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, afflicted, tormented . . . in deserts, in mountains and in caves of the earth (Heb. 11. 36-39). When Jacob cried out, "This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven", he had nothing like the cathedrals and churches of Christendom in mind. He was a fugitive, fleeing from Esau his brother, who had threatened to slay him. Coming to a certain place he had tarried all night because the sun was set. There, *in the open, with stones for his pillow*, he had lain down to sleep. While he slept he dreamed of a ladder set up on earth, reaching to heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending it. He heard the voice of the Lord, the God of Abraham and Isaac, confirming to him the promises made to his fathers. Awakening from his sleep he said, "Surely *the LORD is in this place* . . . this is none other than *the house of*

God". (Gen. 28. 10-17.) God was in that place with Jacob because he was heir to the promises concerning the "land" and the "seed". There He gave Jacob the assurance, "I will not leave thee".

As "the children of the promise" and "heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 4. 28 ; 3. 29), we have the same assurance from the Lord. His presence is with us, not because we have some "holy" building in which to worship Him, but because we like Jacob are "heirs of the promise" (Heb. 6. 17). We are living stones, built up as a spiritual house, a people to *shew forth* His praises. When Jesus said, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will build it again . . . He spake of the temple of *his body*" (John 2. 19-22). Paul says, "The temple of God is holy, which temple *ye are*" (1 Cor. 3. 17). Peter says, "As He which hath called you is holy, so *be ye holy* in all manner of conversation (in all manner of behaviour"—*Rotherham*). "Know ye not that *your body* is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price, therefore *glorify* God in your body" (1 Cor. 6. 19, 20).

When the Apostle advises us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, but to exhort one another, and so much the more as we see the day approaching (Heb. 10. 19-25), he makes no mention of the need of a building furnished in some particular way. In fact he clearly shows in his Epistle that the earthly Tabernacle, beautiful building though it may have been, was but a figure of the *true* Tabernacle, serving its purpose in the Jewish Age. As Christians we enter into the spiritual things which were foreshadowed in that earthly Tabernacle and its arrangements. God has "raised us up and seated us in the heavenlies *in Christ*" (Eph. 2. 4-6, *Rotherham*).

If we have an appreciation of such a living, vital, spiritual, relationship to our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, the hall in which we are privileged to meet together will add little, if anything, to our blessing.

*"Father, where'er thy people meet,  
There they behold Thy mercy seat,  
Where'er they seek thee thou art found,  
And every place is hallowed ground."*

## WITHOUT FORM, AND VOID

A Study in Gen. 1. 2.

Some students teach that the beginning of sin in God's universe was long before the creation of Adam ; that originally this earth existed in a perfect or complete state and was brought to ruin or chaos through the fall of Satan and many of the angels of heaven. Some teach that there was a race of human beings living on the earth prior to this "disruption" caused by the entrance of sin. Subsequently, God re-created or reformed the earth and placed Adam upon it at the end of the six great creative days or epochs of Gen. 1.

There are two arguments (in the main), advanced to support this teaching:—

1. The use of the word "*katabole*" in the New Testament, associated with the world *kosmos* (order or arrangement of things). It is found in Matt. 13. 35 ; 25. 34 ; Luke 11. 50 ; John 17. 24 ; Eph. 1. 4 ; Heb. 4. 3 ; 9. 26 ; 1 Pet. 1. 20 ; Rev. 13. 8 ; 17. 8 and in each case translated "foundation" in the Authorised Version. It is pointed out that the primary meaning of the word is to "cast down", and, therefore, refers to the disruption of the world, or *kosmos*, and not its foundation being laid at creation.

2. It is contended (and so rendered in some translation), that the first word "was" in Gen. 1. 2 should be more literally rendered "became"—"the earth BECAME waste and void"—something that it was not previously. It is claimed that thus Gen. 1. 1 is separated from the rest of the chapter—that in vs. 1 we have the original pure creation at the hand of God—then the earth *became* waste and void through the entrance of sin, and from the latter clause in vs. 2 "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" until the end of the chapter we have the creative power of God once more operating to bring order out of the chaos which had been created through sin.

Let us now examine these claims, and see what other Scriptures also have to say on this subject.

In the first place, the Greek word "*katabole*" is not used solely for a disruption, or a work of overthrow. We find it used in 2 Macc. 2. 29 to describe the building of a house. "*For as the master builder of a new house must care for the whole building*" (literally, foundation—"katabole" in the Greek version). Its usage in the New Testament bears this out. For example, its use in Heb. 4. 3

"foundation" clearly has reference to the work of God brought to a completion in the creation of Adam, as the quotation in vs. 4 from Gen. 2. 2 shows, and not to any prior disruption or overthrow of the earth. Again, referring to Heb. 9. 26, there is no reference to sacrifice for sin being necessary prior to the expulsion from Eden. And the same word in Luke 11. 50 is shown very clearly by vs. 51 to apply not to any prior disruption of the world in pre-Adamic times, but to the first death (by murder) after Adam's fall into sin. In other words, even if we give the word "*katabole*" its first primary meaning, it can only have reference to the disruption or overthrow caused by *Adamic* sin. But the reference in Heb. 4. 3-4 must carry it back there to before Adam's *fall*, to the time of Adam's *creation*, and the meaning given in 2 Macc. 2. 29 must there apply—to the laying down of the foundation of a building. This is borne out by one of the meanings given to "*katabole*" by Liddell and Scott, which, among other things gives one definition as "a foundation, beginning". Abbott-Smith's Greek Lexicon also gives the meaning of "*katabole*" as "A laying down, or foundation".

There is, therefore, no justification in citing "*katabole*" to prove a pre-Adamic disruption of the world.

With reference to the second argument, we cite Gen. 1. 1, 2 from Dr. R. Young's literal translation. "In the beginning of God's preparing the heavens and the earth—the earth hath existed waste and void", and in his "*Critical Comments*" he says on this passage:—"Existed—this rendering is perhaps preferable to that of the Common Version 'was', the Hebrew verb is not simply the logical nexus 'is', 'was', etc., but the real verb of existence. The thought is, that at the beginning here referred to (in Gen. 1. 1) the earth was, and had been existing in a certain state described as—Waste and Void—two Hebrew words almost if not entirely synonymous. . . . The words combined form a phase 'utterly void of light and life'."

In the above Dr. R. Young clearly shows by his translation and in his critical comments that "waste and void" applies to the conditions prevailing when the heavens and earth were being created or prepared, as Young translates, and NOT to conditions following such creation.

There is, therefore, no justification for saying that a "disruption" of the earth, due to sin, followed the creation of Gen. 1. 1, prior to the creative work of the six epoch days terminating with the creation of Adam, shown in the remainder of Gen. 1.

Those putting forward the above interpretation tell us that this was the time of Satan's fall, and also of many of the angels of heaven, who followed

him. Let us note what the Scriptures say on this subject.

In 1 John 3. 8 we are told that the Devil sinned from the beginning (literally, "a" beginning). What beginning? Certainly not from his own beginning, for he was not created as an evil being.

The word "beginning" in 1 John 3. 8 is the Greek "*arche*". Now we find this same word used by our Lord in Mark 10. 6 "From the BEGINNING (*arche*) of CREATION God made them *male and female*". The Septuagint Version uses the same Greek word in Gen. 1. 1 "In the beginning (*arche*) God made the heaven and the earth". Our Lord in Mark 10. 6 plainly couples the "beginning" of Gen. 1. 1 with the creation of Adam and his wife—"male and female". He does not separate the "*arche*" of Gen. 1. 1 from man's creation in Gen. 1. 26-28 by a "disruption" of the earth. It is all part of that creation mentioned in vs. 1 of Gen. 1. And our Lord also couples with this the same thing that John mentioned in 1 John 3. 8—"the devil sinned from a beginning"—the same beginning as in Mark 10. 6, for in John 8. 44 the Master declares that Satan was a murderer (literally—man-killer) from the (literally—a) beginning (*arche*) and abode or stood not in the truth. Here our Lord definitely shows that the Devil or Satan sinned from the time of Adam's creation, for there was no other "beginning" from which he could be a "man-killer". He was the "man-killer" of Adam because his temptation of Adam to disobey God brought death upon Adam and Adam's race.

The angels who sinned, of which the Scriptures speak, did not sin after the creation of Gen. 1. 1 and before man's creation spoken of in the latter part of Gen. 1, thus causing after Gen. 1. 1 a "disruption" of the world. On the contrary, Peter tells us in 2 Pet. 2. 4, 5 "God spared not the angels when they sinned, but cast them down to Tartarus . . . saved Noah . . . when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly" (See R.V.). These angels "who sinned" are "the spirits in prison which aforetime were disobedient . . . in the days of Noah" (1 Pet. 3. 19, 20), and not in some pre-Adamic disruption of the world. (See Gen. 6. 1-4; Jude 6. 7.)

Paul tells us very plainly in Rom. 5. 12 that "sin entered into the world and death by sin" through "one man" and in vs. 14 he clearly states that that "one man" was Adam. To say that sin first entered the world (Greek *kosmos*), through the fall of the angels, who thus brought about its disruption, is clearly here at variance with the inspired Apostle's statement, and those who go still further and say that there was a pre-Adamic race on earth

prior to such "disruption" are also at variance with Rom. 5 which tells us that it was through man that sin and death entered the world, and that man was Adam. No Bible student can hold the idea that the earth was peopled by a pre-Adamic race in face of the Apostle's plain statement that "Adam" was the first human, of the earth, earthy. (1 Cor. 15. 45-47.)

It is true that Satan was a man-killer through his

temptation of Adam, but Adam was not deceived when he gave way to temptation (1 Tim. 2. 14) and for reason or reasons not stated in the Word of Truth, chose the way which led to sin, and through sin, brought death upon himself and mankind. Thanks be to God, that even before that time provision had been made for mankind's salvation from the result of Adam's choice for the human family. (1 Pet. 1. 20—RV.)

## MANY MANSIONS

*A looking forward to things to come*

*"In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you"* (Jno. 14. 2).

If there are so many mansions in the Father's house, why did our Lord find it necessary to go away and prepare a place for His disciples, that where He is, there we may be also? Were none of these mansions good enough?

In all God's creation there are many homes for living beings, many stations of existence, both spiritual and material. Look up into the starry heavens; behold the magnificent array of stars, some of them attended by planets like our own. Here in this great universe there are untold myriads of possible abiding places for living creatures. Sir James Jeans, speaking before the Royal Institution in November, 1942, and giving the very latest considered conclusions of astronomers on this subject, said *"the chance of a star, in a nebulous state, having given birth to planets before attaining to the sun state is considerable. A fair proportion of the stars must then, be accompanied by planets. Of these a substantial fraction are likely to be in a physical state not very different from that of our own earth, and so capable of maintaining life like our terrestrial life; it is possible that such life is far more abundant in space than we used to think"*. Bible students may not agree readily to the last sentence; it is more likely that these other planets are being prepared for future races of men made in God's likeness, when the drama of sin and death has been enacted once for all upon this earth. But it does seem that many "mansions" in the skies, existing from of old, "or ever the earth was", have been and are being prepared for the further purposes of God; nevertheless, none of these terrestrial mansions can ever be a fitting home for the glorified Christ company. Made like unto their Lord, clothed upon with spiritual bodies even as He, possessed of powers and attributes far above the human, there must of necessity be, somewhere, a home prepared for them which is of like quality.

What, then, of the spiritual world, of which our visible universe is but a material counterpart? Long before the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters and commanded light to be; long before the particles of which sun, and moon, and stars are made, had begun to come together, God Most High reigned upon the throne of His holiness. His first-born Son, the Logos, rejoiced "always before Him" (Prov. 8. 30), and ten thousand times ten thousand glorious celestial beings lived their lives and carried out their varied occupations and vocations in sinless purity before Him. That world of theirs, impossible for our human brains to imagine or visualise, must have a more glorious counterpart to everything that gives us pleasure or sustains life here on earth. Those angels do always behold the face of the Father (Matt. 18. 10). Could it not be, then, that among those heavenly hosts and in the order of things in which they live, and move, and have their being, there may be found that superbly glorious home to which the King will lead His Bride when the day of union shall have come?

But perhaps even higher than that!

All these planes of being, with their varied homes and worlds, belong to the Old Creation—that creation which commenced when the Most High, in the solitude and silence before Time began, through His Son created a spiritual world, and varied forms of spiritual beings to fill that world; then, turning His gaze downward, through that same Son brought into existence a material universe, finally making man in His own mental and moral image and likeness, in form of flesh adapted to the earth upon which he was to live. All this constitutes the Old Creation, the First Creation, the one brought into existence by God Himself through the instrumentality of His beloved Son, "by whom also He made the worlds".

This creation, with all its mansions, is, or will be when sin is banished, complete in itself. Our Lord Jesus, by virtue of His obedience unto death, has

been granted the inestimable privilege of bringing into existence a New Creation—something the like of which has never been seen or known before, either upon earth or in heaven. Spiritual beings—yes, but on a higher plane than spiritual beings have ever been constituted before.

Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, became the first of this New Creation. His followers who are called to follow in His steps are promised that, if faithful, they too shall share in the glories of that New Creation. More, they are even now, while yet in the flesh, members of that New Creation, if they have become dead in Christ and have been buried with Him in His baptism and have risen again to walk in newness of life with Him. They are not yet clothed upon with the "body", the outward organism in which the new spiritual life and identity finds itself at home, and through which it can be manifested in its own surroundings and to its fellows, but, nevertheless, they are a "New Creation". *"If any man be in Christ, there is a New Creation. Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"* (11 Cor. 5. 17).

So it is not surprising that this New Creation, endowed with immortality, which previously had been the prerogative of God Himself, should need a new kind of home of a nature that the Old Creation had never needed and never seen. Yes, many mansions there have been in the Father's house, but none just suitable for immortal beings. The Bridegroom must needs go away and prepare a place exceeding the most glorious spiritual condition, previously known, just as the spiritual we do know exceeds in glory the earthly.

May we not, therefore, imagine our Lord after His ascension commencing a new creative work in just the same manner that, ages ago, He came as the personal representative of His Father to superintend the work of earthly creation? May we not think of a difference, too, in this later work? In that first creation He worked with His Father, carrying out His Father's every command. *"When he prepared the heavens, I was there; when he drew a circle upon the face of the deep . . . Then I was by him, as one brought up with him . . ."* (Prov. 8. 30). In this new creation, the bringing into existence a new order of things, which is to be exclusively for the habitation of His Bride, may we not think of Him as using His own power, power given Him by the Father in consequence of His faithfulness unto death; and designing this new "home" Himself, conscious always of His Father's kindly interest and approval in all that He is doing?

If this be so, what joy must fill the heart of the Heavenly Bridegroom as He comes to call his Bride

to her new home. With what deep satisfaction must He then contemplate the imminence of the day when He shall *"see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied"* (Isa. 53. 11). The new home ready; angels in heaven eager to witness the great event; the Heavenly Father Himself awaiting the presentation of the Bride before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy; what wonder that it is said that the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, and that His beloved shall be "caught up" to meet Him in the air, so to be ever with Him. Who knows the wonders of that marriage feast, when the wisdom of all the ages, and deepest confidence respecting the work of the future, shall be imparted to those to whom it is given to sit around that festal board?

Here it is that the picture of the Bride must merge into that of the anointed and glorified Christ company. From that wedding feast these will come forth—many radiant souls all possessed by an all-embracing and overpowering love for their Lord and their Leader—the Head of their house. That home is to be their headquarters, their homeland, from which they will go forth to carry out the wonderful works which are to be their portion to all eternity.

The wedding feast is limited in time. The world of men will be passing through the severest phase of the world's final trouble while those wonderful scenes are being enacted in heaven above. The Church will have gone from earth; all will have been taken to be with their Lord, to be presented to His Father, to become accustomed to their new environment and their new powers, and to receive their final instruction for their first great work, the Millennial conversion of men upon earth. But they may not linger around the festal board, for the cry of sinned humanity resounds to the heavens, and the whole creation, groaning and travailing in pain together, *"waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God"* (Rom. 8. 19-22).

So the cavalcade sets out. The Lord Who had come to the earth for His saints, and taken them to Himself, now comes to the world with His saints, and there is no man who knows it not. We do not know, we cannot say, what coming and going there may be between that place which is our home, prepared for that purpose by our Lord, and this place which for a thousand years is the scene of our labours. It "doth not yet appear what we shall be", and our deepest thinking can only furnish us with a shadow of the reality.

Perhaps, though, we can visualise, dimly, at the end of the thousand years, another great gathering in the spacious halls of that "prepared place". The work with mankind is over. Evil has spread

its wings and flown far away; never again will its shadow darken God's fair realm. The sinners are no more; all the earth is at rest, it breaks forth into singing. Listening angels have heard the sublime words, echoing from high Heaven: "*Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*". The cherubim which for long ages have stood on guard with the flaming sword, keeping the way of the Tree of Life, now wing their flight back to the Throne of God, their long vigil over. The sons of God who wondered, and shouted for joy, when the

foundations of the earth were laid (Job 38. 7) are shouting again for joy to behold this triumphant conclusion to the Divine Plan of the Ages. And away up in that highest home of all the Lord Jesus Christ and His Church commune together. The further plans of God are spread out to view; works of creation mighty beyond imagination, designs for the enrichment of God's glory and superabundant happiness for creatures yet to be born, happy service and unceasing joy in each other's fellowship and in the presence and companionship of our glorious Lord; age after age without end, to all eternity.

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## MOSES, A TYPE OF CHRIST

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Moses was born at a time of great distress among the people of Israel. A Pharaoh had arisen who "knew not Joseph" and Egypt saw in Israel a danger and sought to repress them by severe laws and slavery. When Moses was born he was concealed for three months in the house and we can imagine the anxiety of his mother during that time, her fear that the case might be reported and bring her whole family, including Aaron and Miriam, into danger. It was too dangerous to keep Moses any longer and a plan was devised which proved very successful, and he was brought up by Pharaoh's daughter.

We have here an example of how God overrules and makes the wrath of men to praise Him. In the ordinary way Moses, while still a lad, would have been put under a taskmaster and grown up uneducated, but God had something in store for Moses and so He over-ruled, and Moses received the best education. So God arranges things for us for our development and fitness.

The life of Moses holds many lessons of faith; it teaches that self reliance is not good unless we also consult God. That was the secret of Moses' success.

Moses was a type of Jesus, as shown in Acts 3. 22. God is our Teacher. A teacher uses chalk and blackboard and illustrates a lesson by diagrams and pictures but the child must not be so engrossed in the pictures that he does not heed the lesson. *So Bible types are not the lesson but they illustrate the lesson.*

Moses grew up in the presence of Pharaoh. He was beautiful in face and form and beautiful in disposition. He was highly educated, for Egypt was the foremost nation of the day, with a great civilisation, and he was "learned in all the wisdom of Egypt". Josephus says that he was also a soldier and heir to the throne. He had also a special know-

ledge of God given to him by his mother; he had learned from her of the Abrahamic promise and of the Messiah who would come to bless. How Moses would listen and his heart be stirred! He was anxious to do something for God and in his active mind he devised a scheme for Israel's deliverance. He would wait his opportunity, then leave the palace and throw in his lot with his brethren, proclaim himself their leader and amid scenes of patriotic fervour put himself at their head and lead them forth to liberty.

Moses was disappointed, misunderstood and rejected. His brethren did not receive him as their leader and Pharaoh sought to kill him.

Jesus was daily in the presence of God; He too was brought up in a palace (Prov. 8. 30). He had a high position with honour, glory and favour and was learned and rich. He had a special knowledge of His Father's plan to deliver the race. How Jesus would listen and His own heart would be stirred and He would long for the time when God would send Him forth to deliver.

Jesus left His home above and for our sakes became poor. He took our nature and was despised, misunderstood and rejected.

Moses, in Midian. Here he fed sheep and the greatest event was his marriage to Zipporah, who was black and a Gentile.

Jesus went into a far country and before He comes to effect the deliverance of mankind already redeemed by His death, He will unite to Himself a bride, who will be "black but comely" (Cant. 1. 5). We see the condescension of God in having such a daughter-in-law, for Psalm 113. 6, shows that God humbles Himself to behold us at all; but He purposes to raise us up with Jesus. Paul felt this when he wrote of the height and

depth to God's love. Black is what sin has made us, but comely is how He makes us. Comely as the curtains of Solomon—suitable for a palace must be the adornments of the character of the Bride. God's providences are all directed towards this end and Jesus had been our helper too all the time He has been away. Throughout the Gospel Age He has been the Advocate of the church.

*Moses*, like all of us had to learn. When he went forth to deliver the first time he seems to have been strong and eloquent, reliant upon self and his great prowess and reputation but it was not God's time—he was forty years too soon. For all that time he had to wait and he learnt much. He learnt to rely not on self but on God. He lost all confidence in himself. In the early days he was "mighty in words" (Acts 7. 22), but forty years later he said, "I am not eloquent" (Ex. 4. 10). Humbled, he was now fit for God's use, and was sent to be Israel's deliverer. Acts 7. 35 says it was the same Moses who was rejected who became the deliverer and Acts 1. 11 and 2. 36, tells us that it is the same Jesus Who was rejected and crucified Who comes a second time to effect deliverance. Deliverance from Egypt was effected after judgment and the ten

plagues; nothing had ever been seen like them before; and God is working His strange work now in a great time of trouble prior to the deliverance of mankind. Is God or is man responsible? There are certain laws in the natural and moral realms which if obeyed will result in blessing. A plant needs sun, air, moisture and soil. These are God's gifts and if the plant is deprived of them it will die. God gives enlightenment and blessings to man, but man lives in defiance of His laws; the golden rule is not practised and the principles of justice are outraged. Hence His blessings prove to be curses and enlightenment brings trouble.

After deliverance came discipline. Israel in the wilderness were learning that the way to life and rest is in dependence and faith in God and in Moses their leader and mediator. The discipline of the world will take one thousand years of trial and testing under the Mediator, Christ.

After forty years Israel came to Jordan. Moses stepped aside and they went in to their inheritance. So the world will come to their inheritance after their Jordan, the final test, is passed. Then will be the rest of eternity, with every evil thing done away and all things made new.

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# BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

Thou, therefore, endure  
hardness as a good  
soldier of Jesus Christ.

Vol. 30, No. 5

MAY, 1953

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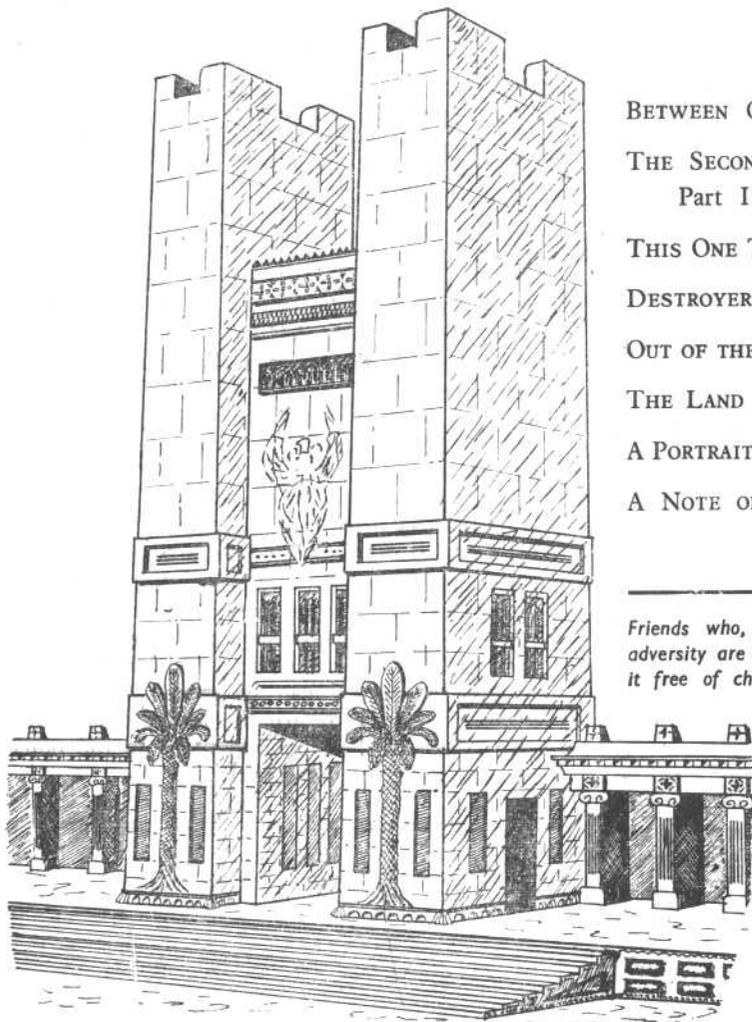
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Lift up your heads, O ye gates  
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors,  
And the King of glory shall come in.

## BETWEEN OURSELVES

A Whitsun Convention is being planned for Yeovil, Somerset, and brethren who are interested may write to Bro. W. F. Fox, 34, St. Michaels Road, Yeovil, for details, which will be forwarded as soon as plans are complete.

\* \* \*

The Midland friends are arranging for the usual Whitsun Convention, which this year is to be held in Leicester. Will brethren desiring particulars please write to Bro. W. R. Walton, "Beirnfels," New Road, Common Lane, Kenilworth, Warwicks.

\* \* \*

The Annual General Convention will be held during the August holiday season this year at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1, and arrangements are now in hand. Sessions will commence on the afternoon of Saturday, 1st August, and conclude at the end of the afternoon on Monday, 3rd August. Programmes will be circulated in due course and in the meantime details can be obtained from the Convention Secretary, Bro. D. Parker, 13, New Road, Langley, Slough, Bucks. Applications for accommodation should be addressed to Bro. H. Charlton, Ryvers Farm, London Road, Langley, Slough, Bucks. It is hoped to hold a baptismal service in connection with the Convention and brethren desiring to take advantage of this opportunity are asked to advise Bro. Parker at as early a date as possible.

\* \* \*

We have pleasure in giving friends the following announcement received from our brethren in America. "The Bible Students Unity Convention Committee wishes to announce that the forthcoming 1953 convention will again be held at Hotel Macatawa, near Holland, Michigan, beginning Sunday, July 5th, and ending Saturday, July 11th. All enquiries concerning hotel rates, transportation, etc., as well as requests for the booklet containing the 1952 convention report, should be directed to the Convention Committee, c/o Berean Bible Students, P.O. Box 125, Cicero 50, Illinois." (Friends writing from England will of course add U.S.A. to above address. A copy of the above-mentioned convention report has been received at the office of the "Monthly" and we find it to be a most interesting account of a gathering which, we are persuaded, has been organised and conducted in the spirit of the Master. May the 1953 gathering be equally characteristic of those things which are good in His sight.)

For a long time the "Bible Students Hymnal" has been in use amongst us without the aid of a corresponding tune book and probably by now many groups have made their own collection of tunes, although we know that in many places there is still difficulty when certain hymns are chosen due to the absence of a known tune. The brethren in the Midlands have had this matter on their hearts and minds for a long time and have produced a collection of fine tunes to suit the entire "Hymnal." Many of the friends throughout the country have seen and commented upon this collection and it is the earnest desire of the brethren who have compiled it to have it published. They have made all the necessary enquiries and gone into the question of copyrights and so on, and now the question before them is: Can it be done?

With a small community such as our fellowship the difficulties of publishing any work, no matter how much wanted, are immense. Unless a book or publication has a large circulation the cost of printing is inevitably inordinately high. Without considerable past experience it is almost impossible to foretell how many copies will be required. Those who have conducted the "Monthly" and its associated work through the years realise that fact perhaps better than anybody else of us. We have great sympathy therefore with our Midlands friends in their desire to ascertain the Master's leading in this matter.

The only way to find out is to ask. Hence we are happy to insert, on our friends' behalf, in this issue of the "Monthly," a questionnaire they have prepared which asks brethren who are interested in this proposed Tune Book to indicate how many copies they would take at prices stated, if the book is published. Only thus can a decision as to whether or not to proceed can be taken. Will all such please fill in and return the leaflet to the address given thereon. Announcement as to the outcome will be made in due course.

---

### Gone From Us

\*—\*

- Bro. G. March (*Dunstable*).
- Bro. J. Martyniak (*Detroit, U.S.A.*).
- Bro. W. R. McNerlen (*Sheffield*).
- Bro. E. R. Smith (*Bolton*).
- Sis. Stewart (*Hampton*).

"Till the day break, and the shadows flee away."

## The Second Epistle of John

Comments on the writings  
of the "Beloved Apostle"

### Part I.

The Second Epistle of John is thought to have been written at Ephesus, following the writing of the First Epistle (eight of its thirteen verses are to be found in the First Epistle also) and to have been addressed to a sister in Christ otherwise unknown to history. It is this question of the Epistle's purpose that has given rise to the most disputed point in its short length of only thirteen verses. "*The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth*" is how he opens the epistle. Some commentators and scholars, reluctant perhaps to give the honour of an entire New Testament epistle to a woman, however saintly, especially to one who is not identified in any other extant writing, have suggested that under this pseudonym John intended the church at Ephesus, or perhaps the entire Church on earth, to be understood. It is not a convincing suggestion; the fact that the elect lady has children who are associated with her in the greeting, and moreover has a sister who in turn also has children (verse 13) makes the supposition practically impossible of serious consideration. It seems virtually certain that John was writing to an actual person of his acquaintance, one whom he esteemed very highly "in the Lord" and the only question is, who was she?

There is not much likelihood of that question being answered, this side the Vail. Some have hazarded the view that Mary the mother of Jesus is the one to whom the Epistle was written. That is hardly likely; Mary must almost certainly have died many years before this date, before John came to Ephesus. Mary's children—James, Joses, Jude, Simeon, Salome, would have been well advanced in years themselves, almost John's own age. It has to be concluded then that we have no clue to this sister's identity.

The word "lady" in verses 1 and 5 is "*Kyria*" which was a Greek woman's name, the equivalent of the Hebrew "*Martha*" and also a Greek term of respect roughly equivalent to our English word "madam". John would be no more likely to use "madam" in preference to the more intimate term "sister" than would we toward one who is well known to us and highly esteemed as a sister in Christ. The most reasonable conclusion then is that the sister's name was in fact *Kyria*, and that the Apostle knew her sufficiently well to address her

habitually by her "Christian" name. She was evidently a convert, perhaps Jewess, more likely Greek, probably middle-aged and with a family of children, "teen-agers" as we would say, living in one of the Greek towns of Asia where there were brethren, perhaps Colosse or Laodicea or Smyrna, within reach of the Apostle's travelling abilities. She had a sister, whose children at least apparently lived in Ephesus itself so that when the Apostle wrote this letter to his friend *Kyria* he would quite naturally add the words of greeting from those children with which the Epistle is ended.

The entire letter therefore is just a little personal word, a gem of Christian correspondence, somewhat akin to Paul's similar letter to his friend Philemon of Colosse, preserved in the New Testament as an example to us of how the believers in that day felt towards each other. John's solicitude for the spiritual welfare of his friend and sister in Christ comes out very prominently in these few words.

His reference, in verse 1, to himself as "the elder" may be equally well a reference to his age or his office. The word "presbyter" may be understood either way and is normally interpreted in harmony with the context. John must certainly have been one of the oldest, if not the oldest, brother in the Truth at the time—probably not far short of a century of years had passed over his head. It is true, moreover, that all the other Apostles had long since gone to their rest, and it may well be that John in humility had ceased calling himself by the name of Apostle since he was now the only Apostle living, and contented himself with the title of "elder" in its sense of a pastor in the church, perhaps referring to himself as "*the Elder*" as indicative of his realisation that the office of leader or chief shepherd of the flock on earth had now devolved upon him as the sole survivor of those who once walked and talked with Jesus, having known Him in the flesh. John was the only one left on earth to have heard the memorable words "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to the whole creation."

There is a world of meaning in verse 2 which we can well take to ourselves in these latter difficult days. "*For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever.*" So many have become apathetic and indifferent, having lost their first zeal and left their first love, often because of

disappointment with some one or other aspect of the faith in which they had placed great trust and which did not turn out as they expected. Some have built their faith on chronology, and when the arrival of the set date and non-fulfilment of the expected event has proved their hopes ill-founded, have given up the Truth in despair and disappointment. We need always to remember that if we do properly and completely appreciate the Truth and allow it to take root in us, giving ourselves in complete and unreserved consecration to God, not to a date nor to work nor on the basis of a doctrine, then the Truth that is in us will remain with us for ever, and neither the failure of the date or the work or the doctrine will make any difference to that. Even though the work and labour of a life-time disintegrate in ruins about us, all that we have constructed and supported and administered come to an end like the things in the Epistle to the Hebrews that, having decayed and waxed old, are ready to vanish away, we can stand up freed from all the obligations and responsibilities that those things have laid upon us and say "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do next?" God will never have us idle, neither will disappointment have any place in our lives, whilst we can so profit by our experiences that the Truth remains in us for ever.

Verse 3 is a wonderful greeting. "Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love." Here in this text we have the ideal expression of the relationship subsisting between the Father and the Son. Spoken of separately, the two are one in the bestowal of these wondrous blessings of favour, mercy and peace. We cannot say these things come from the Father more than the Son, nor yet from the Son more than the Father. John has no use here for the later "Dark Ages" idea that the Son in His mercy stands between a wrathful Father and a condemned world to save that world from the Father's vengeance. Here we have Father and Son in perfect unison and perfect oneness extending heavenly blessings upon those in this world who are in the right attitude of heart to receive those blessings. Here we have assurance that in the Age to come the Shepherd Who goes out to seek and save the lost sheep and the Father Who goes out to meet the returning prodigal are working together in the closest harmony, so that, as Jesus Himself said, "I and my Father are one".

To these blessings sent from heaven there is conjoined the twin earthly blessings of truth and love. Neither is very much use to us without the other. Together, they yield us all that we need to make

our calling and election sure. Truth regulates our intellectual faculties and love regulates our emotional faculties. Neglect either, and we become unbalanced Christians, either all heart and no head, or all head and no heart. In either case we shall not be of those who will need both heart and head for the onerous work of the next Age. This does not mean that we have to excel in the accomplishments both of heart and head before we can be acceptable to God, as though in one ordinary, everyday person are combined all the attributes of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Augustine. It is not given to many to reach up to the stature of great men. What is really needed is a due balance, so that the heart does not run away with the head nor the head stifle the impulses of the heart. We each of us, need to pay attention to both attributes, to truth and to love, in our lives.

It is in verses 4 to 6 that John impresses this point with a practical and personal application. "I rejoiced greatly," he says to the unknown sister Kyria, "that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father. And now I beseech thee, Kyria, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it." Here are truth and love again associated, and this time brought into contact with the commandment and so with our Christian walk, which is a practical application indeed. He finds Kyria's children walking in truth, and he rejoiced greatly on that account. That is the Father's commandment and he is glad to find them so. Now he beseeches that they walk in love, which is also God's commandment. He makes haste to affirm that he knows this is not a new commandment—even though Jesus himself had called it such. "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another."—To John and his disciples it was no longer a new commandment; they had heard it expounded and commended to them every day of their Christian lives. But it was still necessary to re-affirm that commandment more constantly and more fervently than the other. Even in those early days it was easier to follow the law of intellectual knowledge than the law of brotherly love.

So it is with us to-day. Too often is love despised as a weak emotional thing of no real value in the Christian conflict, and knowledge extolled as the be-all and end-all of Christian endeavours. Too easily do we for-

get St. Paul's immortal dictum, "Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge . . . and have not love, I am nothing." (I Cor. 13. 2.) Here in this Second Epistle John remains resolutely set upon the theme which appears so prominently in his First, that the Truth of God can only be effectually manifested against a background built up of intellectual appreciation based on absolute sincerity in the quest for Divine Truth, and a heartfelt love for the brethren

and for all mankind that is an accurate reflection of the love that God Himself bears toward all His creatures. Kyria had evidently brought her children up "in the nurture and fear of the Lord" to understand well these things, and John, knowing that thus they had been taught "from the beginning" has no fonder desire than that they might continue so to walk to the end of their days, living witnesses to the truth that dwelt in them and should remain with them for ever.

*To be concluded.*

## "This One Thing I Do"

*An exhortation*

One of the great advantages we have received from our knowledge of the Divine Plan is to be able to rightly divide the Word of Truth, as workmen that need not to be ashamed. We have learned that some statements made by God are true in one age, but not true if applied to another. The statement that a flood of water was soon to destroy the earth was true in Noah's day, but it is not true in ours. The statement that God is calling out a Church—in all a little flock—is true of our Gospel age, but it was not true of Noah's day or of the Jewish age. The statement that the Spirit and the Bride say "Come" and that whosoever heareth may say "Come" will be true in the Millennial Age, but it is not true in this or any former age. When we say that any one of these statements is not true, we mean that it is not true historically, that it is not true in history and experience, and is not in full agreement with the course of events taking place in the earth at that time.

Actually all God's words are true in themselves—that is to say, they are true essentially—but they are only true to men historically and practically when they are applied to the affairs of men in God's own time and way, as He intended them. In itself no word of God can ever be really untrue—that means to say, that no word of His can ever be false, for nothing He has said can ever become a lie, or remain forever void or unfulfilled. It must accomplish the purpose for which it was sent, for as Jesus said, "Scripture cannot be broken": Heaven and earth may pass away, but God's word cannot pass away unfulfilled. Most Christians would agree to that, but even so, it is by no means an unusual thing to see them stringing texts of Scripture together from all parts of the Holy Book without consideration for their context or for their intended purpose.

Many of the strange creeds of Christendom arise from this improper practice of stringing texts together in this loose fashion, and applying them in any way the person may choose. As an example of what can be done when texts are strung together improperly we ask you to read the following:—

(a) When Judas saw that Jesus was condemned to death he "went and hanged himself" (Matt. 27. 5.). (b) In another place Jesus said (Luke 10. 37), "Go thou and do likewise." (c) In yet another place Jesus said (John 13. 27), "That thou doest, do quickly. By stringing these three texts together in this way Jesus is made to command his followers to commit suicide, and to do so quickly!

Of course such instruction as from the Lord is ridiculous, but it only serves to show how easily you can string together passages of Scriptures and make them teach anything you please. It shows the need at all times for rightly dividing the "Word of Truth." It is because certain groups of Christians string together certain texts in this way that there are so many sects, and so much diversity of thought between those sects. Such a state of things ought not to be, and would not be if they all sought earnestly to divide aright the Word of Truth.

There are other senses also in which Christian people fail to rightly divide the Word, as for instance, when a Christian teacher appropriates a passage of Scripture from the prophecies and applies it to the Christian Church. This is often done, intentionally or otherwise, when some wonderful and comforting promise has been made by the prophet to the ancient people of God, Israel—and it is desired by the Christian teacher to offer a word of comfort to a Christian congregation. As a case in point we quote Isaiah 54. 9 & 10. "*This is like the waters of Noah to me, as I swore that the waters*

of Noah should no more go over the earth, so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you, and will not rebuke you, for the mountains may depart, and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love will not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the Lord who has compassion on you." If we were to ask Bible students generally who was the company to whom God sent that gracious message of love and assurance, perhaps eight out of ten would say at once, "Oh, it was the Church! It was for the followers of the Lord in a time of persecution or other difficulty." But that answer would be wrong. That Scripture is the record of a promise made to Israel, and refers to the time of her re-gathering and restoration at the beginning of Millennial times. God still loves His ancient people for their faithful fathers' sakes, as Paul says in Rom. 11. 26-28. There are many promises of that kind written in the prophecies, every one of which was addressed to Israel, but which has been taken and appropriated, many, many times over by Christian people as their own, and as though it was intended by God for their own. The Christian has no need to deprive or rob Israel of her promises in any shape or form, for he has better promises than these—exceeding great and precious promises all his own. To take these promises of Israel and apply them to the Christian Church is not rightly dividing the Word of Truth. Nor would God be obliged to honour them, if claimed on behalf of the Christian Church. He will honour and fulfil them in the fullest sense when claimed by Israel in the days to come, but He may not honour them in the least degree if claimed by Christians in these present days.

Let us learn to divide rightly the Word of God in this matter of the Divine Promises, and rejoice in our hearts at the thought that God has still some good things in store for that much-abused, ancient people in His own due time and way, and resolve henceforth not to be guilty of stealing Israel's wonderful promises for ourselves.

Also there are some things in relation to the Christian Church in which it is very necessary to rightly divide the Word of Truth. There are some things which the Bible sets before us as free gifts, and some which are set before us as prizes and rewards. Now surely we can all see the difference between a gift, which is bestowed upon us absolutely free, and a prize for which we must fight the good fight, or run the sacrificial race. If that which is set before us is offered "free," then we are not called upon to work, or run, or suffer to obtain it as our own, but if it is set before us as a "prize"—"the prize of the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus"—then there will be conditions attached to

its offer and we shall be expected to comply with those conditions in full. In distinguishing between the "free" gift and the "prize" it is very necessary that we rightly divide the Word of Truth.

What has been said so far about rightly dividing the Word of Truth has been leading up to this point, where we can say that some things belonging to the Christian faith and to the Christian life are of much more importance to us, day by day, than are some of the other things. Some things are of "first" importance in every way, others can quite rightly be said to be only of secondary importance in comparison with the "first." This is a point of great importance in our Christian life, for if we do not keep the "first things" of our calling as the "first things" in our life, we shall find our hearts and minds overburdened and weighted down with many other things which will hinder our daily overcoming, and will endanger our prospects of winning the prize of the high calling, for which we have started to run.

Let us take the Apostle Paul's words in Phil. 3. 13-14, to illustrate this point. We read "*Brethren, I count not myself yet to have apprehended, but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*" The one thing which stands out very prominently in this scripture is that Paul is speaking of himself, and of his course in life in view of the possibility of his being accounted worthy of a share in the first resurrection. He says he wanted to know his Lord, and the power that accomplished His resurrection, and to find fellowship in His sufferings, being conformed unto His death, "*if, by any means, I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead.*" Fourteen times in the few verses preceding and following this text Paul uses the personal pronoun "I," thus indicating very clearly that he was speaking of himself, of what he had done in the past, of what he was doing at the time, and of what he hoped to attain in future days. Now Paul here pictures himself as an athlete, engaged at present in running a race, at the end of which he sincerely hoped he would be accounted worthy to receive the prize. In other places in his writings he appears before us as an evangelist, as a student of prophecy, as a teacher of the truth, and as a pastor of the churches he had been instrumental in founding. In all these features of his service and activity he stood out pre-eminent over all his fellow-brethren everywhere. "*I laboured more abundantly than they all.*" He says in I Cor. 15. 10.

As an evangelist, going out into the dark places

of the earth, with the story of the Cross, he was without a parallel; as a student of prophecy, he was one of the best, as Rom. 9. 10-11, amply testifies; as a teacher of the truth his various epistles prove that true beyond all doubt; and as a pastor of the churches, his tears and words are proof of that. "Remember," he says, "that by the space of three years I ceased not to admonish every one, night and day, with tears." (Acts. 20: 31.) No word of ours can describe the value of Paul's life and service to the Church of his day, and to all the generations of Christian people since that day. Always, day and night, he was ever seeking ways and means for spending himself and being spent for Christ's sake and His people's good. But in our text, there is no word of that activity for another's good. He does not say, "this one thing I do—I want, above all else to be a good and faithful evangelist." He does not say, "I want to influence and win ten thousand people where heretofore I have won one." He does not ask for powerful words, to strike with conviction his hearers' hearts, and lead them to the Lord. It is not Paul the great evangelist that is speaking here. Nor does Paul say, "This one thing I do—I am giving all the time I can to the study of the prophecies"; He does not say, "I want to show my brethren all I can about the Pyramid and the lessons it can teach." He does not say, "I want to show my brethren all the truth about the coming great day of the Lord, and all the things that must take place when the Lord returns." It is not Paul the great student of prophecy who is speaking here! Nor does Paul say, "This one thing I do—I want above all things to be a better teacher of the truth"; He does not say, "I want to write something better than I wrote to the brethren in Rome, in Ephesus, in Corinth, and elsewhere." He does not say, "I want to teach the lessons of the Lord with more force, and get them over into the minds of the people with more effect." It is not Paul the teacher of the truth who is speaking here. Nor does Paul say, "This one thing I do—I want most sincerely to be a better pastor to the flock"; He does not say, "I want to keep the sheep of the Lord more faithfully, and attend to their needs more carefully." He does not say, "I want to carry the lambs in my arms, and lead the flock in the paths of righteousness, or by the still waters." No! it is not Paul the great under-shepherd and pastor of the flock who is speaking here!

Paul was all these things, and more besides, in their own time and place, but not here in this passage in Philippians. Here it is Paul only; Paul first, Paul last, and Paul all the time. It is his

own destiny of which he speaks—a share in the special resurrection of the dead. It is the prize of the high calling for himself which alone occupies his mind, and puts all his energies on the stretch. I have left certain things behind me, he says, and I am pressing on to certain things ahead which I hope to possess. It is Paul the athlete, who is speaking here of the one thing in his life, the one and only thing for which he was prepared to sacrifice every other thing.

Paul had learned how to put "first" things "first," and to put all secondary things in their proper place. There was not any less love for the evangelistic work in his heart, nor any less desire to understand the meaning of the prophecies, nor any less satisfaction in teaching his brethren, nor any less sense of responsibility as an under-shepherd of the flock than at other times, or in other moods, but all these other loves, desires, responsibilities had been placed in their right relationship to the one most important thing.

That this was his usual view of the relationship of these things may be seen from his words in 1 Cor. 9. 24-26 & 27. Here he says, "Do you not know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it." Then speaking of his own attitude he says, "I do not run aimlessly, I do not box as one beating the air, but I pommel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified"—or become a castaway. He knew he might be a good and successful evangelist; a well-trained student of the prophecies, a successful teacher of his brethren, and a most capable under-shepherd of the flock, and yet, if he had not run so as to obtain the prize he would become disqualified or a castaway—an unsuccessful runner after all! It was because he always kept that thought sharply impressed upon his mind that he wrote those uncertain words, "if by any means (or if possible) I might attain to the resurrection from (or out-from) the dead." "Brethren," he says, "I do not consider I have made it my own as yet, but one thing I do, . . . I press on toward the goal for the prize." His great desire was to know Christ Jesus his Lord more intimately and thoroughly, to feel in himself more fully, the power of God which had raised Jesus from the dead, to have a greater share in His sufferings, and thus be more completely conformed to His death, yet he knew that after all this had been attained he still could fail to have a place among those who would share that special resurrection from the dead if he failed to run as he ought. He knew that he could help his brethren to run so as to obtain the prize, he knew he could

teach them the way to the goal, but supposing that in helping and teaching them how to win the great prize, and to reach that desirable goal, he himself should fail to attain it, and become disqualified or a castaway, what then? That was always the great problem of his life!

To concentrate his attention in this way on his own opportunity of winning the great prize was not selfishness on his part—it was but copying out the pattern set before him by the Lord Himself in John 17. 5. Jesus, after completing the work God had given him to do, thought of Himself, and prayed for Himself, and asked the Father to return to Him the glory He had had before coming to this world. That prayer was not a selfish prayer, expressing only a desire to have something Himself, but was a prayer for His brethren's good; yet there was something He wanted and requested for Himself. But He asked for only what the Father had previously promised Him. That being so, He asked for that only which was according to His Father's Will, and for His Father's glory. So with Paul. It was God's Will (God's sincere desire) that Paul should so run as to win the prize for the high calling in Christ Jesus, and, for Paul to run day by day so as to obtain that prize, thus concentrating his earnest attention on his own effort and endeavour, was not selfish or self-centred in the least degree, but was entirely and strictly according to the Will of God.

These things being like this in the case of Paul, is it a difficult thing to say which was the "first" thing in his life, in his heart, and in his affection? Supposing he lived with us to-day, what would he do now as the "one thing of his life?" Would he give first place to evangelistic work, and seek by all means to save some from their evil way? That he would still be an evangelist we can be well assured, but would that be the "one thing" or even the "first" thing of his life? Would he be such an untiring student of the prophecies and the Book of Revelation as to make these researches the "one thing" or even the "first" thing of his life? Would he make it the objective of life to explain the Pyramid or chronology or other abstruse parts of the Holy Writ?

We think not!

Would he set himself, like some to-day, who seek to correct all their brethren's mistakes, and rectify all their wrong points of doctrine and practice—to the extent of making this the "one thing" or even the "first thing" in his life? Or again, would he make his desire to be a successful pastor of souls—desirable though that is—the "one thing," or even the "first" thing in his life? We think

not! We cannot think of him doing to-day other than he did nineteen centuries ago!

Dear brethren, we have been dividing the word of truth down to its minutest details, dividing it as Paul did in his own personal way, and as he applied it to his own life and his own activities, and in doing so we trust we have found a key to the successful issues of our own consecrated lives. Are we, like Paul, among those who sincerely believe we ought to engage in fervent evangelistic work sending forth the word of truth to win men to the Lord from the ranks of sin. If so, may we suggest that you put your whole heart into this work and do it as unto the Lord, but meantime do not forget that for yourself you are a runner in this wonderful race for the great prize. While helping others along do not forget yourself and become yourself a castaway. Or are we, like Paul, students of the prophecies and the Book of Revelation, spending much of our time and effort in bringing forth solutions and explanations of their symbolism. If so, may we suggest that even if you solve every difficulty, and explain every word, that will not ensure you a place in the special resurrection from the dead! You may be a successful student of these things, yet be a failure in the race for the heavenly prize. Or again are we, like Paul, desirous of proving ourselves better teachers and preachers of the truth, able to instruct our brethren in the deep things of God. This is a most desirable thing to seek for, yet though you speak with the tongue of an angel, and have not love, you could be a tragic failure in the heavenly race. Or do you wish to be a better under-shepherd to the flock—a better elder or deacon, a better caretaker in the church? That is all very good in its way, and will bring you much present joy, but will it help you to run your race more successfully and ensure you a place among those who share in that special resurrection from the dead?

Dear brethren in the Lord, it is possible for you to do all these things, and give your full time and attention to them, and yet be forgetting your main responsibility before the Lord. You may give your body to be burned—you may spend yourself till you are utterly spent in your service for other people, and all the while be failing to run the heavenly race so as to obtain the prize. Among all the various things to which we may be called by the Lord, our own soul's salvation is the most important thing. God has called us because He wants us—to be forever with His Son in glory, and to obtain that, we must run the race and win the prize. This is not a free gift to be obtained without effort, but must be won by pressing on to the

things before us. And it must be won by each individual for himself. The secret of the true Christian life is to keep all its parts in proper balance and right proportion. Witnessing and preaching the truth to all who have ears to hear is right and proper everywhere, all the time, but the zeal required for this work should not crowd out that deeper sense of our own participation in the Christian race. Careful and persistent study of the prophecies in the Old Testament, and even of the Book of Revelation, is not to be condemned. Rather it should be approved and encouraged, but the danger is that the student can become so deeply engrossed in the subject that he may tend to forget other things and become somewhat narrow-minded and fanatical in the theme.

On this point we speak from experience. We have seen good brethren who in former days had been most useful to the Lord and most helpful to the brethren lose their power and influence, and become a source of irritation and weariness to their brethren because they would talk only of Revelation all the time. They become like men who could only play or sing one single tune. If then God has blessed us with a brain that is able to think deeply on the Prophecies or the Book of Revelation, let us go about our task with moderation, but let us not forget that these are only parts of a larger book—and small parts at that—and that the other parts are mainly those which tell us of our heavenly Call and of our need to run the race with patience,

while looking unto Jesus for our pattern and example in our Christian life.

The same line of reasoning applies to our Christian work both as teachers of the brethren and pastors of the flock. Should we have been blessed of God with one or more of these abilities, let us look upon them only as departments or sections of a whole Christian life, important in themselves for other people's needs, but of less importance to ourselves than our ability to concentrate heart, mind, soul and strength on our own efforts to run the Christian race as those who intend to win the prize.

May God grant us to be able some day, when our course is nearly run, to say with Paul ". . . *the time of my departure is come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day*". If we can say that, as our life comes to its end, it will repay us for all our concentration on the "one thing", for all our participation in His sufferings and for all we have failed to understand in the other sections of the Holy Word we have had to leave unstudied and unexplored.

May the God of all Grace add His blessing to your hearts and minds as you give your attention to these words and thoughts, and help you to concentrate from now on upon the "one thing" that matters most.

## Destroyers of the Sanctuary

*A plea for zeal  
according to knowledge*

*"A man was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees; but now they break down the carved work thereof at once with axes and hammers." (Psa. 74. 5-6.)*

The sublime lament which is Psalm 74 might very well have been composed in Babylon at the time of the captivity. It seems clearly to refer to the destruction of Solomon's Temple. There is no event in Israel's earlier history to which the words can be made to fit. The Psalmist laments the destruction of the Divine Sanctuary by fire, its profanation by pagan symbols, and concludes on the despairing note, "we see not our signs; there is no more any prophet; neither is there among us any that knoweth how long". And as he looks around him at the ruined house of prayer and calls to mind its former glories, he breaks out into the

bitter reflection just quoted. In the days when this Temple was built men achieved honour and glory by virtue of their labours upon the great cedars and stately olives which were cut down and shaped to their uses in this house; but now fame and reward is to him who leads his comrades in the work of destruction. "Ichabod" has been written over the portals of God's house on Mount Moriah and the glory has departed.

What would have been the thoughts of those men who hewed the timbers for the Temple, had they known that in generations to come their great work would become the prey of the invader, suffering total destruction at the hands of God's enemies? I Kings 5 tells of their labours. King Solomon, writing to his friend Hiram, King of Tyre, who had jurisdiction over the forests of Lebanon, said,

*"Now therefore command thou that they hew me cedar trees out of Lebanon: and my servants shall be with thy servants; . . . for thou knowest that there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like the Sidonians. . . . So Hiram gave Solomon cedar trees and fir trees according to his desire . . . and Solomon had threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens, and fourscore thousand in the mountains . . . so they prepared timber and stones to build the house".* What a mighty work this must have been, this felling and transporting of the cedars and firs of Lebanon to Jerusalem that the House of God might be built!

I Kings 6 tells of the building and of how these great quantities of precious timbers were utilised. "He built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar, both the floor of the house, and the walls of the ceiling; and he covered them on the inside with wood, and covered the floor of the house with planks of fir . . . and the cedar of the house within was carved with knops and open flowers; there was no stone seen . . . and within the oracle he made two cherubims of olive tree, each ten cubits (about eighteen feet) high . . . and he overlaid the cherubims with gold; and he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, within and without. . . . And for the entering of the oracle he made doors of olive tree . . . and he carved upon them carvings of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, and overlaid them with gold . . . and the two doors were of fir tree . . . and he carved thereon cherubim and palm trees and open flowers; and covered them with gold fitted upon the carved work" (vs. 15-35).

This was the carved work which those later despoilers attacked with their axes and hammers. Caring nothing for the patient loving labours of those who in times gone by had given their lives' best endeavours to creating these beautiful things for the glory of God, that His people might worship Him in the beauty of holiness, they wantonly destroyed that which they had neither capacity to create nor ability to appreciate: and the world was the poorer for their action.

Have we not here a vivid picture—almost a parable—for our own day? We, too, in this time of frustration and disappointment lament the bygone days when men were famous according as they had lifted up axes upon the thick trees, the great foundation principles of the Word of God. We remember how they brought them unto Zion with songs and rejoicing, and shaped them into walls and floors and ceilings for the house of prayer that was being built. We recall with a tightening of the heart strings how the carved work was put

into place and a place of worship, of fellowship and of service was prepared into which those who were unsatisfied by the old theologies could enter, and rejoice in a new and larger hope for all mankind. The simple gladness and enthusiastic zeal of those earlier days is traditional amongst us.

One can trace an analogy between that Temple of Solomon's day and this work in the end of the Gospel Age which has meant so much to a great number of devoted saintly ones. One thinks of the floor of fir, a symbol of everlasting life because of its evergreen nature. Here is the ground on which we stand. As we enter this temple we enter upon eternal life. "*We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.*" "*Whosoever believeth on me hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day.*" Upon every side were the enclosing walls of cedar, according to Lev. 14 one of the constituents in the ceremonial cleansing of leprosy; and leprosy is a symbol of sin. So, in our temple, there is that all around which cleanses from sin. "*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.*" The doors into the sanctuary, made of olive wood, bring to the mind thoughts of the "way in" to God's purposes and to communion with Him—access by Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. "*Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared . . . but God hath revealed them to us by His Spirit.*" So do the olive wood doors swing open, revealing to us somewhat of the glories which lie beyond.

And what shall we say of the cherubim, the attributes of God? Wisdom, Justice, Love and Power appear before us revealed in all their beauty and magnificence. Surely they were not so seen before our minds were enlightened by that knowledge of the Divine Plan which came to us primarily by the labours of one who undoubtedly did wield axes upon the thick trees? Now we see them, alternating with the carved palm trees, reminding us of the righteous man who shall flourish like a palm tree (Psa. 92. 12-14) in his growth to the full stature of a man in Christ (Eph. 4. 11-13). Between the cherubim and the palm trees, above and around, wrought into a score of graceful patterns, were the open flowers—probably lilies and pomegranates—fit symbols surely of the many precious promises of the Word; all flowers, all "open" for our enjoyment, means of the bringing forth of "much fruit". We can see a picture of our coming to know God in the cherubim; of our growth in grace and Christ-likeness in the palm-trees; and our reception of the precious promises and the bringing forth of

much fruit in the open flowers. And this is the "carved work" which unthinking brethren in our own day set out to break down with axes and with hammers!

Make no mistake about it. The picture is very exact. In their heedless zeal many have done grave harm to the cause they espouse and disservice to the Lord they love. Brethren have set out to shatter the faith of others in fondly-held beliefs—often in matters of little or no importance, on the plea of "walking in the light" and in the endeavour to substitute other and allegedly better conclusions. All too often the new belief is no nearer to ultimate truth, and sometimes is a good deal farther away from it, and some devoted disciple's joy and faith in his belief has been taken away to no purpose. Let us then consider carefully what we are about before we apply our own little hammer to the carved work of the Temple!

To adorn and extend the Temple is not the same thing as breaking down the structure already erected by men of faith in times gone by. It is always our privilege and responsibility to bring forth out of the storehouse "things new and old" for the household of faith according to our ability. Every generation between Solomon and the Captivity did something to increase the beauty and majesty of the Temple at Jerusalem. Rich and poor, young and old, made their contribution according to their means, and the building which was eventually destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar's soldiers was at that time in every respect more impressive and glorious than it was at King Solomon's ceremony of dedication. So must we ever be zealous to add to the edifice of truth which we have inherited, but always with remembrance of the purpose for which truth is given to us, "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4. 12). We need to add our contributions with care, that they may be helpful, encouraging, spiritually uplifting, to those to whom we minister, and not on the contrary deprive them of the confidence and faith which formerly they enjoyed.

"But surely", says one iconoclast (which word means "destroyer of idols"), "if a belief is error, it is better to expose it, whatever the consequences. Error never sanctifies; truth alone sanctifies."

How often is that old tag repeated! And none of us has ever yet attained to the full truth on any subject! Like Paul, we know only in part, and cannot hope to know in full until we are beyond the Veil. And so, whatever truth we hold, it must be to some extent tinged with "error"—to some extent an inaccurate definition of that truth. Our

aim and object should be constantly to advance to an increasingly accurate understanding of the truth.

"Well, that is what I mean", says the iconoclast.

Unfortunately, that is not what he really means. If he was honest with himself he would admit that what he really means is something like this: "I am convinced that this particular view of this particular doctrine is truth. Therefore, any other view of it must be error. Therefore, anyone holding a view different from mine must be in error. Therefore, since error does not sanctify and truth does, I must first destroy their faith in their belief, and then, if possible, get them to accept my own", and so saying, he picks up his axe and hammer and goes out to destroy some carved work.

We need to read and re-read, often, the little verse which appears on the title page of "*Poems of Dawn*".

*"A bending staff I would not break,  
A feeble faith I would not shake,  
Nor even rudely pluck away  
The error which some truth may stay.  
Whose sudden loss might leave without  
A shield against the shafts of doubt."*

How plain it is that the whole purpose of our insight into Scriptural doctrine and prophecy is that we might encourage and build up one another therewith. Unless it fulfils this function it is useless to us. Unless our knowledge is used to edification we are better off without the knowledge. And yet it is also very, very true that "Where there is no vision, the people perish". "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Prov. 29. 18, Hos. 4. 6). Let us, therefore, each one of us, holding in grateful remembrance the labours of those who in past time lifted up axes upon the thick trees, treasure also the carved work they set up in the sanctuary. Even if some of it is becoming a little antique, not in accord with the best modern taste, let us recognise that it still gives joy to some; let us refrain from destroying it with our axes and hammers. We shall find one chapel in the sanctuary where we can make our own contribution to the carved work and add to the total store of the treasures wherewith God is honoured.

We are the inheritors of a rich tradition. Other men have laboured, and we have entered into their labours. In the spirit of One Who made us members of Himself, members who do not all have the same office, let us seek not our own, but each others' good. Let us be careful and reverent in the use of the revelation which our God has given to us. So shall we be His disciples.

# Out of the Ivory Palaces

*"Blow upon my garden  
that the spices thereof  
may flow out."*

## A Help in Trouble

You are face to face with trouble,  
And the skies are murk and gray;  
You hardly know which way to turn,  
You are almost dazed, you say.  
And at night you wake to wonder  
What the next day's news will bring;  
Your pillow is brushed by phantom care  
With a grim and ghastly wing.

You are face to face with trouble;  
A child has gone astray;  
A ship is wrecked on the bitter sea;  
There's a note you cannot pay;  
Your brave right hand is feeble;  
Your sight is growing blind;  
Perhaps a friend is cold and stern,  
Who was ever warm and kind.

You are face to face with trouble;  
No wonder you cannot sleep;  
But, stay, and think of the promise,  
The Lord will safely keep,  
And lead you out of the thicket,  
And into the pasture land;  
You have only to walk straight onward,  
Holding the dear Lord's hand.

You are face to face with trouble;  
And did you forget to look,  
As the good old father taught you,  
For help to the dear old Book?  
You have heard the Tempter whisper,  
And you've had no heart to pray,  
And God has dropped from your scheme of life,  
For many a weary day!

Then face to face with trouble;  
It is thus He calls you back  
From the land of dearth and famine  
To the land that has no lack.  
You would not hear in the sunshine;  
You hear in the midnight gloom.  
Behold, His tapers kindle  
Like stars in the quiet room.

Oh! face to face with trouble,  
Friend, I have often stood,  
To learn that pain has sweetness,  
To know that God is good.  
Arise and meet the daylight;  
Be strong and do your best!  
With an honest heart, and a childlike faith  
That God will do the rest.

## The Refiner

He sat by a fire of seven-fold heat  
As He watched the precious ore,  
And closer He bent with a searching gaze,  
As He heated it more and more.

He knew He had ore that could stand the test,  
And He wanted the finest gold,  
To mould as a crown for the King to wear,  
Set with gems of a price untold.

So He laid our gold on the burning fire,  
Tho' we fain would have said Him, "Nay";  
And He watched the dross that we had not seen  
As it melted and passed away.

And the gold grew brighter, and yet more bright,  
But our eyes were so dim with tears,  
We saw but the fire—not the Master's hand—  
And questioned with anxious fears.

Yet our gold shone out with a richer glow  
As it mirrored a Form above,  
That bent o'er the fire, unseen by us,  
With a look of ineffable love.

Can we think that it pleases His loving heart  
To cause us a moment's pain?  
Ah, no; but He saw thro' the present cross  
The bliss of eternal gain.

So He waited there with a watchful eye,  
With a love that is strong and sure,  
And His gold did not suffer a whit more heat  
Than was needed to make it pure!

# The Land of To-morrow

*Pen-pictures of the  
coming Kingdom*

"We stand on the borders of a new era. The present dispensation is almost finished. In a few more years, if prophecy be not thoroughly misinterpreted, we shall enter upon another condition. This poor earth of ours, which has been swathed in darkness, shall put on her garment of light. She hath toiled a long while in travail and sorrow. Soon shall her groanings end. Her surface, which hath been stained with blood, is soon to be purified by love, and a religion of peace is to be established. The hour is coming when storms shall be hushed, when tempests shall be unknown, when whirlwind and hurricane shall stay their mighty force, and when 'the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ'. But you ask me what sort of kingdom that it is to be, and whether I can show you any likeness thereof. I answer, No. 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of men, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him', in the next, the Millennial dispensation; 'but God hath revealed them unto us by His spirit'.

"Jesus, our Lord, is to be King of all the earth, and rule all nations in a glorious personal reign. The saints, as being kings in Christ, have a right to the whole world."

(C. H. Spurgeon, 1834-92.)

"Sin is not, as some suppose, a comparatively little thing. It is a deadly spiritual disease, as the word of God declares it to be; and no progress in education, no mental culture, can eradicate it from the heart, nor change depraved human nature. For, notwithstanding every effort at improvement the heart remains 'deceitful above all things and desperately wicked'. Until the return of the Lord Jesus, therefore, the present state of things will continue, and, as we shall see presently from the word of God, will become worse and worse.

The gospel, indeed, was to be preached 'for a witness unto all nations', but it was not to be the means of the conversion of the world. (Matt. 24. 14.) Moreover, from Acts 15. 14 we learn the character of the present dispensation, which is, that God takes out from among the Gentiles 'a people for His name', but does not convert all nations. This is confirmed by the parable of the wheat and the tares; for if the whole world were to be converted before the return of the Lord Jesus,

there would be no truth in the explanation given of it by our Lord Himself. He tells us that the tares (the children of the wicked ones) were to grow together with the wheat (the children of the kingdom), until the end of the age, namely, up to the time of His return. This, therefore, the word of the Lord Jesus, is in direct opposition to the common notion that the world will be converted previous to His coming again. . . .

As assuredly as the practical character of the Lord's second coming is really apprehended in the power of it, the most blessed effects upon the life and deportment of Christians will follow. By means of it we are taught what awaits the worldly, lying in the wicked one, and what will be the end of all this world's glory, pride and pomp. The future destiny of the children of God is also unfolded to us, even that we shall be perfectly conformed to the image of our risen Lord, both in soul and body, when we shall see Him as He is. Then shall we enter upon the possession of our inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away; and shall be seated with Jesus on His throne (Rev. 3. 21), to judge the world in union with Him, and to spend a happy eternity together with our Lord in glory 'Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.' (Rev. 22. 12.)

(George Müller, 1805-98.)

"As the doctrine stands in the Scripture, it is the flower of the Protevangel in Eden, the glorious outcome when the veil that is spread over all nations is destroyed, and death is swallowed up in victory; the future Age, after Patriarchal, Jewish, Pagan, and Christian ages, muffled in their gray mantles, with shadowy faces, have flitted for ever away. It is a symposium with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Bridegroom's wedding, the angels' delight, the overcomer's reward, the martyr's joy. It is the doctrine of the 'Day-Dawn' and 'Phosphor' of eternal glory, more sure than the vision on Tabor's height, or audible voice from heaven; part of the 'Sabbatism' that remains for the people of God; the earthly bloom of a 'kingdom that cannot be moved', when the voice that once shook the earth shall shake once more, 'not the earth only but also heaven'."

(Dr. N. West, circa. 1850.)

## A PORTRAIT OF LUKE

Luke, the Evangelist, physician and historian, is said by tradition to have been a painter, and perhaps in the picturesque qualities of his writing we may trace the origin of this pious opinion. There is a legend that he painted the portrait of the Virgin, and certainly the greater part of the little we know of our Lord's mother is due to St. Luke, who preserved for us the Magnificat, and drew in words that poetic picture of the Nativity adorned with the Nunc Dimittis and the Benedictus which pictorial art has never ceased to reproduce. There is always a widespread desire to discover the personalities of great writers, and surely there is no one who has any feeling for Christianity but must regret our ignorance about the four Evangelists. Luke is the only one of whose character it is possible to form any definite idea. Even in his case we must rely mainly upon conjecture, for the modest chronicler of the Acts of the Apostles has purposely withdrawn himself from the gaze of his readers. He never tells us who he was, nor asks for our sympathy or our praise for the many hardships which he and Paul bore, and the many heroisms they displayed together. He never even betrays his presence except by the use of the pronoun "we". All we know for certain is that the "beloved physician" never failed his friend, but was alone with him when he made "ready to be offered". There is no direct evidence as to whether he was a Jew or a Greek, but many authorities adhere to the latter conclusion. Luke shows little sympathy with the Jews as a nation, and always paints them as hindering the work of the Church. On the other hand, he betrays some tolerance for the heathen religion around him, and a just and sympathetic comprehension of the attitude of the Roman Governors towards the new faith.

But whether he belonged to "the people" or "the nations", the historian was an artist—a man of great literary genius, whose heaven-instilled purpose, while it inspired his work, never for a moment obscured his artistic skill. The object of the book of the Acts is, as we read it, twofold. First, the author desires to draw a picture of the early Church while it was still but an offshoot of Judaism; and secondly, to describe the bursting of the Judaic bonds by the real hero of the book—Paul. Inspired by his wonderful—we are tempted to say his Greek—love of beauty and happiness, Luke begins with an exquisite picture of the early Christian community. An ideal social life prevailed among the brethren. "No man lacked anything", for "they had but one heart and one mind". No one "called anything his own, but they had all things in common", and "breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and single-

ness of heart". We are told that "a great peace was upon them all", and that they possessed singular gifts of healing. Their increasing influence with the people disquieted the authorities, who, "doubting how far this would grow", summoned the apostles to appear before them and tried to bind them over to silence. Peter and John, however, replied to their accusers with light-hearted courage saying, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than to God, judge ye", and so far impressed the learned Gamaliel with their assurance that he begged his brethren to let them alone lest they themselves should be found fighting against God. When persecution threatened them Luke shows us the disciples assembling themselves together and praying that God seeing their peril, would grant unto His servants that with all boldness they might speak His word by stretching out His hand to heal, that signs and wonders might be done by the might of His holy child. In the next picture which Luke puts before us the state of the Church is somewhat changed. The brotherhood has been greatly enlarged, and we trace some diminution in the early simplicity and joyousness. There arose, we are told, a murmuring among the Christian poor because some were better cared for than others;—evidently there is no longer community of goods. Certain men are chosen for the work of practical philanthropy, among them Stephen, who by giving offence to the orthodox Jews, became the first martyr. In presenting Stephen to his readers Luke departs a little from his ordinary method of character-drawing. Generally he adheres strictly to the dramatic method, and allows his characters to reveal themselves by their own words. But in the case of Stephen it is not so, and the world knows Stephen better by what Luke tells us than by the long discourse which is reported as his. We are convinced by his biographer rather than by his eloquence that "he was full of faith and power", and that his hearers "were not able to resist the wisdom and power by which he spake", so that "all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly upon him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel". By the description of his actual martyrdom this impression of spiritual fascination is confirmed in the reader's mind, and perhaps the picture of Stephen "looking into heaven", seeing the "glory of God"; and forgiving his enemies, while they, "cut to the heart, gnashed upon him with their teeth", is for mere beauty of depiction the finest passage in the Acts. This moment of tragedy is the one which Luke chooses as the one in which to present Paul. "The witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man whose name was Saul".

Once more the scene changes. Henceforward the reader's interest centres round Paul,—his conversion, his perils, his trials and his defences. As we read Paul's words as recorded by his friend it is impossible not to wonder to what extent they have been modified by passing through the medium of another mind. Was Luke's report always accurate? Verbal accuracy was surely impossible. It is out of the question. If a speech took some hours to deliver it is not possible to compress it into a short paragraph and maintain verbal accuracy. All the same, the short report may be a true one. A man may give in ten minutes an account of a speech he has heard in the House of Commons, and may convey truly both the subject matter of what was spoken, and also the manner and mental characteristics of the speaker, though he give up all attempts at a literal repetition of the sentences. Such a report could not be called imaginary, though it makes of necessity some tax upon the understanding and imagination of the reporter. The account would remain essentially true, and in this matter of essential truth, so far as Paul is concerned, every reader of the Bible who has the smallest grasp of character is in a position to verify Luke's account. Is the Paul whose adventures we follow in the Acts the same perfectly original character who reveals himself to us so unreservedly in his letters? Undoubtedly he is. No one could fail to recognize the great Apostle.

Nevertheless, every portrait reveals the painter to some degree, and in all Luke's sketches of character we see the same aversion to dogmatism, and the same fair attitude toward "those of the contrary part". He dwells particularly upon any sympathetic allusion to the classical standpoint made by the apostles, repeating with evident sympathy the words spoken by Paul suggesting the nearness of God toward those philosophers who had "felt after Him"; and again, when Paul prevents the populace from worshipping him, we catch a glimpse of Luke's artistic appreciation of the joyousness inherent in a point of view which, however erroneous, bore testimony to the goodness of God, "*who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless He left not himself without a witness in that He did good, and gave us rain*

*from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.*"

All through his book Luke shows the characteristics of a man of much education. He seems almost to share the High Priest's surprise at the eloquence and force of Peter and John, "seeing that they were unlearned and ignorant men", and he displays that distrust of the multitude so common in men of exceptional gifts exceptionally cultivated. Witness his allusions to "fellows of the baser sort", and his account of the mass meeting of the Ephesian silversmiths, where "some cried one thing and some another, for the more part knew not why they were come together". The sudden changes of mind observable in crowds strike the historian's notice. He describes how the barbarians of the island on which Paul was shipwrecked, on seeing him bitten by a snake, concluded that he must be some murderer flying from justice whom vengeance had overtaken. "*They looked that he should have swollen and fallen down dead suddenly; but after they had looked a great while and seen no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god.*" Again we see a trace of the same feeling in the almost satirical account of the behaviour of the Jewish rabble before Gallio, when with utter inconsequence they beat Sosthenes in the Judgment Hall because they could not be revenged on Paul, and we feel that Luke is not wholly out of sympathy with the supercilious Gallio, who looked on at what he considered a quarrel "about words and names and their law," and "cared for none of these things". To Gallio himself it can never have occurred that his name would be known two thousand years later solely in connection with a petty riot he hardly noticed, any more than it occurred to Festus how bitterly the course of history would satirize his contemptuous summing up of Christianity as a question of Jewish "superstition" and of "one Jesus, who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive". Man has a treacherous memory. It is hopeless to say what he may remember, or to gauge how much he will forget. Agrippa, Felix, Festus, Gallio would have been as dead men out of mind but for Luke's pencil. Luke showed wherein lies "*the artist's vantage o'er the king.*"

## A NOTE ON JOHN 21.5

"Children, have ye any meat" is the Authorised Version's way of recording the question addressed by the waiting Lord, on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, to the unsuccessful toil-weary fishermen after their night's fruitless work. While it is fairly obvious that Jesus was asking if they had caught any fish, He does not use the word usually equivalent

to "fish" (*Ichthys*) but an entirely different and unrelated word (*Prospagion*). This word has caused the translators and commentators no end of trouble, as reference to the various translations will show. We append a few of these translations to show the line of thought the various versions give. "Children have ye aught to eat." (*Revised Version*.)

"My children, have you anything to eat." (*Twentieth Century.*)

"Children . . . have you any food there." (*Weymouth.*)

"Children, have you any food. (*Diaglott.*)

"Children, perhaps you have nothing to eat." (*Rotherham.*)

"Lads, have you any meat." (*Young.*)

"Lads, have you got anything." (*Moffatt.*)

"Lads, have ye caught anything to eat." (*Ferrar Fenton.*)

"Little children, have ye any viands." (*Concordant.*)

Obviously all the translators are referring to the fish they thought to have been in the net—and while Jesus is also referring to fish, He did not put His question that way. He used a word which does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament, which really means "to eat with or alongside".

The force of this word was brought out very vividly to an Englishman, resident in an official capacity in Palestine, during a journey from Tiberias to Jerusalem. He was well acquainted with the Arabic version of the New Testament, and knew the Greek "*Prospagion*" had been translated by the Arabic "*Idiam*", which, he had been

led to believe, was more a classical word than a word of current usage. He had to stand in a crowded bus for about half the journey, but at Nablus—the nearest to Shechem, the Sychar of Jesus' day (John 4. 5.)—a seat next to a Palestinian Jew become vacant.

Availing himself of this seat, he heard the Jew ask one of several boys who came round the bus offering food for sale, for two small loaves. On the top of each loaf was a "*kufta*" (or rissole) evidently intended to be eaten with the loaf. The Jew did not want the "*kufta*" and demanded the loaves without them. Indignantly the boy refused to accede to his demand, blurting out with considerable vexation, "What, sell my loaves without their '*Idiam*'?—never!"

The Englishman was greatly interested in the little episode. Here he had the key to the word which Jesus used. "*Prospagion*" meant something to eat with the bread", to make the bread go down—exactly as we to-day would eat butter, cheese, jam, and even meat and fish to help the bread along its way. Some commentators have suggested the word "relish", but that is not quite the thought. It could be any eatable that was "extra" to the bread.

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# BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

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hardness as a good  
soldier of Jesus Christ.

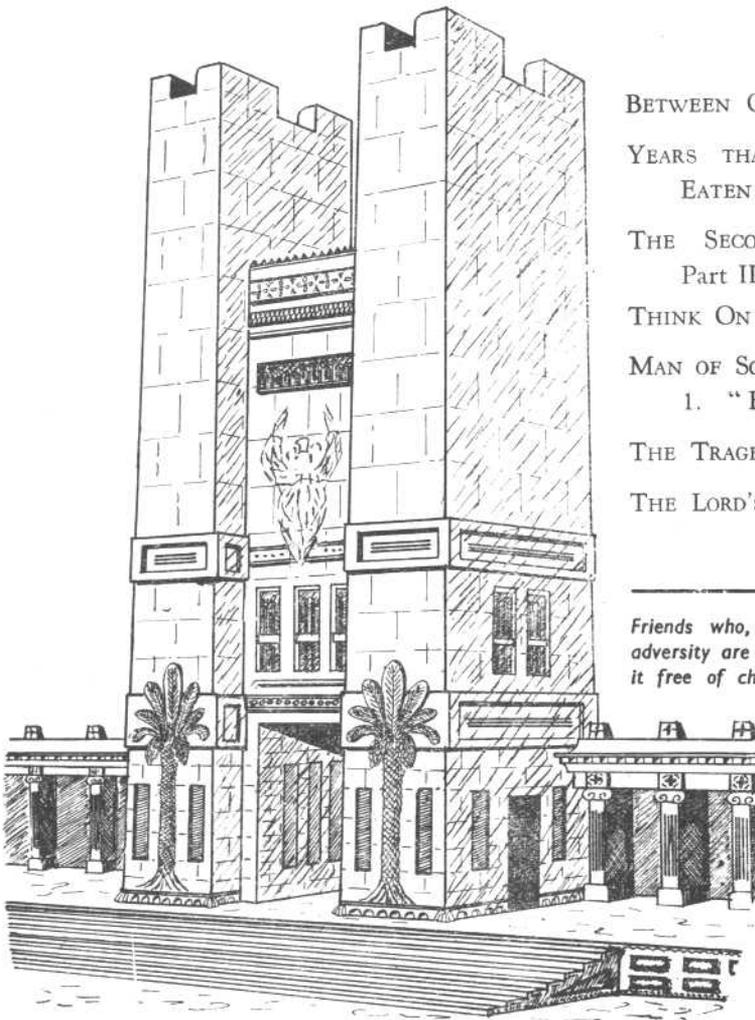
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JUNE, 1953

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adversity are unable to pay for this journal may have  
it free of charge upon request, renewed annually.*



Lift up your heads, O ye gates.  
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors,  
And the King of glory shall come in.

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## BETWEEN OURSELVES

The Annual General Convention will be held during the August holiday season this year at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1, and arrangements are now in hand. Sessions will commence on the afternoon of Saturday, 1st August, and conclude at the end of the afternoon on Monday, 3rd August. Programmes will be circulated in due course and in the meantime details can be obtained from the Convention Secretary, Bro. D. Parker, 13, New Road, Langley, Slough, Bucks. Applications for accommodation should be addressed to Bro. H. Charlton, Ryvers Farm, London Road, Langley, Slough, Bucks. It is hoped to hold a baptismal service in connection with the Convention and brethren desiring to take advantage of this opportunity are asked to advise Bro. Parker at as early a date as possible.

\* \* \*

We have pleasure in giving friends the following announcement received from our brethren in America. "The Bible Students Unity Convention Committee wishes to announce that the forthcoming 1953 convention will again be held at Hotel Macatawa, near Holland, Michigan, beginning Sunday, July 5th, and ending Saturday, July 11th. All enquiries concerning hotel rates, transportation, etc., as well as requests for the booklet containing the 1952 convention report, should be directed to the Convention Committee, c/o Berean Bible Students, P.O. Box 125, Cicero 50, Illinois." (Friends writing from England will of course add U.S.A. to above address. A copy of the above-mentioned convention report has been received at the office of the *Monthly* and we find it to be a most interesting account of a gathering which, we are persuaded, has been organised and conducted in the spirit of the Master. May the 1953 gathering be equally characteristic of those things which are good in His sight.)

\* \* \*

Lovers of Weymouth's modern English translation will be glad to know that after quite a long time out of print, this well-known translation is once again available in several editions, both pocket and library sizes. This new edition is without notes. Any bookseller can obtain copies for those interested, but for the convenience of our readers we are holding in stock the 7½ in. x 5 in. edition, cloth bound, at 9/6 post free (\$1.50). This is a handsome book, cloth with gold lettering on spine, with dust jacket, 458 pages, and makes an acceptable gift. More expensive editions in various bindings

are available and can be obtained to order if desired as follows:

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Pocket edition, Paste Grain ...	17/- post free.

\* \* \*

It is with much pleasure that we announce the forthcoming visit of Bro. and Sister P. L. Read, of St. Louis, U.S.A., to this country for a short while this summer. Brother Read was last in this country twenty-one years ago but there will be many who remember him and will look forward to renewing fellowship with him and with Sister Read. Unfortunately our brother's stay in this country is strictly limited and the purposes for which he is visiting Britain will not allow him to make a regular "pilgrim" trip through the land; he has however been able to set aside some time at certain places where he has to visit and will be happy to minister to the friends at those places. In order to enable as many as possible to benefit from these arrangements we give below list of places and dates and will be glad to give full details of local arrangements to anyone on request.

It is quite impossible for Brother Read to accept any other engagements beyond those shown on this list and it is useless therefore to write us asking if another visit can be arranged.

Aug. 1-3.	London Convention (Conway Hall).
5.	Wed. London (East).
9.	Sun. Rugby.
12.	Wed. London (Central).
13.	Thur. Newcastle.
14.	Fri. Edinburgh.
16.	Sun. Glasgow (United Meeting).
17-18.	Mon. Tues. Belfast.
19.	Wed. Birmingham.
23.	Sun. Cardiff.
25.	Tues. Luton.
26.	Wed. Oxford.
30.	Sun. London (Farewell Meeting).

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### Gone From Us

\* \* \*

Sis. L. Carpenter (Brentwood).  
Bro. H. McLaren (London).

*"Till the day break, and the shadows flee away."*

## Years that the Locusts have Eaten A Reflection

*"That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten, and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten, and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten."*

—(Joel 1. 4.).

A sad and sorry tale indeed. To an agricultural and pastoral people such as Israel it was tragedy. All their labours of the past gone for nothing, their crops destroyed, their pastures barren, their flocks and herds perishing for lack of food. These four ruthlessly destructive forces, the palmerworm, the locust, the cankerworm and the caterpillar, the Lord's great army which He had sent amongst them, had completed their mission and become the instrument of Divine judgment on Israel. Because the nation had forsaken the covenant, apostasised from the true faith, and gone after other gods, the Lord had done according to His Word and brought blight, mildew and decay upon all their goods and leanness into their souls. The land that once had been so goodly a land, rich in vines and fig-trees, flowing with milk and honey, had become a sun-scorched and barren waste, offering no sustenance to man or beast. All the work of years and all the achievements of the past were as nothing, for God had hidden His face and the glory of Israel was departed.

It is easy to dismiss all this as the penalty of Israel's unfaithfulness and to leave it so, but the problem is not so simple as that. Israel was not wholly unfaithful and not all her people were apostates. There were many faithful hearts in each generation, men and women who truly loved God and sought so far as in them lay to honour and keep the covenant made with their fathers. And even of those who turned aside from the way and served other gods there were many who repented and turned back again to renew their vows to the Lord of hosts. Israel was not wholly bad and the light of God's truth was never entirely extinguished. In even the darkest times there was a Samuel or an Elijah to hold aloft the sacred standards and seven thousand beside who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Yet in spite of all this the calamity was all embracing and complete. The good as well as the bad were included in the common ruin. All alike looked up to heavens that were as brass and upon an earth that was dry and barren. All alike beheld their enemies invade their land, capture their cities and spoil their goods. All alike at the last went into captivity

and saw their land no more. And although the bitterness of loss was no sharper in the hearts of the righteous than in the hearts of the evil, the righteous did have the added realisation that their suffering was not of their own making. Nothing they had done deserved the fate that was theirs and all the work they had done for God in past years was now as though it had never been. The Temple was destroyed and no more would the sweet singers of Israel beautify the holydays with the strains of sacred song and the notes of harp and trumpet. The priests had been slain and no longer would be holy sacrifices be offered that the people be cleansed from sin. The young men had been taken into captivity and never again would the schools of the prophets attract the fervour and enthusiasm of youth, pupils sitting at the feet of some saintly prophet or teacher that they might in their turn go forth and keep the faith of the one true God alive in the land. All these things had gone and it must have seemed to Joel, as it did to so many of his contemporaries, that God had forsaken His people and made null and void all the glorious things that had been done in His Name, and all the triumphs that had been achieved in years that were past. Like a swarm of all-devouring locusts, the judgments of God had visited Israel and left them nothing but desolation and the bitterness of memories.

But God always delivers at the end. His wrath does not endure for ever, lest the spirit should fail from before him and the souls that He hath made. (Isa. 57. 16.) In wrath He remembers mercy, as Habakkuk pleaded with Him. So it comes about that Joel was not only a prophet of judgment but also a prophet of deliverance. The dark night would eventually pass and the fair morning come, the brightness of the day when God would gather His people and pour out His spirit upon all flesh. He waits only for the repentance of those who have strayed away from Him and so brought His judgment upon themselves. So we have it that when the priests and the people obeyed Joel's fervent summons to assemble before the Lord, to weep between the porch and the altar, to acknowledge their sin and beseech the Lord for the deliverance that only He can give—God delivered. He removed far off from them the great army of judgment that had destroyed their land, He promised peace and plenty for the future, and a wiping out of all the sorrows of **this**

time of trouble. "I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten" He told them. The work and achievement of past years, so ruthlessly destroyed by the invaders, was not lost after all. God would restore it and set all things that are good in their former places. What a heart-cheering message that must have been for those in Israel who had laboured long and faithfully in the Lord's service only to see their life's work vanish like smoke in the troubles and desolation brought about by the judgments that came upon the nation.

What a parable for our own times! We too, we who are the Lord's ambassadors in the world, have seen so much of our life's work wither away and die in these last times. We look back to our earlier days in the way of the Lord, the fervour and enthusiasm with which we preached the message, the numbers who came to listen to our presentations, the meetings, the activities, the joyous gathering together for study and worship, the convocations and conventions and the many-sided aspects of our fellowship together. To-day we sadly write "Ichabod" across that colourful page of our lives' experience, for truly the glory has departed. And the more thoughtful amongst us must surely at times ask themselves "Has it all been wasted? Was it all really so important and momentous a period in the history of the Church, and the world, as we were led to believe? What has become of all that was said and done in those halcyon days; has it all vanished into oblivion as though those things had never been? Has God made no use of all that was done after all?" To all those questions that thus intrude themselves from time to time there is one answer. "*I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten.*" It matters not that the increasing apathy toward Christian faith and teaching so characteristic of this generation makes a work of the dimensions we knew in times past quite out of the question. It matters not that increasing age and the failure of the youth of this generation to pick up the flaming torch from failing hands gives small hope of any such work ever being done again. It matters not that our own failure to measure up as much as we might have done to the tremendous concept of a Christian brotherhood fully illumined by an accurate knowledge of the Divine Plan standing before the world as a living witness to the coming Kingdom has found us out at the last. We have not done all that we might have done; we have done many things that we ought not to have done; but we have at least tried to manifest the Kingdom in measure. And nothing of all that has been done is wasted. We

are now living in the time of Divine judgment on the world for its evil and we cannot help but be involved in those judgments. The locusts are abroad in the earth and our own work must needs be affected by that fact. But we have the promise. "*I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten.*" In that confidence we can wait in quietness and confidence for the deliverance the Lord has promised, knowing that when it comes it will mean the outpouring of the Divine Spirit upon all flesh.

Holy men of old knew this experience. It was the lot of most of the heroes of faith of Old Testament times to see their life's work vanish away and to die in comparative obscurity if not disappointment. Elijah converted the nation and wrought a mighty work in Israel. Kings quailed before him, courtiers and priests were silent in his presence, the common people adored him. Yet at the close of his life, spectacular as it was to Elisha the only onlooker, the nation was already in great measure relapsed into idolatry. Samuel the uncrowned king, the last of the Judges, at the height of his career went from place to place every year administering justice, and all Israel hung on his words. But the last we see of him is an old man living obscurely in a country village teaching the ways of God to a few young lads while another reigns as king over Israel. Moses led Israel forty years in the wilderness and nurtured a virile and unconquerable generation in the desert preparatory to the victorious assault on the Promised Land which gave Israel a land they could call their own. But Moses was destined not to enter that land himself. He died, alone, upon a mountain top under conditions of such obscurity that no man knoweth of his grave to this day. John the Baptist had kings and people paying him court; to his desert retreat there came Jerusalem and all Judea, hanging upon his words and being baptised of him. It is probable that his short ministry of six months was more successful outwardly than that of any other of the prophets. Yet he ended his days in prison under the hand of the executioner. Jeremiah strove hard to preserve a remnant who retained faith at a time when the whole nation was going to pieces, but he spent his last days an exile in Egypt. The Apostle Paul, the greatest of them all, and perhaps the man who had done the greatest works for God and suffered more than any for the sake of his mission, knew that most certainly his work would be vitiated after his death by "grievous wolves, entering in among you, not sparing the flock," and when, on that spring morning in A.D.61, he walked

out of Rome along the Appian Way to the place of execution, and bent his head to the executioner's axe, he died knowing that the glory of Christianity as he had preached it was already overshadowed by the dark night of superstition, error, faithlessness and fanatical hatred that was to endure for so many centuries. But to all of these faithful stalwarts the promise holds good "I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten" and in a time yet to come the real fruitage of all that

they have done will be manifest to the glory of God and the blessing of redeemed humanity.

These are our examples and the stories of their lives should give us courage. No matter what discouragement and disappointment this present "day of small things" brings to us we have always to remember that the day is still to come when God arises to pour out His Spirit on all flesh, and in that day we ourselves will have restored to us "the years that the locust hath eaten."

## The Second Epistle of John

Comments on the writings  
of the "Beloved Apostle"

### Part II.—(Conclusion)

"For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." (vs. 7.)

These words are virtually a repetition of those in the early part of chapter 4 of John's First Epistle. There were many theories abroad in John's own day which would, as we would say, "deny the Ransom". They were directed toward doing away with the reality of Jesus' earthly life, denying that the "Man Christ Jesus" was in actual fact the Son of God sent down from heaven, trying to find some doctrinal philosophy which would do away with the necessity of believing that Jesus did indeed die on the Cross, descend into the grave, and rise again the third day. So they supposed, variously, that the visible man Jesus of Nazareth was an ordinary man of Adam's race in whom the Divine Spirit Jesus dwelt for three and a half years, from Jordan to Calvary, taking His departure at the moment the human man died on the Cross; or that the whole appearance of Jesus on earth was a phantom, a kind of optical illusion, the Divine Spirit being Himself invisible but manifesting Himself through an appearance like unto a man having no reality. All such theories deny the very basis of the Atonement as we understand it and as John understood it. To him, as to us, the Word was made flesh, born of a virgin, and lived on earth a Man amongst men, experiencing the joys and sufferings common to men. His death on the Cross was a real death and for that short time in Joseph's tomb He was truly dead. His resurrection on the third day was a true resurrection and from thence He sat on the right hand of God, "from whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead". All this was essential doctrine to John and it is essential doctrine to us. We cannot maintain Christian faith without it and

we cannot "profess and call ourselves Christians" unless we believe it. Hence John is by no means extreme or fanatical when he brands all who refuse thus to confess that Jesus came in the flesh as deceivers and antichrists.

We must note here that the orthodox creeds of Christendom to-day themselves claim that Jesus came in the flesh. Whatever may be the implications of the doctrine of the Trinity as defined in those creeds, they do insist that Jesus was in any case "perfect Man". Even although we consider that the commonly accepted doctrinal definition of the "Incarnation" is grievously in error in certain vital respects we must at least recognise that Christian churches in general do hold to the reality of our Lord's humanity. The old Gnostic and other theories of John's day no longer have any influence among responsible Christian people. Certain small groups of "mystics" who try to create synthetic religions compounded partly of Christian ethics and partly of Hindu or other Eastern philosophies do propound views somewhat akin to these First Century heresies but such groups are manifestly far removed from practical Christianity. It is true to-day, as it was in that of John, that the real test by which professing Christians should be tried is the one that is before us here. "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?". It is true that not many have a really accurate understanding of the manner in which He laid aside the glory He had with the Father before the world was, and became Man, but if at any rate it is believed that He did in fact come to the world as Man, and did literally die on the Cross, and was truly resurrected, then at least there is no ground for the charge of being an antichrist.

"Look to yourselves, that ye lose not those things

which ye have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward." (Vs. 8.)

The A.V. has "we" in this verse, but it should really be "ye". John is exhorting his friend and sister in Christ to continued zeal and faithfulness. Like the Apostle Paul thirty years previously, Sister Kyria had fought a good fight and kept the faith, and now a crown of righteousness was laid up for her "against that day"—the day when all who should "sleep in Jesus" throughout the Age were to receive the things for which they hoped and prayed. But even at this point there is danger of backsliding and consequent loss. That was made clear in John's First Epistle and it is made clear again here. This verse has been a constant warning and exhortation through all time since John first inscribed the words upon his sheet of papyrus. To-day it is used as a word of greeting, a message sent from one to another, valued because of its combined assurance of glory to come and warning against losing that glory by carelessness when it is almost as it were within our reach. The very language reminds us that if we do fail of gaining the prize it will not be because God has been unfaithful but because we have been. We are not bidden to look to God lest we lose those things, as though He would deprive us of them if we are not diligent in holding Him to the compact. We are bidden to look to ourselves, lest we lose. That is where the danger lies. He ever abideth faithful; He will not let go our hands. We may insist on being unfaithful; then it is we who separate ourselves from Him and go our own way alone. So we need very carefully to watch ourselves, that we maintain our confidence and faith steadfast to the end.

"Whoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." (vs 9.)

This word "transgresseth" does not mean a mere departure from the right way or path. It does not indicate a lapse into some erroneous or inaccurate understanding of some element of the faith.

The Greek means to go forward or beyond or in advance. The reference is to those who claim to be entering into a state of "advanced" doctrine so far forward of what has been revealed by the Holy Spirit that they are in fact running in front of God. He grants "meat in due season for the household of faith" and allows the veil obscuring further understanding of Divine truth to be drawn aside more and more as fast as His people are able to comprehend that further understanding. It is good and praiseworthy for any of us to seek the being always watchful in following that enlargement of

understanding whenever the Spirit leads. But we also have to remember that for each of us individually as well as for the Church as a whole there must be the times of halting to assimilate the new truths revealed and to consolidate the ground gained. Progress in Divine truth is always characterised by this alternate advance into new light and then the halting while that new light is fitted into the fabric of Christian life and belief. Now the Apostle is not denouncing that kind of advancing neither is he branding as transgressors those who thus seek to know ever more clearly what the Lord is revealing. He is talking rather of those who in their eagerness to find something "new" or something "different" wherewith to "shine" before their fellows, would go beyond what God is opening up and themselves add to the revealed Word. That is how the 20th Century translation puts it, in words that seem accurately to represent John's thought. "Who goes beyond the limits of the teaching of Christ has failed to find God." In modern parlance, the man has over-reached himself. Rather than rest content with the rate of progress in Divine Truth which the teaching and leading of the Holy Spirit affords him, he would force his own way forward and blaze his own trail through the unknown, putting his own imaginations for doctrines and his own words for God's. It is not surprising that in such case, to use the words of the 20th Century, he "fails to find God".

"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deed." (vs 10-11.)

This needs thinking about. It is true that many believers are so dogmatic about their own doctrinal outlook that a text such as this is very gladly and literally received and all who do not subscribe to their own outline of doctrine and agree with them in every matter of Christian belief are unhesitatingly relegated to this category and cut off from fellowship. The thoughtful Christian knows, however, that this cannot possibly be the meaning of John's exhortation here. It is quite absurd and illogical to expect all of Christ's disciples to view every doctrinal teaching in just the same light. Differences of viewpoint arise for a multitude of reasons, many of them quite outside our own control. There is not a shadow of justification for suggesting that failure to agree on some aspect of Scripture teaching, whether it be in connection with the time or manner or object of the Second Advent, the relation between the symbols of spiritual truths contained in Old Testament Tabernacle ceremonial and the spiritual truths themselves, details of prophetic interpretation, or any other such matter,

justifies the application of this verse to any fellow-believer with whom we may have such a difference. John is talking, not about these secondary doctrines, but about the fundamental basis, the primary doctrine, of our faith, "What think ye of Christ?". It is the one who denies the humanity of Jesus Christ while upon earth who is to be excluded from the benefits of fellowship, the one who refuses to accept the basic Scriptural truth that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners". It is the one who denies that we stand in need of salvation and without Christ and His atoning sacrifice can never receive salvation that must not go on his way with the sound of "God speed" ringing in his ears.

In this our day such people fall into two classes. There are the Theosophists, the Spiritualists, the Eastern mystics and others who find no place in their theology for the Fall of man, the condemnation to death, the necessity for the coming of Jesus in the flesh to give His life a ransom for all, and in His resurrection to become Lord of all, of the one class. There are the modernists, materially-minded believers, who disown the same things and disclaim belief in the miraculous element in Scripture, who likewise have no place for a suffering Christ. In both cases the particular theology of the group may have much to commend it; there is usually a high appreciation of the ethical value of the teachings of Christ and a great reverence for Him as a Teacher, but that is all. Human salvation is to come by a conscious and deliberate conformity of one's self to the example of Christ, by one's own power. There is no admission that fallen man is quite unable to do such a thing unaided. Like Israel of old the cry is "all that the Lord hath spoken will we do, and be obedient" and, again like Israel, no realisation at all that the thing is impossible.

So these are they whom we are not to receive into our houses nor bid them God speed. The injunction is not to be held to apply to the ordinary conventions of politeness and courtesy, but to the closer circle of Christian fellowship in the Church. Such are not to be granted the privileges of the brotherhood, the spiritual communion or fraternal intercourse of the *ecclesia*. "What concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" (2 Cor. 6. 15). The basis of our fellowship is the ransom for all given by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. That Ransom, and the doctrines upon which it depends and which are indissolubly associated with it—Fall, Condemnation, Repentance, Justification, Reconciliation, Resurrection—are the fundamental doctrines upon which we must be agreed and without which we cannot have fellowship. It is a remark-

able thing that in our own differences of viewpoint within our own fellowship these things are never questioned. Whatever we do disagree upon, we never disagree upon these. And all other doctrines are secondary and there is room for difference of thought provided we respect our brother's views and display tolerance in the expression of same, and there is no excuse for divisions on that account. We all would surely do well to re-examine our own position in these matters and see to it that in contending earnestly for the faith we do choose the fundamental doctrines about which to contend.

The word "God Speed" here is a translation of a Greek salutation which had the significance of wishing prosperity and success and was used in correspondence in much the same way as we begin our own letters with "Greeting" and perhaps close them with "all good wishes". Acts 15. 23 is an example of Christian usage of the word: "The Apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles" and so is Jas. 1. 1 "James . . . to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting." Such good wishes, insofar as the practice and service of the Christian faith is concerned, should not be extended toward those who come under the ban of the Apostle in verses 7-10 of this Epistle.

John had a great deal more to say, but for reasons unexplained he preferred to finish his Epistle at this point. The rest was to be said by word of mouth. "Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with pen and ink—but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full." (Vs. 12.) The 20th Century says "I would rather not trust it to pen and ink." The shadow of persecution was still dark over the Church; perhaps there were matters to be talked about, truths to be taught, that in the then suspicious attitude of the civil powers were best not committed to paper. John expected to see his sister-in-the-faith Kyria at some future time and promised that all the rest would be said then, to their mutual edification and joy. And so with his usual thoughtfulness he closes this brief letter with the final greetings from those who were with him "The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen." (Vs. 13.) A little homely touch, these young people in the Truth taking advantage of this opportunity to send their personal greetings to their aunt according to the flesh, their sister according to the Spirit, in the faraway city, and in so doing attaining for themselves an immortality that they never for one moment suspected. We do not know their names and we shall never know their names, until the great assembly beyond the Vail. But we know them to be our brethren and sisters in the Lord also, and

we reach hands back to them over the span of two thousand years and see in them some of the great army of unnamed ones who have preceded us in the Christian walk and been faithful unto death. Perhaps this is the most encouraging thought we can take in concluding our consideration of this short Epistle. In all the ages of the Church's history there have been the unnamed ones, quietly pursuing their allotted tasks and treading their allotted paths,

known only to their Saviour and Master, but brought safely home by Him at the last. So it can be with us; we may never have done anything spectacular or stood in any prominent position or been known by any but the tiniest circle of brethren, but Jesus knows our names and watches our course in life, and will welcome us just as warmly as the more well-known ones, when we reach Home.

*The End.*

## Think on These Things

*An exhortation*

The Apostle Paul, in Phil. 4, 8, gives very good advice to the Christian believer. He tells us (see, for example, *Rotherham* and *Diaglott* translations of this verse) to think on the things which are true, dignified, righteous, pure, lovely, of good report. This does not mean just reading about these things, as we would read a newspaper or a novel, to keep abreast with the world's happenings, or to have an hour's entertainment. The Greek word '*legizomai*' rendered 'think' is defined by the Greek lexicons as follows: 'To think upon, ponder' (*Bagster*); 'Think upon, consider' (*Robinson*); 'Consider, weigh' (*Souter, Abbott*; *Smith* is similar). The *Diaglott* translation therefore very aptly translates 'Attentively consider these things'. These things to which the Apostle is referring are worthy of our deepest and careful consideration. They are not things which are to afford us momentary consideration, and then to pass from the mind. They are to be considered, pondered over, weighed up. They are to be stored in our mind, our memory, to be reflected upon. By this process they will become part and parcel of ourselves. We think this is what the wise man is referring to when he said—'As he (a man—or woman as well) *thinketh in his heart, so is he*'. In this way our characters are formed—developed, for good or bad—for right or wrong. No wonder that the Apostle admonishes us to set our mind upon the heavenly things—for it is by the renewing of our mind (through heavenly knowledge—Col. 3. 10) that we are transformed into the Divine likeness. (Col. 3. 2 RV; Rom. 12. 2 with 2 Cor. 3. 18.)

In thinking of those things which are true, dignified, righteous, pure, lovely, our minds naturally and truly turn (as Christians) to our Lord Jesus, our great pattern and example. In Him we truly find these things personified. Can we think of another character which so sets forth and exhibits to us the things that are true, dignified, righteous,

pure, lovely. The Apostles were indeed noble examples, for us, but they were also, as we are told in Acts 14. 15, men of like passions as ourselves, and in that way fall short, as they themselves have acknowledged, of the glorious example and standard set before us in our beloved Lord. It is for this reason that the Master alone can speak to us and say 'Follow Me!' No one else can speak in this way. The Apostles never exhorted us to follow them. They did indeed say—see RV of I Cor. 11. 1—'imitate us as we imitate Christ,' that is, follow our example—do as we do, follow the Master. So we have such good advice as 'Attentively regard Jesus' (Heb. 3. 1 *Diaglott*.) 'Looking away to . . . Jesus. Consider Him attentively' (Heb. 12. 2, 3 *Diaglott*.) Looking away to Jesus suggests to us, (as some have pointed out) that we are looking away from all others, and looking unto Him. 'They saw no one, save Jesus only.' This was of course very appropriate in the letter to the Hebrews, where the writer is drawing attention to the contrast between the old arrangement and the new. They were to look away from Moses, Aaron, and the other leaders of the past, and to realise that God's great Messenger now speaking to them was the Son 'This is My Beloved Son . . . hear ye Him.'

The word 'consider' in Heb. 12. 3 ('consider Him') is the Greek word '*analogizomai*' which *Bagster's* Analy. Greek lexicon defines as meaning 'consider attentively' and *Robinson* as 'consider attentively—reflect upon'. This calls for deep and reverent meditation. The word consider in Heb. 3. 1 is '*katanoeoo*' which is defined by *Bagster* as meaning 'Observe, mark, contemplate.' *Robinson* gives the further definition of 'To mind accurately' while *Abbott-Smith* says 'consider carefully' and *Souter* 'Take in a fact about'. This draws to our attention the importance of careful and accurate information concerning this great One who we are

exhorted to observe or contemplate. This brings us into line with the requirements of Phil. 4. 8. There are many things which we may read about in a newspaper or a novel which may be neither true, or lovely, they may not be dignified, they may not be just. It is of course necessary for us to be acquainted with the things happening in the world, that we may note the things foretold in our Father's word of Truth, and where we are on the stream of time. But we do not, or should not, let our minds be filled with these things, that they become part and parcel of us. But the things with which we are to fill our minds and be transformed are the things which are true, dignified, righteous, pure, lovely, and of good report.

In thinking of our Lord as the exemplification of these things, let us see that we are conforming our pattern to the ideal. A thing may be true, and yet may not be pure, and it will therefore fall short of our ideal. It will therefore not be one of those things with which we should fill our minds. A thing may be lovely, but it may not be true. It, no less than the first mentioned, must also be discarded. The things which we learn about our Lord, must not only be pure, and lovely, but they must also be true, otherwise they are not the 'κατανοεω' knowledge which we have seen mentioned in Heb. 3. 1. We should note that first in the list of those things which we are to think upon and lay to heart, as some translations give Phil. 4. 8, are those things which are true. They may be pure, they may be lovely, but if they are not true, they are not giving us an accurate knowledge of our beloved Lord and Master. They are not the things which we should think over and lay to heart.

All Christians must agree that the only accurate source of information concerning our beloved Master is that given us in the New Testament—the pictures which the writers of the New Testament have drawn for us of Him—what he said and did. We agree that the nearer we get to the thought of the original in which the manuscripts of the New Testament were written the better opportunity we have for getting a fuller and more accurate knowledge of the Son of God.

In addition to the New Testament writings, there have, of course, been many good books written to try and help us understand more fully and with accuracy the things which are true, and pure, and lovely, as portrayed in Jesus of Nazareth. Good men have concentrated their studies upon the New Testament, often in its original language, that they may seek to draw therefrom and faithfully portray the portrait and character of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Complete knowledge in all things is not given to any one at the present time, and it must

be frankly acknowledged that while much that is true and good has been set forth by such writers, they are not entirely free from errors. But as such they have indeed been on the right track, in seeking to ascertain from, and set forth, the New Testament teaching concerning the Man Christ Jesus.

Such general approval cannot however be given to all that has been written on the subject. There has been a tendency in these modern days for many fiction writers (among others) to set forth in story form an alleged picture of Jesus of Nazareth. Such fiction writers are often accustomed to build a story based on some incident in history with the details drawn in the main from their imagination and not facts. The incident may have happened; the character may have existed according to history, but the picture painted may be a completely false one due to the fact that the details are created not out of ascertained facts, but the imagination of the writer. In this way have legends and stories grown up. Much that has been written in this way by modern writers comes under this category, when they have attempted to write the story of Jesus of Nazareth. The New Testament is not the background of their work, but their fertile imagination. The real work and mission of our beloved Lord and Master, His real teachings, are often sadly lacking from such pictures, and much that is said about Him in such writings are often mentioned with the complete lack of the first essentials of the things mentioned in Phil. 4. 8—i.e., truth. The true Christian should therefore take heed how he handles such books, and of the impression, so often false, which may be created upon his mind as a result. The only safe guide to a careful and accurate knowledge of the Son of God is that afforded us by the New Testament itself, with, to a certain degree, the assistance of those books and helps which merely act as pointers and guides to enable us to understand what is therein written. Let us make sure that the things with which we are indeed filling our minds, especially in connection with the Son of God, are not only pure and lovely and of good report, but are true as well. Knowledge of essential things built on any other foundation than TRUTH itself is a waste of time, and can be a delusion and a snare.

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The supreme example in the way of the Cross is Jesus. In His self-denying life and self-sacrificing ministry we discover how the Supreme Will of God lies like the transverse beam of a literal cross athwart the most noble and most natural aspirations of well-intentioned men.

## MAN OF SORROWS

A Study in Isaiah 53

### Part I.—"BEHOLD MY SERVANT."

The latter part of the Book of Isaiah, from chapter 40 to the end, presents a grand panorama of the Divine Plan of Salvation, the means by which that salvation is accomplished and the nature of the world that is to witness the accomplishment of that salvation. This noble prophecy presents a picture of the "servant of Jehovah", a "suffering servant", who because of his unquestioning loyalty to the Father of Heaven and his uncomplaining acceptance of the suffering on earth which that loyalty involves, becomes the means whereby God is able to reconcile to Himself "whosoever will". The story closes with a wonderful pen-picture of the new heavens and earth, cleansed from the defilement of sin, which results from that reconciliation. The end of the vision is strikingly like the closing scene of the Book of Revelation, where the Holy City has come to earth and its light enlightens the nations, nothing that defiles being able to enter into it, but only they who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

The whole of this Messianic prophecy of Isaiah forms a setting for its brightest jewel, the sublime passage which constitutes its 53rd chapter and from which we have our conception of Jesus as a lamb who is led to the slaughter and a man of sorrows who is acquainted with grief. That is not the only aspect of Jesus of which we know. We realize that in His earthly life He was not always and even not habitually overshadowed by sorrow. His countenance was more often lighted by happiness and benevolence than it was darkened by grief and sadness. His relations with men were not always that of an unresisting sheep being led to death; there were times when He took full command of the situation in indignation and even anger, reproving Pharisees and priests for their hypocrisy and greed. There were times when He held His hearers spell-bound, teaching them as "one having authority". But here in Isaiah 53 we have what is intended to be a doctrinal presentation of the "Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world" and therefore it is only to be expected that the suffering aspect of our Redeemer's ministry should be stressed to the absolute exclusion of every other consideration.

This study opens with verse 13 of chapter 52—this is really the commencement of the description and this is where chapter 53 should in fact have

started. In verses 13-15 of chapter 52 the voice of God is heard speaking from heaven declaring the mission of His Servant the Redeemer. Verses 1-10 of chapter 53 contain the spoken response of a company on earth who understand the message and accept the Redeemer. Verses 11-12 are the closing words from God giving assurance of the triumphant fulfilment of all that the Redeemer comes to accomplish. In this chapter we have a number of vital Christian doctrines established. Foremost in the picture are the Ransom ("brought as a lamb to the slaughter", "cut off out of the land of the living" vs 7, 8) and the Sin-offering ("He hath borne our griefs . . . wounded for our transgressions. . . His life an offering for sin" vs 4, 5, 10). Next, perhaps, comes the human nature of Jesus, "the Word made flesh" (His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men" 52, 14; despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows" (vs 3), Consecration ("He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant" vs 2), Resurrection ("He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days" vs 10) and Glorification ("Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great" vs 12). This chapter is a most important one in its bearing on the Divine Plan of the ages, and it is well worthy of examination verse-by-verse in detail.

"Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high." (vs 13.)

Although the term "servant" in the Old Testament usually carries the thought of a slave, since most servants were bound to their master's house and family and could not leave even if they wanted to, it does also include the thought of reverential respect and obedience as from a son. Here at the outset we are reminded of that word in Hebrews "Then said he, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." Throughout His earthly life Jesus made clear that He was always consistently carrying out His Father's will and purpose. The absolute supremacy of God the Father is everywhere acknowledged. Even though for the work and duration of the Millennial Age "the Father judgeth no man but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" it comes about that at its end "then shall the Son Himself be subjected unto Him that did put all things under Him, that God may be all in all". But here in

Isaiah there is something more than the usual significance in the word "servant". There is no other servant anywhere in the Bible just like this one. Here we have the suffering servant of God who by means of His suffering is going to restore God's erring creation to Him. Abraham (Psa. 105. 6), Job (Job 1. 8), Moses (Josh. 1. 1), Joshua (Josh. 24. 29), David (Psa. 18. 1) and Isaiah himself (Isa. 20. 3) were all honoured by being called servants of God, but none of them held the position before God that was occupied by this "suffering servant". Mighty as were the works that all those men did in their several spheres, none of them could match the work done by the One Who is described with such eloquent pathos in Isa. 53. "Behold my servant". The injunction is imperative. We are to look upon this One and see in Him all that we need to take away the load of our sins and all that we need to show us the way back to harmony with God, and everlasting life.

He shall deal prudently—wisely, is the meaning. The word is from a root meaning to attend closely, to be circumspect. In the Book of Proverbs the same word is often used in the sense of having understanding. "The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him" says Isaiah in chapter 11 "the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord". The rest of chapter 11 goes on to describe the practical outworking of that wisdom, in the work of the Millennial Age when many are to be turned to righteousness and the stony hearts taken away from men and replaced by hearts of flesh.

Here in verse 13 the "dealing prudently", or with wisdom, would seem to have reference rather to His First Advent and His life on earth rather than His Second Advent and His reign over the nations. Even though He was to be despised and rejected and ultimately put to death His whole life was to be characterised by Divine wisdom and it was so truly thus characterised that His opponents "could not gainsay the wisdom with which He spake".

Now come three verbs, crowding one upon the other, all expressive of His ultimate triumph and glory. "He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high". Obviously this must refer to the outcome of His earthly life, the glory that was to follow, for none of these things were true while He lived on earth. It might be that here we have an indication of the three steps by which the One Who died on the Cross in obedience to the Father's Plan was ultimately brought to be seated at His right hand "from thenceforth waiting until His enemies be made His footstool"—His resurrection, His

Ascension, His "entry into the presence of God for us". The first word "exalted" means to be raised up, the second, "extolled" to be borne up or lifted up, as by angels or other medium, and the third just what it says, to be very high. Our Lord after His ascension was "higher than all heavens". We might very reasonably therefore take these three words as descriptive of the upward progress of our Lord after the close of His earthly life to be glorified with the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, as He prayed the Father in His Gethsemane prayer recorded in John 17. "Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and in earth and under the earth". (Phil. 2. 9, 10.)

"As many were astonished at thee: his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men". (Isa. 52. 10.)

The first phrase means to be dumb with astonishment, to be compelled to silence by the solemnity or the strangeness of what is seen. The subject of astonishment is the second phrase "His visage was so marred" and here it is very possible that the traditional view is hopelessly wrong. The word for "marred" occurs only this once in the Old Testament and there is serious doubt whether it is correct. It means, not only "marred" in the modern sense of that term, i.e. to deface, but it means to destroy utterly by decay and corruption. Such an expression carried to its logical extreme is quite out of place in any description of our Lord. There is no evidence that our Lord was in any sense unlovely to look upon. There is at least some piece of evidence to the contrary. We know that little children came spontaneously to Him. Children do not come spontaneously to a miserable man and are not likely to come spontaneously to a deformed or hideous man. Jesus as a perfect man must have arrived at the maturity of human life in possession of a physical beauty far excelling anything that had been seen on earth since Adam. The sorrows and disappointments of life may and probably did leave their mark on Him to the extent of a more serious and reflective mien but there is no more likelihood that those experiences, or the "going out of virtue" from Him as He expended vitality for the good of others, rendered Him unlovely to look upon than it does in our own cases to-day. We are witnesses that such experiences in the life often tend to make the countenance sweeter and more attractive; it is usually bitterness and discontent which sours the visage, and that we do not associate with our Lord.

The Septuagint has it "so shall thy face be without glory from men, and thy glory shall not be

honoured by the sons of men". This rendering must have come from a different Hebrew text than the one which declares His countenance to be in process of destruction by decay, and it makes a much more fitting commentary upon the person of our Lord, so much so that we are perhaps justified in accepting it in place of the Authorised Version. Our Lord while in the flesh did indeed manifest a glory all His own, a "glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" but it was not a glory He obtained from men, neither was it a glory that was honoured by the sons of men. They despised and rejected Him instead. The words of the Septuagint are literally true therefore in our Lord's experience.

Some scholars consider that the word has suffered the alteration, at the hands of an ancient copyist, of one letter which has changed the word from one meaning "to anoint" and that on this supposition the reference here is not to a countenance that has

been marred by disfigurement but one that has been anointed for ceremonial purification. The word in this case would be the same as that used in Leviticus for the consecration of Aaron and his sons, and elsewhere for the anointing to office of the kings of Israel. If this be in fact the true interpretation—and such cases of a changed letter altering the whole meaning of a word are not uncommon—then this verse indicates the astonishment of the beholders at seeing one among them who is anointed for the purpose of cleansing the people from sin, which is itself a fitting introduction to the sublime theme of the 53rd chapter.

It is tolerably certain that the passage in the original never taught that our Lord's physical appearance would be repulsive or unattractive and if we can at least dispose of that relic of traditional thought we shall have approached to a more accurate conception of Jesus' human nature.

*To be continued.*

## WHEN GOD CREATED

"*Bereshith bara Elohim eth hasshamayim veets haarets*"—"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." In those few words is enshrined the story of countless ages. Long before man came into being, long before the infinite variety of animal and vegetable life which now inhabits this planet was brought forth, the work of God went steadily forward. In the mighty crucible of Nature He was moulding and fashioning a fitting home for humanity. Before even that great work, of creating this earth, began, He was working, compelling the tremendous forces of the Universe to work together in slow but ceaseless motion until one day a star, approaching on its journey measurably within reach of our sun, tore from that sun masses of incandescent vapour, which streamed out into the heavens and then began to consolidate into separate planets, cooling and shrinking until after the lapse of ages upon ages the angels looked down upon this solar system of ours; the parent sun, majestic in the centre of its family of circling worlds.

The Earth was one of those worlds. Long ages had yet to pass before even the humblest form of life could appear on its troubled surface. Great eruptions of Nature from within, avalanches and floods from above, all combined to keep this new world in a state of perpetual unrest. But eventually there came a time when the tumult was stilled, when the boiling seas subsided and the land had some measure of peace from warring elements, and in that eventful day life was born on earth.

No man saw it come. No human history can go back to those first beginnings when lowly creatures of the seashores were the lords of material creation. Long years afterward the chronicler wrote "And God said, Let the waters bring forth the moving creature that hath life . . . and it was so."

So passed the centuries, the millenniums, the epochs during which God worked silently, in that orderly development which characterises all His works preparing a home for a new creation which He purposed, until at length the watching angels saw a new wonder at which they shouted aloud for joy. Beings—intelligent, perfect, capable of love and gratitude, worship and service—made to be the crowning glory of all that creation which had taken so long a time to bring to this climax. "The morning stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for joy." (Job 38. 6.) With what serene pleasure must the Father of all have gazed upon those first material beings and foreseen, even then, the wonders of a still future age when the earth shall be fully perfected; and when mankind shall have achieved the Divine ideal and attained to the image and likeness of God.

If we are faithful in this service we have no time, nor have we the disposition, to give heed either to false doctrines or to other themes which have no bearing on the one thing to which we have solemnly dedicated our lives.

## The Tragedy of Lot

A Character Study

Lot was not called of God as was his uncle Abraham, but he was a good man and there was a bond of union between the two which was stronger than that of natural affection; and he accompanied Abraham the three hundred miles into Canaan. Weaker characters often lean on stronger ones.

Lot was wealthy. Genesis 13. 5 says he had flocks and herds and the difficulty of finding sufficient pasturage was so great that verse 6 says "*The land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together, for their substance was great.*" Strife began between the herdsmen of Abraham's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle but it is obvious that Lot began to take part with his herdsmen and regard himself as an injured man, for Abraham said, "*Let there be no strife I pray thee between thee and me,*" and suggested that they separate. Abraham was generous and gave Lot the choice. Lot accepted it and instead of feeling that it was due to his uncle's age and rank to yield to him the preference he greedily selected the region that seemed to offer the greatest worldly advantages. He chose the Plain of Jordan which was well watered. In Abraham's day the Jordan poured down a larger volume of water than at present. By the loss of its forests the climate of Palestine has become much more dry and fertile regions have become barren.

"*Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent towards Sodom.*" He had evidently a longing towards Sodom but was not as yet within its walls. His departure was evidently a great grief to Abraham; he had lost a companion, but God consoled him. In his journeying Abraham was to have the tranquil pleasure of feeling that his seed would inherit each beautiful spot that he visited. As Lot was deteriorating Abraham was drawing nearer to God and walking more closely with Him.

When we come to Genesis 19 we find Lot had become a citizen of Sodom and was probably treated with honour as a relative of Abraham. This personal respect had made him close his eyes to the sinfulness of the people. He consented to live there and permitted its citizens to marry his daughters. Meanwhile all intercourse with Abraham had apparently ceased and he had lost all share in the covenant of circumcision.

We find a sharp contrast when we read the attitude of the angels towards the two men Abraham and Lot. When Abraham offered them hospitality they replied "So do as thou hast said," but to Lot

they said, "Nay, but we will abide in the street all night." Lot's character had deteriorated. 2 Peter 2. 7-8 gives Lot a good character but he was righteous only relatively and though his soul was daily vexed by what he saw it was not vexed enough to make him quit such evil and return to the healthy and virtuous mountain life. The warning of his fall is that men who part with religious privileges for the sake of worldly advantage are in danger of sinking into moral degradation and losing with their faith and hope not only their self respect and happiness but even that earthly profit for the sake of which they sacrificed their religion.

The men of Sodom said of Lot, "This fellow came in to sojourn and he will needs be a judge." It seems that an extraordinary concession had been made in Lot's favour in allowing him to reside in Sodom. In ancient times rights of citizenship were jealously guarded and the position of a sojourner made very bitter. "He will needs be a judge" is in the Hebrew "He is ever acting as a judge" and suggests that Lot had previously reproved the Sodomites.

The angels told Lot of the impending destruction of the city, but verse 16 says, "While he lingered." He still clung to his wealth and could not make up his mind to leave it so that the angels had to take him by the hand and lead him without the city. The instruction was given, "look not behind". God required a total abandonment of the doomed cities in heart and will, but his wife looked back and became a monument of an unbelieving soul.

Zoar was pointed out to him as an asylum, but (verse 30) he left Zoar, giving another instance of his loss of faith. It is recorded that "he feared to dwell in Zoar" although he had been told he would be safe there. Terrified at the sight of the smoking valley, and remembering that he had been originally commanded to go to the mountains, he summoned up courage and went there, and we find him there housed in a miserable cavern—he whose wealth had been so great and who had sacrificed so much for worldly advantage dwelt with his two daughters in a cave.

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To gain proficiency in the Word is indeed the work of a lifetime; but every day should see a closer approximation to that proficiency, and will, indeed, if we are faithful students and faithful servants of the truth

## THE LORD'S GARDEN

*A Pen-picture of  
the Song of Solomon*

The beauty and virtue of the glorified Church of Christ far transcends anything we can visualise while in the flesh. Nevertheless, various pen pictures of the select company are drawn in the Word for our instruction and edification, each one in its own peculiar way revealing to the new mind some aspect of those graces and qualities which must be developed in each member of that great Assembly, ere they can be ready for that great Home-gathering which will unite them to their Lord and Head.

Among these pictures there is one in the Song of Songs which is not only beautiful as pictured by the natural eye, but which also conveys to the new mind something of the character, the development, and the blessedness of each member of the New Creation.

First, let us take a look at this garden as it is described in Cant. 4. 12-15.

As we approach, we see that it is surrounded by a high hedge, "a garden enclosed, a fountain barred." Thus, it is not for every eye to behold, but is reserved for those who can appreciate its beauty and respect its sanctity.

On gaining entrance, a wonderful blending of nature's colours meets our eyes; an "orchard" of pomegranates ablaze with their beautiful blood-red flowers.

Among the trees we see bushes of *camphire*, small shrubs with pale green leaves like lilac, covered with sweet-smelling white and yellow blossoms.

Cinnamon, too, in abundance; small trees like the laurel, with broad, ribbed leaves and white blossoms.

The larger trees, like the mountain ash, are *frankincense*, with their long, glossy leaves, and green star-like flowers, tipped with red, giving forth a fragrant lemon aroma.

The *aloes* and the thorny *myrrh*, although not so colourful, supply the background of darker greens, and we remember their usefulness in perfumes obtained from their bark and roots.

Down by the spring we see the stately *Calamus* reeds swaying in the breeze, on the slopes the grass-like *spikenard*, and, peeping out from among the trees and shrubs, myriads of yellow, crocus-like flowers—the *saffrons*.

To complete a very pleasing picture, we see the crystal springs bubbling along between the gently

sloping grass-covered banks, and the dancing fountains sparkling in the sunshine.

Not only is this garden very pleasant to the eye, but everywhere we are met with a wonderfully subtle perfume arising from the mingling of these aromatic plants and flowers. As another has so aptly written: "A garden composed of such odoriferous plants must have been like a bed of perfume; and every breath of heaven which passed over it must have filled the surrounding atmosphere with a richness and sweetness unsurpassed in all the world."

Now, what does this picture convey to our new minds?

This enclosed garden, this fountain shut up, is unseen by the world. It is true that the Church must, and does, witness to the world, but the inner qualities, and the motives which lie behind the actions are seen only by the Lord, and in its completeness this garden will be for the delight of the Lord, for who but He could appreciate the beauties there portrayed?

The blood-red flowers of the pomegranates speak of the Ransom-sacrifice which makes this new creation possible; and the golden fruits with their abundance of seeds and rich juice, from which, in Palestine, a very refreshing drink is made, speak of the fruitful days of the Kingdom, when the after-fruit of that great sacrifice will be brought forth, and the joy of the Lord and His Church when the days of refreshing shall come.

From the cinnamon, calamus and myrrh came ingredients used in the anointing oil, and each have their meaning for us.

Calamus is the "sweet cane" of Isa. 43. 24, and seems to picture the love which is the motive which prompts the sacrifice made by the anointed ones. There can be other motives which are not acceptable, as we read in Jer. 6. 20: "To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me."

The inner bark of the cinnamon is used as a spice, and as a medicine, and reminds us of the great joy which Jesus had, and which we, as His Church, can share; that joy which comes through complete obedience to the Father's will, whatever may befall. Such joy is indeed as the spice of life, and is the sure cure for many of life's ills.

Myrrh was distilled from the gum which exudes from the plant of that name, and was used as a perfume, and for embalming.

In Psalm 45. 8 it is said of our Lord, "all thy garments smell of myrrh, aloe and cassia," and this last ingredient of the anointing oil (myrrh) which so pervaded the atmosphere in which our Lord, the High Priest, moved seems to represent that *peace* which comes with complete trust in our Heavenly Father.

"O blessed peace of a perfect trust  
That looks away from all ;  
That sees Thy hand in everything,  
In great events or small ;  
That hears Thy voice— a Father's voice—  
Directing for the best—  
O blessed peace of a perfect trust,  
A heart with Thee at rest."

Myrrh was also used to make a drink to deaden pain. So we shall find the painful experiences of life easier to bear, if, being willingly submissive to them, we maintain that peace of mind which can only come through a perfect trust in a loving Father.

Combined with aloe, it was also used to preserve the bodies of the dead (John 19. 39), and it was the fragrant centre-wood of the aloe, together with myrrh, that was used to embalm the body of the Lord. The body of the Lord was removed ; nevertheless, what sweet memories of His loving words and actions remained with His disciples. What of us ? Will the myrrh and aloe preserve any fragrant memories of our lives ?

"Shall we be missed, though by others succeeded ?  
Ever remembered by what we have done ?"  
"Only the truth that in life we have spoken,  
Only the seed we on earth have sown,  
These shall pass onward when we are forgotten,  
Fruits of the harvest and what we have done."

Camphire provided the women of Palestine with a very delicate perfume, and from the leaves they made a dye to ornament their finger-nails. We are not concerned with such ornamentation, but rather with the adornment of 1 Pet. 3. 4, "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

From the aromatic root of the spikenard came perfume and ointment. The "precious perfume" (not ointment) which filled the house with its aroma when Mary opened her alabaster jar and anointed her Lord, came from the spikenard, and this seems to picture the deep love and devotion which all of the Lord's followers should have for Him and His brethren. In Cant. 1. 12 (Youngs), the bride says : "While the King is in his circle my spikenard hath

given its fragrance." So, when we meet together within that "circle" our love and devotion for each other should be a sweet perfume.

A very costly perfume is obtained from the style and stigma of the saffron, costly because of its scantiness. From it is also obtained colouring and flavouring for bread and drinks. This seems to picture the Christian grace of gentleness of speech ; so rare even among brethren, yet so essential to a rounded Christian character. Paul exhorted the Colossians (and us) : "Let your language be always seasoned with the salt of grace." If it is, men will have cause to say of us, as they did of our Lord, "never man spake like He spake." The wise man says (Prov. 25. 11, Leeser) : "A word spoken in a proper manner is like apples of gold in silver baskets."

Frankincense is a bitter aromatic resin, yielded by the shrub of that name. It was used in the meat offering and in the offering of the first-fruits. It was placed on top of the two piles of shew-bread in the Tabernacle ; but it was *not* to be used with the sin-offering or the jealousy offering, because they brought iniquity to remembrance ; so frankincense seems to picture our appreciation and gratitude as we acknowledge God as the Giver of every good and perfect gift, and give to Him our all.

Frankincense was also an ingredient of the incense used in the Tabernacle ceremony, and as such symbolises praise and heart adoration on the part of the sacrificing priests.

Both myrrh and frankincense, although sweet perfumes, are bitter to the taste, and only yield the fulness of their aroma when brought into contact with heat, as when the incense was crumbled over the fire in the censer of the Golden Altar of the Tabernacle. So we, as prospective members of the Bride, can only yield the perfume of gratitude, praise and heart adoration as we are obedient and willingly submissive in the fiery experiences of life, which alone can bring forth that "sweet savour" so pleasing to our Lord and Master.

Even as we have already noted, such a garden must have filled the surrounding atmosphere with a richness and sweetness unsurpassed in all the world, so we, even here below, can, and should, manifest to an ever-increasing extent the Christian graces of which this garden reminds us, that the atmosphere in which we move may be pervaded by the same sweet perfume which surrounded our Lord and Bridegroom as He moved among men at His First Advent.

To do this, we need a plentiful supply of the water of life. This brings us to the last part of the description of our garden (verse 15) : "A fountain

of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon."

These symbols combine to give us the thought of a superabundance of water.

The well of living waters may well refer to the great storage cisterns which Solomon constructed at El Burak, and which later on supplied the water for the service of the Temple in far-off Jerusalem. So, likewise, we have an inexhaustible store of living water, shut up in the eternal heavens.

Of the "streams of Lebanon" another has written: "There is a deep rupture in the side of Lebanon, both sides steep and high, clothed with fragrant groves from top to bottom; everywhere refreshed with fountains falling down from the rocks in pleasant cascades, the streams all uniting at the bottom to form a rapid stream which murmurs pleasantly through the valley."

What an apt picture of the wonderfully refreshing streams which combine to form the glorious river of truth which it is our privilege to enjoy.

Following the Bridegroom's description of His Bride, she herself continues (Cant. 4, 16): "Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.

Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits." The first part of this verse reminds us that adversity (northwind) as well as felicity (south wind) should cause us to yield the same precious perfume which pervaded our Lord's life in both joy and adversity.

The latter part reminds us that this garden is not only a bed of perfume, but also that it produces a abundance of fruit—fruit which will satisfy our beloved Lord when He comes into His garden.

Let us seek more and more to bring forth both flower and fruit, that we may bring joy to our Lord; in a very limited sense while here below, but in fullest measure when, in the glorious future, He comes into His garden, to eat His pleasant fruits.

The true doctrine of Christian liberty is not our right to think for ourselves, but the right of the other man to think for himself. There is no danger now that our right will not be insisted upon and enforced, particularly if our thinking happens to fall in with that of the majority. It is the other man's liberty that is in danger, particularly if he is in the minority

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# BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

Thou, therefore, endure  
hardness as a good  
soldier of Jesus Christ.

Vol. 30, No. 7

JULY-AUGUST, 1953

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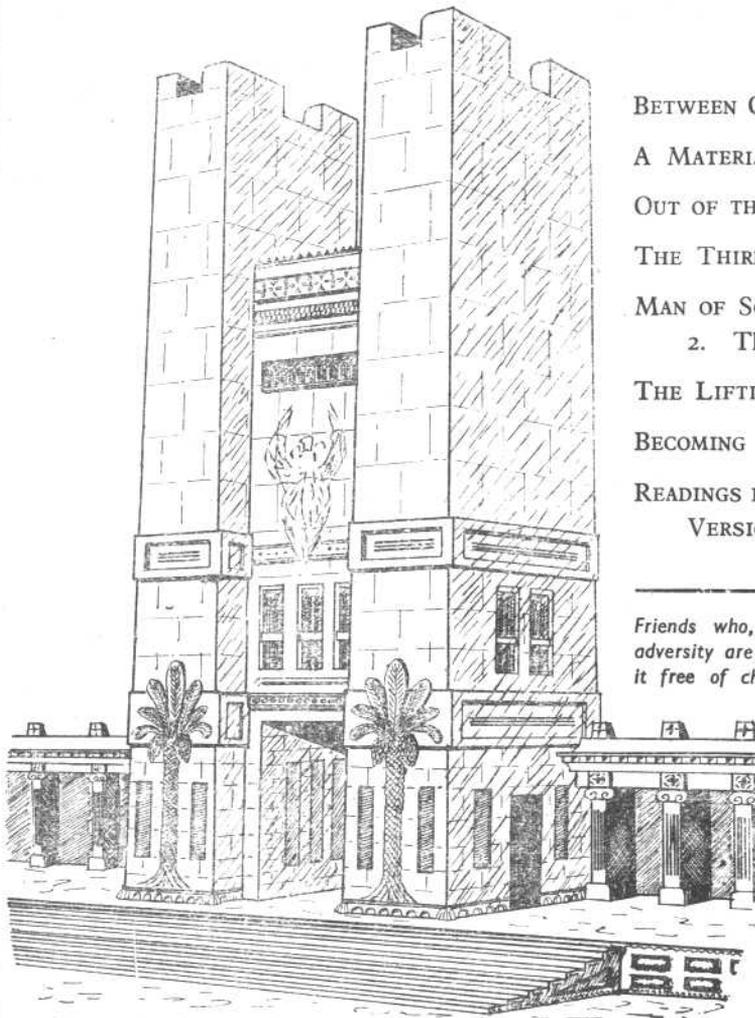
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Lift up your heads, O ye gates.  
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors,  
And the King of glory shall come in.

## BETWEEN OURSELVES

In consequence of declining funds the "Monthly" will be published every six weeks for the remainder of this year. Thus the next issue will appear at the beginning of September. We regret this, but feel sure the friends will appreciate that since the 7/- subscription goes nowhere near to meeting the costs of publication and distribution, it is necessary to rely on donations from brethren who feel the "Monthly" is worth keeping in being to defray the expenses.

\* \* \*

The Annual General Convention will be held during the August holiday season this year at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1, and arrangements are now in hand. Sessions will commence on the afternoon of Saturday, 1st August, and conclude at the end of the afternoon on Monday, 3rd August. Programmes are included in this issue and further copies, or other details, can be obtained from the Convention Secretary, Bro. D. Parker, 13, New Road, Langley, Slough, Bucks. Applications for accommodation should be addressed to Bro. H. Charlton, Ryvers Farm, London Road, Langley, Slough, Bucks. It is hoped to hold a baptismal service in connection with the Convention and brethren desiring to take advantage of this opportunity are asked to advise Bro. Parker at as early a date as possible.

The hall is to be florally decorated and brethren who would like to contribute flowers, etc., toward the decoration are desired to bring them with them on Saturday afternoon at as early a time as possible.

A feature of this year's Convention will be an exhibition of photographs depicting present day progress in Palestine, under the care of a brother who has conducted a deal of research aimed at getting this collection together and it is thought that this exhibition, which will be open throughout the whole period of the Convention except when meetings are proceeding, will interest a great many of our friends.

\* \* \*

The article "World Conversion—When?" appearing in our April issue has been reprinted as a four-page leaflet for the use of the friends. It is thought that it will be particularly useful among Christians who are already active workers in other groups and denominations. Unfortunately funds do not permit of its being distributed free; we can however supply at the rate of 10/6 per 100 or 3/- for 25, both post free and will be glad to despatch on receipt of order.

\* \* \*

It is with much pleasure that we announce the forthcoming visit of Bro. and Sister P. L. Read, of

St. Louis, U.S.A., to this country for a short while this summer. Brother Read was last in this country twenty-one years ago but there will be many who remember him and will look forward to renewing fellowship with him and with Sister Read. Unfortunately our brother's stay in this country is strictly limited and the purposes for which he is visiting Britain will not allow him to make a regular "pilgrim" trip through the land; he has however been able to set aside some time at certain places where he has to visit and will be happy to minister to the friends at those places. In order to enable as many as possible to benefit from these arrangements we give below list of places and dates and will be glad to give full details of local arrangements to anyone on request.

It is quite impossible for Brother Read to accept any other engagement beyond those shown on this list and it is useless therefore to write us asking if another visit can be arranged.

Aug. 1-3.	London Convention (Conway Hall.
5.	Wed. London (East).
9.	Sun. Rugby.
12.	Wed. London (Central).
13.	Thur. Newcastle.
14.	Fri. Edinburgh.
16.	Sun. Glasgow (United Meeting).
17-18.	Mon. Tues. Belfast.
19.	Wed. Birmingham.
23.	Sun. Cardiff.
25.	Tues. Luton.
26.	Wed. Oxford.
30.	Sun. London (Farewell Meeting).

Arrangements in London are as follows:

- Aug. 5. 7.30 p.m. at the Lecture Hall, Public Library, Romford Road, Manor Park, E.12 (usually known to us as the Manor Park Library). Near Manor Park Station and Manor Park Broadway.
- Aug. 12. 7.0 p.m. at the Caxton Hall, Westminster (in the Kent Room).
- Aug. 30. Sunday. 6.30 p.m. at Denison House, Vauxhall Bridge Road. This will be the farewell meeting to Bro. and Sister Read. Also at 3.30 with tea served.

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### Gone From Us

- Sis. G. Brown (Welling, late Mansfield).  
 Sis. A. Reynolds (Swanscombe).  
 Sis. G. E. Smith (Blackpool).

"Till the day break, and the shadows flee away."

## A MATERIAL PARADISE

An Outline for  
the newly interested

### Part I.

What is Paradise? That question has bothered the heads of more clergymen than any other subject. Their sermons, especially at the time of a funeral, are full of thoughts leading the mind of the hearer to eternal bliss, which being interpreted in the vernacular means—"Golden Streets, Pearly Gates, Golden Harps and endless Songs of Praise". Indefinite though these thoughts may be, they are still held by many intelligent people.

In handling this subject we believe we can answer satisfactorily from the standpoint of the Scriptures themselves, the only source from which we can glean true knowledge of the future, that a spiritual reward is only given to those of a spiritual mind, and not those who love life and revel in its joys and sorrows, those who live life to the full, and drinking it to the lees, ring it out and cry for more. These receive their heart's desire, an earthly reward in an "Earthly Paradise". Furthermore we believe we can show from the Scriptures that this reward is not limited to the educated, or the wealthy, nor even the poor, nor yet the foolish, but also the influential, the mentally deformed, and also those who are actually bad at heart. The enquirer is naturally puzzled at statements of this nature and desires proof to show that theirs is not a future of eternal torment in fire and brimstone, but a life in which they will be given a chance—the only chance they have ever known. For this reason we will make our discourse more of a Bible study than an oration or a sermon.

We call to mind that the basis of hope given to the human race was first vaguely intimated to mother Eve at the time of the Fall when it was said that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. More definite information on this subject was not given until father Abraham demonstrated his faithfulness and as a special reward was given the covenant or promise that in him and in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed. If all the families of the earth should be blessed, none of them are to be excepted. We find that this covenant was absolutely unconditional and still remains to be fulfilled. Let us quote, "And the Angel of the Lord called unto Abraham the second time out of heaven, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless

*thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is upon the sea shore, and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice". (Gen. 22. 15-18.)*

The natural thing coming to the mind after reading this passage is that this covenant was given to Abraham, the father of the Jewish race, and therefore is limited to them for its fulfilment. Our answer is that this conclusion is partially right, for the Seed of promise through whom all the families of the earth shall be blessed was to be Jesus Christ, a Jew. Nevertheless Paul gives us the "Story of the Olive Tree", picturing the Jewish nation having its branches cut off from the trunk of the tree—God's special favour—and the wild olive, the Gentile nations, being grafted in, showing that the gospel of salvation was to go to the Gentile nations, but that it should, nevertheless, return to the Jews, when the "Times of the Gentiles" would be fulfilled. In summing up the matter as recorded in Rom. 11. 15, 25, 26 we might state the thought in these words, "For if the casting away of them (The Jews) would mean the reconciling of the world, what would the receiving of them be but life from the dead? Blindness in part is happened unto Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in". We therefore conclude that in the resurrection the Jews as a nation shall inherit the promises made to them through the prophets of the Old Testament Scriptures. Let us consider some of them.

We have in mind particularly the one recorded by Jer. 30. 3, "For lo! the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall return unto the land which I gave to their fathers and they shall possess it." If the Jews as a nation are to possess the land which God gave to their fathers, their reward is to be an earthly, a material reward, and not spiritual according to our ordinary conception. We find that all of the promises in the Scriptures made to the Jews are of a material nature. The special inheritance which was given them, through father Abraham, confirmed unto father Isaac, confirmed again unto Jacob and his sons, was that they should inherit the land of Palestine. Stephen tells us Abraham never owned land in Palestine "so much as to set his foot upon." (Acts 7. 5). **Never-**

theless God promised to give it to him, and Abraham died, not having received the promise. The conclusion is, therefore, that this promise will be made good, as the Scriptures indicate, in the resurrection. The Jews and all the world have gone into captivity, down in the prison-house of Death, but they are to return, according to Amos 9. 14, 15: "*And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them, and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; and they shall make gardens and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land, which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God.*" If this means the Jews are to have a spiritual or heavenly nature, then our conception of the heavenly condition, the spiritual condition, is entirely wrong. Here we find that the Jews are to build material houses and live in them. They are to plant material vineyards and to drink actual wine. They are to plant gardens and to eat the produce from their gardens. Furthermore they are to return to their land and not be pulled up out of their land, a condition which has never existed in Jewish history.

But to prove the point let us consider other Scriptures, for example Isaiah 65. 21-23. "*And they shall build houses, and inhabit them, they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them, They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them.*" In this quotation we find the thought advanced that the Jews have laboured in vain and have brought forth to no purpose. This thought is true of the entire human race. They have laboured amid the perplexities and conflicting influences which have existed since the Fall, and as the result of it. Here we find these influences will be brought to an end and that the labour of the labourer shall accomplish the purpose for which it was intended. That this time—the time for the Jews to possess their land—is near at hand can be demonstrated by the fact that they are possessing it now. They have gone back to the land of their forefathers, thousands of them every year, and are now developing and perfecting the Land of Promise so that instead of bringing forth thorns and thistles it is now producing the finest grapes and the most perfect oranges that can be bought in the markets of Europe.

That this returning of the Jews should be under peaceful conditions and that the land should return

to its former fertility, because of their energy, their thrift and their enterprise, is proven by Isaiah 55. 12, 13: "*For ye shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, instead of the briar shall come the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.*" Seeing the fulfilment of this prophecy we are amazed at the greatness of our Creator. Even though we can attribute the fertility of Palestine to natural conditions, such as the analysis of the rock and finding that the crushing of this rock and scattering it over the soil was the means of making it produce; nevertheless, it was not until recent times that this discovery was made possible. Following His usual plan of operation we find Jehovah is carrying out His designs through or on account of His own laws, Nature's laws.

As a result of disobedience of the Jewish people, they were made outcasts, for their own punishment, as explained by the prophets that they would be, and more particularly indicated by Jesus and the Apostles. This "casting away" of the Jewish nation and making them outcasts, vagabonds upon the face of the earth and still preserving their nationality, is a marvel to the entire world, but constitutes what the Scriptures term, "the cleansing of Israel". Other Scriptures refer to the same thing, calling it "the Times of the Gentiles" because it is in or during this period that the Gentile nations received their special lease of favour and the privilege of coming up under the Abrahamic promise, as a result of their recognition of Jesus Christ, the Jew, the only Jew who was able to keep perfectly the Mosaic Law. When we read, therefore, that it is during this day in which Israel is cleansed that the Jews are to return, we therefore recognise special significance in the present Zionist movement among the Jews. Ezek. 36. 33-35 expresses the matter thus in harmony with what has already been quoted from the writings of other prophets. "*Thus saith the Lord in the day (Mark you, not after the day) that I shall have cleansed you from all of your iniquity, I shall also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded, and the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by, and they shall say, this land that was desolate has become like the Garden of Eden, and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are becoming fenced and are inhabited.*" The Scriptures therefore agree on the material inheritance of the Jewish nation and that their inheritance shall be a PARADISE

because of the returning fertility of the soil, and the improved conditions which shall exist to make earth once more an Eden, at the time of their attaining to their complete inheritance.

But do the Jewish people recognise this fact at the present time? We answer, no; that they do not. Furthermore, it is our belief that they will not recognise it until after the resurrection has taken place. Their mind at present is given up to worldly pursuits and it is safe to say the majority of Jews do not attend their own synagogues more than once a year. But this does not mean that they shall never know. In fact, they have ever been and still are, from a Scriptural standpoint, "God's Chosen People." All the covenants and promises of the Scriptures have been made to and through the Jewish people. The only access Gentiles have into Divine favour is through the recognition of Jesus Christ, the only perfect Jew. As for the rest of the race, we read that in the resurrection every one of them shall be brought to a knowledge of God. "*And ye shall know that I am the Lord, O my people, when I have opened your graves and brought you up out of your graves and shall put my spirit in you and ye shall live, then shall you know that I the Lord have spoken it and performed it, saith the Lord.*" (Ezek. 37. 13, 14.)

The principal stumbling block to the Jews at the present time is that the despised Nazarene is to be their coming Messiah. They cannot see it. They do not appreciate it. Nevertheless they shall attain their own resurrection as a result of the ransom sacrifice effected by Jesus of Nazareth. The mere fact that because of ignorance or superstition or prejudice they reject Him and His sayings does not mean that they shall not be judged by Him when the proper time comes and thus compelled to recognise Him, for we read: "*He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth Him. The words that I have spoken the same shall judge him in the last day.*" (John 12. 48.) "*Because He hath appointed a day in which He will judge the WORLD in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained*" (the Man Christ Jesus) "*whereof He hath given assurance unto all men in that He hath raised Him from the dead.*" (Acts 17. 31.)

The magnitude of the plan of salvation which God Himself has arranged for the world does not begin to dawn upon the material mind until a careful study has been made of all of its various phases. Quite often we find one text of Scripture which in itself has hidden away within its wording various jewels of truth, which shine forth, like polished diamonds when once they are uncovered. One of these is found in the 10th verse of the 35th

chapter of Isaiah's wonderful prophecy, "*And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*"

The casual reading of this verse conveys to the mind of the Bible scholar an indefinite blessing to a select number of people, possibly the Jewish race and them only. But as we study this verse more carefully we find that it is full of food for thought, and as we consider each individual clause, each word produces a volume of testimony to the greatness of God's plan of salvation. Let us consider it—"And the ransomed of the Lord." Who are the ransomed of the Lord? Paul tells us in his epistle to Timothy, "Jesus Christ died a RANSOM FOR ALL to be testified in due time." Simply because the ransom of Jesus Christ, as provided for the human race by the wisdom of the Father, was testified to some of the Gentiles before it was testified to the rest of the Gentiles and the Jewish nation, does not mean that He is not a ransom for all which shall be testified to ALL in God's due time. Therefore we would understand this verse to refer, in its first clause, to the entire human race because in that He was a ransom for all, none are excepted.

The next word in our text is also full of meaning. It is the word RETURN—"And the ransomed of the Lord (everybody) shall RETURN." This word conveys the thought of first being somewhere and secondly the thought of coming back to the same place. The returning of the world, as we understand it, from our material standpoint, shall be not only a returning from the death condition, but a returning to a condition having the possibility of perfect life. As we view the world to-day, we find there is not a person in it who is really living. Every one of them is born into the world in a dying condition. This was the penalty pronounced in Eden and recorded in Genesis, "Dying thou shalt die." This dying process has been going on now for approximately six thousand years according to Bible chronology. But in the resurrection we understand the condition will be reversed. Those raised from the grave shall be raised to the possibility of attaining perfect life, a thing they never had enjoyed before.

*To be concluded.*

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Each consecrated believer should ask himself, How carefully have I studied that which I have clearly recognised as Divine truth, and how fully capable am I, therefore, of handling the sword of the spirit?

# Out of the Ivory Palaces

*"Blow upon my garden  
that the spices thereof  
may flow out"*

## Transformed

Through a cloud of earthly senses  
Bursts upon my raptured sight  
Such a vision of my Father  
In his glory and his might,  
In his justice and his wisdom,  
In his tender, watchful care,  
Manifested in my Saviour,  
Rich in blessings everywhere.

Oh, it thrills with love and longing  
Every fibre of my soul,  
To be with thee, in thy presence,  
While the countless ages roll.  
Then a voice, "This be thy pattern,  
See that thou in all thy ways  
Make according to the pattern,  
To my glory and my praise."  
Thou the pattern, blessed Saviour,  
How can I a copy be  
Of that gracious, sweet perfection  
Manifested, Lord, in thee?  
"Keep thine eyes upon the pattern,  
Look not thou aside, behind,  
And beholding but my glory,  
Thou shalt be transformed in mind."

Oh, my Father, in thy mercy  
As I gaze with unveiled face,  
Let me see, as in a mirror,  
All thy brightness, all thy grace.  
So in looking, so in longing,  
Shall my homely features glow  
With the radiance of thy glory,  
And thy matchless beauty show;  
All my days be crowned with gladness,  
From the centre of my heart,  
Praise to thee that in the blessing  
Thou wilt let me have a part.  
So then, in a faithful service,  
For the loving service' sake,  
Changed from glory unto glory,  
I shall in thy likeness wake.

I shall see thee in thy beauty,  
I shall in thy beauty shine,  
All the loving, all the longing,  
Merged in purest love Divine.  
Satisfied with the full sweetness  
Of the bliss of heaven above,  
All my future spent in blessing,  
All my being lost in love.

C.B.

## He Leadeth Me

He has guided my steps where I could not see,  
By ways that I had not known;  
The crooked was straight and the rough made plain  
As I followed the Lord alone.  
I praise His name for the pleasant palms  
And the water-springs by the way;  
For the glowing pillar of fire by night,  
And the sheltering cloud by day.

There is light for me on the trackless wild  
As the wonders of old I trace,  
When the God of the whole earth went before  
To search me a resting place!  
Hath He changed for me? Nay, He changeth not;  
He will bring me by some new way,  
Through fire and flood and each crafty foe,  
As safely as yesterday.

Anon.

## Dawn

*"For as the bright shining, that cometh out of  
the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall  
also the presence of the Son of Man be." (Matt.  
24. 17.)*

Yonder, friend, behold the darkness  
Lightly tinged with streaks of grey.  
Far beyond the Mount of Olives  
Comes the glorious radiant day.  
See how pink and rosy fingers  
Clamber up the lightening sky;  
Heralds of the sun's own glory,  
Soon to reign supreme on high.  
Now the light has reached to Hebron;  
Priests and watchmen cry aloud:  
Men are rousing from their slumbers,  
Heads in prayer and praise are bowed.  
Lo! the sun itself, in splendour  
Rises high o'er Zion's hill,  
Pouring down its life and blessing  
Free for men to take their fill.  
Come thou thus, O blessed Jesus,  
To this darksome world of sin,  
Bringing rich Millennial blessings,  
Calling men to enter in.  
Thus the glory of thy presence  
Manifest to all will be,  
Glory that enshrouds creation,  
As the waters shroud the sea.

A.O.H.

## The Third Epistle of John

Comments on the writings  
of the "Beloved Apostle"

It is generally agreed that the Third Epistle of John was written at about the same time as the Second Epistle, while John was living at Ephesus. Like the Second, which was addressed to a Christian woman, Kyria, this one is a personal letter, its recipient being a brother in the Lord named Gaius. The identity of this Gaius is unknown; it is not likely that he can be identified with either man of that name otherwise mentioned in the New Testament. We know of Gaius of Derbe in Macedonia (Acts 19. 29 and 20. 4) and Gaius of Corinth (Rom. 16. 24 and 1. Cor. 1. 14) but these texts refer to a time probably forty years previous to John's epistle. Gaius was a very common name and it is more likely that the recipient of John's third epistle is otherwise quite unknown to history. There was a Gaius who was Bishop of Pergamos at about this time and it is just possible that this might be the one to whom John is writing but we really do not know. It is perhaps sufficient to appreciate the evident fact that here is a brother who was well-beloved by John and enjoyed his high esteem. "*The elder unto the well-beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.*" That is how he opens his letter, and what a revealing opening it is! John was the "disciple whom Jesus loved" and his own loving disposition is proverbial. It is in little touches like this verse that we see how John retained the right to be called the "loving disciple" even into old age. It is said of him that when he was so old that he had to be carried into the meetings, and was quite unable to preach to the brethren as in past years, he used to repeat just the one exhortation "Little children, love one another". That was the end of his ministry and his service, the sum and substance of all that he had ever said or done.

"*Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.*" The expression "above all things" is not correctly translated. It would be more accurately rendered "in all respects". We may note from this verse that John does not shrink from wishing temporal blessings of prosperity and health for his friend Gaius. It is true that he qualifies it by saying "even as thy soul prospereth"; evidently he wishes temporal and spiritual health and well-being to go hand in hand together. That surely is a sane and balanced outlook upon our position as "New Creations" having the "all-things-new" mind operating in a body which is

still very much tied to and dependent upon this old world. John, for all his character of loving-mindedness, was no impractical mystic. He knew full well that the good things of this world—health, prosperity, ability, and so on—could be of great use in the service of the King of Kings, and having confidence that Gaius was so devotedly consecrated to his Lord that the possession of such blessings would by no means draw him away, John wishes for him prosperity and health, that he might be able to serve his Lord the better.

"*For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.*"

It would appear from the succeeding verses that some little company of brethren had gone out on a kind of tour, preaching the Gospel. Gaius was one who had received them hospitably and sent them on their way with a "God-speed". Coming to John, they had brought this good report of Gaius which so rejoiced the aged Apostle's heart. In these first four verses the expression "the truth" used with the significance that we ourselves attach to the word, occurs four times. "The Truth" was a precious thing to John, just as it should be—and usually is—to us. He has no greater joy than to receive tidings assuring him that his children, his disciples, his converts, are still walking and rejoicing in the Truth. The trials and vicissitudes and disappointments and disillusionments of a long life had not destroyed or weakened his appreciation of the Truth or his love for the Truth. Something like sixty years had passed over his head since that memorable day when he had stood upon Olivet and watched his Lord ascend into the cloud and disappear from sight, but that long lapse of time had not shaken his faith nor replaced zeal by apathy. He was as sure and certain as at the beginning and just as eager to bring new converts into the fold of the Church. "I have no greater joy". Happy are we if we can say the same thing and feel that notwithstanding all we have experienced in life's journey, despite all the failures and disappointments, we are as convinced and enthusiastic as ever we were in those halcyon days, so far away now, when "the Truth" was a new and precious thing to us.

"*Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; which have borne witness of thy charity before the*

*Church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. We therefore ought to remember such, that we might be fellow helpers to the truth."*

This is the passage on which is based the belief that there had been an expedition, as it were, of missionary brethren from Ephesus, passing through the towns and villages of Asia preaching the Word, and that in so doing they had stopped at the house of Gaius and been hospitably entertained. True to the best traditions of Christian ministry, these had gone forth on their work of love, taking no payment or even, perhaps, gifts of any kind from those to whom they were sent. They laboured only for their souls, seeking to win them to Christ. John draws the attention of Gaius to this fact and points out what meritorious service it is to entertain and care for the wants of such. Our thoughts might well turn to our own time. It is not always possible to be one of the heralds of salvation who go forth into the world to preach the gospel—not always possible to undertake "active service" in the execution of the Church's age-old commission. And yet there is always something we can do towards the great work. It may be assisting in the provision of the material resources necessary to the promulgation of the message, helping to bear the cost, or performing with faithful diligence some of the hundred and one little "behind-the-scenes" duties that have to be carried out if the message is to go forth with good effect. It may be that one's part lies in the ministry of prayer, on behalf of the "travellers" as they go "into all the world". It may be in that other ministry, the Ministry of Encouragement, which has so necessary a function to perform on behalf of those whose labours so often, especially in this our day, are apparently so unfruitful. Depend upon it, there is something for each member of Christ's church to do in the great work of making known the glory of Divine truth and the Plan of God, and those who diligently apply themselves to the full exercise of such talents and abilities as they have will earn the Apostle's approving words here to his friend Gaius "Thou shalt do well".

*"I wrote unto the Church; but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words; and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church."*

This Diotrephes is one of the six men named

in the New Testament as opponents of the true faith. They were all professing brethren, not men like Demas who openly forsook Paul and the faith "having loved this present world". These six, Hymenæus, Alexander, Hermogenes, Phygellus, Philetus and Diotrephes had adopted various courses of opposition to the Apostles and their work and had in consequence become menaces to the settled and orderly progress of the Church. It is not said of Diotrephes, as it is said of the others, that he was guilty of doctrinal lapses or that he was a teacher of error. But the Apostle's condemnation is none the less forthright and definite. This man, who evidently occupied the leading position in the Church, the "Bishop" or elder as we would say, was exercising the powers of his office in a thoroughly improper manner. He had even gone so far as to disown the Apostle himself and prevent the reading of his letters before the assembled Church. He was not interested in the wider preaching of the Gospel and sought to hinder the free communion between brethren from elsewhere who came thus preaching, and the members of his own Church. He was in fact, busily engaged in forming an exclusive little religious club presided over by himself with all outsiders barred. We have all seen the same thing in our own time; the spirit of Diotrephes is still amongst us and the pity of it and the shame of it never grows less. All too often "my people love to have it so" and then there is not much that can be done about it. John held a certain Apostolic authority which he did not hesitate to invoke on this occasion. Although in his epistles he normally shows little inclination to appeal to his own Apostleship and prefers to appeal and exhort, allowing his gospel of love and light to penetrate the hearts of his "children" and do its work there in its own way, he can certainly be sharp at times and this was one such time. Diotrephes and his ways he would not tolerate, and one can well conclude that if John ever did carry out his expressed intention of visiting the church referred to in this letter, then Diotrephes received very short shrift at the hands of the father of all the churches.

*"Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God; but he that doeth evil is not of God. Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself; yea, and we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true."*

It is impossible to resist the conclusion that in these two verses John is addressing the Church through Gaius. It seems so unnecessary and even inappropriate in view of John's earlier words of commendation to Gaius to think that he is now

counselling him to avoid evil and embrace good. He was doing that already. But taking these verses in conjunction with those immediately preceding in reference to Diotrephes one can detect a tone of reproof to the church for permitting this sorry state of affairs. If Diotrephes was an improper person to have the oversight of the little company, it was not because they had no one else. "Demetrius hath good report of all men." John could hardly go further than this in recommending Demetrius to the notice of the Church—surely here was the man who ought to be their elder. Well reported of by all who know him—a good report concerning the Truth—the endorsement of the Apostle himself. What more could they want? Perhaps the church did eventually take the hint and replace Diotrephes by Demetrius, to their own spiritual good and advancement. We do not know, but it is nice to think that perhaps they did.

*"I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee; but I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name."*

A very similar conclusion to that of the Second Epistle. Just the kind of conclusion we should expect. So much to say and discuss and the written word so unsatisfactory a medium by which to say

it. So much better to defer it until they could meet and then spiritual communion would be free and unchecked. So the friends with John at Ephesus send greetings to their brethren with Gaius in the unnamed church, and in so doing express once more that spirit of understanding brotherly love which is the cohesive force holding together all who are His. "The love of Christ constraineth us"—holds us together.

John's work is done. He has given of his best, spending himself in wise instruction, grave warning and loving exhortation. It is for us to take great heed of his words and apply them very seriously to our own hearts and lives. This man lived a long and crowded life in the service of his Lord and ours. He knew—none better—how the practice of the principles of Jesus' teaching, rightly combined with a proper perception of the doctrinal understanding of Scripture, can make the Christian life full and complete, giving every happiness and satisfaction now, furthering the interests of the Gospel in this world, and in the after life beyond the veil, bring joy unspeakable and full of glory. "We know not what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

## MAN OF SORROWS

A Study in Isaiah 53

### Part 2.—"THINGS EYE HATH NOT SEEN."

*Last month's instalment commented on verses 13 and 14 of Isa. 52 and showed how the usual thought that our Lord as a Man was of "marred" and unlovely visage (countenance) is not likely to be correct; that in fact His appearance was serene and lovely.*

\* \* \*

*"So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider." (chap. 52, vs. 15.)*

This "sprinkling" is the same thing as Moses' sprinkling of the blood upon the altar and the people (Exod. 24) and of the blood of the sin-offering in the Day of Atonement ceremonies. (Lev. 16.) It is also the sprinkling of water for purifying and making clean in Lev. 19. The sprinkling of many nations is the purification and cleansing of many nations, and the purifying agent is the blood of Jesus Christ, the blood of the Sin-

offering. Hence the Apostle tells us that we have come to "Jesus the mediator of the new covenant and the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel". (Heb. 12. 24.) Hence we are "elect . . . unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ". (1 Pet. 1. 2.) The Church now, and the world in the next Age, the Millennial Age, benefit from the sin-offering of Jesus and come under the sprinkling which is for purification. What a triumphant testimony this is to the final success of God's Plans. "So shall he sprinkle many nations." It is not that only a few will eventually attain eternal salvation and the many suffer everlasting loss and cutting-off. The Divine Plan is going to be gloriously successful, and "many nations", the majority of earth's children, receive lasting benefit from the ransom-sacrifice of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

There is a subtle allusion here to the priestly function of the "servant's" work on earth. After the institution of the priesthood, only the Levitical

priests could lawfully sprinkle the blood of the offerings. Hence this servant who comes to execute the will of God in the realm of human salvation is qualified and authorised to act as a priest—as we have it in the Epistle to the Hebrews “We have such an High Priest . . . a minister of the true tabernacle”. (Heb. 8. 1-2.)

Now we are told that the kings shall shut their mouths at him, seeing things of which they had never before heard, and understanding things which heretofore had never come upon their minds. This is quite clearly spoken prophetically of the far distant future when Messiah should come in the glory and power of His Kingdom. These words are quite inappropriate to the First Advent. If kings shut their mouths at Him it is because they respect and honour him. So it was in the days of the patriarch Job's prosperity and glory, when he was the acknowledged lord of his community and nation. “When I went out to the gate through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street, the young men saw me, and covered themselves; and the aged arose, and stood up. The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth. The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth.” (Job 29. 7-10.) Poetically Micah says “the nations . . . shall lay their hand upon their mouth” (Micah 7. 16) at the rising up of God to fulfil His age-old promise to Israel. So here, the mighty exhibition of the Divine power that will eventually reveal the all-conquering Christ to mankind will cause kings and mighty men to stand abashed and silent in the presence of One Who is to exercise all rule and all authority and all sovereignty in the earth.

“*That which hath not been told them shall they see, and that which they had not heard shall they understand.*” This is a Millennial promise also; it is easy to say, as do most commentators, that these words were fulfilled in the coming of the Gospel to the world when Jesus came, and in the preaching of the Gospel in the world throughout the centuries since, but that, although a comfortable doctrine for those who expect the world to be converted during this Age, is not the right understanding. It is an obvious fact that the kings and great ones of the earth still do not “see” and “understand” the things which heretofore had not been proclaimed. With all the making known things that beforetime had been kept secret from the foundation of the world the “seeing” and “understanding” is still not an accomplished fact. It is still mainly the “poor” of this world, rich in faith” who have seen and understood; most certainly not the kings and mighty men. We are

led therefore to the only and obvious conclusion, that this word will have its fulfilment in the coming Age. In that day things that the powerful and influential and intellectual of earth had either never considered seriously for a moment, or if they had, had dismissed as unworthy of further consideration, will be brought prominently before their attention and demand acceptance. “God will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

It requires only a moment's thought to appreciate what a revolutionary change in the thinking of educated men and women will be brought about by the Kingdom. Every one of us is familiar with the half-pitying, half-cynical, smile that comes over the face of some as we try to tell them the message of the Plan in its simplicity and beauty. “Do you really believe that?” “Rather fantastic, isn't it?” “You'll never change human nature”—we have heard all the stock replies. There are so many in the world brought up in the ways of the world and according to its standards who find it quite impossible to consider the story of the Plan seriously even for a moment; it is so foreign to their way of thinking and alien to all their conception of things. That is why one can truthfully say that they have never heard or been told of these things. The message has fallen upon their ears, perhaps repeatedly, but the ears were deaf to the message; they could not receive it. Now, says the prophet, in that day when the servant of the Lord commands the attention of all men, they *will* see and understand the Truth. It is a true word, applicable in principle to men in the next Age although really intended in its fulness to the Church in this Age, which says “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love him”. (1 Cor. 2. 9.) It was Isaiah who first uttered those words which are so well known because the Apostle Paul used them in his epistle. And Isaiah's phrase is vivid when we think of these kings who are to see and understand. “For since the beginning of the world, men have not heard, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.” (Isa. 64. 4.) Paul's words were intended for the Church, the spiritually-minded sons of God in this Age; Isaiah's rhapsody was designed to embrace all men and to bring within its scope those who in this “present evil world” do not know God. “Him that waiteth for him” says Isaiah; this is none other than every son of mankind who ultimately inherits the earthly Paradise. “It shall be said in that day . . . we have *waited for him*, and he will save us.” (Isa. 25. 9.)

In the glorious triumph of God in the outcome of His redemptive Plan, when all that are in heaven and on earth join together in one vast song of praise and adoration to the One sitting upon the throne, and to the Lamb, the men who formerly doubted

and disbelieved and disparaged and denied will perceive in the ways of God and the benevolence of God heights of wisdom and love such as the heart of man, unaided, could never have conceived.

*To be continued.*

## The Lifting Up of Jesus

*An exposition of vital doctrine*

*"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." (John 12. 32.)*

In the matter of the world's redemption God is a God of order. He works out His Plan in a methodical way, finishing one stage before commencing another. This is clearly seen in that famous passage in Acts, where James says that the first thing God did after the Ransom had been provided, was to visit the Gentiles to take out a people for His Name. After that He builds up the Jewish nation restored in their homeland, and finally there comes an opportunity for all men to seek the Lord. Just before His death Jesus said: *"I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do"*, and on the cross He said, *"It is finished"*. We have no difficulty in recognising that He meant that one stage of His Father's Plan committed to Him had been successfully brought to a finish, namely, the giving of Himself as the sacrifice for sin. This would have availed the world but little if the Plan of God had stopped there; there are further stages to be worked out. The benefit of that great redeeming sacrifice must be proclaimed to all men far and near. *"Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under Heaven given among men whereby we must be saved"* (Rom. 10. 13-14; Acts 4. 12.) If belief in Jesus is the only way to life, then it clearly follows that everyone, living and dead, must have an opportunity to know the way, or else it cannot truly be said that Jesus gave His life a ransom for all.

We have in the New Testament two statements of our Lord which it is difficult to understand until one recognises the fact that one feature of God's plan must be worked out before another commences. Both are found in John's Gospel, and both of them speak of the lifting up of Jesus. The first is the well-known one when, early in His ministry, Jesus talked with Nicodemus, the Jewish ruler who went to Him by night because he was afraid of others knowing of his interest in Jesus. To him Jesus said, referring to Himself: *"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilder-*

*ness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up"* (John 3. 14). The other passage, spoken to His disciples, occurs in the words of Jesus at the close of His ministry. *"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me"* (John 12. 32).

These two texts are not harmonious if read in the light of orthodox teaching. The first indicates that God has provided a means of salvation, but that the onus of obtaining the same is put upon the one who sees himself smitten by sin and under sentence of death. He must do something himself if he is to obtain relief. The other text indicates something different, for it tells of an active work by Jesus which will result in His victory over all the forces which have hindered, and would hinder men from seeing in Him, and then obtaining those blessings which God has set in Him. The first passage is the better known, and it has determined much of the theology of Christendom. Had the second been more properly understood the result would have been widely different.

These two words of Jesus illustrate the two phases of the programme which God purposed when He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to be its Saviour. The two phases are distinct in character. Clearly the first passage tells of an opportunity provided to accept a favour set forth for those who seek it. This is voluntary in character. The second just as clearly indicates that a work is to be done, not primarily by man himself, but a work which begins outside man and apart from him, a work which shall draw him to Christ, that at least he may know and understand that He is God's appointed Saviour. Whereas the former phase is voluntary in character, this one is in a measure compulsory.

Jesus told Nicodemus why He came into the world. He said: *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* For thousands of years the world had been under the rule of sin and death; millions had perished in that they had died without any hope of a resurrection, and men would con-

tinue thus to perish unless God did something to stop the reign of sin. The illustration Jesus gave to Nicodemus is a graphic one. Nicodemus knew the story well, how in the wilderness shortly before they reached Canaan, their fathers were attacked by fiery serpents, that is, by serpents whose bite resulted in immediate burning inflammation and speedy death. That difficult people, then nearly at the borders of the promised land, had once again complained of God's provision for them, especially of the Manna, saying they would rather be in Egypt. God sent fiery serpents amongst them as a punishment. The fact was that many of that multitude who had been sentenced to wandering in the wilderness and to death some thirty-nine years before had not yet died, and now God brought them into tests which demonstrated that they were still of the same disobedient and unbelieving spirit which they had manifested a generation earlier, and which brought upon them that sentence of death in the wilderness. God had said: "*As truly as I live, your carcasses shall fall in the wilderness . . . doubtless ye shall not come into the land concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein, save Caleb and Joshua*".

The fiery serpents were means used to bring righteous retribution on the people, but, as the people cried out and expressed repentance, God, on the plea of Moses, instructed him to make a brazen serpent and set it on a pole. In the sunshine it would bear the appearance of fire, and He said that it should come to pass that whoever looked on the serpent should live. The brazen serpent represented the sin of the people, and as they looked upon it they were reminded of their sin. It was only by an acknowledgment of their sin that they could gain freedom from the curse which had come upon them. They looked and lived. "*When he beheld the serpent of brass he lived*" (Numbers 21:9). It is interesting to note that the word "beheld" has a sense of looking to, that is, not a casual glance, but a purposeful set gaze, a look of expectancy, a look of faith.

It was to this incident that Jesus referred when He said to Nicodemus: "*Even so must the Son of Man be lifted up*". There could be no special point in His referring to the lifting up of the serpent if He meant only the fact of his being put to death on a cross; evidently it was His intention to show that in His lifting up He, too, should be as one bearing sin. It is a graphic picture, but it tells as perhaps no other illustration could, not only of the fact of the ransom price being provided, but that the poison of sin can be eradicated, and the sufferer completely healed. God has provided not only for the forgiveness of the sinner, but also

for the breaking of its power in the lives of those who accept the salvation He has provided in His Son. "*God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.*" This text tells of the cost to God of His provision for human salvation. The Bible explains quite simply that the love of God was so great for mankind that He gave His Son, the dearest treasure of His heart, His greatest gift, for its salvation. The sacrifice was great, but it was made greater by reason of the shameful death which was necessary, and the cost to the Son was great too, for He gave all He had, and for our sakes became poor that we through His poverty might be rich. Not only did His future depend upon His fidelity when it was put to the test, but the way in which the sacrifice was to be made entailed great suffering. In His lifetime He was spoken of as in league with Satan, from whom it was said He received His power. At His trial He was called a blasphemer. These were dreadful and awful calumnies uttered by wicked men, but to be crucified as a sinner was far, far worse. Surely His Father would not permit this, He was so conscious of His own innocence; He had never caused His Father a moment's doubt or anxiety. He had been loyal to his task and faithful and trustful throughout. "I do always those things which please Him" was His outspoken conviction. Why, then, should He go out of this life with such a stigma upon him? Branded as a sinner, would it not appear that Satan had won the contest and secured a notable triumph in His death? He had come to show how sin and death could be conquered, and should He, the would-be conqueror, succumb as a victim just as millions of the human race had done before Him? Must He hang there, not only the object of men's hatred, but as a sinner in His Father's sight? No wonder He prayed so earnestly: "*Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me*". But so it was to be. Jesus, in the manner of His death, was to be made to appear as if He were a sinner.

After the resurrection of Jesus the proclamation that God had made Him a Prince and a Saviour was made by the Apostles, and since then thousands have heard something of the righteousness in the earth, and that the power of sin would be broken, and all the forces of evil, which had kept men down, would then be restrained, and liberty to serve God and find eternal life would then be possible. He knew, too, that He would be chosen of the Father, even as now, to reveal unto men the beauty and grace of His character, but with this difference—that whereas now the spiritual perception of most men was so dulled by the poison of sin that understanding was impossible—then the

blinded eyes should see, faculties so long blunted by human frailty would be awakened to full power, and not a handful only of Gentiles would be enquiring for Him, but the whole Gentile world would be drawn to Him, and He would teach them of the love of God for all men, for all the power of the Kingdom would be in His hands. Meanwhile, if it was His Father's will, Jesus was content to declare his message to the few. Now was the opportunity for him who hated his life in this world to secure the life eternal: "If any man serve Me let him follow Me, and where I am there shall My servant be". While it was His Father's good pleasure that the door of opportunity should remain open, He must wait until His day should come to be lifted up in power and glory and establish His Kingdom.

Thus it is seen that the two texts considered tell of two ages during which the Gospel is preached. The first occupies the time between the two Advents, when God is drawing a people to Himself by the message of His love, and when He causes those who come to Him to behold His beloved Son crucified, and tells them of the resurrection and the power of salvation which now is to be realised in Him. The second is the time of Christ's reign, commonly spoken of as the Millennial reign, because the Bible says it will last a thousand years. It is when the Kingdom of Jesus is fully established that the turmoil of the present trouble will cease, and there will be a drawing to righteousness which will prove to be the world's real hope and its salvation.

## "BECOMING"

*Important Counsel for  
the Christian Life*

*"And are become such as have need of milk and not of solid food." (Heb. 5. 12.)*

The Christian life is one of "becoming". It is not static or stationary. Either there is growth and progression, or there is decay and retrogression. In the text the Apostle addresses some who had "become" such as had need of milk again and not the more solid food. And for this he felt it needful to administer words of reproof, for by that time they to whom he wrote ought to have become teachers of the Word. Instead of having progressed to that more favourable state they had retrogressed from an intermediate stage of development until now they were back at the point where their Christian growth began.

Naturally in the first phases of the Christian life milk is the proper food for all believers. And the more developed and mature rejoice exceedingly to see the new beginner imbibing and absorbing milk, but it must be cause for much concern and regret for them to see believers who have had the Truth for years retrogressing and becoming such as have need of milk again.

It would be cause of considerable concern and alarm in our domestic life if our boys and girls of "teen-age" growth were becoming such as had need of milk again. We hold it right that they should have milk—good milk indeed—in the first few months of life, and even good supplies of milk along with solid foods for the first few years, but should they once have reached the first threshold of adolescence and puberty and then begin to retrogress and become again such as had need of milk

—all milk—this would be to us a very serious matter indeed.

That is exactly what had happened, in a spiritual sense, with the brethren of our text. A rather considerable period of time had elapsed since they first believed and were fed with milk, but now by reason of that stretch of time they ought to have been developed as far as "teacher-hood". Instead of that there had been malnutrition and decay, and they were neither able to be of service to others in the teaching capacity, nor could they be taught the deeper things which a Christian needs to know.

If these Christian brethren were of the "first" generation of believers some thirty years would have elapsed since they began to imbibe that milk of the Word, and, in that span of time (or even in one-third that span), they surely ought to have grown up to teacher-hood, and have been able to pass on the milk to other new believers any day, and every day, of their lives! They ought to have been teachers of the Word! Yes, God counts the time from when we first believe, and rightly expects to see progression and development in the way of the Truth, and if, as the years go by, there is no such development, He may want to know the reason why!

The brethren in our text had become "dull of hearing", apathetic, sluggish, and somewhat indifferent to the Truth in its deeper, wider fulnesses. Teachings which the Apostle wished to impart were to them "hard of interpretation". Not that they ought to have been hard to impart had the brethren been alert, with their senses spiritually exercised.

They were "hard of interpretation"—hard to put over by the teacher, solely because the brethren had become dull of hearing, and could not exercise their senses enough to discern the good things of the Truth, and the evil nature of their lethargy. That was the tragic side of their Christian life, for while they drifted backwards and became as babes again, the deeply flowing currents of their day and nation were sweeping onwards towards the crisis-hour of their national and religious overthrow. Every day and month was carrying them nearer to that national catastrophe concerning which the deeper truth they could not learn would have been deeply instructive. In the vortex of the swiftly moving current they were likely to be as helpless and useless as children caught in the rapids of a river in spate.

Perhaps nothing is so pitiable in human experience as the decline into a second childhood. In the first childhood—the infant childhood—the vital powers are expanding and developing; the days of milk are followed by the days of "the crust", and then of "meat". Here the days of milk are temporary and in proper season—and indeed this is Nature's way; but in the second childhood the vital powers are spent. Degeneration and decay become paramount, and senility and death loom ahead.

So also with those who, after juvenile growth spiritually "become" such as have need again of spiritual milk. They are "becoming" old, decrepit, and senile—old-age babes.

There are certain marks which are indicative of babyhood which can become accentuated in a second spiritual childhood.

First, it is right and proper for an infant babe to be carried about from place to place, and even to be tossed about in parental hands. Correspondingly it is a sign of immaturity to be tossed about by any and every wind of doctrine that blows about (Eph. 4. 14). This is often seen after some long-trusted teacher is removed by death or other circumstance. Such growth as there may have been is arrested and the reverse procedure begins. Uncertainty and insecurity replace conviction and trust, former beliefs are relinquished and new ones take their place with every shift of wind.

Secondly, the babe tends to "belong"—as a baby claims to have its crib, its toys, etc. The religious babe has its denomination, its church, its sect, its class, and is very careful to "belong"! "My church", "my class", "my people", is its watchword. And this becomes very obvious as its inner helplessness becomes complete.

Next, the babes in spiritual things tend to glory in men, to rhapsodise over "so and so's" preaching

or "so and so's" ideas. Like the Corinthians, they can say "I am of Paul" or "I am of Apollos", or in modern terms "I am of Wesley" or "I am of Calvin" or "I am of Brother ———". Paul had to treat the Corinthians as babes in Christ, whom he had need to feed with milk, because they had turned aside from deeper things. "Are ye not carnal" he asks them. Yes, carnal Christians—Christians who had "become" carnal! Not necessarily wicked Christians but Christians living on the level of the flesh. Christians dividing up into groups exactly as the politicians do; or professing preference for this leader or that, or this policy or that. When seen at work this attitude is always indicative of the fact that the great central truth of the Church's oneness in Christ is either lost, or is become obscured, and so likely to become lost in future days.

Again, babes need much sleep. So do some decadent and relaxed Christian souls. The vigour of youth is spent, the fires of enthusiasm are dying (or have died) out, and a spirit of slumber and lethargy creeps slowly over the soul. The sense of ambassadorship is lost, the spur of the ministry of reconciliation is spent, and the tired one lies down to vegetate till senility damps out the fires.

It is an inescapable fact that every one of us is "becoming" this or that. Either we are "becoming" strong in the Lord and in the power of His might with all the senses rightly exercised to discern both good and evil, or we are "becoming" weak and need only milk for our sustenance. There is nothing to-day exactly as it was yesterday, nor will it be tomorrow exactly as it is to-day. It is either growth or decay, vigour or decrepitude, health or disease—a matter of daily change, for good or ill. It behoves us all to give attention to this matter of "becoming", for

*To sow an act is to reap a tendency,*

*To sow a tendency is to reap a habit,*

*To sow a habit is to reap a character,*

*To sow a character is to reap a destiny.*

God grant us to be found among those who are being changed from glory unto glory with every passing day, and so "becoming" God-like and Christ-like in consequence.

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Let us serve Him faithfully as our Master. Let us obey Him loyally as our King. Let us study His teaching as our Prophet. Let us walk diligently after Him as our Example. Let us look anxiously for Him as our coming Redeemer. But above all, let us prize Him as our Sacrifice, and rest our whole weight on His death as an atonement for sin . . . Whatever else we glory in about Christ, let us never fail to glory in His Cross.

## READINGS IN THE REVISED STANDARD VERSION

This feature is giving, month by month, comments on most of the important changes of translation made by the new Revised Standard Version, published in 1952, compared with the Authorized Version. The entire Bible is being gone through in order, beginning with Genesis and ending with Revelation. The comments are necessarily brief but sufficient to give readers a good idea of the nature of the new Version.

\* \* \*

Gen. 1. 21. "And God created great whales" (A.V.) "So God created the great sea monsters" (R.S.V.). The Hebrew word means any huge denizen of the sea but the A.V. translators knew only of whales. The R.S.V. rendering only confirms what has long been recognised as the best term to use and so gives a place in the Creation account to a most important epoch, the age of mighty sea reptiles, great creatures which dominated the earth for a long period and then died out completely. The celebrated *Diplodocus* and *Gigantosaurus*, with their long necks and small heads, familiar to those who saw the "Drama of Creation" films many years ago, lived at this time.

Gen. 4. 8 "And Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field . . ." (A.V.). "Cain said to Abel his brother, 'Let us go out in the field'. And when they were in the field . . ." (R.S.V.). This addition is found in the Septuagint and Samaritan texts and is adopted by R.S.V. as authentic. It fills a gap in the Hebrew text and indicates a deliberateness of purpose on Cain's part which is lacking in the A.V. It makes it appear as if Cain induced Abel to accompany him to a place apart, away from the rest of the family, so that he could carry out his purpose. If the addition is correct, it implies that Cain's crime was not the result of a sudden impulse, as has often been concluded from the story, but was a premeditated act. (It is certain that the human community must have grown to quite a sizable group of men and women by the time of Abel's death.)

Gen. 5. 32. "And Noah was five hundred years old; and Noah begat Shem, Ham and Japheth" (A.V.) "After Noah was five hundred years old, Noah became the father of" etc. (R.S.V.). This change makes clear that the three sons were not all born at once, which of course is evident in Genesis since Shem was one hundred years old two years after the Flood and so was born in Noah's 502nd year (see Gen. 11. 10). By translating Gen. 10. 21 "to Shem . . . the elder brother of

Japheth" instead of "the brother of Japheth the elder" as in A.V., the R.S.V. makes Shem the first-born instead of the youngest as has often been assumed.

Gen. 6. 3. "My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years" (A.V.). "My spirit shall not abide in man for ever, for he is flesh, but his days shall be an hundred and twenty years" (R.S.V.). This verse in the A.V. has usually been a puzzle and various interpretations, some quite fantastic, have been advanced. As rendered by the R.S.V. it is intelligible. It seems to be a reiteration of the Edenic sentence "In the day thou eatest, dying thou shalt die" but limiting that "day" to a period much shorter than had hitherto been known. It has sometimes been suggested that Adam's "day" in which he must die was a "day with the Lord" of one thousand years' duration. True to that, all the antediluvian patriarchs with the exception of Enoch are recorded to have lived for periods not much short of one thousand years and over the whole progress of the "world that was" there was no apparent decrease in the length of human life. In fact the two longest lived men of history, Jared and Methuselah, lived toward the end of that Age. After the Flood the histories show a steady decrease in the length of life. Although at the first there were spans of six, five or four centuries, by the time of Jacob and Joseph the allotted span had settled down to figures of one hundred and forty, more or less, and by the time of the Psalms it had become the traditional three score and ten. Centenarians are at this present time still not uncommon, but in all the world for many centuries now only a handful of people have been known to exceed 120 years.

Gen. 9. 20. "And Noah began to be an husbandman" (A.V.). "Noah was the first tiller of the soil" (R.S.V.). This change eliminates the old English word "husbandman" which is obsolete nowadays. If the change to "first tiller of the soil" is correct it means that men before the Flood had no need to till the soil for their food, which is out of harmony with the Edenic curse "in the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat bread". It is more probable that the expression refers to the new world after the Flood, that Noah's sons became pastoral folk, keeping flocks and herds, and he himself turned to agricultural pursuits. That would lead his sons very soon to leave him since a tiller of the soil is bound to the land he cultivates. Shepherds and herdsmen in olden times

wandered wherever they found good pasture. That supposition helps to fill in the next Genesis story, that of the Tower of Babel. The sons of Noah travelled to the plain of Shinar and there separated. Noah remained on his own farmlands.

Gen. 11. 1. "And the whole earth was of one language and one speech" (A.V.). "Now the whole earth had one language and few words" (R.S.V.). This slight difference in rendering expresses a significant truth. All languages are continually growing by the addition of new words, some taken over from other languages and some invented to meet a need. The early clay tablets which have been found in Mesopotamia show that in, for example, the days of Abraham, written and therefore spoken language was simpler and of far fewer words than is the case to-day. The sons of Noah, after the Flood, had fewer interests and a more restricted view of the world than have we to-day and their language was correspondingly simpler. From Babel onwards, as humanity began to multiply and spread abroad over the earth, not only did various tongues and languages arise, but the invention of words to express the new ideas that came into men's minds, and describe the new things they found, proceeded apace.

*The publication of the Revised Standard Version may well prove to be one of the greatest contributions of this generation to the promotion of the Christian faith. It presents the old story rendered anew in a tongue more readily understood by this generation. Copies of the Rexine bound edition are held at Welling for the convenience of readers, at 39/- (£5.50) post free.*

The whole earthly life of the Saviour was lived in cottages, by the wayside, in the usual haunts of men engaged in their daily tasks. Flowers and birds, candles and bushels, beams and motes were the texts for His sermons; His pulpit was often a stone on the mountain side, or a fishing boat by the shore, but such was the glory revealed by His ministry that hearts were humbled, sins were confessed, and lives were transformed.

\* \* \*

A young man came to an evangelist and said, "It costs too much to be a Christian." The evangelist replied wisely, "It costs too much *not to be one.*" It costs much to be a sanctified Christian walking in the light and life and power of God; but none of us can afford not to be such a Christian.

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Thou, therefore, endure  
hardness as a good  
soldier of Jesus Christ.

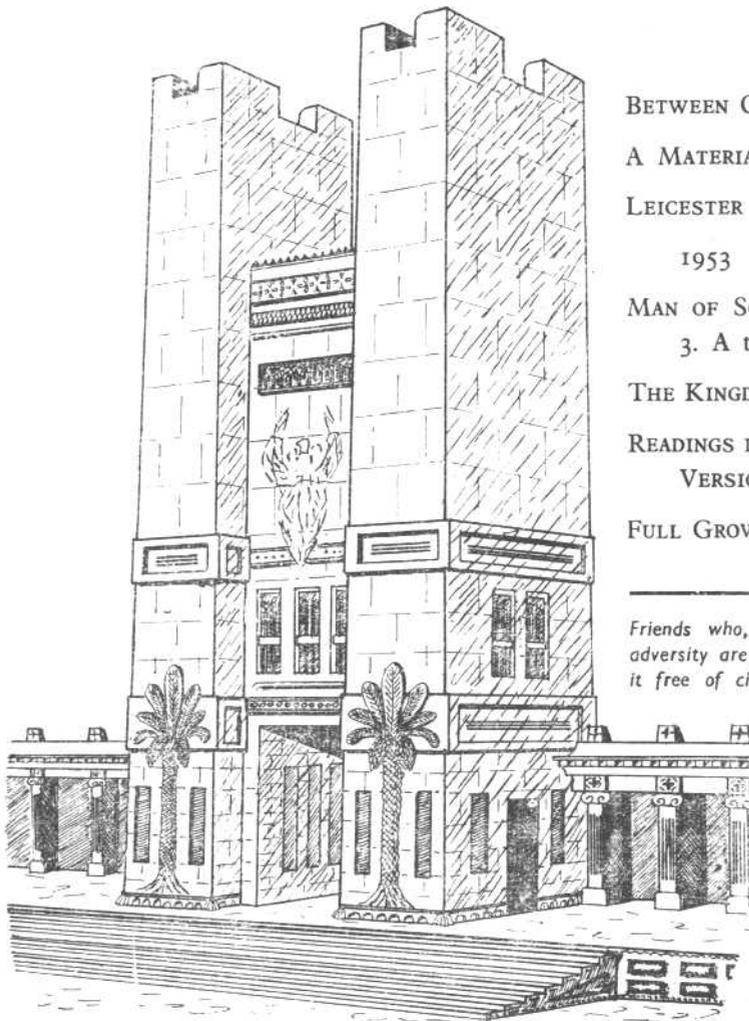
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*Lift up your heads, O ye gates.  
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors,  
And the King of glory shall come in.*

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## BETWEEN OURSELVES

The friends at Ossett (Yorks) are arranging a Home Gathering for the weekend 5th-6th September and a warm invitation is extended to all who can attend. The sessions will be held on the Saturday at the Christian Fellowship Mission, Ossett, and on the Sunday in Ossett Community Centre. Saturday meetings commence at 3.0 p.m. and there will be a baptismal service on Saturday evening. Accommodation will be provided for those who wish to stay overnight, and meals each day will be provided. Further details from Sister (Miss) E. L. Robinson, Laburnam Cottage, Dewsbury Road, Ossett, Yorks.

In this issue there will be found the second and concluding instalment of "A Material Paradise", the first part of which appeared in our last issue. This article is by Bro. Clifton G. Reynolds, of U.S.A., and we plan to publish it in booklet form immediately, for public witness purposes. The booklet will have 24 pages and be uniform in style to our similar booklet "A Glimpse of God's Plan" issued some time ago. We do trust that this edition to our series of useful pamphlets for use in interesting people in our message will be found useful and acceptable. The price is 3/- per dozen or £1 per 100, post paid, and we can take orders at once for delivery commencing in about a week's time. We recommend that our readers consider, while they read this article, what use they can make of the booklet. (§3.00 per 100 in U.S.A.)

This is a very special notice to all our American readers. Will brethren on the American continent please take care to address their letters with a 4 similar to this example. The American style of writing 4 is very similar to the English style of 7, and in consequence letters from America occasionally get delivered to 27, Darwin Road instead of 24. This causes a certain amount of inconvenience and it will be appreciated if brethren will make a note of this little point.

The article "World Conversion—When?" appearing in our April issue has been reprinted as a four-page leaflet for the use of the friends. It is thought that it will be particularly useful among Christians who are already active workers in other groups and denominations. Unfortunately funds do not permit of its being distributed free; we can however supply at the rate of 10/6 per 100 or 3/- for 25, both post free and will be glad to despatch on receipt of order.

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### Gone From Us

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Sis. Cowan (*Glasgow*).

Sis. M. G. Lewis (*Ipswich*).

Sis. Traill (*Glasgow*).

"Till the day break, and the shadows flee away."

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## "THROUGHOUT THE AGES"

Throughout the ages the progress and development of Christianity has been marred by doctrinal strife. Intolerance, discord and persecution has stained many a fair page of the Church's history with its indelible markings. Men and women whose loyalty to the cause of Christ was beyond question have nevertheless so utterly failed to grasp the essence of Christian teaching that they have soured their lives and blemished their good works with the evil fruits of religious controversy. And realising, as one must do, that the seed of these things lies in individual conscientiousness and zeal for the Truth it is a matter for wonder that greater thought has not been and is not being given to the essential place of theological teaching in the Christian life. That it is an important—perhaps the most potent—of the external forces shaping and influencing our development cannot be denied. That it is of all aspects of our fellowship together the one most productive of misunderstanding, division, and the waxing cold of that love which constitutes the evidence that we have passed from

death into life, is unhappily only too true. That we in this day have been blessed with an insight into the deep things of God far exceeding the portion of past generations is so tacitly accepted amongst us that the position is never questioned. Yet current thought amongst us still tends to gravitate to the extremes; we are told on the one hand that salvation comes by reason of an intellectual appreciation of true theology, and by means of which faith remains unshaken in the evil day; upon the other hand that doctrinal understanding is of such relatively little importance that nothing more than a mental acceptance of Jesus Christ as the Ransom for All, coupled with a life of good works, is asked of those who would follow in the steps of the Master.

Somewhere between these extremes the truth must lie; and it is with sober and reverent minds that we should enquire, first as individuals, and then in communal discussion, if we are to occupy our rightful place as ambassadors for Christ to this generation.

## A MATERIAL PARADISE

*An Outline for  
the newly interested*

### Part 2.

But while we are considering the return of the world under the resurrection, or restoring process, to a condition of human perfection, we must not forget the "Church class", as illustrated by those who take up their cross daily and strive to follow the footprints left on the pages of history by the Babe of Bethlehem. Those who accept Jesus Christ as their Advocate, through consecration and faithfulness in service, attain to what the Scriptures term, the First Resurrection. Theirs is a spiritual reward and has nothing to do with our general subject, but as it is referred to in this verse we shall consider it very briefly. Through consecration and faith these come forth from the tomb perfect, having received their trial in the present life, under the present unfavourable conditions. Therefore we read the succeeding words in this text, "shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their HEADS".

Generally speaking the word Zion would be considered to mean spiritual Israel. In this text, however, we believe that Zion means that restitution government which shall be instituted under the material leadership of the Jews at Jerusalem, and under the leadership of spiritual Israel, designated in other Scriptures as the "Church of the First Born", "Israelites indeed". These will be recognised, as the Scriptures foretell, as "Kings and Priests upon the earth", though unseen by mortal eye. In other words, their influence for good shall be felt and recognised just as truly as Satan's influence for evil is now recognised.

The returning to Zion therefore has a twofold scope or meaning. The Church of Christ shall return to Zion for the purpose of administering God's blessings to the world through the Jewish Patriarchs. The Jews themselves shall return for the purpose of being the material channel through which God's spiritual blessing shall be administered. The world in general shall return for the purpose of receiving these blessings, and we read, "No man shall say unto his neighbour, Know the Lord, for all shall know Him, from the least unto the greatest". Therefore in spite of the greatness of the blessing which the world itself shall enjoy, we understand from this passage that the HEADS of the restitution government (spiritual Israel) shall have a greater reward because their judgment day has been under such unfavourable conditions, and their salvation attained as a result of such great

sacrifice on their part. Briefly this "better resurrection" is indicated in the verse we are considering, in these words, "with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads".

The only thing the Scriptures give any account of as being of an everlasting or a never ending, or a never dying nature, is the immortal nature. We therefore refer in our common conversation concerning life, as the joy of life, the joy of living. In this verse we find that the heads of the restitution government shall come forth from the grave with everlasting life, with the joy of the immortal nature, on a spirit plane of existence, and shall come singing the song of "Moses and the Lamb". In other words they shall come proclaiming the harmony of the Scriptures for the enlightenment of the world. "And they (the rest of the world) shall obtain joy (shall attain to an appreciation of their opportunities and gradually obtain the perfection of the life—human life—lost in Adam) and gladness," and also the world in general shall obtain an appreciation of the harmony of the Scriptures and the melody with which they declare, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace and goodwill toward men"—with this thought in mind we clearly see how the resurrecting process, the "restanding" process, is carried on. If a man was brought forth from the grave a perfect man, when he had gone down into the grave a cripple, he would not be able to recognise himself, but coming back as he went down he is recognised by his friends and relatives and also is able to appreciate more abundantly the blessings of a perfect life physically, mentally and spiritually which shall be attained by him as a result of obedience to the perfect laws administered under the Messiah and His material representatives in the Jewish nation.

It is our understanding of this verse that the whole world shall be brought back to a condition of actual perfection, and that sorrow and crime and dying as result of the imperfect conditions at the present time shall be done away with, and we read in the concluding thought of this verse, "and sorrow and crying shall flee away". This same thought is also brought out in many other passages of the Scripture, throughout its entire length, and should be a cause of much rejoicing to those in the world, born into it without their consent, under conditions with which they cannot

cope, nor hope to obtain the mastery of. From the standpoint of the Church, those who are striving to attain to the First Resurrection, the fight is particularly discouraging, because they are usually people who desire better things, but who are willing, because of their love for their Lord, to lay these aside, to live a life of sacrifice and of loyalty, and to place their entire hope for better things in the future. We like to quote from the life and experiences of the Apostle Paul in this matter. He was a man who enjoyed more of the good things of life that do most of us. He was a member of the Sanhedrim. He was a man of social position and distinction; he was able to command the following and obedience of Roman soldiers. He was a man of exceptional education for his time and day. Yet he gave up all of these, choosing rather a life of privation and hardship and the death of a martyr, in order to obtain the spiritual reward promised to the faithful footstep followers of Jesus Christ. With these thoughts in mind we can all understand his expression in I Corinthians 15. 19, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ we are of all men most miserable". Paul looked forward with intelligence to the resurrection and believed that he would reap the reward of his life of sacrifice at that time.

The objection made to these thoughts, in the mind of the critic, would be that all of the Scriptures we have used, have been directly or indirectly referring to the Jews as a nation, and not to the world in general. The question in the mind of such would be, How do we know the Gentile world shall have a resurrection and that they shall come back to this material earth, the same as the Jews shall come back to this material earth in the resurrection? In answer we will quote from the Word of God the same as we have quoted from the Word of God to prove that the paradise in the future is an earthly material paradise. It is our belief that the Jews in general will not precede the rest of the world in the resurrection. We believe that they shall not precede the wicked Sodomites whom God destroyed by fire. We believe they shall not precede the despised Samaritans, but that at the same time the Jews come forth to their earthly reward, the world in general, including these, shall come forth to an earthly material inheritance, the same inheritance which they possessed while in their present earthly life, as we read, "*When thy sisters Sodom and her daughters (those of like condition of mind as the Sodomites) shall return to their former estate, and Samaria and her daughters (those of like condition of mind) shall return to their former estate, then you (the Jews) and your daughters (those of like condition of mind) shall*

*return to your former estate*". (Ezekiel 16. 55.)

If the former estate of the Jew was an earthly estate, then the former estate of these Gentiles is also an earthly estate. What applies to one in the promises of the Scriptures must apply to the other. There can be no doubt about it. Nevertheless should the sceptical mind care to apply spiritual evidences as indicated in the writings of the Apostles we might obtain further satisfactory evidence in regard to the matter. For example, Acts 15. 16, 17: "After this (time in which we are now living) I (Jesus) will return (with the power I purchased at Calvary) and will build again the Tabernacle of David (we are told the Church class at the present time are tabernacling in the flesh and that they shall constitute the antitypical David in the First Resurrection) and will build again the ruins (of that fleshly temple, the Jewish nation) thereof, and will set it up (establish the Jewish nation in power), that the residue of men might call upon the name of the Lord (that is all the heathen who have never heard of the only name given under heaven or amongst men whereby we can be saved) and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called (Christians, those who are called by the name of Christ), said the Lord who doeth all these things." For the benefit of those who may desire to hear this passage without the interpolations we have inserted we will quote it again: "*After this I will return and build again the Tabernacle of David which is fallen down, and will build again the ruins thereof, and will set it up, that the residue of men might call upon the name of the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.*"

In these three wonderful verses we find the definite statement, discernible to the spiritual mind, that God has first a special salvation for the Church class, second a better salvation for the faithful ones of the Jewish race, and third a salvation, a material salvation, a tangible salvation for the world, including those who nominally call themselves Christians but who in reality are no better than the rest of mankind. If there is any passage in Scripture which makes clear the greatness of our God and His superiority to every human conception concerning Him, it is in the fact that the wages of sin is death, not torment, and that the gift of God is life. The "Curse", as a result of transgression in Eden, was a death curse or penalty. In the resurrection those who will not obey the voice of "that prophet", "shall be cut off from amongst the people"—destroyed. The only hope which the race had since the pronouncing of the original curse was the hope of life realised for the world through the seed of Abraham, Jesus Christ

—and we read in Galatians 3. 18, "*And the Scriptures, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen, preached before the Gospel (of salvation, of life) unto Abraham, saying, in thee and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed*".

This Abrahamic covenant must be fulfilled. It never has been fulfilled, therefore its fulfilment is still future. Furthermore, if there was but one text of Scripture emphasising the Abraham covenant we might have some doubt as to the reality of it, but we find that it is emphasised by nearly every writer in the Holy Scriptures. We find it particularly emphasised in Genesis, the 12th chapter, the 22nd chapter, and the 28th chapter, and in Galatians the 3rd chapter. All of these refer to the times of restitution spoken of in Acts 3. 19-21.

We believe, however, that these TIMES referred to so eloquently by so many of the Bible writers will be times of systematic, orderly government under an established Head and recognised Leader, and have a seat of government in a definite locality. There are several Scriptures which indicate this, for example Ezekiel 37. 24, 25, "*And David my servant shall be king over them, and they shall have one Shepherd, and they shall walk in my judgment and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall return to the land which I gave unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt. And they shall dwell therein, even they and their children, and their children's children forever. And David my servant shall be their Prince forever*". With this arrangement clearly in view it is evident even to those of material mind that God's plan is far greater than human conception has ever made it out to be (I Timothy 2. 4). It is God "Who will have all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the Truth", or if we were to quote the literal Greek in this passage we would make it read "come to an accurate knowledge of the Truth", for this is so rendered in the emphatic.

In other words, it is not to be a matter of guesswork, as it is with many to-day in regard to the Scripture teachings. Referring to the present time we read Philippians 2. 10, 11: "*At the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father*", but of this future day we read quite a different statement. Accurate knowledge shall be obtainable by all, therefore absolute obedience shall be required from all, and we read (Romans 14. 11), "*Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess*". To make this a possibility the student concludes a change of heart and mind conditions throughout the world in general must be effected and also a change in God's method of dealing with the world must come about.

We believe this is the correct conclusion, for in referring to this future period and the changed method of God's dealing with the world we read (Isaiah 65. 24, 25), "*And it shall come to pass that before they call I will answer and while they are yet speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain (government) saith the Lord*".

At the present time the Scriptures state clearly that God is not dealing with the world, nor even hearing their prayers. Our Lord Himself states, "No man cometh unto me, except the Father which sent me draw him". In other words, no one has access to Jesus Christ, through whom we can approach the Father, except the Father first draw the individual. But of this future time we read that things will be different. Before they call, God will anticipate their needs and supply them. Circumstances, conditions or influences which will lift them to a higher plane, will be granted. We believe the phraseology of the succeeding verse, highly figurative though it is, is full of significance when we understand the types represented. For example, the followers of Christ are told to be lamb-like, meek, not self-assertive, but humble minded, following the leading of their Shepherd wherever He might go. We are also told that the worst enemies of those lamblike followers are the wolves of the flock, who seek to devour the humble minded ones. Yet in this future age we find the two feeding side by side.

We also believe that business conditions will be utterly and entirely changed. For example, the most nutritious animal for food is the bullock. The man who does most for building up the prosperity of a community to-day is the small merchant, the farmer, the small banker, while the great lions of commerce, the great corporations and trusts, do more to crush prosperity than to help it, devouring the small man, and merging his interests into their own. Yet in this future age we find that the great lions of industry as well as the bullock class, shall feed side by side. In fact all, from the greatest to the smallest, shall be brought into subjection to the great supreme law which shall then be in existence, and those who will not obey that law, the sneaking, snake-like dispositions, the incorrigibly wicked, shall be brought down to the dust of the ground.

We have another beautiful passage in mind covering the thought we are now treating. It is difficult for anyone lacking spiritual inclinations to understand or appreciate the figurative expressions of the Bible. They are myths to such, and they do

not care to burden their minds with investigating them. In other words, the eyes of their perception are blinded and the ears of their spiritual comprehension are stopped, but indicating the change of the mental condition of those upon the earth, as well as God's method of dealing with the world, we read (Isaiah 35. 5), "*Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped*".

It is with a degree of great anticipation therefore, we are looking forward to the establishment of God's Kingdom upon the earth. We believe this time is near at hand because the Jews are returning to the land of promise as prophesied, and that they would return and enjoy prosperity as a result of their returning. There are many other Scriptures which indicate the time is near at hand for the realisation of these Scripture promises, but they do not come under the heading of our present discourse. We have proven beyond a doubt that PARADISE FOR THE WORLD IS A MATERIAL EARTHLY PARADISE, upon this material world, under a material leadership. This was the object of our study. How much better it is for us to realise this as part of God's plan, than to accept the eternal torment theory preached by some and taught in most of our creeds. We are very thankful to be able to present from

the Scriptures a better hope for most of those who have gone down into the grave, and to bring out the facts that as a result, "*God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away*". (Revelation 21. 4.)

While the result of obtaining the Divine law shall be thus grand in its beautiful out-workings, we are not to lose sight of present opportunities to attain to the higher reward as represented in spiritual Israel. To-day is the day of opportunity for both Jews and Gentiles. Those who take advantage of this opportunity have nothing to lose and everything to gain. In reviewing the various Scripture passages which the world will enjoy and our own opportunity in reference to it at the present time, none come to our mind more eloquently than those three verses in Acts (Acts 3. 19-21) "*Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the time of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you, whom the heavens must receive until the times of RESTITUTION of ALL THINGS which God has spoken by the mouth of ALL HIS HOLY PROPHETS since the world began*".

## WHITSUNTIDE CONVENTION AT LEICESTER, 1953

As we entered the Convention Hall we were met by several brethren busily preparing the meals. Advancing a little further we saw a smiling face behind a very fine selection of literature on the bookstall. Ushers were happily putting the final touches to the auditorium as the friends began to take their places. But none were so busy as to neglect that first warm handshake and the hearty greeting which was so greatly appreciated. This introduction to the gathering was but a token of the "good things to come" as expressed in the Words of Welcome by Bro. T. Wood (*Rugby*) who was Chairman of the Convention. After invoking the Lord's blessing upon the assembly, he exhorted those present to join in fellowship with God, with His Son and with each other. He also spoke of the need of unity as indicated in Psalm 133.

The first address, which was upon "*The Holy Spirit*", was given by Bro. J. H. Sharman (*Forest Gate*). After referring to Whitsuntide and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Church at Pentecost a number of texts were quoted describing many of its functions among God's people. The speaker then asked some very penetrating questions about the Spirit's effect upon our own lives. For

example, did the Spirit make us more Christlike? Were we using the Spirit's gifts to the fullest extent? Finally some of the practical applications of the Spirit were discussed, particularly in relation to the power of private prayer.

We spent the evening session "*Looking Ahead*" under the guidance of Brother F. Musk (*Rosendale*). With special reference to the Prophets and Revelation we surveyed some of the events marking the end of the age and the commencement of the new age of righteousness. The witness given in times of crisis by men like Noah and Elijah illustrated the position of God's people during the time of trouble. Whether men heed our warning or not, let us, said the speaker, lift up our head and yearn for the establishment of the Lord's kingdom.

Our worship on Sunday morning began with a session of praise and quite spontaneously the brethren selected hymns through which ran the theme of the "Cross of Jesus". This was followed by "*Some timely reflections*" by Bro. H. Chrimes (*Timperley*) whose texts were found in 1 Peter 5. 7 and John 16. 27. Firstly the unhappy position of the world was reviewed, contrasting the increased knowledge and invention for the benefit of mankind

against the growing unrest and frustration. Brother went on to speak of the disappointment and apathy among God's people during this same period of the last few decades. It had been a time of testing, preparing the Church for its work in the days to come. The latter part of the talk emphasised the great need to attend to the things of TO-DAY and not to be too concerned with the details of the future. None of us is able to predict with certainty how events in the world will shape and it is our responsibility to be serving the Lord now in whatever sphere He has placed us.

The Midlands friends are noted for their enterprising use of youthful talent, and with one exception all the chairmen for the speakers were young brethren. It was doubly refreshing however on Sunday afternoon when two "Juniors" appeared, the speaker being Brother John Cawker (*Rugby*). A kindly, attentive audience listened to him trace the story of sin, and the way which God had appointed to remove it from the earth. He touched upon the fall, recorded in Genesis, the typical sacrifices of the Law, and lastly, the only "Way" of atoning for sin, through the blood of Jesus.

A discourse from Brother J. Barber (*Warrington*) occupied the second half of the afternoon and his lively method of delivery kept everyone awake during that hot sultry afternoon. His exhortation, based on Paul's words in Philippians 4. 8, was taken from a verse in each chapter of that epistle. Firstly, that we should approve that which is excellent, using discernment in our study of the Word. Secondly, in the example of Christ's humility,

death and resurrection. Finally, allowing the power of these things to make us abound in the Lord.

A period of praise brought the friends together for the last session and was followed by an impressive sermon entitled "*Increasing in the knowledge of God*" in the characteristic manner of Brother T. Watson (*Aldersbrook*). In three successive stages he plainly showed the value of knowledge. The knowledge of God's grace was the first revelation to the Christian, followed by an understanding of His Word. Maturity brought the third stage, a personal knowledge of God Himself and of His dear Son. By prayer and daily experience we came to know Him better, and it was this most important aspect of all which prepared us for our home and work in Heaven. It was a fitting climax to this holy convocation of God's people, weaving together many of the thoughts and themes of the various previous sessions and providing much food for thought.

As always, the partings were hard. But the memories of those happy days linger still. We recall how with much labour the brethren prepared such splendid meals (another Midlands characteristic), the attractive array of books at the book-stall, the beautiful display of flowers upon the platform. We remember too the words of admonition and instruction, the praise which included part of our American pilgrim's legacy, "*Great is Thy faithfulness*"; and most of all the rich and sincere fellowship among hearts devoted to the Lord and to each other.

## MAN OF SORROWS

*A Study in Isaiah 53*

### Part 3.—A TENDER PLANT

*"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" (53. 1.)*

It is an appealing question. It almost implies that none can be found to believe, and yet the story is a true one and the revelation waiting to break through to those who will bend their minds to consider. The speaker has changed his standpoint very rapidly from the one he occupied in chapter 52. *Then*, he gloried in the prospect of kings and great men shutting their mouths and giving heed to the coming of the Servant for their salvation and their instruction. *Now*, he bewails the fact that none will listen to the good tidings nor lift their eyes to the glorious vision resplendent in the skies. Very evidently the prophet has turned away from his contemplation of the glories due to be revealed in the Millennial Age, and bent his gaze

again upon the nearer prospect, the darker days of the First Advent, with all that they hold of sorrow and suffering and death for the Anointed Deliverer.

The word rendered "report" means tidings or news, and is so translated in Psa. 112. 7 and Prov. 25. 25. Here it quite certainly denotes the declaration of the office and work of Jesus and the preaching of His Gospel, as is evident from Rom. 10. 16 "They have not all obeyed the gospel, for Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report". The prophet, coming back as it were from the world of the future into the world of the present, is suddenly struck with the realisation that the glories which are so real and so precious to him and his fellows mean nothing to the world in general. He does not claim the message as his

alone; he has fellow-believers and fellow-prophets. It is not "my" report, but "our" report. He pictures himself as one only of a dedicated company who have seen the light themselves and want to make it known to all and sundry. After all, Israel was a consecrated nation, intended by reason of election and training to receive the Servant when He came, in the way He should come. Isaiah really had a right to expect that the joyous declaration would be received with acclamation by his countrymen. Their ritual sacrifices on the Day of Atonement had pointed forward to this reality. They should know by now that only by suffering and sacrifice could there be cleansing from sin. But Israel did not believe, and Isaiah and his fellow-prophets found themselves but voices crying in the wilderness.

We often find ourselves in the same position. The Truth is so real and logical and convincing to us, we fail to realise that it does not seem so to others. The promise of future restitution and, above that, the glories of the High Calling, take clear and definite shape in our minds but to others it oft times appears fantastic and improbable and all our arguments unconvincing. And we find that hard to understand. Why cannot these people see the same things that we can see so well? That is an old question but it will not be fully answered until we are beyond the Vail. Suffice it now to realise that, as with Jesus during His life on earth, so with His followers since, "the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not".

So Isaiah is driven to proclaim his message to an unbelieving generation, knowing not to what extent his words would ever find lodgment and bear fruit. He must have thought of it as a witness to the people, a prophetic foreview that would be better understood and appreciated after the fulfilment had come. He could not have known of the Divine purpose that his inspired and glowing words should be preserved and recorded for all succeeding generations and taken by other zealous servants of God to the uttermost ends of the earth. Yet so it has been. Wherever the Gospel has been preached this 53rd chapter of Isaiah has been preached too, one of the Scriptures' brightest jewels.

By way of doctrinal digression, it has been pointed out that there are no less than eleven expressions in this chapter referring to the vicarious nature of our Lord's sufferings while in the flesh. The modern schools of thought which portray our Lord as an inspiring example of right living but deny man's fall into sin and the need for a Redeemer must dispense entirely with this chapter and blot it out from the Divine revelation

before they can begin to sustain their contention. The eleven points are:—

"He bore our griefs."

"He carried our sorrows."

"He was wounded for our transgressions."

"He was bruised for our iniquities."

"The chastisement of our peace was upon Him."

"By his stripes we are healed."

"Laid on him the iniquity of us all."

"For the transgression of my people was he stricken."

"Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin."

"He shall bear their iniquities."

"He bare the sins of many."

All of this is very closely associated with the typical ceremonies of the Day of Atonement, and the Priesthood which conducted those ceremonies. "Transgression"; "Iniquity"; "Sin"; these are words that are frequently used in the Leviticus accounts of the laws concerning the offerings, and it is only appropriate that we should meet them again here. If we could only but realise it, the whole of the complex ritual associated with the Day of Atonement has the reality toward which it pointed clearly set out here in this chapter. Isaiah 53 is in very truth the prophetic counterpart of Leviticus 16, and all that there is in that 16th chapter is presented in new guise here in Isa. 53.

"For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground." (vs. 2.)

The word translated "tender plant" comes from "suckling" as in "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings" in Psa. 8. 2, and refers to the young saplings that grow up from the stump of a tree which has been felled. In our own day such shoots are still referred to as "suckers". This is a picture of the coming of Christ which is similar and yet in marked contrast to Isa. 11. 1 "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots". In that chapter the "Branch" comes forth to glory and power, the Spirit of the Lord resting upon him leading him to judge the poor with righteousness and slay the wicked with the rod of his mouth. Isaiah has passed over the day of humiliation and suffering and sees only the triumphant Kingdom beyond, when Messiah shall reign gloriously and all the nations flock to His banner. In this verse of the 53rd chapter the same "rod of the stem of Jesse" is depicted as a sapling growing out of dry ground to disesteem and spurning. Its growth and development is to be under unfavourable circumstances. But it is the same shoot. It will go on growing until it has survived the winter and passed into the light and sunshine of the spring, and it is then that

the fully grown tree will spread abroad its branches in invitation to all creatures. Just as the stone which Nebuchadnezzar saw in his vision became a great mountain that filled the whole earth, so here we have the picture of a tender sapling which thrusts its roots into the soil and its leaves into the air until it has filled the whole face of the land, and, like Israel in her own destined times, blossomed and budded and filled the whole world with fruit.

The background of the picture is the allusion in Isa. 10. 34 to the fall of the Davidic kingly rule under symbol of the cutting down a great cedar in Lebanon by the ruthless invader. The cedars of Lebanon were the mightiest trees known to the ancient world. It was only fitting that these proud monarchs of the forest, standing erect in their towering majesty over all the other trees, should be chosen to picture the royal authority of the house of David, who "sat upon the throne of the Lord" and ruled Israel in the name of God. The apparent permanence of those cedars told fitly of the throne that was to endure for ever before God. But Isaiah in his day knew that because of faithlessness the throne of David must be overthrown, the upstanding cedar be cut down. That was the theme of his prophecy but he did not end there. The throne of David would one day be re-established, when "he whose right it is" appeared to claim His possession. So in verse 34 of chapter 10 the prophet sees the Assyrian and Babylonian invaders ravaging the land and taking the people captive and destroying the kingly power, and he says "he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one". Immediately following, in the first verse of chapter 11, comes the golden sequel "and there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse . . ." Like the tree of the Babylonian king's vision, which was cut down until seven times had passed over it, and then was to sprout again, so it is here. The great cedar of Lebanon which was the kingship of David's line was cut down by the oppressors of Israel. Zedekiah was the last king; but a tender sapling out of that cut-down stump would one day arise to grow into a cedar mightier by far than that which had flourished and perished.

So out of the apparent barrenness and failure of God's promises there grows the "root of David". Christ is to be as a root out of dry ground. The learned men of our Lord's day were quite unable to understand how Christ could be both David's son and David's Lord, even though Jesus quoted the Old Testament Scriptures to that effect and they had prided themselves on understanding the Old Testament Scriptures. This "rod out of the stem of Jesse", this "tender plant" or sapling

from the cut-down stump, is also the root itself! "I am the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star." A particularly uninformed question is sometimes raised in certain circles: "Did Jesus have a pre-existence?—did He exist before the days of His flesh?" Such a question brands the questioner as in complete darkness concerning the fundamentals of the Christian faith. "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." Unless Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, the Lord from heaven, is the root of David as well as his Son, the whole of our faith is founded upon a falsity and we are of all men most miserable. The only possibility of salvation for this fallen race of which we are members lay in the active intervention of God from heaven. "God, sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh . . ." "He Who was rich, for our sakes became poor . . ." Without the root there could never have been the tender sapling growing up into maturity to the lasting benefit of mankind.

The "dry ground" is the "dry and thirsty land, where no water is" of *Psa. 63. 1.* The Psalmist longs and seeks for God but sees no evidence of His presence, until he finds Him in the sanctuary and remembers Him on his bed, meditating on Him in the night watches. Unless we search for God, and finding Him, hold Him fast, even the promises and plans of God are as dry ground to us, barren and profitless. But for those who will have it, there is a root in that dry ground which contains within itself the springing life that is to burst forth into the light of day, bringing life and immortality to light through the Gospel, and causing, at last, the desire of all nations to come. To we who know these things, the dry ground has indeed become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water.

*To be continued.*

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*Concluded from page 144.*

Lord. When believers come to understand that God's great desire for them is their sanctification, and that "Christ should be formed in them" and that this perfecting is the work of God who will both "will" and "work" in them according to His good pleasure, (if only they lie responsive in His hands) they will then realise that all that God asks of them is to present themselves a living sacrifice to Him that they may prove—in actual experience—what is "that good and acceptable and perfect Will of God" concerning them. This will work perfection in them, and bring them up to the full stature of men in Christ Jesus. "Now he that hath wrought this self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit."

## THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

An Expository  
Talk

The New Testament begins properly with the birth of Him who is earth's rightful king and immediately the introduction is made commences the ministry of John the Baptist calling upon the nation of Israel to repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And thus a momentous change began in God's dealings with his chosen people. Throughout their history men of God had arisen among their own nation calling them back to their allegiance to the Lord God and the law of His servant Moses, but to none of those faithful prophets was given so vivid and so definite an announcement as was charged upon John. Though those ancient worthies had spoken of and looked forward to the day when God's kingdom would be upon earth, and of the glories of the King who would reign in righteousness, not to them the honour of heralding, and seeing that King. That so signal a message was given to John to announce was not unexpected when we recall the miracle of his birth and the prophetic words of his father concerning him and his destiny which caused the people to exclaim "What manner of child shall this be!" To him, the last of the old line of prophets, was deputed the honour of introducing Israel's king to His own people. What an honour! What a message!

John "grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing to Israel" and it may well be that by the time he had grown to prophetic manhood some of the prophetic words about John had been forgotten and a new generation had arisen; yet there was in Israel an air of expectancy that God was about to intervene on behalf of His people. That He did intervene at that time through the prophet John and His Son the King of Israel is the basis of the New Testament gospel, though not as supposed by the people. Though John was of priestly descent his mission did not begin at the temple or in the city. It was ever so with prophets—no code of practice governed them as kings, priests and judges were ruled, and they arose any time and anywhere. Their unconventional appearance on the scene of Israel's life often made for their rejection by the nation and John was no exception though many were baptised of him and his message stirred the rulers in Israel enough to send emissaries to hear from John himself his status and message. And then the King himself joined in the call to repent for the kingdom was at hand thus intensifying the importance of the hour and the message.

What did the Jews understand by the mandate

of John, or better, what should they have understood; and further, what should the Christian of to-day, looking back over the years, see in the phrase the Kingdom of Heaven? Because the Scriptures were read every Sabbath day the Jewish nation would know of the exhortation to impress upon their own hearts and minds the words of the Mosaic law and promises, and by that would know in themselves that they had failed as a people to reach that standard of righteousness which would give them the "days of heaven upon earth" (Deut. 11. 18-21), and thus they would reason that the prophets' call to repent was to encourage them back to their obligation to their God and Saviour. But there was more in it than that. And those who heard John would recall the words of Daniel that "the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High" and they would assume that the days were near when they would once more be in their proper status at the head of the nations. If they were expecting their own national ascendancy the course of events and the passage of time would prove that the kingdom was not at hand as they hoped. And the course of events has induced Christians to hold differing thoughts as to the meaning of the kingdom of heaven. Some Christians think of the kingdom *in* heaven, some apply the expression to the church of God or to missionary work, yet it must be clear that none of these ideas quite fit the story. Others believe that John was calling on all to repent, for the king, not the kingdom, was at hand. The king was there in their midst, yet He did not encourage Israel to believe that because the king had come the kingdom on earth was imminent. (In point of fact the work and mission of Jesus at that time was more in keeping with His title of Son of Man—His title of king being more appropriate when He reigns over all His subjects.) As He drew near to Jerusalem for the last time and knew that the people would receive Him with "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" He gave to His disciples the parable of the ten pounds so that they might not harbour false ideas of the imminence of the earthly kingdom. But how quickly the mood of the people changed, for some charged Him before Pilate that He claimed to be a king. Pilate straightly asked Him "Art thou the king of the Jews" and even had the words "This is the king of the Jews" placed over His head on the cross in Greek, Latin and Hebrew, that all

might know. What was in Pilate's mind we cannot know. Possibly he considered that of all men Jesus was most worthy to be Israel's king if imperial Rome would allow it, for he had clearly heard of the teachings and miracles of Jesus and his wife regarded Him as being a man of God. Shortly after the resurrection of our Lord the disciples asked him "Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" They were thinking of the kingdom in terms of earthly glory. Though their expectations were incorrect, their question was pertinent, for in their midst now in resurrection glory was Israel's king and many Scriptures had already been fulfilled concerning Him.

What did the coming of the king entail upon Israel? From later verses in Matt. 3 it is apparent that His coming meant a time of judgment and no claim that they were the children of Abraham would avail them then—hence the need to repent lest they be burned as chaff in the fire of judgment. The chapter closes with the opening of the ministry of Jesus, yet the voice from heaven which inaugurates and blesses His mission did not proclaim Him as Israel's king. He then received His anointing and benediction but not His kingdom. Shortly after the tempter offered him the kingdoms of this world which offer was rejected out of hand. The tempter was in fact insulting the King, inasmuch as no usurper can offer a kingdom to its true king. All these considerations have not served to explain the meaning of the phrase "the kingdom of heaven" and we must look elsewhere in Scripture for help, particularly in regard to the first Advent of Jesus Christ. The king was there but not the expected kingdom on earth under the rulership of heaven. Yet in spite of the fact that Israel rejected their own king and had Him crucified by the Roman power the announcement of the kingdom of heaven being at hand was not annulled thereby. In fact some remarks of our Lord tell that the kingdom of heaven had come to Israel whether they accepted their king or not. Luke 10. 9-11 is an example of this. Here the commissioned seventy disciples were to heal the sick and say to them that the kingdom of heaven is come nigh unto you, and if they were received ungraciously by the cities they visited they were still to say the kingdom had come. And so we observe that whether received well or scorned the kingdom had come to those people who had heard the message of grace. Hence the judgments to come upon Chorazin, Tyre, etc., who rejected the specially chosen disciples endued with powers to gather the harvest of that time. Luke 16. 16 is another example of this—"The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every

man presseth into it". Strange words indeed if in no sense the kingdom had come! These very words may help us in our examination of the topic for they speak of dispensational change—the law and the prophets ordained of God closed with John; since then something new which the Bible calls the kingdom of heaven is in vogue. This reminds us of John 1. 17 "For the law was given by Moses but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ"—dispensational change again. These words do not mean that prior to the coming of Jesus Christ the grace of God was unknown and that since the coming of Christ the law of Moses is no longer necessary. But it is certainly true that before the First Advent the love of God was set upon one people who had entered into covenant agreement with Him on the basis of the law mediated through Moses, and that since the coming of Him a much freer approach is made for all men, whether Jew or Gentile, and the grace of salvation is theirs in believing that this Son of God is the redeemer of all. This is grace and this is truth. It was even possible for the publican and sinner to enter into this grace, this kingdom of heaven before the meticulous observer of the law and traditions who prided himself on his works. To this agree our Lord's words (Matt. 21. 31-32) ". . . the publicans and harlots go (not will go) into the kingdom of God before you, for John came unto you in the way of righteousness and ye believed him not; but the publicans and harlots believed him".

It will be observed that the expression "the kingdom of God" appears synonymous with the phrase "the grace of God" in these few texts and the question must arise as to whether we may regard them as alternatives in other cases. A good example of this alteration occurs in Paul's words to the Ephesian church (Acts 20. 24-25) "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify *the gospel of the grace of God*. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching *the kingdom of God*, shall see my face no more". How clear it is that in Paul's use these phrases are interchangeable! Surely this is why we read of the gospel of the kingdom! For in that kingdom (present or future) and that gospel, the grace of God shines forth. Let us examine sundry texts where the kingdom of God is mentioned to find what grace of God is intended.

Mark 12. 33/34. Here the scribe had discerned that love to God and to one's neighbour as himself far surpassed countless burnt offerings. The sacri-

fices year by year under the law had never taken away sin and had become formal, and the scribe saw that a heart striving to love God and neighbour was worthy of more consideration than them. Jesus noted that he answered discreetly and said "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God". He was very near to it, for when he heard the gospel of grace he would have all things falling into place—love to God and neighbour summing up the requirements of the Law and the old Mosaic law sacrifices transcended by the one sacrifice of the Lamb of God soon to be accomplished.

*Matt. 18. 1-4.* "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Jesus did not ask who will be. Who enjoy the grace of God now; who at that time were blessed of God? Throughout the ages He has been pleased to be gracious to those who humble themselves under His mighty hand. The disciple of our Lord's day, the Pharisee, the publican had all to go this way of humility to receive the grace of God.

*Matt. 18. 23-35.* The king of the parable freely forgave the servant who owed him ten thousand talents. So is the grace of God—He freely forgives when we have nothing to pay our debt to Him. (Blessed are they who know in their hearts that they are in such great debt to their King that they will never be able to repay.) Unfortunately in the parable the forgiven servant received the grace of God in vain and would not in like manner forgive the small debt of a fellow servant, and the grace of the king was withdrawn from him.

*Matt. 20. 1-16.* The parable of the labourers in the vineyard, or as some call it, the parable of the penny. Here the grace of God, seen as wages rather than grace, is given equally to those who work for the husbandman from the eleventh hour and those who have borne the burden and heat of the day. The pharisee whose life had been spent in exact performance of the law and the traditions did not view with pleasure the new message of the grace of God (the kingdom of heaven) which gave freedom from sin and condemnation even to those who as it were came in at the last moment. He believed, he had always believed and meant to continue in the belief that the gifts of God are dependent on meritorious work. How glad we should be that the new message of the kingdom of heaven is one of grace, unmerited and free.

*Luke 16. 16.* These words follow the stories of the prodigal son and the unjust steward, given apparently in the hearing of the Pharisees, and, says the context "they derided him". No doubt they realised that these stories and that of Dives and Lazarus were undermining their standing in

Israel. To them Jesus said "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts . . ." From their own standpoint they were righteous, but God knew their failings. And Jesus continuing, said in effect:—all your security which you think you have is passed away, you claim your standing in the law, but that standing has gone, "the law and the prophets (in which you trust) were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached (the message of grace) and every man presseth into it (the common people, the publicans and sinners were pressing to hear it)".

*Matt. 21. 28-32.* The parable of the two sons with its conclusion "that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness (that is, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand) and ye believed him not, but the publicans and harlots believed him". Here again we have support for previous thoughts, that the Pharisee would not accept the great change in God's ways and dealings, being self-righteous, but the common people gladly came into the kingdom of heaven.

*Matt. 23. 13.* How could the Pharisee "shut up the kingdom of heaven against men"? By their traditional teaching and decrying the new message of grace and entering not in themselves (being self-righteous) they hindered the poor from believing the gospel.

*Matt. 21. 33-44.* The parable of the wicked husbandmen (a parable teaching judgment and condemnation of the nation) tells that after Jesus notes that they had fulfilled scripture in rejecting Him as the stone which became the head of the corner, of the kingdom being taken from them and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And all Christians know how the Gentiles received the gospel message of grace.

*Matt. 8. 5-13.* The story of the believing centurion, of whom Jesus said he had not found such great faith, "no, not in Israel." And He continues, "Many shall come from the east and the west and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven" (or in other words, the outsider from countries far from Judea shall enjoy the grace of God even now and surely in the coming kingdom if he has the faith of the Roman centurion. "But the children of the kingdom (those who should have received their king) shall be cast into outer darkness" (lose the benefits of those in the light of truth).

*Matt. 11. 11/12.* How puzzling a statement if some views of the kingdom of heaven are correct! In this tribute to John the Baptist, our Lord tells of

the least in the kingdom of heaven being greater than him. So great a man, so faithful a prophet, did not receive (though he himself started the message) that standing of grace and justification in the gospel which is the portion of the believer since his days! These amazing words show very clearly the change of dispensation, the church and gospel dispensation which was just then commencing. And the kingdom of heaven was suffering violence (the message was opposed by the rulers in Israel) and the violent were taking it by force (they rejected John, who was in prison, and said he had a devil (v. 18) and conspired against their own king Jesus). Then follows our Lord's upbraiding of the favoured cities of Chorazin, etc., who had not repented in spite of the mighty works done in them.

*Luke 17. 20.* Jesus' answer to the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God should come. Clear it is from His reply that the kingdom would be set up in the days of the Son of Man, but to the Pharisee He gave the answer true to the change of dispensation. He said in effect, the kingdom cometh not with outward shew, so that one could say, "Lo here or there" but do not fail to see that phase of the kingdom which was already in their midst or "among them". The advice is true to-day also—the Christian looking forward to a glorious kingdom

on earth must not forget or neglect that present phase, the gospel of God's grace.

These references in the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke are well known examples of the use of the phrase "the kingdom of heaven." There are many others, including parables beginning with the phrase. All will bear the idea of some expression of the grace of God in the gospel, but not necessarily the same expression of grace. And when we read the phrase in the Pauline epistles (Rom. 14. 17, Gal. 5. 21, Col. 1. 13, 2 Thess. 1. 5) we may well conclude it has reference to some aspect of the Church's life present or future, but that does not give us authority to read "church" into every use of the expression in the gospels. This we shall conclude—that the first coming of Jesus began the new dispensation of God's grace, and that the second coming of Him brings, first, glorious grace in the Heavenly kingdom to His true followers, followed by grace, though with judgment, to mankind in the Heavenly kingdom on earth—the fulfilment of the prayer "Thy kingdom come". Then, Israel will have what they have always wanted, a King and a kingdom in their own land. At the First Advent, the king was in their midst but they refused Him, and that phase of the kingdom then in vogue they failed to value.

## READINGS IN THE REVISED STANDARD VERSION

*Gen. 12. 3* "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." (A.V.) "By you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves." (R.S.V.)

The R.S.V. rendering is not entirely new; it has been suggested by translators before. The difference is more apparent than real. We often say that a man by taking a certain course of action "benefits himself" when we really mean that he has personally been benefited by that course of action. So here; it may be said that each man of Adam's race will have blessed himself by coming under God's gracious arrangement of blessing which is to be administered through Abraham and his seed. We may if we like include the additional thought—which is a very true one—that there must needs be positive action on the part of each man individually and willingly to take advantage of the opportunities of life which will be extended to him. None will receive the Millennial gift of everlasting life who themselves do not first become sincerely and voluntarily reconciled to God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Gen. 12. 14* "And Lot . . . spake unto his sons-in-law, which married his daughters" (A.V.) " . . . his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters."

(R.S.V.) This raises the old question as to whether Lot's daughters were married or not at the time of the catastrophe. It seems conclusive from vs. 8 that they were not. The R.S.V. rendering seems to indicate that they were betrothed in the Eastern fashion with a betrothal lasting a year before the actual marriage. This makes the whole matter consistent.

*Gen. 21.9* "And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had borne unto Abraham, mocking." (A.V.) " . . . unto Abraham, playing with her son Isaac." (R.S.V.) The word means to laugh in amusement or derision, as when Sarah "laughed" at the news she was to have a son, and considering that Ishmael was only about fifteen or sixteen years old at the time it is hardly likely that he was "mocking" at Isaac on account of the latter being the heir of promise, as has so often been suggested. More likely he was "teasing" the child and the episode then becomes a purely human one; Sarah's petulance at her son being teased by the son of the slave-woman. The idea that this "mocking" constitutes the beginning of the foretold "affliction" of the Seed of promise (Gen. 15. 13) is not well founded. The affliction was to be four hundred years in a

strange land at the hand of the Egyptians. Ishmael was not an Egyptian and this incident took place in Isaac's own land. The affliction can only be said to have commenced when Israel was in Egypt.

Gen. 24. 47 "And I put the earring upon her face." (A.V.) "So I put the ring on her nose." (R.S.V.) The thought of Rebecca wearing a ring in her nose as an aid to beauty may seem strange to Western minds, but maybe rings in the ears seem as strange to Eastern minds. The nose ring (*nezem*) was a familiar article of feminine adornment

and is mentioned a number of times in the Old Testament.

Gen. 49. 10 "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah . . . until Shiloh comes." (A.V.) "Until he comes to whom it belongs." (R.S.V.) This is a more intelligible rendering and is in harmony with our understanding of Scripture to the effect that the Lord Jesus Christ is the rightful King and will take His power when the right time comes. The word "Shiloh" as in the A.V. conveys no real meaning.

## "FULL-GROWN—MATURE—PERFECT" Ah Exhortation

"Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age." (Heb. 5. 14.)

"Solid food belongs to them that are full-grown" so runs the R.V. and other versions on this text. Others translate it "them that are mature," or are of "adult" stature. Any of these words would stand, in this setting, as the equivalent of the Greek "*teleios*." In other settings it would be right to use the word "perfect." It is derived from the word "*telos*" which means "end," "consummation" or "conclusion." "Full-grown" or "mature" is a good word to stand over against the word "babes" in the context here, and to indicate that the growing process has reached its climax and consummation as Nature intended it. And to these "strong meat" or "solid food" is the appropriate nutriment. The A.V. frequently renders the Greek "*trophe*" as meat—an indication of the general usage of the term in former Elizabethan days—but most modern translations use instead the word "food." "*Trophe*" denotes "nourishment, food,"—(akin to "*tropho*" to rear, nourish, feed) says Vine in his "*Expository Dictionary*" hence does not of necessity mean animal flesh, though it would not exclude that if used in the wider general sense of food.

"Strong" meat or "solid" food, is food which can make hard, firm, or solid, (from *stereo*—to make firm) and is a variant from the thought in our word "establish." "Strong meat" or "solid food" stands for an advanced form of teaching or doctrine in contradistinction to the elementary matter alone suitable for babes. Those therefore for whom solid spiritual food is appropriate and necessary are the full-grown, the adult, the mature, the spiritually perfect, and these are they whose senses can be exercised to discern or discriminate between good and evil.

It is with the sense of being full-grown, mature or

perfect that this present study is concerned. This is a theme on which good-intentioned men have stumbled grievously, especially those, jealous of the Mosaic Law, who claimed not to have sinned or stumbled over considerable periods of time. Imagining the Law of Christ (Gal. 6. 2) to be identical with the Law of Sinai, these dear but misguided souls have often come to think because they have not openly dishonoured their parents, nor killed a fellow-man, nor committed adultery, nor engaged in theft, nor borne false witness, nor coveted their neighbours goods, they are therefore without sin, and may claim a standing as perfect men in the sight of God. Now while there is a standing in God's sight, denoted by that term, and possible to men, it is an easy thing to fall into grievous error over it by pressing our own significance and definition into it, and erecting a standard of conduct thereby which we may claim to attain and fulfil.

Christian perfection or maturity is often defined as a state of sinlessness in moral things—a state of abstinence from doing forbidden things. But surely Christian perfection is more than that—surely it is much more than a mere negative attitude to evil and to evil things! It is one thing to hate evil—but that in itself is not enough. Of our Lord Jesus it is said He loved righteousness as well (Heb. 1. 9). It is on this side of the relationship—the really positive side of the basic principles—that the true nature of the Christian perfection is to be found. And for this standard of perfection our Lord Jesus is the one and only pattern. A man may not actually have killed or robbed his fellowmen, but if in his heart, at times of intense provocation, he may have felt that he could have done so, in the sight of Heaven the act has been performed. If at any time he has looked upon a woman to lust after her, the transgression is accounted to have been committed. The merely negative withholding from the deed is not sufficient

to fulfil the Law of Christ—there must be a positive attitude manifested thereto, so that if the opportunity really came, the act would not take place.

Absolute perfection is not possible so long as we lack complete knowledge, for as our knowledge grows we constantly discover evil in the things which formerly we did, or allowed, without qualms or misgivings, and as we continue to grow older, and to grow in grace, we shall yet come to see impropriety, or un-Christlikeness in things which we do to-day, so that we can never say we have reached full and complete attainment in moral things. Paul knew right well that he had not apprehended that for which Christ had apprehended him, and if he, giant that he was, had reason to say that for himself, surely we of lesser stature must say the like things for ourselves.

Whether we confess them or not, our shortcomings in God's sight are none the less real and none the less censurable.

Yet on the other hand, in spite of our shortcomings and defects there is a state of perfection accredited to us in Christ Jesus our Lord, but in each person, and each case, the term must be applied in accordance with its setting and with its context "*The man of God must be perfect*" said Paul to Timothy (2 Tim. 3. 17) but here it is the perfection of the workman with his tools. It implies the full kit of tools, and an efficiency and dexterity in using them. And the tool-kit here is holy Scripture; the dexterity the ability of the man of God in using it for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and for instruction in righteousness. But the possession of the tool-kit and the dexterity in the use of each tool does not imply absolute sinlessness in the man of God himself. Again when Jesus bids us be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect, He bids us use the same impartiality in the distribution of our bounty, so far as in us lies, which like God's, shows no distinction as between the just and the unjust, but distributes its rain upon all everywhere. (Matt. 5. 48.)

When God called Abraham to walk before Him and "be perfect" surely it did not mean that Abraham was to walk before God sinlessly. (Gen. 17. 1). That was impossible for that dear old patriarch to attempt, but to walk before God with a whole-hearted devotion was another thing, and was definitely possible. And that is what God seeks always, everywhere, according to ability. The standard is more a matter of "what we would if we could" than of actual explicit deed, though be it promptly said, the "what we would" of tomorrow must exceed the "what we would" of to-day. There must be growth to attain the "full-grown" estate.

If then God is graciously pleased to accept the "will" for the "deed" and it is our will to offer

Him the utmost devotion of our soul, that act of worship and surrender is the state of soul which God accounts as "perfection" — "perfection" at our present stage of growth. It indicates the attainment, assisted by the Holy Spirit of God, of the utmost of which our "new-man" is capable to-day, and will help us to become assured that God will not look for more from us, till we have had time and training to grow up more nearly to full maturity.

Paul tells us in Eph. 4. 11-12, that God gave to the Church Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers for the purpose of the perfecting of the saints, which was to be a continuing procedure until each believer had attained through unity with his fellow-brethren, and a deepening knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect (*teleios*, mature) man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. All the service of this God-given ministry is intended to promote development and growth in each individual saint, as well as in all saints collectively, till the "full-grown" Christ-like condition is attained.

This growth and development manifests itself along four principal lines—of faith, of knowledge, of holiness, and of love—each part, though separate inter-linking itself with each other part to produce the ideal perfection of Christlikeness.

Paul writes to his Thessalonian friends assuring them that night and day he was praying intensely to see their face in order that he might help to "*perfect that which is lacking in your faith*" (1 Thess. 3. 10). They needed to be informed more fully concerning the purpose of God to enable them to grow up from the "milk" stage to that of the "solid food." In this acquisition of the necessary information their faith would attain perfection.

But any kind of information would not attain that end. Only that which set the Love of God, and the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord before them would be effective for their growth. To the Colossians Paul wrote "*We . . . do not cease to pray and make request for you that ye may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.*" Peter also adds his admonition to the saints to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Items of knowledge which do not enhance our knowledge of our Lord Jesus are not likely to increase in us a likeness to Himself.

Increasing knowledge of the Son of God (Eph. 4. 13) plus a maturing of faith, will then lead to the next step of perfecting holiness in the fear of God. "*Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*" (2 Cor. 7. 1.) As the knowledge of the Lord Jesus is received by a deepening faith into a good and

honest heart it will be to us as the reflecting mirror in which we behold the Glory of the Lord, and by means of which, as we gaze therein, we shall be changed (another picture of our growth) into the same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord. It is only as we come to "know Him" (Phil. 3. 10) that this transforming work proceeds apace.

The crowning feature of this perfecting process is that of Christ-like love. John says "If we love one another God abideth in us, and His love is perfected in us." (1 John 4. 12.) "Perfect love casteth out fear" (1 John 4. 18) and this perfect love, says Paul "is the bond of perfectness"—the bond that binds and holds every grace together into a perfect Christ-like unity.

Grouping all these things together—faith, knowledge, holiness and love—John says "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect . . ." (1 John 4. 16-17.)

Thus belief (faith) based on knowledge (of the right kind) leading us to dwell in God and to have God dwell in us (holiness) results in perfection of love, and this matured and full-grown love is the

hall-mark of perfection in the sight of God. Of all such John says "*whoso keepeth His word* (after learning it) *in him verily is the love of God perfected.*" (1 John 2. 5.)

In our ministries one toward the other we should seek to be like Epaphras of whom Paul wrote "*Epaphras . . . is . . . always labouring fervently for you in prayers that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the Will of God*"—i.e. in all that God wills for us. And Paul says he taught men in all wisdom—all knowledge—that he might "*present every man perfect in Christ Jesus*" (Col. 4. 12 and 1. 28.)

To this full grown maturity, perfection, both the Word of God in precept, and the indwelling Spirit of God in practice urge us on. It is no more thinkable that the Christian believer should desire to remain a babe, feeding only on "milk," than that a lad should lack desire to grow up to be a man. The inward "urge" which turns bud into flower, child into adult, should prompt the desire, and promote the activity in every Christian's "inner man" to attain maturity, and be thus able to absorb and assimilate "strong meat." Christian perfection is not a perfection of the flesh, but a maturing of the New Creature into the likeness of Christ Jesus the

*Concluded on page 137.*

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# BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

Thou, therefore, endure  
hardness as a good  
soldier of Jesus Christ.

Vol. 30, No. 9

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER, 1953

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*Lift up your heads, O ye gates.  
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors,  
And the King of glory shall come in.*

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## BETWEEN OURSELVES

A brother writes to make the following suggestion with regard to the future of the "Monthly".

"I am enclosing £1 to pay for two subscriptions and I am making the suggestion that each subscriber endeavours to have at least two copies, one for themselves and one to pass to a friend. This idea is based on the presumption that a higher circulation would reduce costs, at least in printing."

Our brother's presumption is correct. If the present circulation should be doubled the "Monthly" would come very near to paying for itself from the subscriptions alone. The suggestion is commended to our readers. It should not be difficult to find some person once each month who would be interested enough to read the spare copy, and by such means something of the glory of our understanding of Divine Truth would be spread abroad.

\* \* \*

Many of our readers will remember the booklet "The Plan of God in Brief", an abridged version of the "Divine Plan of the Ages" which was published about twenty years ago in this country and enjoyed a wide circulation for many years. Some of our brethren in U.S.A., who conduct their work under the name "Bible Harmony Truth Associates", have had the "Plan in Brief" translated into Hebrew, and are endeavouring to circulate it widely among Hebrew speaking people. Particularly are they trying to get a free copy into the hands of as many Rabbis as they can, in the belief that at this present time it will be of intense interest to such.

Our brethren have now made a generous offer. They are willing and anxious to extend this opportunity to this country. A free copy of the "Plan of God in Brief" will be sent to any Rabbi whose name and address is furnished to them, whilst in addition, anyone else desiring a copy may have same for the sum of 5/3 only. Naturally the book can be read only by persons who can read Hebrew. We here will be glad to pass on to the brethren in U.S.A. every address of a Rabbi that may be sent to us and in addition will take orders for the book for others at 5/3 each. The books will be sent by post direct to the recipients.

The "Plan of God in Brief" was translated into Swedish some years ago and quite a work was done at the time in that country by that means. Now we may hope and trust that this new venture will be productive of good; it rests with those who

read this announcement and can make good use of the booklet along the lines indicated to extend still further the message which is contained in this abridged version of the "Divine Plan".

\* \* \*

For some years past we have stocked Scriptural Christmas cards at this season for the friends' convenience. This year it will not be possible so to do, in consequence of the pressure of other matters which restricts the time available at Well-ing for dealing with such things. Will the brethren therefore please take notice that no Christmas cards of any description are available from the bookroom this year.

\* \* \*

With respect to the leaflet recently circulated calling attention to the project, sponsored by the Midland friends, for publishing a tunebook edition of the "Bible Students' Hymnal", we are advised at time of going to press that it seems as though the book will be published, and action is being taken to that end. If there are still brethren who would like to take a copy when available, and have not yet indicated their wish, perhaps they would do so now, saying how many copies they would take at, alternatively, 30/-, 20/- or 15/- each, to Bro. G. E. Chilvers, The Haven, Oldbury Road, Hartshill, Nuneaton.

\* \* \*

The treatise "A Material Paradise", which appeared in our last two issues, is now available in booklet form, 24 pages, at 3/- per dozen or £1 per 100 (50 cents or \$3.00 respectively in U.S.A. and Canada) and we shall be glad to despatch to all who can make use of this latest addition to our range of public witness booklets.

---

### Gone From Us

---

Sis. C. Guard (*Forest Gate*).

Sis. M. Hogburn (*Lincoln*).

Bro. H. McCroban (*Newcastle*).

"Till the day break, and the shadows flee away."

## MAN OF SORROWS

A Study in Isaiah 53

### Part 4.—"NO FORM NOR COMELINESS"

*"He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him."* (vs 2.)

This is the idealised form, comeliness, beauty, of the Messianic King of Jewish hopes that the prophet declares is absent from the Man who has at last fulfilled the prophecy. It is manifestly illogical to take these words as descriptive of our Lord's personal appearance when one remembers that He was humanly perfect as was Adam before his transgression, and that the physical aspect of Jesus must have been one of overpowering beauty and majesty. It is unthinkable that the Son of God should walk this earth in any form other than one suited to the fact that He was indeed the Son of God. It is a significant fact that the alleged descriptions of Jesus dating from the days of the Early Church all present Him as possessed of grace and beauty; it was not until later centuries, when the dark influence of a gloomy asceticism was fastening itself upon the Church, that the conception of Jesus as physically unlovely and even repulsive took the lead, and texts like this were taken out of their poetic setting and interpreted in a grossly literal sense.

The glory of Jesus was not of this world. That was the great truth over which Israel stumbled and fell and that is why they saw no beauty in Him to desire. A king must, in their eyes, be possessed of outward majesty and glory; he must be arrayed in costly raiment and flashing jewels; he must have courtiers and servants and a shouting crowd to attend him wherever he went. There were three things, yea, four, said the Wise Man in Proverbs, which "go well" and are "comely in going". A lion, which is strongest among beasts, took his admiration; a greyhound, a he-goat, and a king, "against whom there is no rising up". (Prov. 30. 29-31.) He looked on the outward appearance and marvelled at the strength of the lion, the speed of the greyhound, the irresistible force of the he-goat, and the power of the king. These things, he said, are "comely"—but there was none of that comeliness in the demeanour and the life of the Prince of Peace.

Neither was there the kingly glory and power which shall in truth be manifested in the days of the Kingdom. "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and majesty; and

in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness" (Psa. 45. 3-4) are words spoken of this One Who "had no form nor comeliness", but they are words which wait yet for their fulfilment. Isaiah saw in vision the glory of Lebanon, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, resplendent earthly reflections of the glory of the Lord and the excellency of our God (Isa. 35. 2) but that again was a vision of the far-distant future, and there was no glory of Lebanon and no excellency of Carmel and Sharon when the Man of Galilee climbed their slopes and wended His way through their valleys. The time for His glory had not then come and there was no reflection of that glory on the earth, and so it was that men, gazing upon him, saw no form nor comeliness, no beauty that could make Him desirable in their eyes.

*"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."* (vs 3.)

This is the most bitter prophecy of the Old Testament. From the very beginning, when amid the loveliness of Eden the first guilty pair stood and heard the sad tones of God passing sentence, there had always been the promise of a coming Redeemer. It is fairly evident from Eve's words at the birth of Seth that when Cain was born she had seen in that, to her, wonderful event the fulfilment, or beginning of fulfilment, of the Divine promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. That early hope was dashed when Cain became a murderer and was banished from the company of peace-loving men; but with the coming of Seth the hope revived, and from that time onwards the world was never without those who looked for the coming of the Deliverer. The ancient mythologies of Babylon, reaching back to the shadowy times before Abraham, pagan though they were, show unmistakable traces of the belief, persisting even though men's ideas of God had become woefully distorted. When Abraham made his bold venture of faith and left his native country for the land of promise, it was because he believed in the Coming One, and so to him came the promise that in his own seed would the word be fulfilled and deliverance come. Throughout Israel's long history the flame of expectation never died down; always were they a people chosen by the Lord to hail and receive the Deliverer when He

should appear, and under His leadership become a light to the nations, to declare His salvation to the ends of the earth. That was the hope that kept them separate from the nations around them, that held them, despite their many shortcomings and failures, a people for a purpose, fashioned and developed by virtue of many and varied national experiences for the part they would be called upon to play when Messiah should appear.

And to Isaiah fell the bitterness of proclaiming in advance that it was all to be of no avail, that when the supreme moment of Israel's existence had arrived, they would turn away from the Deliverer and fail at the very moment of achievement. He would be despised and rejected of men, and all the glorious things associated with His Advent vanish away like the morning mists. They would fail to recognise the time of their visitation, and the magnificent opportunity pass them by for ever—for even then the Divine sentence was in process of formulation "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof".

The fulfilment of the prophecy is too well known to need detailed exposition. Jesus was in truth despised and rejected of men, and had the fate of the Kingdom of God rested with the ecclesiastical leaders and the political rulers and the bulk of the ordinary people of the First Advent, then that Kingdom indeed was doomed. But in His infinite wisdom God has entrusted the destinies of His outworking Plan, not to the great and the wise and those chosen by popular acclaim, but ever and always to an inconspicuous and uninfluential minority who at certain times in earth's history have been called "the Remnant". A remnant they have truly been, on more than one occasion when the earth has been all but in darkness and it has seemed as though the Plan of God was sinking into irretrievable ruin; but always there has been new life springing out from that remnant, a revival of God's work in the midst of the years, and an upsurge of spiritual vitality that has carried the Plan of God into another phase and another dispensation. So it was when Jesus was despised and rejected by the many; there were a few who did accept Him and did realise that His coming meant salvation for the world, in due time. And from the hearts' loyalty and lives' devotion of those few is born all that we possess or know of Christian faith and hope to-day.

The story is not ended yet. It is still possible to despise and reject Him. Even to-day the worldly wise and great and influential, the leaders and the controllers of this world, like their prototypes of

two thousand years ago, do not understand and have no use for the teachings of the Man of Nazareth. The popular voice is no more disposed to consider His claims than it was then. If we would be of those whom God will use to carry the interests of His Kingdom into the next Dispensation, we also must reconcile ourselves to being of the "Remnant". But even so we may yet fail to retain the coveted honour.

Those who despised and rejected Jesus at the First Advent, and were in consequence themselves rejected, were not so judged because of lack of knowledge, or unsoundness of theological outlook. On matters of the Law, and of doctrine, and of righteousness before God, the scribes and Pharisees had much in common with Jesus. He certainly condemned them for their narrowness and rigidity in the interpretation of the Mosaic Law but He did not dispute the soundness of the theological ground upon which they stood. It was not their orthodoxy or their beliefs which cost them the Kingdom; it was their failure to appreciate and manifest and practice the mind of God—which in our day we would call the spirit of Christ—that led to their rejection and thrusting out from the Kingdom. "Go ye, and learn what that means, 'I will have mercy, and not sacrifice'." That was the stumbling-stone. They despised and rejected Jesus because He manifested a spirit of love and tolerance and mercy, and with all their doctrinal orthodoxy they could find no room for those virtues. So they rejected Him, arrogantly, scornfully, and at the end, maliciously; and so He in turn rejected them, sadly, regretfully, but firmly.

So it will be with us. Like Paul, the most intellectually minded of all the apostles, we may understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, but without faith it profits us nothing. If we refuse to have our lives guided by love, tolerance, and mercy, and insist instead upon the empty shibboleths of intellectual understanding and a mechanical memorising of Scriptural doctrines, we shall without any doubt at all end up where the Pharisees did—outside the Kingdom. Our Lord will be just as sad and regretful as He was in the case of the Pharisees, but He will be just as firm. The Millennial work of the future needs many qualifications, some of them of a nature that cannot be learned out of a book. Unless we have well learned, and practiced in our own lives, that spirit which pervaded the life of Christ we shall not be fitted for the Church's future work, and it will become true of us as it was of them "the Kingdom of God is taken from you". We also shall have become of those who "despised and rejected" Him.

## “THE ANOINTED CHERUB THAT COVERETH”

A Consideration of Ezek. 28

It was in the year of Jerusalem's destruction by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar that Ezekiel the priest, far away by the rivers of Assyria, uttered those memorable words of denunciation against the Phoenician city of Tyre which form the burden of the twenty-sixth to twenty-eighth chapters of his book. The idolatry of Tyre was an offence to every pious Israelite; the Tyrians' satisfaction at the miseries which came upon Israel during the closing years of the latter's national existence induced an antagonism which found comfort only in the thought that one day God Himself would intervene to punish the enemies and the traducers of Israel.

It was in this setting that Ezekiel presented his message. The idolatrous Tyrians were to suffer the same fate that had already overtaken Jerusalem. Their trade would be destroyed, their possessions taken from them, their city desolated. But unlike Jerusalem, which by the promise of God was one day to rise from the ruins and recover more than her former glory, Tyre, once overthrown, would remain in oblivion for ever. Never again would she sit as mistress of the seas, her merchants trading with the four corners of the earth.

The prediction came true. Nearly three hundred years later Alexander the Great laid siege to Tyre, captured the city and fulfilled Ezekiel's forecast to the letter. From that day to this Tyre has remained in oblivion; even as the ancient seer declared; "Never shalt thou be any more".

Now here is afforded a perfect setting for that deeper instruction to Christians of after days which was recorded by the Holy Spirit. The first part of Ezekiel's denunciation clearly refers to the city and its inhabitants and their activities and institutions. Every detail is capable of a strictly literal application and its fulfilment is recorded in history. This part of the description concludes with an account of the woes which would come upon the prince of Tyre, and chapter 28, verses 1-10, tell of the doom awaiting that potentate. At the 11th verse the prophet passes into a new denunciation, which, while addressed ostensibly to the ruler of Tyre, employs language and allusions which cannot be truthfully applicable to any earthly being. The point of correspondency is that just as Tyre was to go into oblivion for ever, so will

this one of whom the prophet now speaks. Addressing the King of Tyre as a symbol, so to speak, of the one he really has in mind, the prophet, speaking by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, records a vivid description of the creation and sin of Lucifer, the Prince of Evil.

A verse by verse examination of the passage will reveal the aptness of Ezekiel's words.

"*Thou seal most accurate, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty*" (Margolis). This reference is to Babylonian clay "seals"—little cylinders of baked clay with an intricate design embossed upon them, used by the owner to impress his distinctive mark or signature upon the clay tablets of that time. A "seal most accurate" would be one which was a faithful copy of the master seal, and by this reference Lucifer is pictured as having been originally a faithful copy of his Maker. Like man in later days, he was created "in the image and likeness of God". Leeser translates this phrase, "Thou wast complete in outline" which conveys much the same thought. Lucifer was created, like all that God has made, "very good", "full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty". The word "*tochnith*" translated "sum" in the A.V. means "pattern" and in its only other occurrence (Ezek. 43: 10) is so translated, referring to the pattern or arrangement of the Temple buildings. Thus the A.V. rendering conveys the same idea as other translations—the accuracy of this copy of the Divine pattern which was represented in the personality of Lucifer.

"*In Eden the garden of God didst thou abide.*" There seems no reason to doubt that this reference is to the new earthly creation described in Genesis. The story of man's original sinlessness and the introduction of evil is common to many ancient nations and the early peoples of Mesopotamia had a vivid belief in the original "garden" and the sacred tree, the curse of evil having been introduced by a serpent, thus in large measure confirming the Bible story. Lucifer's special commission had to do with the earth and its inhabitants.

"*Every precious stone was thy covering.*" The word translated "covering" is *mesukkah*, meaning a pavilion or a tabernacle, and the description of a pavilion bearing "every precious stone" brings to mind at once the description of the New

Jerusalem in the book of Revelation, that glorious city of which it is said that the foundations were garnished with all manner of precious stones, its gates of pearls and its streets of gold. Remembering that this "New Jerusalem" is to restore to mankind that which was lost in Eden, it is not an unreasonable thing to picture Lucifer enthroned in that early day of man's innocence as the lord of earthly creation for man's guidance and instruction in the ways of God. The contrast between this one who, through ambition, misused a wonderful opportunity and the One Who, having humbled Himself, became obedient to death "even the death of the cross" and afterward is enthroned for all time as the Lord of all things in Heaven and on earth, is then a particularly striking one. This thought of Lucifer's royal state is further borne out by the next clause, "*The service of tabrets and flutes was prepared with thee in the day thou wast created*". The word translated in the A.V. "workmanship" is "*melakah*", meaning work or business, in this case referring to the royal music, the "tabrets and flutes" of the text. Musical instruments were an essential adjunct of kingly state, and a similar reference to the "business" or "service" of the king's musicians occurs in Neh. 11. 22 and 13. 30, and in Dan. 8. 27, affording illustrations of the kingly rank with which Lucifer was invested at his creation.

Next comes a reference to Lucifer's priestly function, this combination of priest and king being particularly striking when one thinks of Melchisedek, a type of Christ, a "priest upon his throne". "*Thou wast a cherub with outspread wings, and I had set thee upon the holy mountain of God as thou wast. Thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the bright shining ones*". This is Leeser's rendering, the majority of other versions being in agreement—the final expression "stones of fire" being a Hebrew synonym for "bright shining ones", i.e., the angels. In that case there is an indication here that this heavenly being was accustomed to consort with the holy angels of God's spiritual creation; but more than that, he held high rank amongst them as an "anointed cherub" (A.V.) one therefore who exercised priestly functions. The general meaning of the entire passage, interpreting the "holy mountain of God" as referring to the perfect earthly creation in Eden, is that Lucifer was "set" to be a Priest and King to the human race, having access at all times to the presence of God in the interests of this new addition to the Divine domains.

Now comes the dark shadow of sin. "*Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day thou wast*

*created, till unrighteousness was found in thee. By the abundance of thy slander thou wast filled to thy centre with violence and thou didst sin.*" In this verse the word "merchandise" is from the Hebrew "*rekullah*"—not "*maarab*" (barter) as in Ezekiel 27, nor "*sachar*" (gain) as in many other Scriptures, but is from a root which means "to go to and fro" either as a merchant or as a tale bearer or slanderer. Hence it is suggested by students that in determining the meaning to be attached to this word in harmony with its context the alternative meaning should be adopted, and the fitness of this is evident when it is remembered that one of the descriptions the Bible attaches to Satan is that of "slanderer" or "accuser".

How fitting then, is this verse, when one recalls the slander uttered in Eden: "God doth know . . . your eyes shall be opened" as though the Creator harboured base designs against His creatures. This verse may well include that great slander and famous lie first told in Eden and repeated for century after century through the ages, "Ye shall not surely die."

The nature of Lucifer's sin is not stated here; fuller details are afforded in the fourteenth chapter of Isaiah; but there stands out in all its stark horror the dread declaration that this wonderful being who had commenced a life of such marvellous promise and had been so signally honoured by his Creator, had proven unfaithful to his trust. Sin had entered, and by the immutable laws of God, unless sin be eradicated, death must inevitably follow.

Hence that solemn declaration of the only possible ending to this story, the fundamental truth that sin contains within itself the seeds of its own destruction. "*Therefore brought I forth fire from the midst of thee; this devoured thee, and I changed thee to ashes upon the earth before the eyes of all that saw thee—Thou art as though thou hast not been, and shall not be any more for ever.*" Here is the doom of Satan; the fire of his own sin, proceeding from within himself, has severed him for ever from the presence and fellowship of God; and devoured by that fire, and in the end of time cast as ashes upon the earth, he will be as though he had never been "and shall not be any more for ever". The continual unrepentant state of the arch-enemy of God and man is plainly inferred in these words. No hint of repentance; no indication that there is in the mind of this fallen being anything else than a determination to continue in active rebellion against all that is good and true and holy. A supreme example of the awful consequences of sin is provided by this story of Lucifer, the fallen archangel.

## LONDON CONVENTION - AUGUST 1953

The Conway Hall vestibule was full. It was 5.00 p.m. on August Bank Holiday Monday. The almost gay and carefree atmosphere of three days' convention had mellowed into the more solemn smiles of parting. The friends were donning hats and coats, bidding each other good-bye. It seemed but a moment since we had entered on Saturday afternoon and heard the first strains of a male voice choir on a recording of religious music. It seemed but a moment since we had first glimpsed the lovely floral display along the edge of the platform, which remained bright and fresh throughout the convention by the same loving hands which had planned and built it up.

From the first hour the hall became a holy sanctuary. This was emphasised by the young brother who gave the words of welcome, speaking of the place of worship and fellowship in our happy meeting together. The first address was given by Bro. L. F. Shephard (*Cardiff*) and was entitled, "*The Unity of the Faith*". After warning against the dangers of discord and uniformity he went on to show the unity of purpose in God's dealing with men, culminating in the life of Jesus. Reference was made to the singleness of heart among the early disciples and the need of it in the Church to-day, particularly in our own fellowship.

Tea, like all the convention meals was simple but an ample and well varied diet was provided. There were many sincere and well deserved remarks of gratitude to the catering team who worked so hard in their sphere of service.

In the evening there was an address designed especially for those who are new to our fellowship. Under the title of "*The Saviour of the World*", Bro. A. J. Lodge (*London*) reviewed the purpose of God for mankind and His intervention through the life and death of Jesus. He showed that redemption by Christ will eventually bring lasting peace and happiness to all men. The number of "newly interested" was noticeably small but the only means of advertisement was by private invitation personally distributed among friends.

Following a cheerful half hour of praise and helpful texts on Sunday morning, Bro. W. F. Fox (*Yeovil*) spoke upon a question asked by Abram of God, recorded in Genesis 15. 8. The sacrifices of the patriarch and the later ordinances of Israel's law were but pointing forward to the offering of Jesus. His death was the surety for the promise made to Abraham.

Meanwhile at the Seventh Day Adventists' Church in Walthamstow an impressive immersion service

was conducted by Bro. S. H. French (*Forest Gate*). Four brethren symbolised their consecration to God by passing through the baptismal waters, while many others who witnessed the occasion were able to renew their vows unto the Lord.

With both sections reunited in the afternoon a large audience gathered to listen to a splendid prelude of songs rendered by the choir. The children retired at this point to enjoy a little service on their own which included a Bible story from Bro. D. Parker (*Windsor*) who illustrated with a flannelgraph. This fine innovation undoubtedly helped to make the children feel that they had a real part in the convention which indeed they had.

Those in the auditorium had a picture drawn for them of "*The Walk to Emmaus*" by the skilful hand of Bro. J. H. Sharman (*Forest Gate*) who spared no pains to describe every detail surrounding that remarkable occasion. After noting the events that followed our Lord's death, some of the more striking Old Testament prophecies to which Jesus probably referred while walking with the two disciples were quoted. Finally the lesson was underlined concerning *our* hearts burning within us as *we* walk and talk with the Master.

The choir again most pleasingly sang to us in the evening and among their selection was "*Great is Thy Faithfulness*", beautifully interpreted. The evening discourse was by Bro. P. L. Read (*St. Louis, U.S.A.*). For many it was the renewal of fellowship from many years ago; for the younger ones it was a first acquaintance, but for all it was a most instructive talk. His subject was "*New Wine in old Wineskins*", centred around the Lord's visit to a publican's house, and the criticism levelled at Him and His disciples for feasting with sinners. Firstly he compared the Gospel texts and noted the additional points of Luke's record. Jesus' method of dealing with opponents was examined, and we noted how He did not counter intolerance in the same spirit, but gently and firmly the Master drove home an important lesson with a simple story. The concluding thoughts were the application of this lesson to our own day and to our own problems in the interests of progress and enlightenment.

While the brethren were gathering on Monday morning the time was devoted to praise and prayer. Next came a stimulating discourse from Bro. A. O. Hudson (*Welling*) upon the "*Mantle of Samuel*". His theme was the spreading of the Gospel and more particularly that aspect of it which concerns the transference of the Christian torch from one

generation to the next. Basing his remarks upon Samuel's instruction to the school of the prophets, he showed how necessary it was that the youth of a fellowship should be well equipped to preach the Christian message if the life of that fellowship is to survive.

The lunch time period, like every preceding interval between sessions, afforded a very profitable opportunity of informal fellowship in which experiences and views could be shared and all could participate.

Then came those last sessions which seemed to pass so quickly. Firstly there was a short but sweet interlude of testimony, and finally a sermon upon "*My times are in Thy hand*" from Bro. T. Holmes (*Melton Mowbray*). In it he pointed to the need for absolute trust in our Heavenly Father, for come what may, He will overrule all of life's experiences for our highest ultimate good. No matter how badly things may seem, how much a failure we might seem to be, providentially God will complete that good work which He has begun in us.

So we sang our final hymn, had our parting handshakes and took leave of each other once

more. There were signs among us that it was time to go home. In the hands of some travellers were little parcels of food, a token of the unflagging service of the catering brethren. Other hands bore the flowers which had bedecked the platform.

Conway Hall is a difficult hall in which to hear a speaker, and but for the efforts of one young brother we should not have heard the quieter speakers nor enjoyed the inter-sessional sacred music which contributed so much to the hallowed atmosphere. Now his task, unflinchingly discharged throughout the three days, was at an end and he was dismantling his own deaf-aid, amplifying and gramophone equipment, so willingly offered in the Lord's service.

The literature of the bookstall was likewise being repacked, a reminder of another devoted service for the benefit of the brethren. Our thanks are due to the Convention secretary and his committee, to the speakers, chairmen, pianists and ushers, and to the many others who laboured for us "*as unto Him*". May the reflections upon this convention inspire us to "*press on*", following the Master more closely to the end of the pilgrim way.

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## HISTORICAL NOTE ON THE TRINITY

For many years pagans had been familiar with the Trinitarian beliefs of the East, beliefs which found their strongest expression in the complicated theology of Hinduism and Brahmanism. It is in honour of the three chief Brahman deities, Siva, Vishnu and Brahma, that a very early hymn to the Trinity was composed. Nearly a hundred years before Christ, Kalidasa, one of the greatest of Indian poets, wrote:

*"In those three Persons the one God was shown  
Each first in place, each last—not one alone;  
Of Shiva, Vishnu, Brahma, each may be  
First, second, third, among the blessed Three."*

The similarity of those words to the later doctrine of the Trinity as defined in the Athanasian Creed is obvious.

It was in the fourth century A.D., and nearly five hundred years after Kalidasa wrote his hymn, that the controversy which had been gathering force in the Church came to a head. Upon June 17th, A.D. 325, the Emperor Constantine opened the Council of Nicea, which was to last for two months, and at which three hundred and eighteen Bishops, drawn from all over Christendom, including one

or two from Britain, sat to debate whether or not the doctrine of the Trinity should be incorporated into the accepted belief of the Christian Church.

Principal opponents in the controversy were Arius and Athanasius, both of Alexandria in Egypt. Arius was an old man, Athanasius a younger man well versed in philosophy and literature, and his ability and energy led the Council to decide in favour of his demand that the doctrine of the Trinity be declared the teaching of the Church. Only two bishops, Thomas of Marmarica and Secundus of Ptolemais, supported Arius. The latter, being thus defeated, was excommunicated and banished, and his books ordered to be burnt. Even so, a considerable portion of Christendom refused at first to accept the doctrine. More especially was this the case in Northern Europe and Britain, for although it was nearly three hundred years after this Council that Augustine landed in Kent to convert the English to Latin Christianity, a British Christian Church having little or nothing to do with Rome had existed from very early times. Several centuries elapsed before the Trinity was firmly established as a generally accepted Christian doctrine.

## LIFE—MORE ABUNDANTLY!

A doctrinal  
discourse

Part I.

*"I came that they may have life, and have it more abundantly."* John 10. 10. (R.S.V.)

The Christian life is a thing that has various dimensions; it is a thing of length and breadth; it may also become a thing of height and depth if its recipient so desires. But these extra dimensions will need seeking for and also praying for. In the words of the text Jesus reveals the fact that an abundant life is awaiting the sheep of His pasture who is aware of his privilege, and will avail himself of the possibilities.

The Christian life has length, inasmuch as Jesus Himself defines this as "eternal life" (v. 28) a life which once begun need never terminate, world without end. True, there may ensue a period of sleep when once the nether gate of death opens to put an end to the believer's present pilgrimage, but that to him is not an out-and-out cessation of being. The very term "sleep" indicates not cessation of being, but only suspension of animation, a state of dormancy, as distinct from the present state of activity. He will "sleep", but not forever; there will be a glorious dawn", when Jesus sweeps down from His Father's throne to gather together to Himself His elect, and to set them before Himself as members of a glorious Bride without spot or blemish or any such thing. And from that happy hour, the life which here began as a rippling rill will widen out to the dimensions of Infinity. Thus the life which Jesus gives is life eternal in its length and durability.

The Christian life has also breadth, in that it is broad-based on so many facts and experiences. Ages were consumed in its preparation. Before the world was, He who was commissioned and sent to bestow it, had consented to lay down His life in sacrifice to redeem the flock, and prove Himself to be the kind of Shepherd required to safe-guard and keep what had been redeemed. The story of His death must be told, its message must be accepted and believed; and much daily contact between Shepherd and sheep be shared ere the "life" could broaden to its fullest dimensions. Redemption and Providence must join hands to bestow breadth to the experience of the abundant type of life.

Length and breadth of "life abounding" are dimensions which every saint can share. Continued faithfulness will ensure the length; unceasing dependence on Shepherd Care will guarantee the breadth. But height and depth are matters more of individual capacity than of common inheritance.

Few, if any, have plumbed the depths and scaled the heights of Christian experience to the extent which it was given to Paul to know and appreciate. "Caught-up-to-the-third-heaven" and "oh-wretched-man-that-I-am" experiences are not given to each and all of the saints, nor could they all profit from them to the same extent even if they were, and that through no fault or failing of their own heart and mind. But lesser heights and lesser depths are possible to all according as capacity is given or ability acquired. Thousands of saints in bygone times have known the joys of the mountain-tops of fellowship or the lowly value of searching self-examination in strict proportion to this measure of their capacity to enter into the experience. And thousands more to-day can share the mountain-top or the lowland pass, each as inbred capacity makes possible.

We are still writing of "eternal life"—the abundant life—in transcribing what has just been written above, for "eternal life" means more—much more—than mere length of days. It holds the thought of quality as well as quantity. "Eternal" is the word derived (or so it is believed) from two Greek words, one of which indicates "duration". The other indicates "intensity". Some of our standard authorities incline more to the one than to the other, either way, while others are persuaded that two separate strands of thought came, at length, to be inter-woven together to give the thought prevailing in New Testament days. Sure it is that Jesus used it in the sense of its "intensity"—its quality—when He said "*And this is life eternal that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent*". (John 17. 3.) "Duration" may be implied as the background to the thought, but fellowship and experience stand as the fore-front of the thing described. "Knowing God" and "life eternal" are here the two sides—the head and tail—of the same blessed thing or experience.

The "Authorised" translators rang the changes (sometimes needlessly) between the words "eternal" and "everlasting" as the English equivalents of the Greek "*aionian*", the adjective of the Greek noun "*aion*". It is this word "*aion*" which, by some, is believed to be derived from the Greek word "*Aei*", which literally means "ever, or always", and is seen in a transliterated form in our English word "aye". Others claim that it is derived from "*Ao*" or "*Aemi*" which means "to breathe" or "to blow" and is thought

to denote "that which causes life or vital force". Both sides in this debate can cite quotations from the ancient Greek classics in support of their contentions, and hence, neither side can claim that its proofs are absolute. It is therefore reasonable to think that this diverse evidence warrants the conclusion that the ancient Greek masters accepted both thoughts and used the one or the other as they pleased, sometimes applying the adjective to a period of time of unspecified duration, and sometimes to the peculiar circumstances and conditions characteristic of the period.

Professor Vine (*Expository Dictionary*) says the word "aion" (the noun) is "to be connected with 'Aei'—ever—rather than with 'Ao'—to breathe—and signifies a period of indefinite duration, or, time viewed in relation to what takes place in the period".

Archbishop Trench (*Synonyms of the New Testament*) on the other hand says "We must reject the etymology of 'Aion' which Aristotle propounds, that is, that its etymology derives it from 'Aei'; it is more probably connected with 'Ao', and 'Aemi'—to breathe". Thayer (*Lexicon*) after noting the same evidence from Aristotle says it is more probable that "aion" is to be connected with "Aemi", which means "to breathe" or "to blow", and may denote that which causes life or vital force. But he also goes on to say that "Aion" is now generally connected with "aei" or "aei", and that from this is derived the Latin "aevum", and the English "aye". Thus we find Vine and Trench presenting opposing definitions, while Thayer agrees with both, though holding primarily with Trench.

But all three agree that "Aion" and "Aionian" have both a primary and secondary sense in ancient literature. Vine says "The force attaching to the word—'Aion'—is not so much that of the actual length of a period, but that of a period marked by spiritual or moral characteristics. This is illustrated in the use of the adjective (*aionian*) in the phrase 'life eternal' in John 17. 3, in respect of the increasing knowledge of God".

Trench also agrees to this thought when he says "'Aion' has a primary and physical, and then super-induced on this a secondary and ethical sense. In its primary, it signifies 'time' short or long, in its unbroken duration; oftentimes in classical Greek the duration of a human life . . . but essentially time as the condition under which all created things exist and the measure of their existence . . . thus (in its primary sense) signifying time, it comes presently to signify all which exists in the world under conditions of time . . . and then, more ethically the course and current of this

world's affairs". After quoting certain Latin and German authorities in support of the foregoing, he continues, "We speak of 'the times' attaching to the word an ethical signification, or still more to the point, 'the age' and 'the spirit and genius of the age' (*German, der Zeitgeist*). All that floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, at any time current in the world which it is impossible to seize and accurately define, but which constitutes a most real and effective power, being the moral or immoral atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale, again inevitably to exhale—all this is included in the 'Aion', which is . . . the subtle informing spirit of the 'kosmos' or world of men who are living alienated and apart from God".

Thayer, more briefly and to the point says "by metonymy of the container for the contained, 'hoi aiones' denotes 'the worlds', 'the universe', i.e., the aggregate of things contained in time".

The evidence thus adduced indicates that the Greek word signifies not only the undefined span of time marked off as an "age", but also its characteristic and peculiar features which distinguish it from all that precede and succeed it. The time involved may be short—a mere human lifetime in duration, or it may be long, spanning centuries and millenniums, but that is nothing more than a "container", its full and complete conception requires the "contained" as well, the whole spirit and genius of its times. The "time" involved is its "quantity" factor, the spirit and genius of the times its "quality" indicator.

Our English equivalent to the Greek word "aion" is "age", and to the adjective "aionian", "eternal" or "age-lasting". Modern thought inclines to think that the word "everlasting" ought not to be used as an equivalent of "aionios", and thus, not as a synonym of eternal. Everlasting should stand only as the equivalent of "aidios", which means the permanent and the unchangeable. Seen in its proper length and breadth "aionian" should always be rendered "eternal", and always with its sense of indefinite duration attached, and characterised always by the genius and spirit of its times.

Bringing these thoughts to New Testament use and application "Eternal life" would be life peculiar to and characteristic of New Testament times. "Eternal life" need not necessarily mean life unending and unchangeable. It may become unending and unchangeable in due time, when certain conditions have been complied with, and the recipient passes on outside, or beyond, the New Testament phase and experience, but that

further and unchanging stage does not lie necessarily within the proper meaning of the word in every case. The "life" that is now given to the child of God is eternal life—and is a gift from God, but should he fail to stand fast in the faith, that life, like a kindled light, could most certainly be extinguished, and therefore lost. That "aionian" life has been conferred is no proof of its permanence and indefectibility, irrespective of circumstances, for the gift, abused, could be readily withdrawn. Paul tells us that eternal life in its final and completest sense is consequent upon seeking for glory, honour and incorruptibility (Rom. 2. 7). Paul lived in hope of attaining "eternal life" which God, who cannot lie, promised before times eternal. (Tit. 1. 2.) Those, says, he, who sow to the spirit, shall of the Spirit reap eternal life, while those, even among saints, who sow to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption. (Gal. 6. 8.)

Having been set free from sin, and in consequence become servants of God, we may have our fruit unto sanctification, and, as our end, eternal life (Rom. 6. 22). The bestowment of God's gift of life eternal stands over in contrast with the payment of sin's wage when life's working day has drawn to its close. (Rom. 6. 23.) That this is the outlook on its completest and final sense when all risks and possibilities of failure are at an end is obvious, for the gift of God is as sure, to the one, as the wage of sin is to the other, and the wage is not paid (or payable) till the day's work is done.

On the other hand John's testimony that eternal life is a present possession and experience is equally emphatic. "I write this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life." (1 John 5. 11.) Again in 3. 15, John says that no murderer (who is a brother-hater) has eternal life in him, thus implying that

the believer, who is a brother-lover, has what the murderer has not. Indeed he further says "we know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren" (3. 14) though in this case the 'life' is left without its adjective.

And for this assurance John has Jesus as the source of his confidence. "Truly, truly, I say unto you, he who hears my word and believes Him who sent Me has passed from death to life" (John 5. 24). "He who believes in the Son has eternal life" (John 3. 36). "Truly, truly, I say unto you, he who believes has eternal life" (John 6. 47). "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life" (John 6. 54). "My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish . . ." (John 10. 27-28). And "this is life eternal, that they might know Thee" . . . (John 17. 3).

Here is testimony in abundance from the Master's own lips, that life, eternal life is a present possession and experience for those who believe on God and eat the flesh and drink the blood of Jesus for their sustenance. Another statement spoken at the well to the woman of Sychar is to the same effect, "the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life". (John 4. 14.)

Thus John assembles the testimony from the lips of his beloved Lord that the life which believers receive, as they pass from death to life, is, in some very real and definite sense, eternal life, and the proof of its possession is that they love the brethren. "Eternal life is knowing Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou has sent." So said the Lord, and, so also said John, in consequence.

*To be continued.*

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## PROTESTANTS AWAKE!

*A call to the defence  
at liberty*

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"One is your Teacher, and all you are brethren . . . nor assume the title of Leaders, because One is your Leader, the Messiah." (Matt. 23. 8, 10—Diaglott.)

"See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh . . . from heaven." (Heb. 12. 25.)

"These holy scriptures, which are ABLE to make thee WISE for salvation. . . All scripture, divinely inspired is indeed profitable . . . so that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly fitted for every good work." (2 Tim. 3. 15-17—Diaglott.)

There were two great principles, for which, during the Dark Ages, the Reformers suffered and

died. An apostate church had claimed to be the only and sure interpreter of the will of God on earth, and that (1) No one could find acceptance with God who did not recognise this earthly medium. (2) The Scriptures could not be understood by the common man, the laity, and must be unfolded by the earthly channel. The reformers, while repudiating many of the doctrines of the apostate church as false, recognised how important it was to brand these two claims of the church, which were intertwined in each other, as false. They claimed that the only medium between God and man was the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, as the

way, the truth and the life (John 14. 6)) and refused to recognise any other. The VOICE which spoke to them to interpret the will of God was not a voice on earth, but a Voice from heaven, as set forth in our second text quoted above. They rightly pointed out the contrast which the apostle draws to our attention here in Heb. 12. In the old dispensation the VOICE spoke on earth, through the medium of the earthly servant, Moses, but now the voice speaks to us from heaven itself. It is no use to say that the voice of heaven comes to us through an earthly medium—this was the case of Moses as the VOICE of Jehovah to Israel, but Heb. 12. 25 points out for us the contrast; that the VOICE that now speaks to us is not a VOICE on earth, but a VOICE from heaven itself. In both cases the Voice gave the message of the great God of heaven, but in the one case it spoke on earth, and in the other case from heaven. It might be asked in what way does the Lord Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant, now speak to us as the VOICE from heaven. We answer, as those reformers of old would and did answer (though perhaps not using the same words), the Lord Jesus Christ, God's Voice from heaven, now speaks to us from heaven through the Word of Truth, and in particular through the writings of those that He chose as His mouthpieces—the writings of the New Testament—"not the word of man, but the word of God", "This we say unto you by the word of the Lord", "The things I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord", "I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you", "The things which are now reported unto you by them that preached the gospel unto you with the holy spirit sent down from heaven"—these and many other statements of a similar character are the utterances of those "sent forth" ones chosen of the Lord to be his mouthpiece and to record His voice from heaven under the guidance of that Holy Spirit which the departing Lord promised to send, to bring back to their remembrance all things which He had spoken unto them, and to guide them into all truth and teach them all things necessary for the instruction and guidance of the church—their brethren in the Lord. See John 14. 26; 16. 13; 1 Thess. 2. 13; 4. 15; 1 Cor. 14. 37; 11. 23; Gal. 1. 11, 12; 1. Pet. 1. 12.

This brings us to the second great principle for which the early reformers fought and suffered and died—the right which they claimed apart from any earthly organisation or so-called priesthood, but aided by that same Holy Spirit "come down from heaven" as guided the writers of the New Testament to record the message or "Voice" of the Lord, the "Voice" from heaven—the right to understand

what was written, to indeed take heed to the holy writings, which as Paul declares, are ABLE to make wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus—that faith or belief which seals us with that holy spirit of promise which enables us to understand the "deep things of God"—the things written in the Word of Truth—those Divinely inspired writings, which are profitable to us in every way, and able to fully equip us for the doing of the Lord's will. (2 Tim. 3. 15-17; Eph. 1. 13; 1 Cor. 2. 9-16.)

This does not mean of course, that the Holy Spirit in the immature believer, (which is the same Holy Spirit which caused the "deep things" of the mind and purpose of God to be written—1 Cor. 2. 10-13) causes him to know "all things". There has to be progress, a growth in knowledge as well as grace, and God has given various helps in the church to this end, to help his people to grow, to develop, to come to full maturity in Christ, and to the full unity of the faith. (Eph. 4. 13—read vs. 11-16.) But it does not mean that these "helps" in the church—which as the apostle shows us in Eph. 4 is not an organisation but a living organism, knitted together in a common bond and linked to its living Head—these helps in the church are not to be accepted blindly, and their statements taken without question. The "noble" ones at Berea did not even accept Paul's statements without examination, but as we are told in Acts 17. 11—"they receive the word with all readiness, daily scanning the scriptures, whether these matters were so" (Green's translation).

PROTESTANTS AWAKE! The same principles for which the Reformers suffered are still true to-day. Not only the great "Mother" system, but other sects and organized movements, in a smaller or less degree have sought to nullify these two great principles. They have set up intermediaries either large or small, in the place of Christ, usurping His place as the Way of God, and claiming that their VOICE on earth must be heard and obeyed if the Truth lover and seeker would have the favour of God. They have not only usurped the place of Christ, the LIVING WORD of God, but also the place of the Scriptures, the WRITTEN WORD of God, claiming that these are NOT ABLE to make us WISE unto salvation through faith in Christ, but that they as an earthly channel or medium are alone the exponent and receptacle of Divine Truth.

*"All his are thine to serve; Christ's brethren here  
Are needing aid. In them thou servest Him.  
The least of all is still His member dear;  
The weakest cost His life-blood to redeem.  
Yield to no "party" what He rightly claims,  
Who on His heart bears all His people's names."*

## READINGS IN THE REVISED STANDARD VERSION

*Exod. 8. 26 "And Moses said (to Pharaoh) . . . we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the Lord our God." (A.V.) "We shall sacrifice to the Lord our God offerings abominable to the Egyptians." (R.S.V.)* Cows and bulls were sacred animals in Egypt and could not be harmed or killed, hence Moses' statement that the Israelites' offerings would be "abominable" in the sight of Egypt. Incidentally this verse is interesting as showing that the children of Israel were already accustomed to some sort of ritual involving the sacrifices of bulls at least, long before the Tabernacle was instituted or the laws regarding the Day of Atonement offerings given, or before they had a priesthood.

*Exod. 9. 23 "And the fire ran along upon the ground." (A.V.) "And the fire ran down to the earth." (R.S.V.)* A rather more accurate description of the lightning which was associated with the hail. "Fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail" in the R.S.V. brings the picture much more readily to the mind than "fire mingled with the hail" in the A.V. of vs. 24.

*Exod. 10. 10 "Look to it; for evil is before you." (A.V.) "Look, you have some evil purpose in mind." (R.S.V.)* The A.V. would almost seem as if Pharaoh was concerned for Israel's welfare in the wilderness, that he feared they would meet with adversity. The R.S.V. makes plain his suspicions that they had some ulterior purpose in their request to "go and offer sacrifice in the wilderness" which of course was the truth.

*Exod. 11. 2 "Let every man borrow of his neighbour." (A.V.) "That they ask, every man of his neighbour." (R.S.V.)* This corrects an old misapprehension. The Israelites did not "borrow" the jewelry and treasures of their Egyptian neighbours when they departed. They "asked" them as gifts. The word here is "shaal" which is used for "ask" scores of times in the Old Testament. The true words for "borrow" are "lavah" and "abat" as in the laws about lending and borrowing in Deut. 15. 6, Deut. 28. 12, Neh. 5. 4 and Psa. 37. 21. It has been a difficulty to some, thinking of the Israelites "borrowing" articles they knew they would never return. The R.S.V. puts this right.

*Exod. 12. 12 "For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night." (A.V.) ". . . land of Egypt that night." (R.S.V.)* The change of one word makes all the difference. It was not to be the night of the day on which the Lord was speaking to Moses that He would smite the first-born, but the night of the Passover, of which He has just been speaking; "that night."

*Exod. 12. 40 "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years." (A.V.) "The time that the people of Israel dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years." (R.S.V.)* This is a text about which there has been much discussion; were the four hundred and thirty years spent entirely in Egypt or did their commencement date from a time farther back whilst still in Canaan? There are strong arguments for both views and since this period is a vital link in Biblical chronology a great deal has been written and said on the subject. Suffice here to note that the R.S.V. eliminates all argument by coming down solidly on the side of the "long" period in Egypt, which is more in keeping with what is known of the histories of Egypt and Babylon, but difficult to reconcile with the Biblical statement that Moses' mother was the daughter of Levi.

*Exod. 14. 20 "And it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night." (A.V.) "And there was the cloud and the darkness; and the night passed without one coming near the other all night." (R.S.V.)* The usual interpretation of the A.V. was that the cloud miraculously gave light all night to Israel but darkness to the Egyptians. This rendering merely makes it a confusing cloud in the darkness—perhaps like a thick fog—so that the Egyptians could not move against the Israelites all night and Israel could sleep safely.

*Exod. 19. 5 "Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me." (A.V.) "You shall be my own possession." (R.S.V.)* The new rendering says the same thing in modern words. Israel was to be God's own special treasure among the nations—something peculiarly His own personal possession.

*Exod. 25. 31.* The "knops" of the Tabernacle "candlestick" became the "capitals" of the "lampstand", which modernises the words. The "capitals" were the ornamental caps at the ends of the branches, carrying the actual lamps.

*Exod. 26. 6.* The "taches" become "clasps"—clasps of gold for attaching one curtain to the next. (One notes the development of the modern verb "attach" from the old English "tache.")

*Exod. 26. 15.* The "boards" of the Tabernacle become "upright frames," i.e. the wooden sides of the central building.

*Exod. 28. 11.* The "ouches of gold" on the High Priest's ephod become "settings of gold filigree."

*Exod. 35. 32 "Bezaleel . . . to devise curious*

works." (A.V.) "To devise artistic designs." (R.S.V.) Only a slight change in words, but because expressed in the usage of to-day, much more capable of conveying the exact meaning. So in the following verse "any manner of cunning work" becomes "work in every skilled craft".

Exod. 36. 19. The "ram's skins dyed red" and "badger's skins" of the A.V. become "tanned ram's skins" and "goatskins."

Exod. 38. 4. "And he made for the altar a brazen grate of network under the compass thereof beneath unto the midst of it." (A.V.) "And he made for the altar a grating, a network of bronze, under its ledge, extending halfway down." (R.S.V.) Perhaps an improvement on the A.V. attempt to explain a constructional detail of the "Brazen Altar."

## OUR INHERITANCE

The Apostle Paul wrote his letter to the Ephesians after he had been for some time a follower in the footsteps of his Master. During a period of at least twenty-five years he had been greatly blessed in heart and mind by Divine revelation by the understanding of prophecy and by the Lord's providences over-ruling his experiences. In this epistle, more perhaps than in any other, he shows forth the eternal purpose of our God, and dwells on the class predestined by God to be associated with Jesus in His sufferings and also in Heavenly glory and the grand work to follow this dispensation. In the first chapter he sets forth two wonderful thoughts, viz., "God's inheritance in the saints" (verse 18), and "our inheritance in Christ Jesus" (verse 11). It is on the latter thought, our inheritance in Christ Jesus, that we will let our minds dwell for a while, for if we are faithful to our inheritance we shall be part of the class described as God's inheritance.

Paul opened his epistle with the words: "Blessed be God, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." His mind was always full of gratitude to God, and this expression "Blessed be God" is synonymous with the Psalmist's "Bless the Lord O my soul." He does not here refer to blessings that are to be ours in the future, but says, "Who hath blessed us." Our blessings are present, for they are spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, and refer to the spiritual relationship we have to Christ. A change has taken place in the spirit of our minds, and we are now the children of God in Christ Jesus. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3. 26; Rom. 8. 17). Weymouth's translation of Col. 1. 12-13 says: "Give thanks to the Father who has made us fit to receive our share of the inheritance of God's people in light. It is God who has delivered us out of the dominion of darkness, and has transferred us into the Kingdom of His dearly beloved Son, in whom we have our redemption—the forgiveness of our sins." "Who has

made us fit to receive our share of the inheritance of God's people in light . . . who has delivered us . . . and has transferred us." This surely refers to our present inheritance; the light of Divine truth and all it means to us in Christ Jesus is our share of the inheritance now. We have been transferred into the Kingdom of His dearly beloved Son, we who were children of Adam, sold under sin, have become children of light. "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts to give the light of knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4. 6-7). When we read: "God commanded the light to shine out of darkness," we think of Gen. 1. 2-3, when the spirit of God moved on the face of the waters, and God said: "Let there be light," and there was light. The same spirit, power, energy of God is shining into our hearts, and it has brought about the change.

The Apostle shows us that we are now the children of God, and he shows how we entered into this relationship. It is well for us to review and consider this scripture over and over again, even though we may have been some time in God's family, for it always brings back to our minds what we were, and how much we rely on our Father's providences in Christ Jesus. "In whom we have redemption, (deliverance) through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." This is a simple truth, but one which we must accept right at the beginning; it is through His blood alone that we have any standing before God. "Wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him" (verses 8-10). He has made known to us something that was not revealed in past dispensations; that there should be a class not only redeemed

by the blood of Jesus but associated with Him in His sufferings and later in his glory. Weymouth says: "He made known to us the secret of His will." The revelation of the plan of God has made these things known to us and we understand the Apostle's words that we are "Predestined according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."

That which brings us into relationship with Christ is shown in verses 12-13, where the word of truth is shown to be the *Gospel of your salvation*, and we read, "after ye believed ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." This word "believed" carries the thought of obedience after hearing; it is when we have heard the instructions in the word and acted upon them by making an unreserved consecration that we are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise.

The scripture is often quoted: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," but believing implies more than accepting as a fact the life and death of Jesus; it means believing and acting upon all He said. In Matt. 16. 24-25, the Lord said: "*If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life will lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.*" Jesus showed the terms of discipleship to be complete submission to the Father's will. When this step is taken the sealing of the Holy Spirit begins to take place in our hearts. Those who are willing to lose their lives for the Master's sake appear foolish in the eyes of the world, but they are blessed and truly wise in the sight of our Father. Our Lord also said: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood ye have no life in you." Jesus knew when He said these words that His disciples would not understand Him, but He also knew that when they received the Holy Spirit in their hearts they would understand the full significance of His words, and would appreciate the opportunity of "eating His flesh" and "drinking His blood"; by being associated with Him; so He said, "at that day ye shall know" (John 14. 20). That day came at Pentecost, when there began to dawn upon them the meaning of what their Master had taught, and they gradually understood the true significance of John 15 and the relationship there shown to exist between the Vine and the branches.

A wonderful relationship exists, not only between our Lord and His followers, but also between the Father, the Lord, and those willing to lose their lives in obedience to the terms, and to continue faithful to the end. "*He that keepeth My commandments, he it is that loveth Me, and he that loveth*

*Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him. If a man keep My words, My Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him.*" These are loved of the Father! He looks down and sees all the sin of the men and women of the world to-day, and He also sees a little company here and there who believe the precious word and take it as direct from Him, fully believe it, and endeavour to shape and control their lives by the things written in His Word. These are sealed by the Holy Spirit, and this sealing is a very real thing in their lives.

"As certainly as God is faithful, your language to you is not now 'Yes' and now 'No.' For Jesus Christ the Son of God . . . did not show Himself a waverer between 'Yes' and 'No,' but it was and always is 'Yes' with Him. For all the promises of God . . . have their confirmation in Him, and for this reason through Him also our 'Amen' acknowledges their truth and promotes the glory of God through our faith. But He who is making us as well as you steadfast through union with the Anointed One, and has anointed us, is God, and He has also set His seal upon us, and has put His spirit into our hearts as a pledge and foretaste of future blessings" (2 Cor. 1. 18-22—*Weymouth*). Happy are we if we have this pledge or guarantee in our hearts; all the promises are ours, present and future, and the sealing or guarantee of the Holy Spirit produces a deeper and deeper conviction in connection with our vital union and relationship with God. We are gradually learning to know God, and "this is life eternal that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent." Both the acquiring of knowledge and Christian experience contribute to this. Knowledge is very necessary, but there is something that is more than knowledge. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" (Eph. 3. 17-20). This is something more than intellectual knowledge, it is the vital relationship in our lives, "being rooted and grounded in the love of Christ that you may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." It is our Christian experience that Paul is here referring to, and every one of us, as we go along the pilgrim way, knows that there are things in our Father's dealings with us that surpass knowledge. Paul said, in the wonderful 13th chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, "Though I have all knowledge . . . and have not love, I am nothing. Knowledge will pass away; it is the right use of knowledge that matters. It requires some knowledge to exercise love, and as the spirit of Christ is in our hearts, His principles will guide our life. We may all have

reached more or less the same degree of knowledge, but we are at different stages of faith, and our Father deals with us individually according to our faith, so we have experiences differing from each other, but we are assured that from the standpoint of the future, all things work together for our good. Paul had many bitter experiences, but he never complained; the desire of his heart was "if by any means I might attain," and towards the end of his life he said, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." "I have learned," said Paul; all that most of us can say is, "I am learning."

The extent to which we have been blessed by God is revealed in Hebrews 6. 4-6. "Those once enlightened." The light of truth from Heaven shone in our hearts and showed us that we needed a Saviour, and it showed us that we could lay down our little lives with the Master. We have tasted of the gift from Heaven, our Lord Jesus, and we are made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted of the good word of God. This good word has been sweet, and has comforted our hearts when no human being could do so. What a comfort to our hearts has been the tasting of the powers of the world to come, that new world that is promised as the real remedy for the troubles of mankind. This passage brings joy to our hearts as it shows to us

the many blessings we have received from our Father, but if one who has been a recipient of all these blessings has repudiated the Lord, then it is a solemn warning. No man, however, has the right to apply this to anyone else.

Our final inheritance is in Heaven. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you." (1 Peter 1. 3-4.)

#### BOOKS FOR DISPOSAL

There are on hand in the bookroom two complete sets of "Studies in the Scriptures" of the De Luxe Karatol edition, now unobtainable in the ordinary way new. One set is itself in perfectly new condition and has hardly been opened; this set will be sent anywhere for 35/-, post free. The other set is second-hand, in reasonably good condition, and will be sent for 12/6, post free. (In U.S.A. \$7.00 and \$2.00 respectively.)

We have a few copies of Basil Mathews' book, "A Little Life of Jesus," still on hand at the old price of 6/- and will be pleased to send these on request until exhausted. The book is a suitable gift for children of 11 years and up, and comprises a well written story of Jesus' life, 220 pages, illustrated by a number of photographs, cloth bound red with gold lettering.

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80 pp. Cloth 3/3 (60c.). Paper 2/3 (40c.).



# BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

Thou, therefore, endure  
hardness as a good  
soldier of Jesus Christ.

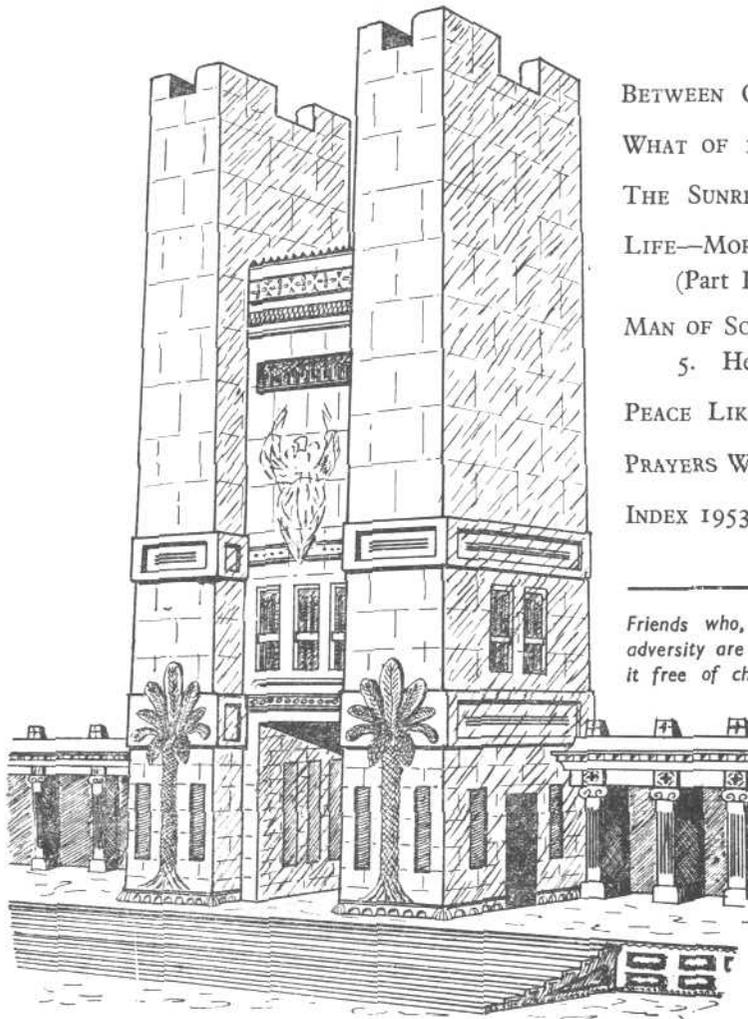
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DECEMBER, 1953

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*Friends who, through old age, infirmity or other  
adversity are unable to pay for this journal may have  
it free of charge upon request, renewed annually.*



Lift up your heads, O ye gates.  
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors,  
And the King of glory shall come in.

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## BETWEEN OURSELVES

From this issue onward, the "Monthly" is to revert to monthly publication, for so long as funds permit. In making this decision some regard has been had to the fact that a real need exists for a journal that will present a fair picture of our faith and the message of the Kingdom to those around us whom we seek to reach with the Truth. Particularly is this true in the case of many of our younger brethren who are anxious to play their part in the fulfilment of the age-old commission "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation". During the coming year, by the Lord's grace and under His leading, the "Monthly" will try to be of especial use in this direction, and a number of new features will be introduced having as their object the teaching of the message of Christ to old and young—and perhaps even the very young—in terms suited to their respective capacities to appreciate. Many of the traditional methods of "public witness" have admittedly become of little or no effect to-day. It may be that we are at fault in talking to this generation in the language of a past day. Perhaps we would be well advised to experiment a little along lines that have not been tried or considered in the past. At any rate, the "Monthly" will make the attempt, and those who wish this journal well will at least look with sympathy upon the effort.

\* \* \*

This issue completes Volume 30 of the "Bible Study Monthly". It was thirty years ago that the first modest leaflet appeared. It has never enjoyed a large circulation but through the years it has been a link between brethren who rarely meet each other except at convention times, and it has formed a convenient medium for the dissemination of notices and information of interest. How much longer it will continue we know not; that is in the hands of our Master: those responsible for its compilation and distribution are ready to carry on as long as may be indicated or to lay down the privilege just so soon as it is plain that its purpose has been served and it is time to say good-bye. In the meantime we embark upon 1954 in confidence that He who has led thus far will lead still, and bless every effort that is put forth in sincerity.

\* \* \*

We announce, as we usually do at this time of year, that the "Christian Home Calendar" for 1954 can be obtained from Bro. F. Lardent, 174, Forest Hill Road, London, S.E.23, at 2/3 each, 6/3 for three, post free. The size is 10 x 7½, one

sheet to each month, with sepia pictures of well-known beauty spots in Great Britain. Please order direct from Bro. Lardent.

\* \* \*

We call attention once more to the new edition of the "Plan of God in Brief" in the Hebrew language, which is published by brethren in America and is available free to Rabbis and at 5/3 post free to anyone else. We will be glad to have the names and addresses of Rabbis to whom the book may be sent, and will also fulfil other orders as required.

\* \* \*

At this season of the year the Benevolent Committee are busy making special arrangements for a little Christmas cheer for some of the old folk in our midst. Gifts and all communications should be sent to Bro. E. Allbon, 20, Sunnymede Drive, Ilford, Essex, and all such will be gratefully acknowledged. It is deemed proper to say at this point that the Bible Fellowship Union has no responsibility for the Benevolent Fund whatever, but is glad to assist its work by publishing an occasional notice such as this. Consequently it is requested that all communications do go to Brother Allbon as above suggested and not to Welling.

\* \* \*

For some years past we have stocked Scriptural Christmas cards at this season for the friends' convenience. This year it will not be possible so to do, in consequence of the pressure of other matters which restricts the time available at Welling for dealing with such things. Will the brethren therefore please take notice that no Christmas cards of any description are available from the bookroom this year.

\* \* \*

A list of second hand books (both "Truth" books and others of interest to the brethren) available at the "Monthly" office will be sent to anyone interested on request.

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### Gone From Us

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Sis. N. Anderson (*Dumfries*).

Sis. B. Smith (*Addlestone*).

"Till the day break, and the shadows flee away."

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## WHAT OF 1954?

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Among a number of brethren in our fellowship, many of them readers of this journal, there is a very definite expectation, amounting in many cases to positive conviction—not shared by the Editor of the “*Monthly*”—that the year 1954 will prove to be a year of crisis, a year of great events for both the Church and the world. This expectation is based in part upon certain interpretations of Bible chronology but probably to a greater degree upon all that has happened in the world since 1914, and the very unusual degree of unrest that exists in almost every country of the world, in practically every sphere of life. Some believe that the last members of the Church will experience their “change” at some time during the year, whilst others think that the year will witness the development of the final phase of the great “Time of Trouble” of Dan. 12, culminating in the “Armageddon” of the Book of Revelation.

The studies of some of the brethren who view matters thus, coupled with their observation of current events, has convinced them that their expectations are well founded and that there is something in the nature of a message here which ought to be broadcast among all who are “looking for His appearing”. One of the arguments rests upon the admitted prominence given in the historical Scriptures to forty-year periods associated with judgment, and it is pointed out that the assumption of a forty-year period of steadily worsening world conditions between the onset of general war in 1914 and the pre-determined end of the power of man forty years later is in harmony with similar events in past Biblical history. The evident anxiety of all the great Powers to outbid each other in the present insensate arms race can only, if the past is any guide at all, lead to another world conflict unless God intervenes, and this is another consideration which has led some to the conclusion referred to. One observer quotes other brethren with whom he has been in contact as saying “*the facts according to our knowledge are that the whole situation is far more critical and serious than at any time before, and that the smallest incident could bring about an explosion and an eruption of the fires burning beneath the surface, and so lead on to the complete destructive judgments of the Lord as set forth in the Revelation*”.

Writing in the September issue of “*Jerusalem*”, Abram Poljak, the Jewish Messianic leader, says, “*the hands of the universal clock show one minute*

*to midnight. We are no longer in the last hour, but in the last minute*”. That sentiment is not a new one; it has been expressed in varying terms by many “watchers” on different occasions for many years past; nevertheless it is being said with increasing frequency and with cumulative support in the form of alarming world happenings tending increasingly to make such a conclusion understandable.

It is not therefore surprising that there should be this expectation in certain quarters. It would have been more surprising were it not so. More than once therefore it has been queried why the “*Monthly*” does not feature articles dealing with these foreviews and prognostications. The answer is very simple: it is that the Editor of the “*Monthly*”, notwithstanding that he highly esteems some of the brethren holding these views and counts them close personal friends, is in no manner impressed by the arguments put forward and does not believe that the year 1954 holds the significant place in the Divine purposes that has for some time been suggested. It may certainly prove to be a momentous year in the affairs of the nations—every present indication points to that—but when viewed against the wider canvas of the orderly progress of the Divine Plan, well, the outcome of nearly forty years’ familiarity with dispensational expectations, commencing way back in early youth, and a dispassionate watching of prophecy passing into history, convinces this observer that there is more water yet to flow under the bridges before the great change can come.

Those of our more elderly readers who were the leaders of the fellowship when this writer was a mere lad will recall the excitement that heralded the approach of the year 1914 and the certainty that the time of the great transition had come. The fact that those who at that time were active in promoting the expectation were utterly sincere and convinced in their beliefs, and could show apparently perfectly sound Scriptural grounds for their conclusions, did nothing to nullify the after effects of the disappointment. It was a sore trial to many and the faith of some failed under it. The present Editor was too young at that time to be affected in that way but he remembers the situation created and has no desire to see the “*Monthly*” unwittingly become the means of encouraging hopes that are destined to be dashed in a few months.

Having said all that, however, and made plain that the "Monthly" does not endorse the attachment of *dispensational importance* to the year 1954, whatever may prove to be its significance in the history of the Gentile powers, it remains true that some of our brethren are sincerely desirous of linking up with others who do hold such an expectation, with a view to discussing the making of certain preparations which those who believe such things would logically want to do. A brother calls our attention to a report in the "Manchester Guardian" of 26th September, describing a recent air raid practice in New York, in which it was commented "For the present, it is intended at least to get the average New Yorker to stock his medicine cabinet, to keep a good supply of tinned food on hand, to pick the safest places in his apartment for his children, and to put his trust in God". The order in which these several defence measures are placed may be open to some criticism, but it can nevertheless be argued that in making prior provision at all, the children of this world are wiser than the children of light. With this in mind, one

brother in the provinces who has given much thought to the practical aspect of this matter suggests that "in view of the possible development of serious trouble during the coming year, it would be right to consider what steps of preparation might properly be taken beforehand to ensure, as far as possible, the lives and safety of those of their families who will be left on earth to pass through the Time of Trouble after the Church has been taken". This brother is willing and anxious to co-operate with others of like mind.

The "Monthly" is prepared to put any such in touch with this brother on request by forwarding him their names and addresses, if sent to the "Monthly" office for that purpose. If any prefer to write him direct, that may be done, addressing the letter:—

A.K.E.D.,  
c/o Bible Fellowship Union,  
24, Darwin Road,  
Welling, Kent, Eng.

Such letters will be re-directed to the brother unopened.

## THE SUN RISING

An exhortation

"And he shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds, as the tender grass springeth out of the earth by clear shining after rain." (2. Samuel 23. 4.)

How eagerly and longingly the watchers of the morning are waiting for the coming or manifestation of the Lord—the Sun of Righteousness. How and when will He come, we often ask ourselves. In the beautiful text quoted above we have a very clear indication of the way in which He will come—even as our Lord Himself stated, that it would be in a clear and unmistakable way. "As the lightning shineth from the east even unto the west, even so shall the coming of the Son of Man be." Men will doubt no longer. "Every eye shall see him."

In another beautiful text, David also says:

"He shall come down like the rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the grass."

One by one the years slip by and hearts grow weary with the strain of waiting and watching for the signs of His appearing. Yet God grant that we may be found ready and with oil in our lamps when the cry goes forth "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh".

St. Paul exhorted his disciples again and again to "be patient". He knew that the period of wait-

ing would be very trying: so trying that many would fail to be ready and some would even be smiting others who were not quite in accord with their own views.

"Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord." (Jas. 5. 7 and 8.)

"Here is the patience of the saints." (Rev. 13. 10.)

How hard it is to be patient in times of anxious waiting we all know well. How our imagination runs riot and often fills us with forebodings or fears until we find the strain well nigh intolerable. When, on the other hand, some great joy awaits us, how eagerly we look forward, counting each day, and then, when the watched for day arrives, watching the clock. This is what we are told to do in these days of waiting—"watch". Not to grow weary, not to lose patience, not to doubt that the time will come at last. Oh yes, it sounds easy to talk, but as weary year succeeds weary year, and the hopes begin to grow fainter, the stoutest and most eager hearted watcher begins to sigh and groan for the longed for time. To some of us more impulsive natures, this is a hard testing time. How, then, are we to keep our hopes high and our confidence steady? Merely, brethren, by calling upon Him Who alone is able to keep us from falling,

and trusting in Him implicitly, for "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the working of His mighty power". Let us ever remember that the "Everlasting Arms" are always nigh, and the overshadowing wings ever ready to cover us, and that those who put their trust in Him shall never be ashamed.

How well David knew these times of testing, and oh how he cried to the Lord, again and again, and how often did he not give thanks for his deliverances. Let us, therefore, say with him, in these dark and trying days:—

*"In the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge until these calamities be overpast."* Ps. 57. 1.

He will "cover us with His feathers", and guard and shelter us from all that besets us. How comforting to think of those overspread wings—wings of love and protection. Let us, then, take heart and trust them.

Soon, soon, the ever growing light of this cloudless morning shall dispel the darkness. The things which have seemed so shadowy and obscure shall be clearly defined and all shall be bright and warm, as the cold morning mists give way to the glowing beams of the glorious Millennial sunrise. "Then shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings." The darkness will be past and the glad day arrived at last.

Take heart, weary watchers, and keep those lamps alight with the oil of love, for though "the love of many shall wax cold" in these days of abounding iniquity, He Who is our Guardian is also the Lord of Love, and can fill our hearts through the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, melting down the hardness and keeping them "hearts of flesh". Ah how soon

the chill winds of adversity, ingratitude and unkindness can make that poor, weak flame, flicker and, alas, even die out. Let us call upon Him to keep our hearts filled with the oil of love, therefore, that when He shall appear, our lamps will soon be lighted, and we may go out to meet the Bridegroom. He alone can give us this oil, through the plenitude of His Holy Spirit.

David, after all the vicissitudes of the dark valley, and having put his trust in the living God, could say—

*"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."*

Praise God, that in the glorious morning that awaits us "many nations shall be turned to the Lord", and many unbelievers shall be converted unto Him "whom they had pierced". Many shall then outgrow the old "earthy" nature, and "spring forth" into the "new birth" even as the tender grass springing out of the earth by the clear shining of the Sun of Righteousness after the refreshing rains of His Presence. Thus, in the "Times of Refreshing" which shall come from the Presence of the Lord, shall many weary wanderers turn their weary steps to Him who has said "Come unto me, ye weary, and I will give you rest".

Wait patiently, then, brethren. Let us be able to say with David, "I waited patiently for the Lord and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry".

*"He shall come down like showers  
Upon the fruitful earth,  
And love, joy, hope, like flowers,  
Spring in his path to birth."*

"Then shall the earth yield her increase, and God, even our God, shall bless us."

## BURDENS

In Psalm 55. 22 there is a word which is full of rich suggestion. We are bidden to "Cast our burden upon the Lord". In the margin, however, is the word gift—thus reading—"Cast thy gift upon the Lord". So our burden is God's gift to us. This is true whatever the burden may be—duty, sorrow, pain, loss, care. Being God's gift, there must be a blessing in it, something good, something we could not miss without sore loss. It may be a blessing for ourselves, or it may be for others—in the garden it was the blessing of the world's redemption which was in the cup that was pressed to the lips of our dear Lord. In every case, our burden is God's gift, and it would not be a kindness to us if He were to lift it away.

But there is more of the promise. We are to cast our burden upon the Lord and He will sustain us.

That is, He will give us strength to carry our load, to endure our suffering. The story of Paul's thorn in the flesh illustrates this. The torturing burden was not removed, but instead there came grace sufficient—the strength of Christ to balance the human weakness, so that Paul was enabled to rejoice in his infirmities because of the blessing which came to him through them.

*"We must live through the weary winter  
If we would value the spring;  
And the woods must be cold and silent  
Before the robins sing.  
The flowers must be buried in darkness  
Before they can bud and bloom;  
And the sweetest and warmest sunshine  
Comes after the storm and gloom."*

## LIFE—MORE ABUNDANTLY!

A doctrinal  
discourse

### Part 2 (conclusion)

*This treatise is concluded from the last issue, in which it was shown how the Apostle John assembled the testimony from Jesus' lips that the life which believers receive, as they "pass from death to life", is in a very real and definite sense, eternal life.* \* \* \*

But Paul also can claim Jesus as his authority for the forward view. "Everyone" said Jesus "who has left houses or brothers and sisters . . . for my name's sake will receive a hundred-fold and inherit eternal life" (Matt. 19. 29). "And in the age to come eternal life" adds Mark to the foregoing testimony. (Mark 10. 30.) So also does Luke (18. 30). Here is evidence for the forward view, and for whatever be the nature of the present possession and experience it would be insufficient and incomplete without an awakening from the sleep of death, hence Jesus further said "For this is the Will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in Him, should have eternal life, and I will raise him at the last day". (John 6. 40.)

But Paul is not at variance with John over the fact of a present possession and experience. He believes the testimony of his Lord just as surely as John, but describes the fact in his own terms. Paul calls it "newness of life" (Rom. 6. 4). "Yield yourself to God as men who have been brought from death to life"; "now that you . . . have become slaves of God, the return you get is sanctification, and its end, eternal life." (Rom. 6. 13-22). Again, "to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace . . . if Christ be in you, although your bodies are dead because of sin your spirits are alive, because of righteousness" (Rom. 8. 6, 10). "If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation, the old has passed away, behold the new has come" (2 Cor. 5. 17) the new life, the new possession, the new walk, the new experience, all have come simultaneously, but all are to be realised only in Christ. "We know" says John "that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, to know Him who is true, and we are in Him whom is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true (real) God and eternal life." (1 John 5. 20.)

There then is the Scripture evidence that there is something real and true about the present phase of eternal life as well as about that phase yet to come. Recalling now the testimony of the Lexicons, we may safely say that the life in Christ we now possess is "eternal life"; life peculiar to the Age;

life characteristic of the times; life conditioned by our belief in God and our surrender in compliance therewith. It implies a full and complete severance from the old Adamic stock and a full and vital union with Christ Jesus our risen Lord. The old things are passed away—old ties, old hopes, old efforts, old relationships, are to be accounted gone, and the new things come. New ties, new hopes, new efforts, new relationships are to be accounted come, come to stay, until mortality be swallowed up of life. A new Adam takes the place, to us, of the old federal head of our race, and as we were once accounted to be in the one (Rom. 5. 12-14) so now and henceforth we are accounted to be in the other.

And now for the heights and depths of our age-conditioned life! In the introductory remarks the suggestion was made that eternal life has length in that it may stretch itself forward throughout the illimitable periods of eternity to come. Eternal also has breadth in that so many episodes and happenings connected with the Divine Plan have been necessary for its foundations. Beginning with the Divine planning ere the world was made, it reached a climax when Jesus came and died and rose again, and ascended up on high to be the pledge and surety of our life in God. It has also heights and depths, which, are matters more of a believer's individual capacity than of a common inheritance.

In the common walks of life, it is common experience to find some men vitally and magnetically alive, and others who (in common parlance) are just "dead alive". Some have energy and vitality in abundance, others can scarcely walk about. Some live a full and vibrant life, others just sputter and flicker along. Some gather all the spoils, others harvest none. Why this is so, we are not now prepared to say—we simply note the fact, because this state of things is paralleled in the Christian life.

If eternal life finds its expression in knowing God, then the more that God comes to be known, the greater the range of the resultant life. Additionally if eternal life comes, or is sustained and intensified, by feeding upon the body and blood of the Son of Man, then the more one eats the more abounding will be the "life". Or viewing this from the words at Sychar's well, the more of the "living water" we imbibe the greater the flow of the inner spring.

If then, eternal life here and now depends on "knowing" and "eating" and "drinking" obviously those who are eager to "know" and who "hunger and thirst" will be the happy folk who feel the up-welling surge of the life within. These are they with the "life abundant", these are they with the "gushing spring".

But how and when does it reveal itself to us and to our spiritual kin? First let us think of its "heights"—its mountain-top experiences! And these begin by knowing God, and by knowing Jesus too. Knowing God and Jesus means the acquiring of personal experience with them in the secret chamber, in the daily walk, in the hour of fellowship, when the up-reaching human heart finds itself linked in happy holy fellowship with its Father and its God, and with its Saviour and its Lord. It is then that "heaven comes down our souls to greet, while glory crowns the mercy seat". And as the days come and go, the knowledge deepens, and the trust intensifies, and we find the loving tie binding us more and more strongly to the other world and to the higher things. The thrill and rapture of that happy state pulsates with life—abundant life, the life conditioned by our times, and by our faith.

And then again those happy times when saint with saint finds sweet fellowship while time and sense molest no more. All awareness of the passing hours is gone, and we find ourselves lost in the bliss and pleasure of the sweet and satisfying companionship. Experience such as this in the things of the Spirit is only possible to those who mind the things of the Spirit, and that, Paul says, betokens spiritual life and peace. And this is the other-worldly life, the life that owes its origin to the Living God. It not only indicates a deepening knowledge of God as Creator, Redeemer and Supervisor of this world's affairs, but as a Father too, the dearest and most precious thing the saint can know. And of a Saviour and Protector who loved us and gave Himself for us to bring us back to God. Additional to that it indicates that we are learning to know our brethren too, and are rejoicing together in our mutual appreciation of the Father-and-child relationship, which none but those who have that inner life can know or understand.

This deepening and exhilarating appreciation of the holy things and the spiritual relationship is an indication of the presence of that life peculiar to the calling of this Gospel Age, and as such may truly be defined as "aionian" life. It is this that is defined for us by our Lord when He said "And this is life eternal that they may know Thee, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent".

Here are some out of the many things which

constitute the heights of that eternal life, and, in proportion to our capacity and desire to enter into such things so is our measure of this life. Some seek for much and find much, others are satisfied with little and find accordingly.

*"And hungry souls there are that find and eat  
God's Manna day by day,  
And glad they are; their life is full and sweet,  
For as their food are they!"*

But the holy life is not all mountain-top experience. It has its depths as well as its lofty heights. The valley of the shadows must alternate with the still waters; the dangers of the path with the safety of the fold. The young eaglet must be tossed out of its nest if it is to learn to fly up the steeps of the Air. God must put His child to the proof to ascertain if his love is true and deep. Sorrow, pain and loneliness may have to be allowed to plough up the subsoil of the heart, in order that the spirit of obedience, so dear to God, may become manifest under a thousand tests. Enemies of the truth may be permitted to revile to ascertain if we will retaliate in the same spirit, or leave recompense to God. Fiery darts of Satan may be permitted to strike home and wound to make known to us how incapable we are of defence in and of ourselves.

But these are tokens that the new life is there. God does not test in this way unregenerate souls; He does not look for obedience in the "dead in trespasses and sins"; He does not seek for love except where His Holy Spirit has been shed abroad. His chastenings are sent to none save His sons. Only the living can suffer pain and sorrow and loneliness, for in this as in mundane life, "the dead know not anything". Yes, the new life must be there otherwise these heart-harrowing things would not be felt or known. What shall the response in the valley be? Shall we whimper and complain and say our lot is hard to bear? or shall we say:—

*"Though sorrow in its work brings grief and  
pain,  
Sweet are Thy messengers, Sweet their  
refrain,  
When they can sing with me, More love O  
Christ to Thee,  
More love to Thee, More love to Thee."*

It is the Christian's deep desire not only to know Him but also to share His sufferings—to find fellowship with Him in the dark valleys as well as on the mountain-top, but he may find assurance in every case, that this is only possible because he lives in Christ, and that Christ also lives in him. Were there no hidden life, he would know neither joy

nor grief in Christ's fellowship, nor would he experience desire for holiness or heavenly things.

There is much more that might be said in support of our suggestion that the "life" we have received from the Father of Spirits is "aionian life"—the life conditioned by the times in which we live and by the call of God, but space forbids. If it be considered a different thought from what has been hitherto expressed let it be considered in the

light of Jesus' words in John 17. 3 in particular, and it will be seen that "aionian life" has intensity as well as duration, quality as well as quantity. That it is the life more abundant we may be well assured. May the dear Lord grant to us, each and all, that the life we now know and enjoy may continue to deepen and intensify till it shall reach fulness and maturity in the presence of the Lord that so we shall ever be with Him, world without end.

## MAN OF SORROWS

A Study in Isaiah 53

Part 5.—"HE SUFFERED FOR US."

*"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted."* (vs. 4.)

This is the first of three verses each of which affirm most definitely the substitutionary character of our Lord's sufferings. It was not just that He endured similar sufferings to those of mankind. It was that He did in truth take upon Himself the sufferings that men ought to have endured. This is not a popular doctrine nowadays. Men prefer to think of Jesus—if they think of Him at all—as an example, a mentor, a Leader Who shows the way, One of Whom they can speak admiringly or respectfully as pre-eminent, but they do not like to acknowledge that He endured sufferings that are rightfully theirs, that they are under that kind of obligation to Him. Men do not care to admit that they are sinners, and especially do they object to admitting that they are helpless sinners, and that only Christ can lift them out of that hopeless state. It is not unusual to see a very small and perhaps obstinate child refuse its father's proffered assistance in its effort to walk, and insist on taking a few tottering steps by itself. That may be a good thing in the case of a child learning to toddle, but it is not a good thing for a man who needs to walk in absolute righteousness before God.

One might very properly ask at this point in what way was it that Jesus bore our griefs and carried our sorrows? Men in all ages have had plenty of their own which they have had perforce to bear and it is self-evident that Jesus did not carry the griefs and sorrows of mankind to the extent that they had none themselves to endure. The cynic might well suggest that if Jesus had never lived the nett difference to any man in this respect would not have been noticeable. The truth of the matter is that all grief and sorrow arises from the presence of sin, and it was man who sinned and men who

continue to sin. Hence that which Jesus undeniably did bear was rightfully the responsibility of men, for Jesus Himself knew no sin. As one translator puts it "It was *our* griefs he bore, it was *our* sorrows he carried". That reflection leads us to the realisation of another fact, that the sin of man has consequences which cannot be confined to the sinning one. The fathers eat sour grapes, but they are the children's teeth which are set on edge. It is when men comprehend that fundamental truth that they will understand why God has decreed righteousness the law of His creation and has outlawed sin. It is then that they will understand why Jesus bore their griefs and carried their sorrows. He, the sinless One, living in a sinful world, willingly sharing in all its life and all its affairs, could do nothing else but take upon Himself that share of the world's distress. It is when men realise that, that they will come with breaking hearts to acknowledge their own unworthiness and to render their allegiance to Him. "In all things" says the writer to the Hebrews "it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest . . . in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." "We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

And He still bears our griefs, still carries our sorrows! Does anybody imagine that because He has now been exalted "higher than all heavens", resplendent in the glory of His spiritual nature, that He no longer feels the woes of men here on earth in the flesh? The parable of the lost sheep should quickly refute any such reasoning. If there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, as Jesus did declare, then surely there must be abiding sorrow over the sinners who have not yet repented.

It is true, of course, that Jesus no longer bears the sin of man in a sacrificial sense, for all that was finished at the Cross, but it must be true that He still takes upon Himself the burden of our griefs and sorrows and gives us instead, if we will, that strength and consolation which can come only from Him. That was His mission from the start and remains His ministry, to bind up the broken-hearted, to comfort all that mourn, to pour in the oil of joy in exchange for mourning, to give the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. We ought to bear in mind that in taking upon Himself the burden of the world's distress our Lord did not assume it merely for the short space of three and a half years whilst He walked as a Man upon earth. He took it for all the time that had and has yet to elapse before sin and the results of sin are forever banished from the earth. Throughout all this present Gospel Age He has carried the griefs and sorrows of all His disciples and been to them a Shepherd and an Elder Brother, guiding and guarding them in times of difficulty and danger, consoling and cheering them in times of distress and tragedy. In the next Age, the Millennial Age, there will be griefs and sorrows, also, as men and women find for themselves that the consequences of their past lives of sin weigh them down like the heavy burden carried by the hero of "*Pilgrim's Progress*", until, like Christian in that immortal allegory, they cast it down at the foot of the Cross where Jesus stands waiting to bear it on their behalf. How could He be a merciful and sympathetic High Priest in that glorious Age if He did not remove the burden from humanity's shoulders and assume it Himself; if He Himself is not affected by the effects of sin in the lives of those to whom He has become a Mediator and whom He is trying to lead up the Highway of Holiness to full reconciliation with God? Surely this fourth verse of Isaiah's fifty-third chapter must be in process of fulfilment through all the long centuries, all the time that any of those for whom Christ died is still weighed down with the grief and sorrow that comes because of sin.

These things must be true of the Church also. Those who are the Master's disciples now, consecrated to His service, trusting in His promise that if faithful they will one day share with Him in His glory and be manifested with Him to raise fallen mankind up to the glorious liberty of the children of God; what of these? They also will bear the griefs and sorrows of mankind in that day. They also will be merciful and sympathetic priests, able to help and guide the willing of earth's unfortunates, able because they themselves have passed this way before. It is a solemn thought,

that we cannot be of use to our Lord in that future unless we have in this life been made perfect through suffering as He was. That does not necessarily mean a life of physical suffering, nor yet of mental suffering, although something of both does usually enter into the experience of each disciple. It does mean suffering in the sense that we have shared in the griefs and sorrows of this sin-sick world, that in our own small way we have followed in the footsteps of our Saviour and been as He was in the world. We too must enter into the world's distress and feel deeply for all men in their sorrows if we are to be of the character needed in that day. Do our hearts ache for the injustice and oppression that comes before our notice every day? Do our minds cry out in protest at some flagrant example of misery or cruelty inflicted perhaps by heartless men or soulless institutions and governments? Do we long for the wisdom and the power to go out into the world bringing happiness and health where now there is sorrow and sickness? These are the things that must possess our inward being like a burning fire if we will be of those who in the next Age will come forth armed with all wisdom and power to do these very things. To-day they are considered by men as signs of weakness, for love and mercy and well-doing are despised and the contrary attributes of selfishness and callousness exalted as desirable standards by which to live. So it is that in this day, as in that of Isaiah, the one who carries the burdens of others is despised as one to whom even God is indifferent. Men in Jesus' day could not understand how such an One could enjoy the favour of God whilst bereft of all outward indication of Divine favour. They looked upon His life, spent chiefly among the outcasts and the poor, the uninfluential in earth's affairs, and His death that of a common criminal, without any kind of spectacular deliverance such as the past heroes of their own history, such as Daniel, Job, Joseph, had experienced, and they could only esteem Him stricken and smitten, deserted by God. They were quite incapable of comprehending how God could possibly be interested in such an one. God was, to them, a militant, war loving God, indulgent to His own people and a relentless foe to His enemies, justifying His worshippers on the basis of correctly performed ritual and sacrifice and condemning all others on account of failure to observe the Law. Temporal welfare and the favour of God went hand in hand, and the manifest disfavour of God could only mean that there was wickedness in the object of disfavour. Small wonder that, looking on the Man of Sorrows and seeing nothing of the spiritual glory, they esteemed Him "stricken and afflicted of God".

*To be continued*

## PEACE . . . LIKE A RIVER

A discourse based  
on Psa. 46. 4

Among the many blessings which are ours through faith in the loving sacrifice and resurrection of our Lord and Head, there is one, bequeathed to us by Jesus Himself, which is especially precious to us in these days, when all around us is turmoil and strife.

As Jesus was speaking to His disciples of His necessary departure to prepare a place for them, and was preparing them for the persecution which would come upon them in a little while, they became troubled and alarmed.

Sensing their distress, He first promises them that He would send them the Holy Spirit as a Comforter, then bequeaths to them that precious gift which had been such a source of blessing to Him in His hours of trial. He said: "*Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you*".

His OWN peace, which was nothing less than the peace of God, which, as Paul truly says, transcends all our powers of thought.

Much has already been written concerning this peace, but no apology is made for yet another consideration of this subject, for God's peace is such that our finite minds can never ascend to its fullest heights, nor fathom its deepest depths.

God dwells in perfect peace because of His ability to see the end from the beginning, and because of His power to accomplish that which He designed to perform.

If we would have His peace we must have, primarily, perfect faith in Him, in His word, and in His ability to bring order out of the chaos which we see around us to-day.

Further, having accepted the precious sacrifice of Jesus, and being justified by faith, we must go on to that condition of heart and mind in which the peace of God will "garrison" our hearts and minds (see Phil. 4. 4-7).

The Apostle Peter urges us to "Seek peace and ensue it", or, as Moffatt puts it: "Let us make peace our aim".

Why need to seek it, if it is a gift? Because it is not a natural element of this passing evil world, neither is it for the indolent and lazy ones.

God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, and if we would have this peace in its fulness, we must seek to know the factors upon which it depends, and apply them to our lives.

Peter's desire for those who had "obtained like precious faith" to his own was, that grace and peace should be *multiplied* unto them through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord" (2 Pet. 1. 2).

This "knowledge" of God implies much more than merely knowing "about" Him. As Paul says, knowledge puffeth up. Rather, it conveys the thought of intimate acquaintance or *personal* knowledge. Rotherham's translation of Job. 22. 21 conveys the thought: "Shew thyself to be *one with Him*, I pray thee, and prosper" (Be at peace).

We may have an intellectual appreciation of God and His attributes, but it is only as we develop a heart reliance upon Him and His word, resulting from an experience of that sonship which is ours through vital union with Christ, that we can find that real peace which came to Jesus whilst He was bearing the greatest burden that man was ever called upon to bear.

It may be our portion to bear heavy burdens, to sustain heavy losses, to fight stern battles, or to keep long and lonely vigils, but even as Jesus by communion with His Father found peace in every circumstance, so, we by learning to commune more and more with our Father, through Jesus, can find peace, perfect peace in every experience.

To have this peace multiplied unto us, as Peter desires, is indeed a blessing beyond the power of human comprehension, but the figure used in the prophecy concerning natural Israel in Isa. 48. 18 may bring some fresh thought to bear upon this wonderful subject. This verse also brings to our attention yet another factor upon which this peace depends.

It reads: "*Oh that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments, then had thy peace been as a river*". The peace of Israel depended upon their obedience to the Divine will as expressed in God's laws, but they failed to fulfil the conditions, and thus lost the accompanying blessing; nevertheless, it is prophesied of her (Isa. 66. 12): "*I will extend to her peace like a river*".

In the meantime, the Church, as spiritual Israel, can rightly claim this blessing, if the conditions are fulfilled; as the Psalmist says: "Great peace have they which love thy law".

Therefore, if we have perfect faith in God and His word, if we accept the righteousness which

comes by faith in the blood of Christ, and, offering our all to Him in sacrifice, learn to know and do His will, we can and should have peace—like a river.

A river is usually symbolic of plenty, constancy or perpetuity, and thus truly pictures the peace which comes from God.

A river begins as a tiny stream in the hills, then, making its way through many scenes, is joined by numerous tributaries, which cause it to become wider and deeper, until it is finally lost in the sea. The changes which it may experience and the ever widening and deepening of its course as it wends its way ever onward to the sea, does indeed graphically illustrate the peace of God as it comes to His obedient children.

Let us cast our minds back to the time when we had no personal knowledge of God. Then we had no real peace. But, with our introduction to the new life which is the portion of all who "diligently seek", we entered into a wonderfully new experience, full of glorious possibilities.

First, we learned something of the love of God (John 3. 16), and of His justice (Rom. 3. 26), and our river of peace began as a tiny stream (Rom. 5. 1). It soon increased as we learned something of His wisdom and power, and as time went on our knowledge of Him and His plan increased, and each aspect of truth became as it were tributaries uniting to swell our river of peace (Psalm 46. 4).

Thus, for a while our river wended its way, as it were, through pleasant scenes. The sun shone on its sparkling waters, the grassy slopes which lined its banks were refreshingly green, and the graceful willows at its edge afforded pleasant shelter. The distant lowing of the cattle and the singing of the birds completed a picture of perfect peace.

But, even as in the natural picture the river leaves the pleasant scenes, and is flanked on either side by bleak and lonely marshes, and the singing of the birds is no longer heard, so in the Christian life our experiences may change and the loneliness of the wilderness may be our portion; but, even as the river flows serenely on through meadow or marsh, so our peace remains undisturbed by the changing scenes of life.

In the natural picture, as the river becomes wider and deeper, men build upon its banks, and it becomes lined with warehouses, factories and squalid dwellings. The singing of the birds or the quietness of the wilderness gives way to the noise and clangour of commerce, and the sparkling stream becomes a murky and sluggish river; for, although it continues its way ever onward to the sea, its flow is retarded by all the commercial activity upon its banks.

So, in our Christian experience, whether in the workshop, office, factory or shop, or about the duties of the home, whatever our vocation may be, contact with the world and its activities tends to slow down our river of peace, and dull its sparkling waters.

Nevertheless, it is the same river, and is ever flowing towards its outlet, the sea; and as it slows down it must widen and deepen, as it should do as our heart reliance upon God is developed in the turmoil of life.

Our river of peace might well be like the mountain streams which rush headlong down the rocks, to be lost in the upland lakes—pretty, but of little use; or it might continue its flow untouched by commerce and worldly activity, and flow unimpeded to the sea. Then it would be like the lives of those who shut themselves up in monasteries, convents and like institutions. Their lives may have a serenity and beauty of a sort, but our Lord's prayer for His own was not that they should be taken out of the world, but that they should be kept from the evil thereof.

So, if our river passes through the squalor and turmoil, the smoke and the ceaseless activity of the world, let us remember how Jesus, in His perfection, moved amongst such greed and hypocrisy, such depravity and degradation as must have deeply affected His sensitive nature. Then above all the distractions of life we shall hear Him saying: "*These things I have spoken unto you, that you might have peace*".

As the natural river flows through the industrial area it becomes liable to pollution, and steps are taken to prevent this by laws which require every stream which flows into it to conform to a certain standard of purity.

So in the Christian life our pure river is liable to become tainted with impurities, and thus our peace disturbed. So we need to be vigilant, especially in these last days, when, as foretold, many false prophets have arisen, and see that every so-called truth is scrutinised to see if it conforms to the standards set up in the Word of God.

As the river nears the sea it is affected by the wind, which whips it up into angry waves. Nevertheless, those who work beneath the surface find that all is calm and quiet below.

So in the Christian experience the winds of affliction may blow upon us, and our river may become ruffled, but this is only on the surface; deep down in our hearts the peace of God remains.

The tides also affect the river, so that for a while its flow is held up, thus causing the river to widen and deepen. The tide of adversity may

hold up the flow of our river temporarily, but this should only cause it to widen and deepen, for, even as the tides are provided to cleanse the river, so the adversity should, if we are rightly exercised thereby, cleanse and purify us and make us ready to meet the God of peace.

Sometimes the adverse wind and the tide coincide in the natural picture and floods result, with corresponding disaster.

We may experience the tides of affliction and the winds of adversity together, this causes a crisis in our life which may seem to us to be a catastrophe, but the tide of affliction must ebb and the winds of adversity must abate, and soon our river flows on more swiftly to the sea, and we are strengthened and purified as a result of the apparent catastrophe.

Sometimes, however, when the "surges rise and rest delays to come," we may lose our hold on this peace. In such circumstances let us recall that our Lord's river flowed through scenes and circumstances much more intense than any experience we may have to endure. The winds of adversity and the tides of affliction were permitted to exert their full force upon Him, and we see the extent to which they bore down upon Him as He cried out in Gethsemane. In such weariness of mind He sought His Father's face, and as a result of sweet communion with Him, He went out of Gethsemane the very personification of peace.

Surrounded by the howling mob, standing before the murderous High Priest and Elders, and facing

the quaking Pilate, He remained calm and composed, and that peace which came from God remained with Him until He died.

So He lived and died, but He arose, and now lives that we might have that same peace, even as we follow Him through Gethsemane and Golgotha to the reward which He has already gained.

This peace, then, will be our portion in ever increasing measure until our river is lost in the sea.

When and where will this be? Surely it will be when this mortal shall put on immortality, and as we enter into our reward in heaven.

Here and now, wonderful though it is, our peace is like a river, comparatively narrow, affected by the frailty of human nature and its circumstances of life, but then, when that which is perfect is come, it will open out into a boundless sea, and we shall dwell in God's perfect peace throughout all eternity.

But this is not all. After this the prophecy of Isa. 66 will be fulfilled, and peace will flow out to Israel restored.

Following this, that rapidly increasing river, springing from beneath the altar in the Sanctuary, will flow out into the desert, even unto the Dead Sea, bringing life to all who have been submerged in sin and death (Ezekiel 47).

Thus cleansed and made whole, being freed from all that disturbs or alarms, the whole world, united under one Head, will find peace at last.

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## PRAYERS WITHOUT WORDS

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*A meditation  
Rom. 8. 18-27*

It is as necessary for the Christian to pray as for a child to prattle to its parents. And it is as vitally important for the child of God to make known its wants as for the human child. In consequence of this need to communicate with his Father, the Christian is reminded that he may "pray without ceasing" and that while watching and working, he may take time off from service to go aside to pray.

But just as an observant mother will know, at times, what the unspoken desire of her child is (or will be) so there are occasions when our moods are of more moment than our words, for indeed as there may be words without prayer, so contrariwise there may be prayer without words and it is to the Christian's advantage that the Father of Love and Compassion understands more perfectly than any man or woman the unspoken (and sometimes unspeakable) desires of His child.

The devout Christian often prays most deeply when he does not speak at all. Occasions arise from time to time when he (or she) is far too full for words. Like the dull movings of deep waters "too full for sound or foam" the Christian's heart is deeply moved, and it is the very depths and fulness of these hidden tides which makes his lips so hopelessly inadequate to utter all he feels.

There is much truth and fitness in the poet's expressive words:—

*"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,  
Uttered or unexpressed,  
The motion of a hidden fire  
That trembles in the breast.  
Prayer is the burden of a sigh,  
The falling of a tear,  
The upward glancing of an eye  
When none but God is near."*

This inability to give utterance to the deep things of the spirit is not just the same thing as the handicap of a poor vocabulary. It is not akin to the difficulty of the tongue-tied or untaught son-of-the-soil or man-of-the-street. The lips of him who guides the plough or drives the loom, may fail to form his prayer because he has no range of words from which to choose. Education may have been too scant. Contrariwise the human metal may suffer from lack of refinability or be unable to take literary polish. Hence his lips may not frame a prayer because the equipment of the man is unequal to the task.

Yet this ill-equipped soul may pray in its own way. The down-cast eyes, the up-raised touching hands, the reverential pose, may say more than a host of words. But when personality is deep and emotional desire is strong, and the lips are trained ordinarily to express the rising or falling mood, it will be the deep swell of some more acute crisis that seals the lips, and bars the egress of the worded prayer.

These deep-felt motions may come late or early in the Christian life. Indeed it may be in such a soul-storm that the Christian's religious life begins. Words may be few—or absent—because the issues are so great.

There is a prayer where words are few, when penitence first stirs the sinful heart. Perhaps it needs the smiting hand upon the breast to emphasise the unuttered pathetic plea. Or in such a case, if lips do speak, seven words contain more prayer than reams of polished phrase. "God be merciful to me a sinner" is a prayer of fundamental depth. It comes from the deep places of an unregenerate but humbled heart, and mounts up to the high courts of Heaven. The God of all love and grace, the God of heaven and earth, bends down to hear that prayer, while angels of light rejoice together as the sinner's prayer mounts to their ears.

Ten thousand words could say no more at such a time than ten mere syllables have said. It is not the ample articulation of the lips, but the inward chastening of the heart which best expresses the deep inner need. A groan, a sigh, a tear, has greater worth, than all the verbiage of a lexicon.

Provision has been made by God to meet that need. A Saviour, and a sacrifice for sin stand ready to move at its call. No cry, however short, can escape the human heart, for relief from sin that will go unheard, or unanswered. Thank God for the sinner's right to speed his penitential call right through to the courts of heaven, not because it is a galaxy of words, but because it is true prayer, and voices his intense needs.

Most Christians may look back to that supreme moment at the penitential crisis of their lives, and call to mind the great relief when contact with the Lamb of God was made. No spate of words, but precious blood, gave solace in the deep distress.

The wordless prayer of which we write lies further on the Christian's path. It is the token of maturity and rich growth in grace. It tells of days and years of God's creative work, in tempering and refining the metal of the inner self. It speaks of yearnings and desires, God-fostered, which reach up and out for holiness and truth. It shows developed sensitivity to the "Absolutes"—to utter sinfulness, and complete sinlessness. It has grown to hate the one, and love the other. Loathsome sin is now more loathsome still; and holiness has become an increasing delight.

What cause can seal the lips and tie the tongues of Christian men so far grown in grace? Ought they not, in weal or woe to find cause enough to pray and praise with heart and voice? Why should the lips of saints at any time fail to voice forth their prayer or praise?

It is the strong flow of the deeper tides within the heart that seals the lips. At times when the good gifts of God have been profuse, and ample store of grace has stirred the depths, the very volume of the gratitude may be too deep to find expression other than in the words "thank God, thank God, thank God." The repetition of the two short words may wing more praise to heaven than strings of loftier sounds. And God will know how much of gratitude is meant.

More frequently the deep tides flow when other causes operate. More often it is sin and sorrow which stirs the depths. We may have listened to creation's groans; we may have felt our lack of strength to ease or aid when suffering called, and this, re-acting back upon our own tense heart, has loosed wild notions and desires too deep for words.

This is the sphere the Apostle's words explores. Creation groans in travail to be set free. Creation is bound in chains of vanity—vain hopes, vain works and vain pursuits. The grace-grown Christian views the havoc of human sin where countless thousands mourn. He sees aggression down the years ride roughshod and unchecked, leaving behind it trails of blood and broken hearts. He sees the profit-snatcher take his filthy gains while starving children cry for bread. He sees the sanctity of wedlock and home dishonoured; he sees wealth squandered in gambling and drink; he sees the bloom of health fade as disease saps the strength. He sees the whole world treading its dead-end trails. He sees pompous little men rise up to power only to fall again.

He sees men barter life for some small wealth, some little pedestal, some tawdry name, and as, for ages, fathers did, so children do to-day. The dictum of the ancient sage upon their dead-end pursuits was that it was vanity through and through. "*Vanity of vanities, it is all vanity.*" And vanity it is and was from morn till night, for rich and poor, while ages come and go.

No child of God can see the naked world and be unmoved. He knows the whole creation had been committed to this vain life, by Divine intent. He knows creation groans in pain and anguish day and night, but never finds relief. He witnesses the frustration and futility of universal life, and knows that no man can emancipate himself, much less his kin. He knows relief will come some day—some better day—it is to-day that often weighs upon his heart! He knows that he and other sympathetic souls must stand idly by, and only watch as wild humanity grows wilder still. He hears their deep universal groan, and as they groan, he does the same. "Oh, if only something could be done! If only men could hear and turn away from sin" he groans within himself. Men, without hope, groan and groan again—he cannot help but do the same, though hope lives in his breast. ". . . *not only they but ourselves also . . . groan within ourselves waiting for . . . redemption*" (Rom. 8. 23).

No man with the "Christ" spirit in his heart can hear this universal groan without groaning too. And when that spirit is of ample growth the groaning will be ample too. His growth in Christ will be the measure of his sympathy for a world chain-bound in sin. The pity for Jerusalem which swept the Master's heart was a like pity that will oft weep over a world, self-doomed to death. The Christian who is much grown like Jesus will be much touched, like Him, with human woe.

It thus befalls that every convulsive pang this sad world feels sends sympathetic pain into the Christ-like heart, and wrings from it both sigh and groan. But the Christian sufferer is helped by hope—that blessed hope—that deliverance one day will come. Hope salves the chafed spirit and helps him wait with more patience for that better day. Expectation relieves the acute tension of the strain, but expectation is not redemption nor release. That which we long for has not come. It is as yet but a sure hope. At most, this hope brings hearts-ease to the aching heart, but leaves it still to groan. But we have other help at hand.

"Likewise the spirit ALSO helps" us in our lack of strength. It helps the Christian when his heart is over-wrought with sympathy and pain, too full for words or speech. It helps him when some acute spasm of world distress wrings from him

sigh or groan. And when that sigh or groan escapes, He who has trod this path before, accepts it as a prayer. The Searching Eye will read the anguish of his soul, and understands the language of these unworded sighs. He knows the sorrows of the world more deeply than His followers do. He tasted their sorrows to the point of death in order to become a sympathetic High Priest. He came to earth to cause men to know that God was sympathetic too. From the beginning of sin's awful reign God's sympathy for sinful men began to operate. The Spirit of compassion was manifest to Mother Eve. This Spirit of compassion was the Spirit of the Oathbound Covenant. That same Spirit of the Covenant under-lay the gift, by God, of His dear Son. And it was the compassion expressed in that Covenant which took Jesus to His death. It is the self-same spirit of that Covenant, the desire to bless, that throbs in every Christian heart. This is the Holy Spirit of the Living God—it is the Spirit of His Christ. It dwelt without measure in our blessed Lord. It dwells in varying degree in every other child of God. It emanates from God—it enters into us. From this almighty fund of sympathy comes our help in time of need. It helps us when we hear the world's deep groans. It helps us when we see its sinful plight. It smooths for us the difficulty of "desiring to bless," while yet we are too weak to bless. It "helpeth our infirmities"—our "*asthenia*"—our lack of strength, our inability, when "work of hand" is unequal to "desire of heart". This weakness it is that makes us groan, and say with warmth, beneath our breath "If only men would turn from sin! If only I knew what to do—or how to help them in their sore distress." At such a time, in such a state, "*We know not what we should pray for as we ought.*" We yearn to bless, but we are too inexperienced to bless. We desire to bless, but we have no power with which to bless.

The pent-up sigh, the unspoken groan tells what we would do, if hand and heart could work in step. And from its lofty throne above, the eye that searches every heart takes note of what it sees, and He who has the power to bless looks down and says, "yes, that child of Mine desires to bless; he has in him the spirit of My purposes. He only needs to bide My time. I see at times the tension of his soul—I hear again the groaning of his heart. This spirit of compassion is what I want to see. This anguish of soul endears him to My heart. It compensates for all his weaknesses."

Thus the falling tear, the aching heart, the stifled groan, what time he sees the world's distress, becomes a prayer of greater worth than ten thousand

ostentatious words. The spirit of compassion thus evinced, wins the Divine acceptance for the child—it makes intercession for His saints in accordance with His Will.

The world around us is in dire distress to-day. Its sorrows deepen like a flood. The sluice gates of evil are unlocked. The universal groan goes up from all the earth, louder and deeper each passing day. "Who will break our bonds? Who will smash our chains? Who can set us free?" . . . What child of God can hear this cry and not feel his pulse-beat quicken, or his heart-strings quiver? What "hopeful" saint can see the "hopeless" mass, and not yearn for its release.

This is a day, beloved in the Lord, when growth in Christ-likeness may go on apace. The "Image

of His Son" may be wrought within at speed. The circumstances are full ripe for the Spirit of God—the Spirit of His Covenant—to work deep and strong. Compassion for a sinful world can transform the wakeful heart. He who understands what is "on foot" may co-operate with God. The compassion of every soul should be white-hot, then the hammer of discipline and anvil of sorrow will do the rest. May God speed this work of Grace, for the day of Redemption draweth nigh.

When hearts are fraught with pain as humanity mourns, there may rise a prayer for God's Kingdom days to come, without the breathing of a word, and as we pray thus for God's Will to prevail, the depth of sigh or groan will be the measure of our transformation into the Image of God's dear Son.

## THE NEW EARTH

Scripture does not direct our glance further than our earth, with its surrounding atmosphere. On this it points to a change, in connection with which it is, for us at least, impossible to think only of the destruction of Jerusalem or of similar events. But at the same time it leads us to expect a new heaven and a new earth, which shall be not merely the opposite, but, so to speak, the consequence, the result, of the great process of purifying and dissolution; the noblest gold, brought forth from the most terrible furnace-heat.

It is especially to the reverse side of the picture that the eye of faith directs itself with unspeakable longing. God destroys only to create something more beautiful; and upon the ruins of the sentenced and purified world His hand raises up another, which, not only for the cleansed vision of its new inhabitants, but in a reality as yet to us unknown, shall bloom in unfading splendour. If we mistake not, the last page of the Apocalypse, especially, opens up to us the prospect of a new order of things in which the old boundary line between heaven and earth is effaced, and this latter, now inhabited by perfectly redeemed ones, itself has become part of heaven. It is certainly a proof of how even the science of faith does not always teach its student modesty, when we consider how many pages have been devoted by some in earlier times, to all kinds of questions, e.g., as to the animal and vegetable kingdom, the light and food, etc., of the new world, with regard to which even no prophet or apostle has ventured to give us any indication. But if this folly is blameworthy, not less so is that of a modern, self styled science, which cannot advance beyond the old doubt as to the reality of

things unseen and yet future. Deeper reflection must render the opposite in the highest degree probable, namely, that as Nature has shared in the fall of man, so shall it share in his future glorifying; and teach us to feel not only the beauty, but also the truth of the saying of Luther. "*The earth as yet wears its working garb; then the earth also will put on its paschal and pentecostal raiment.*" In this new creation we at the same time behold the theatre of the perfect blessedness of which we have earlier spoken, and of which we in vain endeavour to shadow forth the dazzling splendour. To the question, however, what place the glorified King of the Kingdom of God will occupy in this boundless circle, the answer cannot be difficult. His kingly dominion comes to an end in the sense in which we have already spoken, but everlastingly does He remain the first-born among many brethren; their guide to the living fountains of water.

J. J. Vanosterzee.

The great secret which keeps the heart of the consecrated child at rest is to realise that a full surrender of his heart to God, links him to both the centre and the circumference of Heaven and Earth, and to the Almighty Energy which maintains and sustains them.

\* \* \* \*

Of intercourse we have enough, perhaps too much. Of communion, how very little. So little of Christ's offering is comprehended, that when believers meet they have scarcely anything of Him to share.

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