



BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

Vol. 51, No. 1

JAN./FEB. 1974

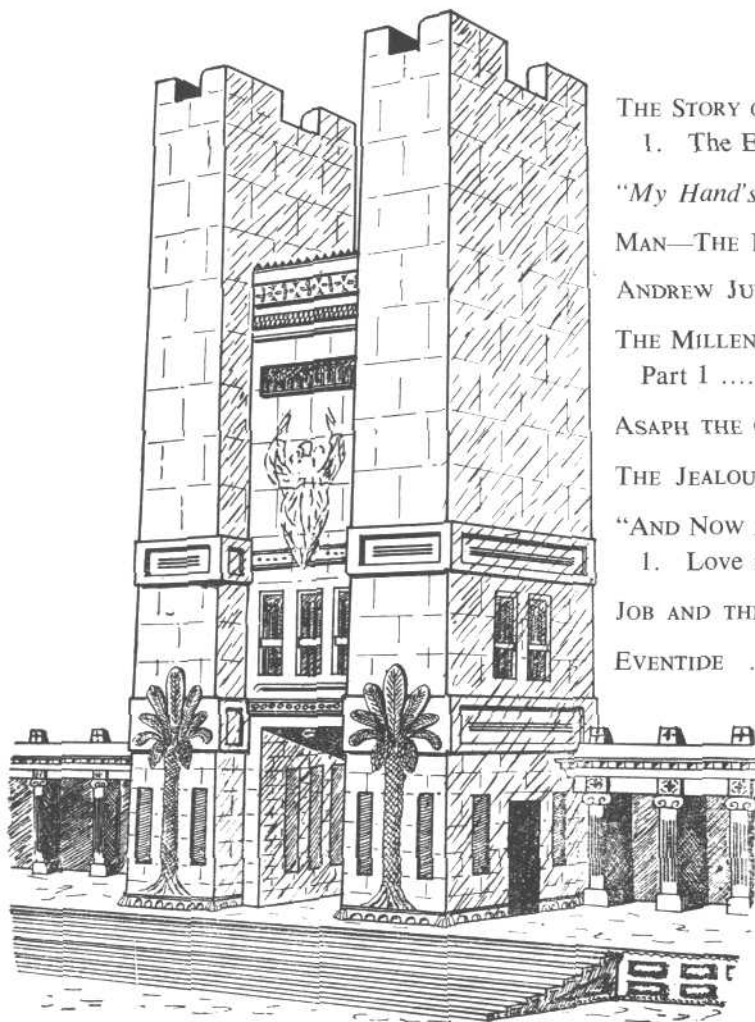
Thou, therefore, endure
hardness as a good
soldier of Jesus Christ

Published January 1st

Next issue March 1st

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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.*

*This Journal is sent free
of charge to all who are
genuinely interested, on
request renewable annually
and is supported by the
voluntary gifts of its readers*

Published by
Bible Fellowship Union
11 Lyncroft Gardens, Hounslow,
Middlesex, England

Bible Study Monthly

FOUNDED 1924

This Journal is published for the promotion of Bible knowledge and the furtherance of the Gospel of the Kingdom, its circulation being largely among independent Bible fellowships and study circles which share in varying degree the viewpoint of the Divine

Plan herein set forth. It is supported entirely by the gifts of well-wishers, and all such gifts are sincerely appreciated. Enquiries are welcomed, and all who are genuinely interested may have the journal sent regularly upon request.

Communications and donations to Bible Fellowship Union, 11 Lyncroft Gardens, Hounslow, Middlesex, England.
Secretary & Treasurer: B. G. DUMONT (Hounslow) Editorial & Publishing: A. O. HUDSON (Welling)

NOTICES

New features for 1974

Twenty years ago we published a series dealing with the Biblical story of Noah's Flood. The circulation, in some sections of the Christian Press since then, of several accounts of various attempts by interested parties to explore Mount Ararat in Turkey in the hope of finding what may remain of the Ark has prompted a revision and amplification of that series and the first instalment appears in this issue.

A regular feature during 1966-67 was that entitled "Eventide", a quiet reflection intended particularly for the more elderly of our readers. This feature is being

resumed during this year and we trust will be appreciated as it was before.

Literature

Two booklets appearing on the current literature list, viz., "Obadiah the Messenger of Judgment" and "The Tower of Babel" are regrettably out of print and for the immediate future at least are no longer available.

The following new pamphlets are available on request: No. 40—The Gifts of the Spirit, and No. 41—Man, the Image of God. No. 40 appeared in the Nov.-Dec. issue and No. 41 will be found in the present issue.

Concerning Ourselves

With this year the "Monthly" enters upon its second half-century. Fifty years ago, in the year 1924, the magazine was launched in a quite modest manner with a circulation reaching only a limited circle. Quite some years passed before it began to attain either its present size or extent of readership. The few comprising the little band which steered it through the first pioneering years have mostly long since gone to be with the Lord, and probably there are not many present readers who remember them or even know their names—but the journal continues to find its place, still very modest compared with some Christian magazines but holding nevertheless to one principle not found so often in this modern cost-conscious world, the old traditional one of "without money and without price". There is nothing to pay and it is sent freely to all who appreciate its contents and message; it depends for continued production upon the spontaneous free-will gifts received from those who feel led and able to contribute. At this the beginning of a New Year very sincere appreciation and acknowledgment is extended to all such. It is in the confidence engendered by such friendly co-operation that we go forward into 1974.

The world is fast running down to its end. The

reins of government and of control are slipping from the hands of men. Human society has become so complex that it is becoming unmanageable. Men's hearts are failing them for fear and for looking to the things that are coming upon the earth, even as Jesus foretold two thousand years ago. But the outlook is not really dark. Behind the cloud is the silver lining. The signs of the pre-millennial Advent of our Lord Christ are increasingly manifest; there is abundant evidence to the thinking Christian that we are living in the "Days of the Son of Man", that period which immediately precedes his revelation to all mankind in the power of his Messianic reign. The renaissance of Israel, "kingdom of this world" though it be at present, is an outward sign too patent to ignore. No man can be saved and attain his destiny without faith in Christ, but no man will be condemned without a full opportunity of knowledge so to believe and be converted. In the meantime the Bible is the book of daily life, adequate for instruction in the things of God and a sure guide to the working of God in history, past and future. These things form part of the message of the "Monthly"; in the inspiration of this belief, if the Lord will, it shall continue.

THE STORY OF THE DELUGE

I. The End of a World

"In the sixteenth or seventeenth century from the Creation, there happen'd a most extraordinary and prodigious Deluge of waters upon the Earth".

So wrote the learned William Whiston, contemporary of Sir Isaac Newton and a famed scholar of his day, in his book *"New Theory of the Earth"* published in 1696. The celebrated professor had assembled a great deal of argument, scientific and theological, to describe exactly what took place when that great catastrophe came upon the world. The passage of three centuries during which scientific knowledge has increased a thousandfold has falsified some of those arguments, and a few of the alleged supporting facts are amusing rather than convincing, but the basis of the good Doctor's thesis remains stable and the historicity of such a great Flood in the lands of the Bible—in fact of several such floods—has been established beyond dispute by the work of archaeologists in our own day. William Whiston's alleged facts may not have been always beyond question, but his faith was solidly founded.

Of all the stories, histories and traditions that have captivated the minds of men, that of the great Flood which once destroyed the world seems to hold first place. It has found its way in one form or another into practically every nation and tribe on the face of the earth and references to the great catastrophe appear in the annals of nearly every generation from the present back to the beginning of history. Christian, Jew and Moslem, pagan peoples and savage peoples, all have their particular versions of the event, agreeing in the main and differing only in detail. Ancient civilisations of the Mediterranean immortalised the story in poem and song; colonies of aboriginals in South America and India kept alive the legend by oral repetition from father to son. The Jews enshrined the story in the Bible; the Moslems in the Koran. One of the oldest literary compositions the world possesses, the *"Epic of Gilgamesh"* written before the days of Abraham, preserves the Sumerian version whilst at the other end of history the daily newspapers of the past few years have recorded the efforts—and failures—of various expeditions which have set out from Britain, America and France to explore Mount Ararat in hope of finding the remains of the Ark. And the fact that this latest—and somewhat belated—enthusiasm for the verification of Scriptural truth, coinciding as it does with a certain tendency in the political world to surround Russia with observation posts, has drawn from the Soviet Government the not un-

reasonable comment that the alleged search is but a cover for other and vastly different activities (Ararat is on the Russian frontier) makes no difference to the editorial view that such expeditions constitute "news" in the newspaper sense of the term.

Any attempt to tell the story of the Flood, therefore, must involve references to a great many historians and writers, from the unnamed scribe who first penned the story which appears in the Book of Genesis, and in a different form in the *"Epic of Gilgamesh"*, to the equally anonymous journalists and others of our own generation busily writing up vivid accounts of men of the nineteenth or twentieth centuries who claim to have climbed—or flown over—the celebrated mountain and seen with their own eyes the ruins of the famous vessel. It must take into account the incidental evidences afforded by the discoveries of archaeologists and the investigations of geologists, for the rocks of the earth and relics of past ages have some testimony to offer. Likewise the studies of astronomers and geographers have much to contribute when it comes to considering the natural causes of the catastrophe; the fact that it was a visitation of Divine judgment upon a sinful world makes it no less true that the Flood was a stupendous cataclysm of Nature.

First and foremost to the Christian, however, comes the moral and dispensational teaching of the story. This is the first example in the history of humanity of what may be termed collective judgment—the execution of a judicial sentence upon a whole community which had transgressed the law. As such it was an assurance of the active intervention of God in human affairs when the state of society demands such intervention. The Flood was the end of a world, the wiping of the slate clean and the making of a fresh start. We in this day live in just such another period, another climax of human wickedness and rebellion which is to bring down fresh Divine judgment, another end of a world, and another fresh start. The story is of surpassing interest to us to-day on that account, for it exemplifies the principles upon which Divine judgment operates, and it shows above all things that with the onset of judgment there comes also a means of deliverance through repentance. The men of the antediluvian world were not left without warning of what was to come; any who wished could have been saved in the same way as was Noah and his family. It need not be assumed that the patriarch was the

only man of his generation who knew how to build a boat. The exercise of belief in the message which was being proclaimed and the necessary activity in harmony therewith would have enabled many more—in fact “whosoever would”—to be saved. But no one believed, save the one family, and so they all perished.

Our Lord drew an analogy between these aspects of the event and the happenings that would characterise the time of his Second Advent and Messianic kingdom. *“As the days of Noah were”* He said *“so shall also the presence of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the presence of the Son of man be”* (Matt. 24. 37-39).

The force of the simile resides in the indifference and heedlessness of men in face of the coming catastrophic ending to a world order. The antediluvians did not believe that anything would occur to disrupt or bring to an end their institutions and their way of life; to them it was a truism that “all things continue as from the beginning of creation”. When the crisis came upon them they were unprepared for it. So it is, said Jesus, when this present world order, built upon and supported by human greed and selfishness, comes to its inevitable end at the time He returns to take his power and rule the nations for their blessing and uplift and for the elimination of sin. Men do not believe and will not believe that this present international system—social, commercial, political, everything—is destined for a destruction every bit as sweeping and final as that which in the story came upon the world of Noah’s day. When one reflects how closely the condition of the world to-day, both as respects the moral state of its peoples and the polluted state of the planet itself, points to an imminent such crisis it is difficult to deny the logic of the argument that here is one very convincing evidence that we are now living in the “Days of the Son of man”, the early stages of his Advent, unperceived by and unknown to the heedless majority but realised by those who, like Noah of old, have walked and are walking with God. So the judgment must inevitably come upon the world, even although in the Divine purpose there is blessing to follow.

The promise of the future is associated with all this. After the storm comes the rainbow. For the first time in the Bible there appears the Divine guarantee of perpetuity for the earth and its inhabitants. God makes a covenant, not only with man, but with the lower creation as well, affirming his intention that no more would the earth be physically depopulated as it had been then. The

earth is to be one scene of Divine promises, and for the fulfilment of those promises it is essential that the earth should remain. The second progenitor of the human race will succeed where the first one failed. In that we have a clear anticipation of the inspired words of St. Paul three thousand years later, when he declared that although by the First Adam came death, by the Second Adam there will come the resurrection from the dead and restoration to the full glory of God. In the Sumerian legend, which is a considerably distorted version of the original story from which the Genesis account is also drawn, Noah and his wife were endowed with immortality and taken to dwell with the gods in the Sumerian Paradise “at the mouth of the rivers” in the Persian Gulf land afterwards known as Dilmun. To this day worship is offered at the shrine of Al Khidr on the sacred island of Failaka in the Persian Gulf; the identity of Al Khidr can be traced back through centuries of Moslem and then pagan legend to Atra-Khasis the Sumerian equivalent of Noah—one of the most striking examples of the persistence of legend the world can show. That translation of the central figure in the story to the land of the gods may, after all, have been but an early poet’s realisation of the fact that only by means of the cleansing effected by the Flood could men hope to obtain the exalted status of sons of God and enter at last into the everlasting inheritance which God has prepared.

To this day the lands of ancient Sumeria, Babylon and Assyria, the modern Iraq, abound with legends of the great Flood, handed down from father to son through the generations. Even were there no written records surviving and no Bible account, the story could be reconstructed in detail. The ruins of Shuruppak, the city where Noah is supposed to have lived before the Flood, are still there. The place where he built the Ark and the nearby village where his wife was born are pointed out to the credulous. The alleged course of the Ark during the hundred and fifty days that it was afloat can be plotted from the various stories, including the near escape from shipwreck on Mount Sinjar in western Iraq and its final landing among the mountains of Kurdistan. To the extent that such traditions help to fill up gaps in the Bible narrative they can be viewed with a certain amount of interest, for some of them at least may well possess a basis of truth, surviving their telling and re-telling through the ages. We need not think that men have remembered nothing whatever of the Flood save the details that are recorded in the Book of Genesis.

Modern research has established that there were at least three devastating floods in the Euphrates plain during the Third millennium before Christ

and each of these caused a local break in the culture of the region. Forty years ago Sir Leonard Woolley's discovery of the greatest of these during his excavations at Ur of the Chaldees led to its identification with the Flood story of the Bible but this is now generally discounted. The stratum of clay which Woolley assumed to have been deposited by the Flood of Noah's day was laid down at about the time Sumerian recorded history, as distinct from myth, begins, when Kish, the first city-state of the Sumerians, came into being, and there is known to have been a considerable time span of some centuries prior to that date during which the Sumerian civilisation was evolving. True to this, Woolley and others found evidence of such earlier peoples beneath the clay layers which betokened these various local floods. Below these evidences lies a thick deposit of black mud and stones bearing on its upper surface pottery objects lying as if swept together by a rush of waters and this deposit is found at various places all over the plain. Here are the signs of the earliest and greatest flood of all and this, in all probability, is the one to which the Bible story refers.

The story as it appears in the Book of Genesis has to be viewed against the background of its authorship and date. The theory so fashionable half a century ago that this and other historical narratives in Genesis were first written up by priests and scribes in the days of the Hebrew monarchy and based upon the folklore and traditions of their own days is no longer accepted by serious students. There is no doubt that the five books accredited to Moses were actually from his hand. It is also clear that so far as history before his own time is concerned he had access to earlier documents and records. The first eleven chapters of Genesis, which include the story of the Great Flood, contain so many words and terms of Sumerian origin that it is obvious that Moses transcribed, probably without alteration, Sumerian records of a much earlier date. The geographical indications in these chapters, although relatively few, depict Sumerian geography and place names of the First Dynasty of Kish, prior to the introduction of Sumerian cuneiform, which indicates that these records must have been originally composed in the archaic pictographic script which preceded cuneiform and of which very few examples have as yet been discovered. Expressed in Biblical terms this would have been in the days of Eber and Peleg the descendants of Shem (Gen. 10.25) and it may not be too far-fetched to speculate that these two patriarchs, ancestors of Abraham, may have been responsible for the completion of this record or at least the editing of previous records and up-dating to their own time. What is of interest is the fact that the internal evidence of these early

Genesis chapters does indicate that they existed at least three centuries before the Sumerian account of the Flood first saw the light. That disposes of the too frequent assertion that the Bible story of the Flood was taken from the Sumerian account. In point of fact, both accounts probably came from a common source, but the Sumerian account has been considerably distorted by the introduction of the many gods and goddesses of Sumerian mythology. Nevertheless, since so much of Sumerian records on the tablets has in these latter days proven to be remarkably accurate it is not wise to dismiss the Sumerian version as valueless; to some extent its testimony can be admitted and the fact that the Sumerians did preserve, quite independently of the Bible, their own version of an event which they claimed happened in their own country in historic time is an additional confirmation of the veracity of the Bible account.

The story of the Flood and its relation to the overruling purposes of God, the Divine Plan, can only be understood when something of the condition of the antediluvian world is appreciated. The record says "*and God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*" (Gen. 6.5.) It is difficult fully to comprehend the significance of that statement. This was not just a hasty or prejudiced generalisation such as, from time to time, is issued by some social or ecclesiastical authority. This was a considered and dispassionate statement of the situation. Humanity had degenerated to a level far below that which exists in the worst of our decaying civilisations of to-day. The unanimous verdict of antiquity was that the world had never at any other time known a wickedness so great as that which existed just before the Flood. The Bible, rightly understood, reveals the prime cause of that wickedness. It is left to the apocryphal books, notably the "*Book of Enoch*" to dwell in detail upon the conditions of that dying age and the manner in which judgment came, but the Bible does, in two verses, indicate quite positively that the incidence of sin upon the earth was tremendously accelerated and intensified by a rebellion among the angels.

The plain implication of Gen. 6.1 is so strange to the thought of modern times that theologians and scholars have resorted to all kinds of expedients to find alternative explanations. This is not the place to go into this particular matter in detail, but it may be said in order to present a picture of the world as it was before the Flood that the "sons of God" of Gen. 6.1 denote the angels, beings of the celestial world. This was the fixed understanding of the Israelites throughout their history and the belief of the early Christian Church. A number of those angels rebelled against God and left their

own high estate, their own order of being, to take upon themselves human flesh and form, so quitting the celestial world for the terrestrial, and in that condition took the daughters of men as wives. Their purpose in so doing is not clearly stated; it has been inferred that their object was the infusion of new, vital angelic life into the dying human race in an attempt to defeat the execution of the Divine sentence upon sin passed on the race at the beginning. If so, the purpose was frustrated; perhaps it was fundamentally impossible. The offspring of these unnatural unions, only half-human, were pictured in later legend as brutish monsters that roamed the earth ravaging, killing and devouring until men went in terror of them. What kind of creatures they were we do not certainly know; the implication in Genesis and in the apocryphal Book of Enoch is that they were wiped out by the Flood, and the New Testament rounds off the story by declaring that their angelic-become-demonic fathers were thereafter restrained, as St. Jude puts it "in everlasting chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day", (Jude 6; 2 Pet. 2.4; 1 Pet. 1.19-20).

So ended the first great Age of human history. It opened in the serene loveliness of Eden, without a whisper or shadow of sin to mar the happiness of the first human beings to walk this earth. It closed, something like two thousand years later, a dark, noisome cesspit of all iniquity, an order of society fit only for destruction. Men had been

given every power to make of the primitive earth a beautiful and luxuriant habitation in which they could live endless lives given over to continued progress in the knowledge and understanding of God and his ways. Instead, they chose, and willingly chose, the way of sin, even to the extent of allying themselves with those who in the heavens had also rebelled against God. Too late, they discovered the unnameable horrors to which that alliance had subjected them, and, in the picturesque language of the author of the First Book of Enoch, "*the earth laid accusation against the lawless ones . . . and as men perished, they cried, and their cry went up to heaven.*"

But the consequences of evil are not so lightly to be mitigated. God in his mercy heard that cry and sent deliverance—but the deliverance was what we in our day would call "long-term". The wisdom of God declared that the mere removal of that fearful oppression would not of itself effect complete reformation. Men groaned under the tyranny but they themselves were still wedded to sin. Only the supreme experience of death, coupled later on with the coming of that day when all men are to stand before the Great White Throne to hear the conditions of eternal life or eternal death rehearsed in their ears, can effect that. The rot had gone too far; there had to be a clean sweep and a fresh start.

So God sent the Flood.

To be continued.

MY HAND'S IN THINE

*This is Thy will for me, because I prayed
 "Thy will, not mine."
 Should I then tremble and be sore afraid?
 My hand's in Thine.
 On this path I must go;
 It is the best for me,
 What though I meet the foe?
 My hand's in Thine.
 What though I e'en should fall and be o'er-
 powered
 And seeming helpless be?
 Thy promises full-flowered
 Enough for me.
 And so I humbly pray
 "Thy will not mine"
 My weakness is Thy strength,
 My hand's in Thine.*

B.P.C.

The Church is to-day defending the Christ of the first century, instead of living the present Christ who is now praying for her. The historical argument will never cease to have its own proper value; documentary evidence must always be valuable in the very highest courts of Christian tribunal; but

what we, the rank and file, have to do is this, to remember that Christ is but a day old as well as a thousand years old. Born *to-day*, as well as twenty centuries since; living *to-day*, as certainly as He lived when He walked in Jewry and did miracles in Galilee.

Dr. Parker.

MAN — THE IMAGE OF GOD

Man is a terrestrial creature physically adapted in a very marvellous manner to life upon this earth. He has physical needs such as air, water and food in the same way as do other terrestrial creatures—animals, birds, fishes—but differs profoundly from all such in that he possesses the quality of intelligence, mental faculties of retrospection and anticipation, ability to comprehend abstract ideas, and above all things the consciousness of moral responsibility to himself, to his fellows, and to the source of his being. Only man can realise that he owes life and conscious existence to a source outside of and greater than himself, and, in his saner moments, one that itself must possess intelligence and power infinitely beyond man's own capacity to understand.

That Intelligence and Power is God, and all life comes from and is sustained by God. No matter how or in what way the first human beings appeared upon the earth or how the marvellous complexity which is a human body was fashioned and began to function, the Mind and Power which designed and produced it all is God. Man's powers and abilities, physical and mental, were bestowed by God; whatever there may be of purpose and potentiality for the infinite future in his creation was formulated in the mind of God. And the attainment of such development and destiny as is intended for man can only be by means of willing co-operation and communion with God.

So the Bible commences by describing the creation of man by God in his own image and likeness.

"And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness . . . So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him" (Gen. 1. 26,27). Men today are very far from the image and likeness of God but Genesis is not talking about the present, it is talking about the beginning. Man as he came from the Creator was perfect and sinless, morally, mentally and physically. He was in harmony and communion with God and in this state capable of life indefinitely in the environment in which God had placed him. It is in these senses that man was in the image and likeness of God. Unlike the animal creation around him, he possessed attributes and qualities which enabled him to commune with God and intelligently to understand and co-operate in God's purpose for him. As God is supreme over all creation, so man was made to be supreme over his own habitat, the earth, to control and develop and administer it in line with the overruling Divine

purpose. Because man is limited and adapted to this terrestrial environment within the bounds of space and time, and God is necessarily outside all space and time, it cannot be that the image and likeness denoted physical similarity; God cannot be defined in terms of the human form. Likewise it must not be thought that man is a physical replica, so to speak, of the angels in heaven; St. Paul says in 1 Cor. 15 that as we, human beings, now bear the image of the earthly, so we shall bear the image of the heavenly—a different image, yet still in the image and likeness of God. If it should be, in the progress of the Divine Plan, that other created beings are to know conscious life in other material worlds, they may differ greatly from man in physical appearance but will still be in the image and likeness of God. Their qualities of mind and intellect, their capacity for knowing and serving God, will be the same as for man, and it is in this that the image and likeness consists.

The more practical details of man's constitution are alluded to in Gen. 2.7. *"The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul."* Modern translations like to express this a "living being" or "living creature"; that is the more accurate rendering of the word, since "soul", the mediaeval term for a breathing creature, has acquired a theological significance which obscures the true meaning. "*Nephesh*" denotes any living and breathing creature, whether man, animal, bird or fish; it is applied to all these in various parts of the Old Testament. The word rendered "dust" applies to any fine particles derived from the earth and is used for dust, ashes, earth, powder and so on. In no better fashion could the narrative define the constitution of a human body from the same atomic elements of which the earth is composed—and in fact the whole material universe as well. A human body consists practically entirely of four chemical elements—oxygen, carbon, hydrogen and nitrogen—with minor traces of other substances. All these elements are common in the sea, the air, the ground and the vegetation around us; at death the body disintegrates and all its constituent elements return to the common stock, to be used up time and time again in other ways as the ages proceed. So God is depicted as saying to the first man after his rebellion and fall from the original high and living estate *"... till thou return unto the ground: for out of it thou wast taken. For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return"* (Gen. 4. 19). The

property which preserves man from such dissolution is possession of the "breath of life", the power or quality of life which is God-given. If that power be withdrawn then death is the outcome. "If he set his heart upon man" said Elihu the philosopher in Job. 34.15 "if he gather to himself his spirit and his breath, all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust." In this the Bible makes no distinction between man and the animal creation; says the Psalmist, speaking of the latter (Psa. 104.29). "Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled; thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust." In both cases, animals and man, death is the end of life. When there is no longer any material organism by which the indwelling consciousness can sense and communicate with its environment, that consciousness ceases and the creature is dead.

This of course is the principle lying behind the Genesis story of the rebellion in Eden. "In the day that thou eatest thereof" was the admonition "thou shalt surely die." Disloyalty to God severed the bond of union; the essential life-line of life from God could only continue under its own momentum, as it were, until the progressive degeneration of the physical frame culminated in the extinction of life and the failing body returned to its dust. This is why the Scriptures say that the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6.23). It is just not possible for any morally intelligent creature to continue in life indefinitely whilst in a state of disharmony and non-union with God, so that death is the inevitable outcome.

But God does not create only to destroy. He who gave life once can give it again, life that can continue into eternity if the one thus blessed comes into a state of harmony and communion with God. That is why the Bible insists that there can be, and is, life for man even following death, that it will be achieved by means of a resurrection from the dead. True, the old body will have long since been resolved into its constituent elements and vanished for ever, but the One who created that original body from the dust can just as easily create a new one from the earth which is the mother of us all. The mystery of character, of stored memory, of identity, is a mystery still to man but no mystery to God. Whatever there was of the real man, the real consciousness which came to an end when the body went to its dust can be re-incorporated in the new body which St. Paul says God will give, to each his own kind, in the due time of his unfolding purpose.

Here the findings of physical science and those of Divine revelation must part company. Biologists know exactly how the body is put together and what conditions are necessary for its orderly con-

tinuance as a living being. They do not know from whence life comes or what it really is but they are trying hard to find reasons for believing that in the exceedingly remote past the action of ultraviolet light upon certain molecules of matter resulted in the spontaneous formation of minute cells which fused together and began to grow and became conscious of their own existence and increased and discovered the possibility of reproducing themselves and so evolved into creatures which could crawl or swim and in so doing developed the ability to see and hear and feel the environment around them and after the lapse of many millions of millions of years were sufficiently specialised to stand up on two feet and look around and say "I am a man." But although this is the favourite—and popular—expression of the manner in which life began on earth very few serious researchers really believe it was as simple as that; they look still for some exterior source from which life was injected into those primitive cells. While some think there are "seeds of life" floating through the whole universe and some of them settled on earth and so started it all—this is called "panspermia", others suggest that perhaps life is as much a fundamental characteristic of the universe as is matter and energy so that it is bound to appear on our earth. Almost always it is tacitly admitted that the origin of life—as distinct from the appearance of living creatures—is a mystery outside the scope of the physical sciences and therefore unexplainable by man, which is at least a good basis for concluding that it must be accepted as an attribute of God and an element of Divine revelation.

Divine revelation, of course, can neither be confirmed, tested or even understood by physical science; it lies in a different field and deals with matters incapable of perception by man-made instruments. Hence the Bible is the only authority—and an adequate authority—for those things which concern man after the death of the body, the point at which human science can see no farther.

The Scriptural teaching on resurrection involves other worlds in addition to this. It has been realised for quite a few generations now that there are many other worlds like our own in this universe we know, and for some time there has been speculation as to whether some of these could be inhabited, perhaps by men like ourselves, perhaps considerably unlike. Now it is beginning to be accepted, with the development of knowledge, that there could be worlds and spheres of life so fundamentally different from ourselves that we could not have any means of contact or communication with them or even know they were there. This is not the place to enlarge

upon this but many a scientific dissertation has been given on this subject in recent years. The Scriptures, however, have been saying the same thing for thousands of years past. There are such abodes of life incapable of our perception in that part of creation the Scriptures call the celestial; there are such beings with whom we have no common ground of contact who in the Scriptures are denominated the angels. But that distant and unknown order of things is brought into intimate contact with man by means of the resurrection.

"God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him" says St. Paul in 1 Cor. 15, referring to the resurrection. In elaboration of this theme he talks both in this chapter and in 2 Cor. 5 about the existence of two spheres of life, the terrestrial and the celestial, each having its own characteristic environment, each its own kind of life forms, and in each of which those therein living possessing specialised bodies in which they correspond and communicate with their own environment. "*There are*" he says "*celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies, spiritual bodies and natural (earthly) bodies*" and each is adapted to life in its own sphere. The Christian hope, supported by the New Testament, is for future and everlasting life "in heaven" after death. Expressed in practical language, this means that at the Resurrection the one whose life on earth has come to an end and whose earthly body has been scattered to the winds is now, by Divine power, awakened to a new life in a new world, in a new body having characteristics fitted to that world. Of the nature of such a world we know nothing and can surmise little for it lies quite outside the range of our human experience and powers of conception or imagination. We are justified in thinking that it is in every respect a transcendently more wonderful world than ours, one in which powers and abilities are immeasurably enlarged, if only because in Psa. 8. 4 we are told that when God made man he made him inferior to the angels even though perfect in man's own sphere. The Apostle Paul makes it clear that because it is impossible for a flesh and blood being of this earth to enter that world as such, it is necessary that all who are "in Christ," in hope of entry therein, that they be "changed," as he puts it, to the celestial state of being. In 2 Cor. 5 he likens this change of body from terrestrial to celestial to the abandoning of earthly clothing and dwelling-house for their heavenly equivalents.

So, in such case, the man who started life as an earthly being, adapted and limited to this earth, enters a higher and eternal state as a heavenly being, with a new body of, to us, unimaginable characteristics but still the same individual, with the memory of past experiences and the qualities of mind and character which stamp him as the

same individual and preserve his consciousness of the fact. The body changes, the environment changes, but life goes on. The great difference is that for all such, those who have known and served Christ in this life, the old experiences of sin, suffering, death, are passed away, for in that heavenly world such things are not; all that is there is to the glory of God and in harmony and communion with him.

This, however, leaves that portion of the human race, by far the largest portion, which has either never heard of Christ and the "only way of salvation" or at best only in terms so distorted as to offer nothing like an adequate opportunity intelligently to accept him. Scripture is quite positive that the future Messianic rule of Christ and his Church over the earth, the Millennium, is set aside to correct this deficiency and provide that opportunity. This requires the resurrection of all such dead, not to heavenly conditions for which they are unfit anyway, but to the earth. Here again Divine power will operate as before but this time to awaken all such to renewed life upon earth in newly created human bodies in the power of which they will have opportunity to listen, to heed, to be converted, accept Christ, and enter into everlasting life, if they will. Only if the opportunity is deliberately repudiated after full and adequate knowledge is given will the inevitable penalty of sin, final loss of life, become reality.

This is not the place to enlarge upon the Biblical basis for this aspect of the Divine Plan. That has been done elsewhere. But so far as the nature of man and the relation between his indwelling life and physical body is concerned, it is as logical to visualise his re-constitution into human life upon earth in the Resurrection as his translation to some other world or sphere of life. What the Divine purpose is for all such redeemed and reconciled sons of God when at the end of the Messianic era all who can possibly be saved will have been saved, when evil, sin and death will have been eliminated from the earth so that God's will is done on earth as in heaven, can only be inferred from rather scanty Scriptural indications. Such as there are would seem to indicate eternal life upon a restored and beautiful and everlasting earth. But whether man is to find his eternal home on this earth or experience a later change of habitat to other surroundings in Divine creation it will always be true that his life will be manifested in a body suited to his surroundings and that, since Heaven is where God is, and God is everywhere, man's perfect outward environment, allied with his inward mental and moral attunement to his Creator and his God, will ensure absolute happiness and content in whatever place it pleases God that he should dwell.

Andrew Jukes on Judas

Commenting upon Peter's words in Acts 1.20 *"It is written in the Book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein; and his bishopric let another take"*, which he quoted in connection with the fate of Judas, the following quotation from the writings of Andrew Jukes is of interest. (Andrew Jukes was an advocate of Future Probation hence his conviction that the case of Judas was not hopeless).

"It is surely significant that one and the same awful prophecy is by the inspired writers of the New Testament applied to Judas and Israel (Compare Psa. 69.23-25 with Rom. 11.16 and Acts 1.19-20. The same passage is applied by St. Paul to Israel and by St. Peter to Judas). If therefore the one is not a type of the other, the two are in some way connected most intimately. And yet Israel, of whom it is said *'Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back always'* (words which in the Psalm immediately precedes the passage which is quoted by St. Peter in reference to the traitor Judas) though hated for a while and as concerning the Gospel enemies for our sakes, are beloved for the fathers' sakes (Rom. 4.28) and shall be restored one day and *'brought up out of their graves'* (Ezek. 37.12) *'for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance'*. And so the betrayer here of whom the same passage is quoted *'Let his habitation be desolate . . .'* and whose fall, like Israel's, has been the *'riches of the world'* may yet more show the Lord's riches. It is no unreasonable inference that, as the same prophecy applies to both, their ends shall not be wholly dissimilar."

There are quite a few Scriptural considerations which tend to substantiate Jukes' suggestion. The word "lost" in Jno. 17.12 and elsewhere where the same Greek word "apollumi" is used, and sometimes translated "perish", cannot refer to the final lot of any, for the same word is used in Luke 15.4 of the one sheep out of one hundred which was "lost" but later found by the Lord, or the "lost" Prodigal son. For the Son of Man comes again, to seek and to save that which was lost, and to "call, not the righteous, but sinners, to repentance". So it may be, we cannot tell, in that day Judas himself will come even as the tribes of Israel will come, with great contrition, and bow trembling before the One whom they sold (Gen. 45.4. Phil. 2.10) and hear the gracious words out of his mouth "Be not grieved and angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither, for God did send me before you to preserve life" (Gen. 45.4-8).

This in no wise mitigates the personal responsibility of Judas for his crime, neither does it absolve him from retribution. The Divine Law is always "what a man soweth, that shall he reap". But it does point to the possibility of repentance arising out of and in the midst of that retribution; and where there is repentance, no matter how late in time or from how great sin, God will save. To allow the possibility of the eventual reconciliation of Judas (and perhaps many others of a similar kind) backed up by passages in the Word of God, by no means detracts from the righteousness and the greatness and the wonder of the love of God, but only magnifies it to a far greater degree.

(Andrew Jukes 1867)

"And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads; and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the wild beast, or the number of his name" (Rev. 13.16-17).

Many interpretations of that cryptic statement have been propounded through the centuries and gloomy indeed have been the forebodings of what this portends for men who live at the very end of the Age. But now this modern systematised world is producing something which is at least reminiscent of the words even if they are not a fulfilment. Several European countries are reported to be instituting systems of numbers by which each of their citizens will be known for official purposes. Every person in one such country, it is reported, will by 1975 be registered under a 12-digit number. This is explained to be necessary to facilitate the computerisation of records.

The hammer of Thy discipline, O Lord,
Strikes fast and hard. Life's anvil rings again
To Thy strong strokes. And yet we know 'tis then
That from the heart's hot iron all abroad
The rich glow spreads. Great Fashioner Divine,
Who spareth not, in Thy far-seeing plan,
The blows that shape the character of man,
Or fire that makes him yield to touch of Thine,
Strike on, then, if Thou wilt! For thou alone
Canst rightly test the temper of our will,
Or tell how these base metals may fulfill
Thy purpose—making all our life Thine own.
Only we do beseech Thee, let the pain
Of fiery ordeals through which we go
Shed all around us such a warmth and glow,
Such cheerful showers of sparks in golden rain,
That hard hearts may be melted, cold hearts fired,
And callous hearts be taught to feel and see
That discipline is more to be desired
Than all the ease that keeps us back from Thee.

THE MILLENNIAL GOSPEL OF JESUS

PART I.

1. The Promise of Restitution

The doctrine of the Millennium has its roots in the soil of Eden. In that record there are two important elements. One; that man was created sinless, capable of living for ever, the subsequent entry of sin being responsible for death and every evil. The other; that God has permitted the dominion of sin for a wise purpose and a limited time, but its power will eventually be destroyed and mankind restored to perfection and attain everlasting life. The Millennium is the period during which this restoration process takes place for those who are capable of conversion and reconciliation to God, and the exaction of sin's ultimate penalty in the case of those who are not.

The story of Eden is not only one of condemnation; it is one of hope, speaking of God's intention to undo the evil effects of sin. Historically it records the conditions that existed when God, having created the earth and furnished it with plant and animal life, placed Man upon it and commissioned him to increase and multiply, bring the earth under control, and make use of all its amenities in harmony with Divine law. Man was free to repudiate that law, but the consequence of violating the principles which God had ordained was cessation of existence—death. *"In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die."* Man did transgress; death reigned in consequence.

We do not fully understand the necessity of this temporary power of sin over the human race, but that it is being overruled for good is undeniable. That in some sense we do not fully comprehend—or perhaps do not comprehend at all—perfection is attained through suffering (Heb. 2.10) is indicated in the Scriptures. Something of this may be meant by the cryptic statement that was man's first ray of hope. *"I will put enmity between . . . thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel"* (Gen. 3.15). That text has been conventionalised into an oft-quoted saying: "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head"; all Bible history and prophecy is a record of the development of this "seed" through the ages, and its final and complete victory over the "serpent" during the Millennium.

The next indication of the Divine purposes came when Abraham received his call to leave his native city and go into a land which God would show him. He left his birthplace to follow the leadings of God. He eventually received the promise *"I will make of thee a great nation . . . and in thee . . .*

and in thy seed . . . shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12. 2-3; 22. 18). By virtue of this declaration Abraham, and his posterity as yet unborn, were destined to become the means of fulfilling God's benevolent intentions to all mankind. Bible history records the vicissitudes that befell the descendants of Abraham until the promise, narrowed down to one specific line, that of Isaac and Jacob, began to bear fruit in the creation of a nation, the nation of Israel, at Mount Sinai in the fifteenth century B.C.

The significance of this event was profound. For the first time in history a nation was formally dedicated to God and commissioned to demonstrate the operation of Divine principles in national life, whilst being trained and fitted for the ultimate conveyance of God's blessings to all men. It could, in fact, have been the Kingdom of God upon earth in miniature. Israel as a nation came short of that ideal, and eventually lost its nationhood during the troubled period 600 B.C. to 135 A.D., but during the fifteen hundred years of its existence it acquired characteristics which peculiarly fitted many of its sons for God's future purposes in the administration of the world during the Millennium.

Two-thirds of the Old Testament was written during this period, and these books trace the gradual revelation of God's purpose regarding the coming of Messiah to deliver the world from the power of sin and death. At first the emphasis was laid upon the deliverance of Israel and Divine retribution upon Israel's enemies, but intermingled with this theme there was consciousness of Israel's mission to "declare his salvation to the ends of the earth." The Psalms of David show the first real hope of an ultimate Messianic Kingdom in which "righteousness shall flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth" (Psa. 72. 7), over which the Son of God will reign as King for the elimination of all evil (see the Second Psalm). Isaiah, the most farsighted of all the Hebrew prophets, described this Messianic kingdom as a time in which "the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, . . . and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose" (Isa. 35.1). But in contrast to this sunlit picture of the Messianic Age he also drew another one of more sombre hue, that of the Lord's "suffering servant" who, after suffering *now*, becomes God's minister *then*, an instructor and guide of the nations. In the supreme sense these prophecies were fulfilled in the person and life of Jesus Christ, Who suffered

and died for men, and having been raised from the dead awaits the time to set up his Kingdom on earth, in fulfilment of all the Messianic prophecies and hopes of old. Isaiah spoke of both his Advents, the *First*, when He took upon himself human nature in order to suffer and die as a man, and the *Second*, when He returns in the glory of his spiritual being to establish the Kingdom that is to restore the willing of mankind to human perfection and so complete the Divine purpose.

Jeremiah, two centuries later, described God's purpose concerning the Messianic Kingdom in terms of a covenant made between God and man. God is to put his law in the inward parts of men and write it in their hearts (Jer. 31.33). All men will know the Lord, from the least to the greatest, and the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea (Vs. 34; compare Isa. 11.9). Daniel, nearly contemporary with Jeremiah, by virtue of his position as Prime Minister of Babylon brought into contact with the highest political movements of his day, stressed the essentially practical nature of the coming Kingdom, how that it is the world's only hope for peace and security; how that all existing forms of government and power must yield place to this universal empire of righteousness that is destined to rule the whole earth (Dan. chaps. 2 and 7). Ezekiel the priest, a man gifted with prophetic vision of a very high order, described the forces of evil in the world hurling themselves in vain against the incoming Kingdom, and failing, vanishing away, to be succeeded by the orderly and beneficent system of Millennial government which he symbolised in his description of a vast and fair Temple from which proceeded a River of Life to the nations. This was the theme which led directly to John's description of the New Jerusalem in the Book of Revelation nearly seven centuries later.

Thus, then, does the Old Testament describe this coming Age of blessing which will abolish evil, undo the havoc wrought at the time of Eden, reconcile man to God, and bring in everlasting righteousness. The work of converting the nations is to be effected by the "servant" which God has appointed and trained for that purpose, an essential factor in that training being the endurance of "suffering". In the end, death will be ended, the dead will have been raised, the righteous made perfect, sinners cut off, and sin no longer mar Divine creation.

The coming of Jesus Christ to earth threw a tremendous flood of light upon this almost purely material, earthly, expectation. Until only a few centuries before Christ it was expected that the "righteous" would all attain their ultimate destiny here on earth. The teaching of Jesus as understood and expounded by the New Testament

writers reveals another phase, a spiritual phase, to God's plan, and shows that some from among the nations during the period between the First and Second Advents are called to inherit a spiritual, heavenly state of being by becoming disciples of Jesus Christ. In the wisdom of God such are trained and fitted by suffering, that they might be qualified to occupy a supremely important position in the work of the Messianic Age. That position is one of association with Christ, in his exalted station as King over the earth during the Millennium. The New Testament thus shows that the "Seed of Abraham" through which all families of the earth are to be blessed has a three-fold aspect. In the first place, Christ himself is the Seed. Associated with him in the heavens, having the oversight of all that is done during the Age of Blessing is his Church, comprising the consecrated disciples of this present Age, for "*If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise*" (Gal. 3.29). Associated with both Christ and his Church in service, but stationed upon the earth, is the restored and purified nation of Israel, administering the Kingdom arrangements. Within these three aspects the whole of the promise concerning the "Seed" is contained.

Additional to this understanding of the "two salvations," the teaching of Jesus made plain another principle upon which the work of the coming Age must rest, *the necessity for conversion and intelligent, willing acceptance of the moral laws which God has ordained for the orderly conduct of life*. The Jews of the time shortly before Christ visualised the righteousness of the Kingdom as a formal and ritualistic righteousness, a state in which observance of the Mosaic Law was the indispensable and all-sufficient condition of eternal life. Jesus changed all that and described a system in which every man will be led to see for himself the rightness of righteousness and the sinfulness of sin, and make his choice accordingly. *Hence Jesus called attention to the necessity of repentance and conversion to his way of life*. For this reason He commissioned his disciples to become missionaries and preachers, and although they were thus bidden to preach in all the world for a witness during this Age, it is evident that this is only by way of preparation for the next Age, when that missionary work will receive an impetus such as could not be given whilst the world is still in bondage to sin and death.

The New Testament, then, completes the Old Testament picture by revealing God's purpose to "send Jesus Christ" (Act 3.20), at his Second Advent, to establish an order of society upon earth in which all evil will be progressively eliminated, and men encouraged to repentance and conversion, and so to everlasting life.

2. Jesus and the Kingdom of Heaven

Both Jesus and his forerunner, John the Baptist, were born and brought up in a domestic atmosphere of what to-day would be called intense Millennial expectation. This is clear from the opening chapters of the four gospels. Zacharias gave expression to such hopes at the birth of his son, proclaiming him the herald of the Messiah: "*And thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest, for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways . . . and give knowledge of salvation unto his people . . .*" (Luke 1. 68-79). He thus connected the mission of John with the prophecy of Isaiah, given seven centuries before. It is not surprising therefore that when, grown to manhood's estate and embarking upon his life's work, John was asked "Who art thou?" he replied in Isaiah's own words "*The voice of one crying in the wilderness 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight . . . and all flesh shall see the salvation of God'*" (Luke 3. 4-6; Isa. 40. 3-5). This is the first hint of Millennial teaching to be met with in the Gospels.

The words of the angel Gabriel to Mary confirmed this expectation. They were in the truest sense a crystallisation of all that every orthodox child of Israel believed concerning the coming earthly Kingdom of God: "*He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end*" (Luke 1. 32-33). The aged Simeon, taking the child Jesus in his arms, thanked God that he had been permitted to see with his own eyes the Lord's Messiah "*a light to lighten the nations, and the glory of thy people Israel*" (Luke 2. 29-32).

It was in this environment that the boy Jesus grew up. His later utterances reveal his thorough familiarity with the "Kingdom" prophecies of the Old Testament, and also his knowledge of the apocryphal (uninspired) literature of his own day, literature which depicted in glowing terms the glories of the Messianic Age. It is probable that Jesus could at least read three languages, Aramaic, Greek, and Hebrew, and there was available to him in these tongues a wealth of literature with which He must have been well acquainted.

The climax to this early training came upon the occasion of his first public discourse, in the synagogue at Nazareth, where He definitely identified himself with the Messianic position by reading the sixtieth chapter of Isaiah and declaring that He himself was the One to Whom the prophet referred. "*This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears*" (Luke 4. 16-27). That chapter is the

charter of Israel, the commission and authority defining the place of Israel in the Millennial Age, and in that memorable discourse Jesus gave the seal of his own authority to the prophecy. Although in his subsequent teaching He did not refer a great deal to the Millennial Age, his mission being rather, as He said, to call men to repentance and discipleship, and to lay the foundations of the Christian work of this Gospel Age, yet what He did say reveals his own sure knowledge that the fruitage of his earthly life and death could only be manifest when that Age should come.

This fact is nowhere so strikingly shown as in his reference to "the regeneration". Asked upon one occasion by his disciples as to the outcome of their following him and faithfulness to death, He replied, "*. . . ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel*" (Matt. 19.28). Our Lord's use of this word is very significant. *Palingenesia* primarily means to be born or created anew, and was commonly used of the restoration of a thing to its pristine state, or as we would say, renovation. The Jewish theologian Philo of Alexandria, contemporary with Jesus, uses the word of the renovation of the earth after the Deluge, and Josephus of the renovation of Judea at the return from Babylon. Thayer defines its meaning as "*that signal and glorious change of all things (in heaven and earth) for the better, that restoration of the primal and perfect condition of things which existed before the fall of our first parents, which the Jews looked for in connection with the advent of the Messiah, and which the primitive Christians expected in connection with the visible return of Jesus from heaven*". Jesus himself used the term dispensationally, applying it to a time future when He would be reigning over the earth. His declaration therefore implied his own belief in the future Messianic Age on earth, that his disciples were to occupy administrative positions superior even to that to be occupied by Israel at that time. Upon a later occasion He confirmed his words by telling them "*I appoint unto you a kingdom . . . that ye may . . . sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel*" (Luke 22.29-30). That this Age of universal conversion could not come prior to his own Second Coming is clear from a comparison of his own prayer "*Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done on earth . . .*" (Matt. 6.10) with his prophetic utterance "*When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*" (Luke 18.8). The context of the latter text shows very clearly that He knew quite well He would not so find faith. It is plain that Jesus realised that despite all the Christian evangelism that coming centuries were to witness, the world would be

largely unconverted at his return, the nations would still be controlled by other than Christian principles, the "heathen" would still be numbered by millions, and the Millennial Age would be the only hope of world evangelisation and general acceptance of Christianity.

It was inevitable that the word "judgment" should appear in Jesus' discourses concerning that Age. The Millennium is the great Day of Judgment, during the course of which all outstanding questions of man's relationship to God are brought into review and settled. Remembering that this judgment (*krisis*) includes much more than the mere passing of sentence—it includes a trial, a consideration of all relevant circumstances, the testing as to each one's fitness or otherwise for God's plans, the separation between righteous and wicked—it is evident that many aspects of that Age can be set against the background of "judgment". Particularly is this true in respect to the opportunity for repentance and reform which that Age affords, for Jesus came "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19.10); God "sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3.17). It is to be expected therefore that Jesus would stress this aspect of his Millennial work, and in fact He does so by using as illustrations just those peoples whom the self-righteous would condemn as unworthy of Divine favour.

"The men of Nineveh" He said "shall rise in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it . . . The queen of the South (the Arabian queen who visited Solomon) shall rise in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it" (Luke 11.31-32). This is a definite avowal that one feature of the Messianic Age is to be the resurrection—re-creation—of the dead, to a state in which generations that had lived at widely different times in earth's history are brought face to face. The nature of that judgment is shown more definitely in the Lord's denunciation of the unbelieving cities of his own day. "Woe unto thee, Chorazin and Bethsaida" He said "it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for thee" (Matt. 11.22). "It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city" (Mark 6.11; Matt. 10.15). "Woe unto thee, Capernaum. It shall be more tolerable for Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee" (Matt. 11.24). In view of the apparent fact that with all their shortcomings it would seem that the cities of Galilee were hardly so depraved as the people of Sodom and Gomorrah it is pertinent to inquire what our Lord meant by the expression "more tolerable".

The Greek word really means that the lot or portion of those named will be more endurable. It is derived from *anechomai*, to bear or to endure,

and the meaning of Jesus' words seems to be that those of Sodom, Gomorrah, Tyre and Sidon, whose sins were largely those of ignorance, will find that stern repression of evil which is characteristic of the Millennial Age easier to bear or endure than will those of our Lord's own day who had the advantage of fifteen centuries of God's laws and at the end the presence and preaching of Christ himself, and yet had rejected him. This is in keeping with the Jewish belief, carried over from Old Testament times, that in the resurrection there is to be a distinction made between the "just" and the "unjust" and that the latter will experience retribution for their misdeeds before they can be admitted to the full privileges of that day. This is the meaning of the allusion in Daniel 12.2 to the effect that some will rise to everlasting (Heb. *olam*, enduring) life and some to shame and "enduring" contempt, this expression being paralleled by our Lord's own declaration "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation" (*anastasis eis krisin*—resurrection into judgment—the present English usage of "damnation" does not correctly represent the meaning of "*krisis*"; John 5. 28-29). This expression "resurrection into judgment" describes the condition into which evildoers will enter when they awake and find themselves called upon to "answer for the deeds done in the body". Those that have "done good" in their former lives will emerge from the grave already measurably free from the necessity of undergoing this "resurrection into judgment" and these were referred to by Jesus when he spoke of the "resurrection of the just" (Luke 14.4).

As to the time when this Kingdom will be set up, Jesus was silent, even when pressed by his disciples. "It is not for you to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power." "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels in heaven, but my Father only" (Acts 1.7; Matt. 24.36). He did indicate that the time would be long, and He gave certain signs by means of which those living when the time had come would recognise the imminence of the Kingdom. For the meantime, He counselled watchfulness and expectancy. "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."

It is true therefore to say that a very considerable part of the edifice of Millennial belief is built upon the words of Jesus himself. It would be surprising were it not so, for the burden of his message was the fact that God is actively moving to fulfil all the promises made to the fathers, and that fulfilment involves the establishment of his Kingdom upon earth.

To be concluded

ASAPH THE CHIEF MUSICIAN

*A man who made
melody to the Lord*

"For in the days of David and Asaph of old there were chief of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God." (Neh. 12.46).

Asaph was a great choir-master; so great that his name lingered on for many generations after his death and in all Israel's after history the Temple singers were known as "sons of Asaph". Here was a man whose talents and whole life were consecrated to God and used in one particular direction, in the ministry of sacred song. Who knows how many hearts in Israel were turned more reverently toward the God of Israel, and how many minds to the more sober consideration of the Covenant and their responsibilities as a chosen and separated people to God, in consequence of that ministry? The ascending of praise and thanksgiving to God is a very lovely thing in Divine worship; and it is more than that. The heart's devotion can rise to heaven on the wings of song, and the renewal, the re-affirming, of one's own consecration can be carried to God by the voice of thanksgiving. It is a part of the service in which all can join and express for themselves in their own way the love and gratitude they feel for all his benefits. Sometimes a speaker, anxious to conserve as much of the time allotted to the service as he can for his address, requests that one of the hymns be omitted, or the long ones shortened. He does not well who does so. The Father looks upon the praises and prayers of his people in their gathering together with as much interest and sympathy as He does upon the ministry of the spoken word and, who knows, maybe He gets less weary of listening to the praise and thanksgiving of the congregation than He does of the sometimes over-long perorations delivered in his name by the minister.

Asaph lived in the days of David. He must have found in that king a very ready sympathiser with his services and a quick readiness to make use of his characteristic talents. David himself in his younger and—who knows—happier days had been a singer and a poet. As a shepherd lad he had whiled away many a pleasant hour on the hillside, while the sun shone warmly down, composing and singing simple songs of praise to God. In later years, when in the service of King Saul, he played the harp and sang the same songs to his own accompaniment. Now, with all the cares of state pressing on his shoulders and the claims of several wives to satisfy he probably had less time for such direct indulgence in his musical tastes; but when he came to organising the worship of God he

remembered the charm that music had always had for him, and realising what it could mean in the worship of Israel, he looked around for a suitable man to place in charge of such things and found a twin soul in Asaph.

It was when King David had brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem after its long sojourn in the house of Obed-edom, following its capture by the Philistines in the days of Eli two generations earlier, that Asaph received his appointment. According to 1 Chron. 16.4, David had *"appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the Ark of the Lord, and to record, and to thank and praise the Lord God of Israel: Asaph the chief..."* As the account goes on we find that there were players on psalteries and harps, and priests with trumpets, and Asaph himself, in addition to his duty of leading the choir, *"made a sound with cymbals"*. It seems evident that this Temple music was by no means a subdued affair; more likely is it that it bore some distinct resemblance to the Salvation Army bands of our own day. But the Lord blessed it; that is the important thing; He blessed it! That is a point to remember when we feel disposed to decry and condemn a form of service which some others are conducting to the Lord's glory but a form which does not appeal to ourselves. The Lord's arm is not so short—nor his imagination so limited—that He is compelled to confine himself to just one way of doing his work and although we do tend to flatter ourselves that we are the only ones who understand his Plan and therefore the only ones entitled to work for him or to speak in his name, there is plenty of evidence to the unbiased observer that the Lord does find use for many of the efforts put forth by Christian disciples of many differing theologies despite the shortcomings of some of them as respects a clear vision of his Plan.

Now Asaph was not only a musician, he was also a prophet. He must have been a very self-effacing one, for there is no mention of the fact during the time of his own life. Perhaps the greater glory of his royal patron obliterated any lesser radiance that might have shone from the Chief Musician. But in the days of Hezekiah, several centuries later, there is a casual reference which goes to show that his prophetic office was remembered equally with his musical skill. 2 Chron. 29. 30, tells us, in connection with Hezekiah's restoration of the Temple service after the idolatry of Ahaz, that *Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the Lord*

with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped".

So Asaph was a seer—a prophet! In his musical preoccupation he found time to study the Word of the Lord and to become a fit medium through which the Holy Spirit could speak. What would be the subjects of his prophecy? Without much doubt he would prophesy, as did all the prophets, concerning the King and the Kingdom, and the conditions of entrance into that Kingdom. Like all the prophets, he would speak of Judgment and Restitution, and call the people to repentance and dedication of life to God's service—to consecration. How would he speak to them? Surely through the medium of his sacred office! Not for Asaph the free, unrestricted wandering through the countryside in the manner of Amos the herdsman or Joel the vine-dresser. Not for Asaph the standing in the royal court in the company of princes and politicians of this world, like Isaiah or Daniel. His duties kept him in the place where daily worship was being constantly offered, and it was there, and in the course of that worship and those duties, that his prophecy, if it was to be given at all, must be uttered. And therefore it is that for the prophecies of Asaph we must look into the psalms of Asaph.

They are twelve in number, these psalms which are accredited to David's chief musician. Some have suggested that they might not all actually be from Asaph; that the structure of at least one seems to indicate a composition of a much later date, but there is really little or no evidence to support such hypotheses. These twelve, Psalm 50 and Psalms 73 to 83 inclusive, are entitled "Psalms of Asaph", and there is every reason for concluding that we have here compositions that are the work of this fervent-hearted Levite, set to music and rendered under his direction by the sacred choir in the days of David. And being a prophet, what more natural than that he should incorporate in these songs the understanding that the Holy Spirit had given him?

It would take many pages to exhaust the doctrinal and prophetic teaching left on record in the twelve psalms that enshrine the ministry of Asaph. A few brief allusions must suffice. And no such short survey can start on a more appropriate theme than the one which led Asaph to compose the 73rd Psalm—the Permission of Evil. Not exactly a doctrine, as we understand the term to-day, perhaps, but how vital a foundation for our own orderly and satisfying appreciation of the Divine mysteries. "I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked" he says (Psa. 73:3). . . . "they are not in trouble as other men . . . they have more than heart could wish . . .

and they say 'how doth God know?'. . . . When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; until I went into the sanctuary of God; THEN UNDERSTOOD I THEIR END." Ah, yes, that is where we, too, understand why God has permitted evil, and that He will not allow evil and the evil-doer to continue for ever. It is in this psalm, too, that Asaph coined a word that has been an inestimable source of encouragement to the disciples of Jesus in all the centuries of this Gospel Age; "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." (Psa. 73:24).

It must have been this realisation of God's determination to vindicate the righteous in due time that led Asaph to the train of thought revealed in Psa. 77. "I have considered the days of old" he says "the years of ancient times. I call to remembrance my song in the night; I commune with my own heart; and my spirit made diligent search. Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever . . . hath God forgotten to be gracious?" Then, in a swift revulsion of feeling "I will remember the works of the Lord. I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of all thy doings." In the study and consideration of the Plan of God as revealed in his past actions Asaph found both consolation and instruction to explain the apparent inactivity of God. "Thy way, O God, IS IN THE SANCTUARY" (vs. 13). That was the great lesson and it is so still with us. The teaching of this Psalm is the over-ruling providence of God and his wise direction of events for the ultimate good of all men. He is leading them through many strange and hard experiences that they might learn at last the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and come willingly and voluntarily in harmony with God's righteousness. "Thou leddest thy people like a flock" are the concluding words of the Psalm. To the doctrine of the Permission of Evil therefore we have to add the doctrine of Divine Providence that doeth all things well.

The next theme to which Asaph devoted his talents was that of Divine Judgment, and here two of his Psalms, 82 and 83, share the burden of the song. "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods" is the tremendous opening of Psa. 82. None of all created beings are exempt from God's judgment if so be that sin has entered and found a lodgment. Even though they be called gods, children of the Most High, they will die like men, and fall like one of the princes, should the contaminating effects of sin so demand. If wicked men take counsel against the people of God, and say (Psa. 83:4) "Come, let us cut them off from being a nation: that the name

of Israel may be no more in remembrance", He will rise up and cause them to scatter and be no more, as the rolling leaves and dust before the whirlwind, twisting and twirling about in the terrible blast of his anger (vs. 13-15). And Asaph saw clearly—so clearly—that the final effect of Divine Judgment is "that men may know that thou, whose name alone is Jehovah, art the most high over all the earth". (vs. 18).

Now Asaph comes to prophecy. In Ps. 78, 79 and 80 he sings of God's chosen people Israel, of his goodness to them and their unfaithfulness to him. "Give ear, O my people" he cries "to my law. Incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old" (Psa. 78.1). Then he sings of the great deeds of old, the victories and triumphs of Israel in the wilderness, the continued faithfulness of God in face of the persistent unfaithfulness of Israel. So, at last, "he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel; so that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh . . . and delivered strength into captivity". But when God saw the distress into which his people had fallen, and how the enemies of righteousness exulted over the sorry state of those who despite all their faults and all their failures and all their perversities were still the people of God, then "the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine, and he smote his enemies, . . . he put them to a perpetual reproach." What a wonderful commentary upon the Divine Plan it is to say, as Asaph here says "so he fed them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands." (Psa. 78.72).

The song drops to a lower key. Asaph's prophetic insight showed him that in days yet to come, long after he himself would be sleeping with his fathers, there would be trouble and distress upon Israel because of renewed unfaithfulness. He saw a day in the which fierce Babylonian soldiers would come and despoil the city and the sanctuary, and take all the treasures thereof captive to Babylon. "O God" he cries in agony in the opening stanza of Ps. 74 "why hast thou cast us off for ever? Why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?" In vision he saw the Temple destroyed and lifted his voice in impassioned protest. "A man was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees. But now they break down the carved work thereof with axes and hammers . . . they have cast fire into thy sanctuary . . . they have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land". But it is in this psalm that he rises up to a lofty plea for the fulfilment of God's Plan, a fulfilment which he knows is sadly needed because of the world's sin.

"Have respect unto the covenant" he urges "for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty". Psalms 74 and 75 both reveal Asaph's knowledge that such a time of disaster must come upon Israel, and that it would be followed by judgment upon the nations that oppressed them. "In the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red . . . the dregs thereof, the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them" (Psa. 75.8). So it is that in Ps. 76 he passes on to a brighter view of prophecy and glimpses something of the day of light and gladness that is to follow the overthrow of God's enemies. "When God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth—surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain" (Psa. 76.10). There is his faith in the coming Millennial Day, in those "Times of Restitution" which Peter, long centuries afterward, was to declare had been spoken of by all God's holy prophets. Asaph was one of those prophets.

Spiritual Israel

It was in the 50th Psalm that the great singer attained his loftiest height of vision. In that wonderful paean of praise and prophecy he traverses briefly the whole of God's later works, succeeding that earlier phase when Israel after the flesh was the only instrument to God's hand. There in Psalm 50 Asaph has taken a mighty stride forward and sees the development of another Israel, gathered to God in another covenant, and in the ecstasy of that revelation he calls "gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice" (Psa. 50.5). Perhaps that last vision of all showed him the majesty and power of God more vividly than anything before. It was at any rate with this train of thought in his mind that he uttered the sublime words that we have used so often ourselves to describe the all-power of our Father and our God: "For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills"!

"Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me, and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God." The vibrant words die away into silence; the melody fades away in the distance. Asaph the singer, the musician of David's choir, is no more. He sleeps with his fellows, awaiting the call to enter that new world about which he so constantly spoke and sang; but his words live on after him, and we, three thousand years later, find strength and encouragement and inspiration because an obscure but zealous and earnest man of God, away in those far-off days, used his talent for music and poetry to sing praises to the God of his salvation.

THE JEALOUSY OF GOD

A sometimes
misunderstood word

More than twenty times in the Old Testament is it said that God is a jealous God. The statement is often misunderstood, naturally enough since the word "jealous" in modern English has a very definite and not very pleasant meaning. The Hebrew word translated "jealousy", however, has a wider range of meaning, and a systematic examination of the use of the word in the O.T., and its Greek equivalent in the N.T., soon removes from the Divine character any suspicion of the attitude of heart and mind normally associated with English usage of the word "jealousy".

The "jealousy" of God is his concern and zeal for the preservation of his own holiness in the sight of men, and for the fulfilment of his Word. The word is translated "zeal" about as many times as it is translated "jealousy" and if every text in which the word occurs is examined it will readily be seen that "zeal" is as good a rendering as "jealousy". As an example, take Zech. 1.14 "I am *jealous* for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great *jealousy*". In this passage God declares his concern at the treatment of Jerusalem by the other nations and his determination to deliver her. So Nahum 1. 2 "God is *jealous*, and the Lord revengeth". Here it is God's coming judgment on the heathen city of Nineveh for its oppression of Israel that is in view. Again Isa. 42.13 "The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up *jealousy* like a man of war" against the enemies of the chosen people. "All the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my *jealousy*" He says through Zephaniah (Zeph. 3.8). In a rather different setting we have the jealousy of God for his own good Name and worship, as in Psa. 78.58 "For they (Israel) provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to *jealousy* with their graven images". In Deut. 32. 16 we have "They provoked him to *jealousy* with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger" and in Ezek. 5.13 (where the word is rendered "zeal") "I the Lord have spoken in my *zeal*, when I have accomplished my fury in them".

This same jealousy of God is shown as the driving force which accomplishes his purposes. In

Isa. 9.7 we have, speaking of the Messianic kingdom one day to be bestowed upon the Child that should be born "The *zeal* of the Lord of Hosts shall perform this", and in Isa. 37.32 the same expression is used with reference to the Divine determination to restore Israel to the Holy Land after the time of desolation. One of the Messianic Psalms (Psa. 69.9) represents the Messiah as saying to the Father "The *zeal* of thine house hath eaten me up", an allusion to the consecrated mission of our Lord Jesus Christ when He came to earth at his First Advent. (St. John quoted this verse and applied it to Jesus on the occasion of his expelling the money-changers from the Temple—see John 2.17).

It is not surprising, then, to find that the same word is used by the New Testament writers in the same fashion. "I am *jealous* over you with godly *jealousy*" says St. Paul to his converts in 2 Cor. 11.2. Obviously "zeal" is his meaning there, as also in Rom. 10.19 "Moses saith, I will provoke you to *jealousy* by them that are no people." God would incite Israel to greater zeal by the spectacle of his dealings with the Gentiles. The elders of the church in Jerusalem, visited by St. Paul, said to him "Thou seest how many thousands of Jews there are which believe, and they are all *zealous* of the Law" (Acts 21.20). In his epistle to Titus (2.14) St. Paul speaks of the church of God as being "*zealous* of good works", and in Rev. 3.19 the Lord Jesus himself bids certain backsliding ones to "be *zealous* therefore, and repent".

When, therefore, God declared to the people of Israel (Exod. 20.5) "I the Lord thy God am a *jealous* God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me", He was saying in effect that in his zeal for the exaltation and establishment of righteousness and the eventual fulfilment of his purpose, He would allow the evil of evil men to run its course through the generations, as it has done, that it might bring forth its inevitable fruit and so at the end disappear from his creation. Divine jealousy and Divine zeal for righteousness are one and the same thing.

"Truth gains more even by the errors of one who, with due study and preparation, thinks for himself, than by the true opinions of those who only hold them because they do not suffer themselves to think."—John Stuart Mill.

Hand and heart, instinct and motive, the whole life within and without must be transformed up to the "Ideal". And only the Omniscience of God knows what that is! And only the Omnipotence of God can sustain in the making!

"AND NOW ABIDETH . . ."

A series of studies
in 1 Cor. 13

I. Love is the principal thing

In a former series some attention was given to the significance of two Greek words—*Agape* and *Phileo*—which in many modern versions are translated by our one word "Love". It was therein sought to show that the early Church had had to give these two words specific definitions of their own. So much new light and understanding of the heavenly verities was breaking into their sanctified consciousness that the old words had to become the bearers of this wealth of truth, and do service for nobler purposes than any they had served before.

To the Early Church the *Agape* was expressive of the Love of God, that mighty force which was putting through the great Redemptive and Restorational Plan for the recovery of man from sin and death. Meantime it was the power which enabled men of different races and temperaments to dwell together in unity—and to sink themselves and their varied interests into the preparatory stages of that Plan. It formed the bond of common citizenship in the heavenly polity, and the link of brotherhood in that wider family relationship which, under God, was yet to embrace heaven and earth. When the Love of God was thus shed abroad in their hearts they accounted it a spark from that same flame which, in a coming day, will consume all impurity and unrighteousness, and refine all things that are refinable.

Similarly the word *Phileo* had taken on a wider meaning than the Greek classics had given it, and had come to stand for a brotherhood no longer circumscribed by blood relationship. The Apostles cut right through tribal and patriotic boundaries and gave to every believing man, regardless of ancestry, the right hand of fellowship in Christ.

But it is the wider conception of the *Agape* that is to be the theme of this present study.

The *Agape* has been compared with those various "other things" with which Paul contrasted it in the course of his argument—those various other ways of life—formulated and fostered by the philosophic minds of Greece and the Orient. Paul had set the *Agape* very deliberately over against the occult knowledge and the cultic mysteries of Greece and Babylonia, together with the Mithraism of Persia, and claimed for it that it was by far a more excellent way of life and happiness. He had also placed the *Agape* over against the *Charismata* endowments of the infant Church, and claimed for it superiority over these, heaven-conferred though they were! To say the least, Paul proclaimed it to be the better way. Time, at

last, will show it to be the only way.

This contrast with these "other things" provides a background for the present survey. When, therefore, we are considering the elements of which the *Agape* is composed, we can ask the question "What place had the elements in the Grecian, the Persian, or the Christian way of life? How would they fit into the experience of those who pursued these ways of life?" We can also ask what place have these elements in the way of life of the saints who have received their spark of *Agape* from God? In this way we shall be able to place these seemingly simple graces over against the attitudes of heathen priests, of cultured philosophers, and the rulers of this present world, and learn how Heaven evaluates these things as of transcendently greater worth than all the thrones and crowns and mitred privileges of which this world can boast.

More than that, in the universal scale of things the simple practice of Love will be found of greater potential worth than all the finely-phrased odes and plays of the Greek or any other Age. The simply-phrased but fervent exhortation of the Christian minister, beseeching his attentive hearers to put on love, will be found, when the tale is told, to have contributed more towards the moral cleansing of the world than all the fine-spun phrases of golden pens or silvery tongues the world has ever known. Even if not immediately effective it is a contribution positive in nature, in conformity with the outlines of the Great Plan of recovery, which can never fail.

Coming now to consideration of the text, it reads, "*But now abideth faith, hope, love; these three . . .*" "*But now abideth . . . !*" These three are to be placed in contrast with certain other things spoken of in the foregoing context. Paul has referred to things that would not "abide"; of these he says, "*they shall be done away . . . they shall cease . . . it shall be done away.*" Presumably the abiding things are intended to be set in contrast with the things that are to pass away. Because of this the Church's future witness was to be affected by her growth in grace and not by demonstrations of her automatic *Charismata*. Thus, when these gifts of "prophesying" and of the immediate use of "tongues" etc., were withdrawn, the Church's life would begin to express itself more naturally in the development of faith, hope and love; because of this, those who were drawn to her ranks by pursuits of the miraculous would tend to fall away, and in this way her assemblies would be purified, her true children

edified and beautified by grace and truth.

Now it ought to be obvious that though Paul asserted that knowledge (of a kind) would pass away (verse 8) he did not intend his readers to understand that all knowledge would pass away, giving place to a state of general ignorance in the Church. Even the graces which were to abide require knowledge as their foundation-stones. There cannot be faith without knowledge, nor hope. And most certainly there cannot be any *Agape* without knowledge of the Divine intention to rescue the world from sin and death. Hence though Paul does not specifically mention knowledge of this kind as an abiding thing, it is obvious that it must abide, and abound also, as the groundwork of all "these three". We must therefore assume that an increasing measure of Christian knowledge, diligently sought by study of the Word, is pre-requisite and essential to continuance in faith, hope and love. In an illustrative sense knowledge is the soil out of which—in part—the *Agape* must grow. The same is also true of faith and hope. But as faith and hope, in a certain sense, are both constituent elements of the *Agape* (see v.7) it will not be necessary to discuss their outgrowth from the soil of knowledge separately. As for the all-embracing Master-grace, this is knowledge transmuted to maturity and fragrance of character through its relationship to every subordinate grace of which Love is composed. In the same way that no floral fragrance or beauty can exist without the prior existence and use of soil, so also there can be no fragrance of Love without the existence and right use of sanctifying knowledge. Let us try to work this out.

Every constituent element of Love must express itself in some form of service or activity. They do not stand for mere abstractions or even states of mind alone. Even those which are set out from the negative point of view—"love envieth not"—have a positive aspect the opposite of that stated in the text. That being so, there must be some act in which each element of Love finds suitable expression. Behind every act accordant with Love, there must be motive and intent. Behind motive and intent there must be understanding and comprehension of the why and wherefore of the act. That brings us right back to our antecedent state—our knowledge of the need for such an act.

In so far as the *Agape* is concerned God has stated why there is need for IT to act. Man is fallen under sin, and cannot extricate himself. Because God knows the need for help is great, He has made certain moves to meet that need. Behind all God's kindly acts are his gracious motives and intents; behind these motives and intents is the knowledge of the need. This same reasoning holds true in our own world, with all its happenings. To

call forth a kindly act, we must have come to sense a need, we do the kindly thing to meet that need, hence our knowledge of that need becomes the antecedent of the act. Were we to be questioned why we did the kindly thing we would say we knew the need and the opportunity was there. It would be quite enough to say we knew of that need, and how to meet the need. In association with the Lord in things pertaining to his Father's Plan this relationship of prior knowledge to both motive and act holds good all the way. Jesus warned us what to expect from our contemporaries. The course of this present world being antagonistic to our own creates many needs, which means many opportunities to do the kindly thing. To have been fore-warned means that we have fore-knowledge of what to expect. Hence we are primed in advance, to be on the alert to see or sense another's need. In God's ordinance of affairs it is his desire that we do the kindly thing when we sense its need. There is here a two-fold reason for the kindly act. First, we know a need exists; next, we know it pleases God for us to meet that need. Now, if we are questioned why we do the deed, we have this two-fold reason to offer in reply. Furthermore, inasmuch as we have been taught that each kindly deed will re-act upon our own hearts and minds and leave behind a deepened impression of the Divine graving-tool thereon, we find yet another reason for our act. As we ponder on truth which we have learned, we see that our kindly act is a minor victory won for righteousness in the age-long conflict between right and wrong—evil and good—sin and righteousness, and is thus a contribution to the over-all effort required to overthrow the wrong.

It is because we have come to KNOW that these daily struggles and victories, with their resultant deepening of character, are the Divine means of preparing the instruments of mercy and righteousness, by which He has proposed to bring in the *Agape* way of life in the coming Age, that these little happenings take on their measure of importance and value. It is because we have learned of the world's great need, and of the Divine intention to meet that need in this very particular way that we have been led to consecrate ourselves to the Divine Will, and submit ourselves daily to the pressure of the graving-tool in readiness for the day and hour when God will begin to use us to meet that need. Thus each degree of growth in this or that element of the *Agape* in the heart of any child of God is a contribution to the diffusion and establishment in the earth of the mighty motive force with which God intends to bring in the perfect way of life.

The knowledge we possess is thus the antecedent factor to everything we do and say in our

service for the Lord, and this abides as the groundwork of our faith and hope and love. Only thus can faith be faith and not credulity; only thus can hope be hope, not wishful expectation; and only thus can love be love, not mere sentimentality. A knowledge such as this, devoted to such ends, can never become "puffed up", nor inflated with a sense of its own importance. The objective before it is too big to gender pride. The very immensity of the conflict between Right and Wrong, and of the forces and powers engaged therein, is enough

to make us realise that God alone is equal to the task and that we need his constant care to help us in our way today.

Knowledge such as this makes us desire the companionship of the Lord Jesus every day, and to find his power working in us all the time. Without this knowledge we would have no hope that the Promise would be fulfilled, or that the suffering nations would be blessed. Our knowledge must abide, for out of it our Faith and Hope and Love must grow.

To be continued.

JOB AND THE RESURRECTION

"I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and after my skin has been thus destroyed yet from my flesh shall I see God" (Job. 19.25-26 RSV).

This is the most remarkable pre-Israelite expression of faith in the resurrection to be found in the Old Testament. That such a faith should exist at so early a time in human history is considered by modern theologians so unlikely that the evident meaning of the passage is disputed and all kinds of variant explanations offered to minimise its significance. Even so, it may well be asked how the old patriarch acquired his very definite faith in a resurrection to earthly life in which happy state he would "see" God.

The present Hebrew text of vs. 26 is admitted by all scholars to be "corrupt", that is to say, it has been mutilated by successive copyists and translators so that the Hebrew is now almost unintelligible. The A.V. rendering "and though after my skin worms destroy this body" does not make sense, and "worms" has been supplied by the translators anyway; the Revisers substituted (as in the margin) "after I shall awake, though this body be destroyed" by adopting a possible variant reading. Of the few modern translators who have made serious attempts to get at the probable original meaning Margolis has it "*when after my skin this is destroyed then without my flesh shall I see God*"; Leeser "*after my skin is cut to pieces will this be, and then freed from my body shall I behold God*"; Rotherham "*and though after my skin is struck off this followeth, yet apart from my flesh shall I see God*"; Ferrar Fenton "*and after my skin is destroyed I shall yet in my flesh gaze on God*"; and Douay "*I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God*". The RSV gives what is probably the best render-

ing "*after my skin has been thus destroyed yet from my flesh shall I see God*". The International Critical Commentary (Vol. "Job"—S. R. Driver and G. B. Gray) says that the Hebrew words "from my flesh" can equally mean "from within my flesh" or "away from, outside, my flesh". Most translators appear to have adopted the latter meaning and this obviously with the theological idea that Job would, in the after-life, "see God" in heaven where the body of flesh is a thing of the past. This however ignores the fact that neither Job nor any of his contemporaries had any conception of a spiritual world or a heavenly salvation; whatever understanding of a future life they had was one to be lived upon earth. The passage is therefore best understood as an expression of Job's faith that although, his present disease being incurable and his state hopeless, his skin now ulcerated and corrupting from his afflictions must surely perish and his whole body inevitably be destroyed in death, at a future day his Redeemer would come to earth and stand upon the earth and restore him to life in a new terrestrial body. From within that new body of flesh he will look out and see his Redeemer, God who had so inexplicably hidden himself from Job during the term of the patriarch's suffering but in whom he had never lost faith. Job knew that his misfortunes and sufferings had been at least permitted by God, if not directly inflicted by him. He had long since given up hope that he would recover; death was the only sequel he could see and in his agony he longed and prayed for death. But death was not the end of all things for Job; he knew that he would live again. He expresses that faith in words of rare beauty in ch. 14.14-15 "*all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou*

wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands". The notable thing about his declaration in ch. 19 is his knowledge that this life by resurrection is to be accomplished by means of a redeemer in the New Testament sense. Christ became man's Redeemer by paying a price, the yielding up of his human life upon the Cross. In both instances where the term "Ransom" is used the word implies a deliverance effected in consideration of a price paid. Our Lord does not deliver man in the fashion of a military conqueror who batters down the prison by brute force and so sets the captives free; the act of redemption cost him suffering and death. Now Job uses the Hebrew term which indicates this same idea. Of the two words for "redeemer", "*padah*" and "*goel*", *padah* has the meaning of procuring freedom or release, to deliver, unconditionally; *goel* means the same thing but upon payment of a price. Job used the word *goel*, and in so doing anticipated Isaiah, who a thousand years later described the Lord as the *goel*, the Redeemer, of Israel, some nineteen times in his prophecy. There are thus three important principles embodied in this 25th verse of which Job was aware and convinced; that the act of redemption was going to cost something, that the Redeemer ever liveth, and that he would "stand upon the earth" at the Last Day, when Job would hear his call, and would answer it. Job knew nothing of Christ; the Redeemer he visualised was God whom he worshipped, but all that he saw and believed and hoped for is fulfilled in the person and work of Christ who is the manifestation of Deity to man.

Job also understood that resurrection is by re-creation, the re-emergence of the identity, the personality, in a new body. This is a fundamental principle; at death the old body returns to its dust and its constituent atoms coalesce again with the whole terrestrial mass. In the resurrection, as St. Paul explains in 1 Cor. 15, "*God giveth it a body as it pleaseth him*" a newly-created organism or body adapted to the environment in which the resurrected one knows himself for who he was and who he is. Job fully realised this. Though this skin

and this body be destroyed, yet in my flesh, from within my flesh, I shall see God. This is a fair paraphrase of his utterance. He knew full well that his present body, disease-ridden, emaciated, corrupting, must inevitably pass into the grave and be destroyed, but he shouted to the heavens his faith that in a day yet to come he would stand upright in a body of new flesh and in that flesh see God his Redeemer. "*Whom I shall see for myself, and not another, though my body be consumed within me*" he says (vs. 27). That is an affirmation of faith in the preservation of his identity, his personality, even although during his sojourn in the grave his terrestrial body has dissolved away and nothing is left. "*Then shall the dust return to earth as it was, and the spirit unto God who gave it*" says the Preacher in Eccl. 12.7 and this was Job's understanding. He knew that his personality was safe in God's keeping until the day of resurrection and that he would then arise and take up the thread of conscious existence just as a man does when he awakens from his nightly sleep.

From whence did Job obtain this knowledge? There was no Bible—not even the Old Testament—in his day. God had not yet spoken to Israel by Moses and anyway Job was not an Israelite. It is evident that in those early days God had means of imparting knowledge of himself and his plans of which we now know little or nothing. Since Job was of the land of Uz, which took its name from Uz the son of Nahor, Abraham's own brother, it is possible that Job was a descendant of Nahor. In such case, and since Nahor, like Abraham, was a worshipper of God, it could be that the primitive understanding of the Divine purposes which was undoubtedly passed down from father to son from earliest times, and through Noah and Shem at the time of the Flood, reached down to Job through Nahor and afforded the sorely-tried but steadfastly faithful old patriarch this faith in the coming redemption and resurrection which enabled him to endure his affliction in hope of a future guaranteed by the promise of God.

He who will not be sweetly ruled by the Divine will is penally governed by himself; and he who casts off the easy yoke and light burden of love, must suffer the intolerable load of self-will. May I breathe under the light burden of love, and be not restrained by slavish fear, nor allured by mercenary desire; but may I be led by thy free Spirit, which may witness with my spirit that I

am thy child. For he who walks in the Spirit never remains in one state. His way is not in himself, but as the Spirit dispenses to him according to his good pleasure, now more faintly, now more eagerly, he forgets the things which are behind, and reaches forth to those which are before.

—Bernard of Clairvaux.

EVENTIDE

*"So he bringeth them
unto their desired haven"*

*"At even, ere the sun was set,
The sick, O Lord, around thee lay,
Oh, in what divers pains they met,
Oh, with what joy they went away!"*

What a day for the suffering souls in Israel that had been! The Priests and Pharisees may have found no place in their thoughts for this tender Healer who had come to Israel, but for the poor and afflicted He was the Man of the Hour. How they spread abroad from village to village the news of his coming and goings, and set every suffering soul aflame with expectation and hope that He might cross their path, and lay his hands upon them, or speak some healing word. Think of the arresting power that could send men hasting here and there throughout a whole region proclaiming "Bring along your sick—the Great Healer is here!", and of the gripping confidence that could say to him "Will you but let these ailing souls touch only the fringe of your robes?" (Matt. 14. 34.) A mighty surge of approbation had spread around the countryside concerning him, for nothing like these things had ever taken place in Israel before.

To be alone with his grief concerning John, Jesus had taken ship to a lonely place apart. "But when the crowds heard it they followed him on foot from the towns." (Matt. 14. 13.) A great throng, with many sick in their midst awaited him, "...and He had compassion on them, and healed their sick", (v.14.) At another place and time, the nature of these sicknesses are specified in greater fulness, "...the lame, the maimed, the blind, the dumb, and many others..." (Matt. 15. 30.) And perhaps it was just these same afflictions that awaited him as He stepped ashore at the place of his retreat. "And they put them at his feet." (Matt. 15.30.) What a picture in these few words! All the wasted frames from the shadowed homes of the countryside lying side by side—and placed there "at his feet"! What would He do? Would He chide them by reminding them that there ought to be no sick in Israel—that were they faithful to their God He would be "Jehovah Ropheka" (Exod. 15.26) to them, and would, according to his own good promise, heal them of their sicknesses? (Exod. 23.25; Psalms 103.3 and 147.3.) He could rightly have done that; instead He had compassion upon them all, and in the Name and power of God healed them one and all.

What a surge of gladness would sweep through the crowd as sightless eyes began to see, and speechless tongues began to speak, and palsied

limbs began to move, and diseased bodies lost their pains! Truly it was a day most wonderful!

And for himself, too, it was wonderful—that deep surge of compassion that swept through his tender heart left its sanctifying impress there, and a little more of the "perfecting" work was done. He was now, at close of day, a little more nearly prepared to be the sympathetic High Priest for all who were "out of the way" and astray from God. It was an opportunity for himself not to be missed!

Time has passed, scenes have changed—and . . .

*"Once more 'tis eventide, and we
Oppressed with various ills draw near;
What if thy form we cannot see?
We know and feel that thou art here."*

These various ills—what are they? Not the ills to which the flesh is heir, to be sure! These are to be borne patiently, like the illness of Epaphroditus, and the thorn of Paul (Phil. 2. 27; 2 Cor. 8. 10.) But there are ills and discomforts of the spirit that can be like a weight at the end of day. Indeed, in a world like this, no day ought to go by without these ills and discomforts pressing heavily upon us. They are a part of our spiritual education, and contribute greatly to our development into the likeness of our Lord.

Spite of all the ecclesiastical organisation and ministerial service in this world, it is still as a flock without a shepherd—a flock astray in the ways of sin. The daily paper tells its story of tragedy and misery every passing day; the daily round brings each child of God into painful contact with the perversities of men; in the office, at the workbench, in the street, and even in the home. The watchful eye and listening ear can see and hear the world's writhing pain and piercing groan, but no child of God can see and hear these things without being touched to the heart—or without joining in the groan! In proportion as the saint partakes of the spirit of him who wept over Jerusalem's perversity, so will he be inclined to weep with a world in anguish, waiting for it knows not what, waiting it knows not how long, but waiting in its chains of vanity for all that! Some day the hour of deliverance will come, but for this present season it must bear the anguish, and groan out its despair.

All this comes out in the daily life every day, and we who have been led aside, and let into the secret of the Divine purpose in it all, can either look on nonchalantly or sympathetically. And, in proportion as our sympathies are touched, so will these things lie heavy on our souls. Moreover, we

shall see even some we love touching much too lightly these Divine opportunities—never having loved him well, perhaps having lost the love they had. And that wounds most of all!

How do these things react back upon us at close of day—the sorrows of a world, the coldness of a friend! They who fain would serve him best are touched the most by all these wrongs without, within. What can we do about it all? Surely nothing less than they of ancient Galilee did with their sick—lay them down at Jesus' feet and leave them all to him, and his healing power.

How necessary, then, at eventide, that we should go aside with him and tell him all that has grieved and disappointed us through the day, reminding him,

*"Thy touch has still its ancient power,
No word from thee can fruitless fall;
Hear in this solemn evening hour,
And in thy mercy heal us all."*

Out of the daily throb of pain can come a little more of that "perfecting" experience for every one of us, if we are alert and alive to its possibilities.

Two Generations

"A generation goes, and a generation comes . . ."
(Eccl. 1.4 RSV).

If one generation comes, another passes away but the earth remains: and what is more, God remains, supreme over all the wonders of his creation. In each generation He has his servants, who, as they grow and mature, are brought to realise their place in his developing purpose. From generation to generation the outward forms will differ: Paul spoke in the synagogue, Wesley in the open air; our times see a progression from the photo-drama and the public meeting to the wireless or the cassette recorder in the home. But the heart of the matter is still the same: a realisation of God, of his love, and a response of love and obedience to him.

Not only do circumstances change from generation to generation, there is also the progression of God's purpose. Its details are hidden from us. When crises press upon us, public life degenerates, the old order changeth, we are apt to think that the end of all things is at hand. It may be so. But all human history is a story of crisis and change. When it is his time, God acts—Jesus came once, and will come again. But our security does

not rest in the imminence of his kingdom: it rests rather in the certainty of what has been promised by the supreme God, who has power, and, marvelously, cares for us! Secure, then, in this knowledge, we go on. No power in life, not destruction, *not death, can separate us from God's love.* If called to suffer, we suffer; if to endure, we endure; if to go forth and serve, we do so. This has been the way for countless saints throughout the age: and while the age lasts, we serve the Lord in our generation.

It is for us in prayer to wait upon the will of God, seeking to understand his will in our particular circumstances. Ours is the day of the house meeting, the small group, the faithful few: of children growing up in a non-Christian world, who, against a background of modern speech and modern ideas must find the meaning of the age-old gospel. Ours is the day of gadgets, television, films, tapes; of mass instruction, of methods of teaching which are potent for good or ill; of opportunity. The history of the coming years remains to be written: what will it have to say concerning our stewardship of God's truth?

(Midland Newsletter)

Pliny declares that Cicero once saw the Iliad of Homer written in so small a character that it could be contained in a nutshell. Peter Bales, a celebrated calligrapher in the days of Queen Elizabeth, wrote the whole Bible so that it was shut up in a common walnut as its casket. In these days of advanced mechanism even greater mar-

vels in miniature have been achieved, but never has so much meaning been compressed into so small a space as in that famous little word "So," in the text which tells us that *"God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."*

Inglishman



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

BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

Vol. 51, No. 2

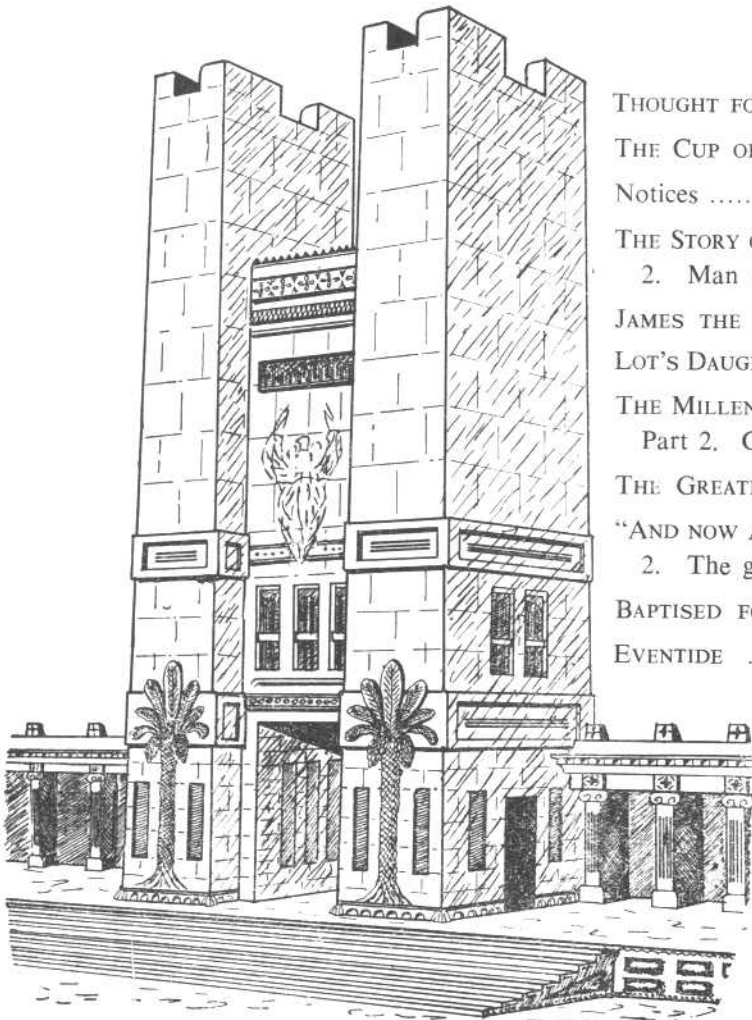
MAR./APR. 1974

Published March 1st

Next issue May 1st

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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.*

*This journal is sent free
of charge to all who are
genuinely interested, on
request renewable annually
and is supported by the
voluntary gifts of its readers*

Published by
Bible Fellowship Union
11 Lyncroft Gardens, Hounslow,
Middlesex, England

Bible Study Monthly

FOUNDED 1924

This Journal is published for the promotion of Bible knowledge and the furtherance of the Gospel of the Kingdom, its circulation being largely among independent Bible fellowships and study circles which share in varying degree the viewpoint of the Divine

Plan herein set forth. It is supported entirely by the gifts of well-wishers, and all such gifts are sincerely appreciated. Enquiries are welcomed, and all who are genuinely interested may have the journal sent regularly upon request.

Communications and donations to Bible Fellowship Union, 11 Lyncroft Gardens, Hounslow, Middlesex, England.
Secretary & Treasurer: B. G. DUMONT (Hounslow) Editorial & Publishing: A. O. HUDSON (Welling)

Thought for the Month

"Woe to those who join house to house, who add field to field, until there is no more room, and you are made to dwell alone in the midst of the land" (Isa. 5.8. RSV).

The ravaging of the countryside in the interests of urbanisation appeared to be going on even so far back as the days of Isaiah, but most certainly not on the scale that it is to-day. It has just been declared that in Great Britain alone 50,000 acres of good agricultural land are disappearing each year under roads, houses, factories and so on. A few farmers protest but nobody takes any notice; if anyone is more than usually vocal the objections are met by that inane cliché "you can't stand in the way of progress". Progress to what? In this case, most certainly to disaster, for the very life of man depends upon that which the ground brings forth and as the area available for food production diminishes so does the difficulty and cost of providing for the growing population increase. That lost 50,000 acres, intensively worked, would provide food enough to sustain at least half a million people and enough oxygen to meet the breathing needs of nearly as many. Of little use, either, to say that there are plenty of open spaces elsewhere in the world to furnish all the food and oxygen we are ever likely to need; food coming from overseas has to be paid for and there is already alarm being voiced that the world's oxygen resources are being depleted so fast by the modern rate of fuel consumption and by other industrial processes that there is a very real danger we may suffocate even before we starve. Almost every part of the world is in the way of becoming heavily industrialised, and with the modern craze for indulgent and wasteful luxury living the process of despoiling Nature irrespective of Nature's importance in the life cycle of man seems set to go on and intensify everywhere.

There is a very general failure on the part of the world's leading men, political and commercial, to realise how very delicately balanced is the maintenance of human life upon earth. What is called the "balance of Nature" is adjusted to suit the needs of the human race. If the earth's distance from the sun was only 10% less than it is the whole of the American continent except Canada and Patagonia would be uninhabitable, and so would Africa, India and most of China. Only 20% of the present inhabited area would support life. If on the other hand, it was 10% greater, then Canada, Alaska, Siberia and most of Europe would be too cold for life. The intensity of full sunlight suitable for plant growth and tolerable to men must be not less than 10 and not more than 20 units; what we get is about 15, just midway. To produce the right amount of air, maintain the best ratio between land and sea area, and afford a force of gravity which allows for normal activity, labour and movement, the earth must be between 6,200 and 10,000 miles in diameter; it is actually 8,000 miles, just midway. These limits were fixed by the Creator for the orderly life of mankind and so was the balance of materials and products which the earth affords. It may well turn out that when man turns away from that which Nature provides and tries to manufacture his own synthetic way of life he is in process of committing slow racial suicide. Nylon replaces cotton only because there is money in it. Synthetic rubber made from oil replaces the juice of the rubber tree for the same reason. One day, maybe, we will have to get back to Nature. It may not be without reason that Isaiah foresees a time when man will not only build his own house and live in it, but also plant his own vineyard and eat the fruit of that.

THE CUP OF OUR LORD

A memorial
discourse

"The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18. 11).

The incident that drew this remark from the Lord's lips is a well-remembered one. It was at the time of his arrest in the Garden. The little party was leaving Gethsemane, and in so doing approached and met the party of soldiers that was on its way to effect the arrest. Simon Peter, having possession of a sword, and burning with zeal to defend his Master, drew it, and struck the High Priest's servant. He succeeded only in cutting off his ear, whereupon Jesus commanded him to put up his sword, forbidding him to strike further blow in his defence. *"Put up thy sword into the sheath; the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"* Thus did He indicate that this Cup of which He spoke was an experience which He was called upon to encounter and endure.

The Cup is figurative. Quite a few Scriptures refer to it in this way. To drink of this cup, the cup of our Lord, signifies acceptance of, and willingness to endure, certain experiences as a Christian and as one of his followers. Jesus asked the two sons of Zebedee *"Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with?"* Quite confidently they answered him *"We are able"* whereupon Jesus rejoined *"Ye shall indeed drink of my cup, and be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with"* (vs. 23) and in saying that, He was telling them, although they knew it not at the time, that they were to taste of inward affliction and desertion and bear their share of outward affliction with him. That was a typical example of many such little words that Jesus had with his disciples as He tried to prepare their minds for the life of patient endurance that was to be theirs in future days, after He had left them to return to his Father.

It is significant that the shadow of the Cross had fallen upon Jesus as He sat with his little company around the table in that upper room. As we read the accounts of the events that led up to this time we can see something of what Jesus endured, as, for instance, his setting his face "steadfastly" to go to Jerusalem, knowing full well what was before him of shame and injustice and suffering and death. There is the human touch of the suggestion that his brethren and family go on before, so that He could slip into the city unnoticed. Then the public excitement of his later entry in kingly fashion, when riding upon an ass

He presented himself in formal fashion to Israel as their King. *"Hosanna to the Son of David"* they shouted *"Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord!"*—that picture fades, and we have another; the Lord is washing the disciples' feet, a lesson for them and for us. Finally the betrayal, and the arrest, and the denial by Peter, all just as Jesus had foretold it. All these things became part of the Cup which our beloved Lord must needs drain to the end.

It was the concern of Jesus to clarify in the minds of his disciples, as much as possible, the things that He must suffer, and so to prepare them for the worst. They were so slow of heart and mind to receive these things in those carefree days before the event. Like Peter, they all wanted to say *"this shall not be unto thee"* and dismiss the subject. But Jesus continued to turn their minds to these things. Can we not see him now, sitting there in the upper room with his disciples? Can we not see him performing that symbolic act that gathered up the meaning of what He had been doing and would be doing in pouring out his soul unto death? He took a Cup, and when He had thanked God for it He gave it to them! He made the wine in that Cup a symbol, a symbol that would best symbolise what He was giving to them spiritually.

This then is our participation with him in his experiences—his Cup! The Apostle Paul reminds us of this in 1 Cor. 10. 16 *"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?"* In this mystic common-sharing we partake with him of the fruit of the Vine. Into that Cup which He held had gone all the experiences of the mystic Vine in the past—for He is that Vine of which we are the branches (Jno. 15.5) and we can very truthfully say that the soul or life of the Vine was there in the Cup. The essence of its fruitage was there in the Cup. Many things had worked together to produce that fruitage. There was, first of all, the kind of soil in which the Vine grew. Then there was the attention of the husbandman and the oft-times pruning, that it bring forth good fruit. The storms which beat over it, the sunshine and the rain, all had their part to play. Finally there was the crushing of the grapes in the winepress that the rich juice might be extracted and afterward become wine. All these things had gone to determine and enrich the quality of the wine which Jesus now was giving to his disciples. Everything of the past in the growth and development of the Vine or the experi-

ences that befel the Vine had gone into the Cup. Here is a lesson for us! Since we covenanted to be footstep followers of Jesus and branches of the true Vine, all the experiences we encounter, whether on the hilltop or in the valley, whether bitter or sweet, are necessary to the triumphant completion of our calling. All are planned to work out some necessary fruitage of character in our hearts and lives.

At that Memorial Supper Jesus was putting to their lips an invisible cup of which the material cup was but a symbol. Into that invisible cup all of the past experiences of his life had been gathered. All that Jesus had said, and suffered, and prayed, and done, and was, went into the chalice which He was now putting to their lips. Thus they drank of his life. Thus they accepted him and thus they identified themselves with him in that acceptance. No wonder Jesus said, afterwards, as they were walking together to Gethsemane *"I am the true Vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away, and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit"* (Jno. 15:1). So He came to the great climax *"herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit"*.

In the silent years at Nazareth, when Jesus lived in obscurity, maybe working and helping at the carpenter's bench, his hands rough with toil, we can visualise him dealing with the commonplace things of every day. He must have known the hardship of poverty, the dull and narrow life of a country village, and perhaps the responsibility of supporting a family of younger brothers and sisters after the death of their father. But with the vision of the future all the time in his heart, unuttered though it was, he conquered the commonplace things and prepared himself a way to take the Cup. Many of us, perhaps most of us, have to live out our lives in the same dull obscurity, battling with the business of making a living, toiling in some factory, field, office or home, dealing with the sordid and scarring things. Yet all the time there is a vision of something better and nobler held in the heart unexpressed, the vision of our glorified Lord, and our being together with him. We are captivated with his word. He has put the chalice to our lips and we too drink of his victory over the commonplace.

Now Jesus lays aside the commonplace things of life and goes out to proclaim his message, and to enter more deeply into the soul of the people. It was in this mood that He came *"from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptised of him"* (Matt. 3: 13). He had been baptised into the world's toil; He was *"tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin"* (Heb. 4: 15). Now He would be

baptised into the world's SIN. Isaiah foresaw this, saying *"Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted"*. (Isa. 53: 4, 5, 6). John is calling a nation to repentance, his throbbing words smiting the hearts of the people, and they come to his stream, the Jordan, for the baptism of repentance. Now Jesus enters that stream. He, with conscience unstained and character untarnished! He, who needed no repentance! He, the holy, the harmless, the undefiled! He, the sinless, enters that line, that queue, waiting for baptism. She may be a harlot standing ahead of him and he a publican who is following behind him; the publicans and the harlots believed John. Jesus became one of them and was baptised into John's baptism of repentance! The identification is complete! He has taken the sinner's place! *"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."* (2 Cor. 5: 21). All this was a portion in his Cup; especially so is it for us and on our behalf.

There came a reaction to this identification of himself with the sinner. Jesus left men and the habitations of men and continued the struggle in the wilderness. Was this the way to complete, absolute, identification? Yes! This was the poured-out Cup that the Father handed to his Son. *"Jesus, being full of the Holy Spirit . . . was led by the Spirit into the wilderness."* (Luke 4: 1). For forty days He faced the issues, and then came hunger, and with it came the first insidious suggestion.

"You need not go back! You are the Son of God; that is enough. Stay out here, feed yourself by miracle, and live as the miraculous Son of God." It was the voice of the Tempter!

The temptation to live apart, to feed oneself on spiritual miracle, is one of the most real temptations of the spiritual life. To hear and receive the approbation of man on account of the things you discover from God is seductive indeed. Jesus brushed the suggestion aside. He would not be content with being the Son of God; He would also be the Son of Man. He would live, not merely by the food the earth brings forth, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Father, and that meant, for him, identification with men and the redemption of men at great cost to himself. That was the Cup! *"The Son of Man came . . . to give his life a ransom for many."* (Matt. 20: 28).

The Tempter suggested another means of proving his authority. If you must go back, why stand down with the people? Why not rise to a pinnacle? Your way is too costly! Why not worship me and take possession now?" Says Jesus, "It is

written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve." He put this suggestion aside also; He knew that the way He had chosen would drive him into a position that would finally mean crucifixion. He had been baptised between two sinners. This choice meant that He would now be crucified between two thieves. But he held to his resolve to be the Son of Man and bear all that men bore, and more.

From this Jesus went straight to the synagogue at Nazareth and announced his programme "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; ... to preach the acceptable year of the Lord*" (Luke 4. 16, 21). This is the Son of Man speaking. This announcement of his programme brought surprise and delighted wonder from his fellow-townsmen until He went on and revealed to them how wide his message really was. It was as wide as the human race—God cares as much for the Gentiles as for the Jew. There were many lepers and widows in Israel but even so the prophet went to others, Gentiles, a widow of Sarepta, and Naaman the Syrian. That changed matters! They arose in anger and led him to the brow of the hill with the intention of casting him headlong over the precipice; but He, passing through the midst of them, and in the majesty of his bearing holding them powerless, went his way.

All this went into the Cup. When we, too, are called and commissioned, and the cold prejudices close in and endeavour to quench our spirits, let us drink of his calm and courage, and so, passing through the midst of them, go our way. Let us fulfil the heavenly vision no matter at what cost to ourselves. Like the Apostle, let us "*press toward the mark for the prize of the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus*." (Phil. 3. 14). "*This one thing I do*"—that is the keynote.

But after this there came a season during which Jesus was immensely popular. The multitudes hung upon his words, words that fell like dew upon their thirsty souls. The healed ones went everywhere telling of his power and compassion. And the people found in him a new authority, the authority of REALITY. When they saw him breaking bread to the crowds in the wilderness they came and tried to make him a king by force. That was how it was that Jesus, perceiving their intention, withdrew himself to the mountains again. He would hold to the high purpose of the Father's Will for him even though it meant crucifixion. The EASY way to power was resolutely put away; He would take the long road to his Calvary. All the decisiveness and completion of consecration went into the Cup when He rejected a throne for a Cross.

When these moments come to us, brethren,

when we are offered the easy and dazzling way and we willingly choose the hard way, then we too drink of the chalice into which this trial has gone. Surely it is then that we find we are ready for further trials, with Jesus our Lord. Then it is that we can say with the Apostle, "*I (am) determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified*." (1 Cor. 2. 2).

There was an occasion when Jesus, beholding the city lying in all its splendour and magnificence before him, paused on the side of the mount and wept over the city. Think of the courage of that hour when He bade them "take these things from my Father's house" and drove them out. All this, too, went into the Cup. As with Jesus, so his followers need a stout heart combined with gentility of disposition. "*Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good*." One writer has said "*I love the Christ of the searching eye, the blessing hand, the tender, terrible prophet pronouncing woes to the city and then weeping over it. I love the Christ that allowed the returning storm to beat upon himself on the Cross so as to complete our redemption*". Let us drink of these qualities and be strong, for we shall need to be bold as a lion albeit as meek as a lamb.

Seated with his disciples in the upper room, and knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, knowing that He himself had come from God and was returning to God, He rose from supper, laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel began to wash the disciples' feet. He was so conscious of greatness that He dared to be humble. Into his Cup had gone majesty of soul linked with lowly service. You, my dear brethren, who share the dignity and honour of Sonship with him, you have need to learn what constitutes true kingliness. It is "the power to bend and serve". As James says (4. 10) "*Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and he shall lift you up*".

Gethsemane! All the pain, the agony, the spiritual loneliness of that hour go into the Cup. Was He afraid to die? Hardly; it was with that intention that He came, to lay down his life. Is it surprising that the Redeemer, who in his determination to go on to the end despite what wicked men might do, seemed to be looking in on men at their worst, should ask "if it be possible, let *this* cup pass from me". This is the hardest thing that any reformer or bringer of new ideas has to face; that although his ideal is light to those who can receive it, it is darkness to others who are willingly blind. But there is no other way. This is the Cup that is poured. The tragedy and triumph is not in the agony but in the out-come. Calm and collected He stands and says "Arise, let us be going... he is at hand that betrayeth me". ALL THAT WENT INTO THE CUP! Those of us who meet our

lesser Gethsemanes drink from that chalice into which the richness of that hour had gone, and we too can say "Arise, my soul, let us be going to meet our Cross". Having drunk, we meet it with calm.

Standing before Pilate, arrayed in mock royalty, He afforded the Roman soldiers a supreme opportunity to show their contempt for the Jews. Putting a crown of thorns upon his head, a stick in his hand for a sceptre, they hailed him as King of the Jews and then spat in his face. They had often wanted to do that to the Jews, now they would do it to their King. The racial contempt that was directed toward the men who were crying for his blood He bore on their behalf. He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. All of that went into his Cup.

He heard his words twisted and distorted to other meanings. *"I will destroy this temple that is made with hands and in three days I will build another made without hands."* He was being crucified on mis-quotation and He was not nervously anxious to explain. He let it go. He could wait. He knew that every lie would break itself on the truth, and He answered not a word. The Governor marvelled! And this went into the Cup. *"Let us consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."* (Heb. 12. 3). Those of us who have had our words mis-quoted, our best actions misunderstood, our best motives misinterpreted, and have suffered, if we drink of this Cup into which patient triumph has gone, and share with Jesus this poise of heart and resignation to our Father's Will, we shall say "Am I not to drink of the Cup my Father has handed me, with thankfulness?" He is nailed to the Cross! His good name is taken away; He is a malefactor. His disciples have fled; He is alone in his agony, beaten back, so to speak, into the dark until it seems that God too has gone—for from his lips comes the cry *"My God, My God, Why hast thou forsaken me?"* Everything seems gone.

But not quite!

Two words remain; *"MY GOD"*. They could not snatch *them* from his lips and heart. In quiet confidence He says *"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."* Nothing more bitter could have gone into the Cup!

A tomb held Jesus—but not for long. The most glorious fact of human history was yet to go into the Cup. Out of that tomb He arose, laid aside his grave clothes, and came forth triumphant and resplendent. He is risen!

My dear brethren: IF into that Cup has gone everything that life can possibly meet:—

Its commonplaces; its obscurity; its toil; its temptations; its blind prejudices; its bid for compromise; its lonely determination; its Gethsemanes; its hours before unjust judgment seats; its Cross-forsakenness; its death:

NEVERTHELESS

there has also gone into it the most complete triumph that can possibly come. *He arose!* Nothing else now matters. GOD'S LAST WORD IS RESURRECTION.

Let life do its best, or worse, this saving truth will be at the end of each one sharing with Jesus in this Cup. The life of Jesus and the Cross of Jesus raises every question about life that can be raised and raises them in the most acute form. The word *"WHY"* upon the lips of Jesus as He hung upon the Cross epitomised all the questions that ever trembled upon the lips of perplexed humanity. WHY does God permit evil? WHY? If there is a God, WHY this, and WHY that? The Resurrection answers them all. *God's last word is resurrection.* That is the finale of his work for mankind and it is in the Cup. Jesus prayed "Glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world WAS". When He had taken the Cup He thanked God for it. He took it all as from the Father's hand. *He thanked him for it, and lo!* everything was transformed. We all have to bear our cross; let us do it thankfully; for only those who have learned triumphantly to thank God for it all, can turn life from a senseless suffering into a sacrament. Let us each and all decide for ourselves *"the Cup which my Father hath given me, SHALL I NOT DRINK IT?"*

The Memorial

The appropriate date for the Memorial of our Lord's death will fall this year on Friday, April 5th.

Gone from us

SIS. E. CAVE (Downham Market)

SIS. V. GOODWIN (Salisbury)

BRO. N. JAMES (Kettering)

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

THE STORY OF THE DELUGE

2. Man of Shuruppak

"Man of Shuruppak, O son of Ubara-tutu, build thou a ship and finish it quickly, for by a deluge I will destroy all substance and life And I, understanding, spoke thuswise to Ea, my Lord, What thou sayest, Lord, I will do Then on the fifth day I laid out the shape of my ship all I possessed of the seed of all living I laded aboard her. Into the ship I embarked with all my kindred and family with me, cattle and beasts of the field"

This is how Atra-Khasis, priest-king of the ancient city of Shuruppak on the river Euphrates, begins his account of the great Flood which destroyed all life save that of those who were with him in the ship. Ea was the principal god of the Sumerians and Atra-Khasis the only one in all Shuruppak who had remained faithful to him. Because of the wickedness of mankind the great gods had held a council and decided to wipe out the human race by a flood of waters; Atra-Khasis because of his piety was told of the decision and instructed to build a ship for the salvation of himself and his family. The whole story was written down as an epic poem about two thousand years before Christ in what is called the "*Epic of Gilgamesh*" and copied and re-copied for centuries afterward until the 7th century B.C. Its details leave no doubt that it comes from the same basis as the Flood story of Genesis although grossly distorted and mingled with lingering memories of other and later floods in the same land.

"And God said unto Noah, make thee an ark of gopher wood I do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven: and every thing that is in the earth shall die And Noah did according unto all that the Lord commanded him And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons wives . . . of clean beasts, and beasts that are not clean, and of everything that creepeth upon the earth" (Gen. 6 & 7).

The story in the Book of Genesis comes down to us virtually unchanged since the days of Abraham, but it has been translated and re-translated many times. The English of our present Bibles comes from Latin and Greek and Hebrew versions of the early A.D. centuries. That Hebrew differed greatly from the Hebrew script in which Moses transcribed the early records of Genesis which he inherited from his forebears, records which were undoubtedly written in Babylonian cuneiform ("arrow-headed") characters on clay tablets which he had to translate. Even this cunei-

form writing was preceded by the pictographic script ("picture-writing") of the earliest Sumerians, long before the days of Abraham. That takes us back to about 2500 BC, approximately the time of Eber forefather of Abraham. No kind of earlier writing has been discovered so that it is not possible to trace the written stories of Genesis any further back.

The Sumerian account dates from just about the same time, or more correctly just a little later. It is generally believed that the "*Epic of Gilgamesh*" which contains the Flood story, was written about 2300 BC to commemorate the exploits of Gilgamesh king of Erech who lived about a century earlier. The oldest copy so far discovered dates from 2100 BC and other copies in the possession of various scholars and museums belong to times up to 650 BC., the latter written, not in Sumerian, which by then was a dead language, but in Babylonian or Assyrian. The copies vary a good deal in detail; it is evident that the same care was not taken to preserve the original text as with the Bible narrative, but the main outline remains the same and it is clear that the accounts retain the main features of the original story.

There are many legends of the Deluge among almost all the peoples of earth. Something like seventy or eighty have been collected, and whilst many of them are probably derived from the work of early Christian missionaries of mediæval times or earlier, or the dispersion of Israelites and Jews over the world through the ages, it is thought that some at least have come down as direct recollections of the event, transmitted from generation to generation and becoming greatly modified in so doing. No surviving account save the Sumerian is so similar to the Bible story as to yield any additional useful information but the fact of the existence of so fixed a conviction among almost all primitive peoples is itself a supporting evidence that something like this did indeed happen in the dawn of history.

Who then was this Noah, who figured so prominently in so great a happening, and what kind of man was he? Gen. 6, 9 says of him, briefly, that he "*was a just man, and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God*". The Lord told him "*thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation*" (Gen. 7.1). These expressions have sometimes been taken to mean that Noah was the only one left in all the earth of pure Adamic blood, that he alone was uncontaminated with the alien strain introduced by the apostate

"sons of God". That is not likely; to be effective the desired purity of Adamic descent would have to be true also of Noah's wife and the three sons' wives and it would require quite an exercise in genetics to establish how this could be so and still exclude all others living. The word rendered "perfect" means to be morally upright or whole, and "generation", "*dor*", denotes the then existing generation. When the reference is to a man's antecedents or origin the word "*toledoth*" is usually employed and this is not the case here. It may be taken then that God looked down upon a depraved and corrupt society and found only one man standing up as a beacon light for righteousness, much as was the case with Lot much later in the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. Like Abraham, Moses, Daniel, the Apostle Paul, Noah was a man of sterling faith and fixity of character, pledged to obey unquestionably the decree and will of God. It might well be said that no other man in history was ever presented with so stupendous a challenge; he was to witness the utter dissolution of the world he knew, build a structure the like of which never man had seen wherewith to escape the fate of his fellows, and with only his own family around him, start a new world. And all that the inspired record says of his supreme faith, translated into action, is "*Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he*".

Where did the event take place; on what part of the world stage did the patriarch play his part? The Bible tells us little about the world of his day; just where he lived, what the state of the civilisation he knew, the arts and sciences of his day, we do not know. One geographical clue is given in the account, and that is very useful. We are told in Gen. 8:4 that "*the Ark rested in the seventh month . . . upon the mountains of Ararat*". This does not necessarily mean, as is generally assumed, the mountain now bearing that name in eastern Turkey. Ararat is the anglicised form of Urartu, the ancient name of the district lying between Lake Van and Lake Urmia known in modern times as Kurdistan, and at present coming within the north-eastern part of modern Iraq with a small strip in the south-east of Turkey. If it was in this district that the Ark came to rest, it is tolerably certain that it had drifted from the wide plains south of the mountains, watered by the Tigris and Euphrates, which now constitutes Iraq, and in earlier days saw the rise and fall of the empires of Sumeria, Assyria and Babylonia. It is therefore highly probable that the old Sumerian tradition, to the effect that Noah was a dweller in the south country, near the head of the Persian Gulf, rests on a basis of fact. The city of Shuruppak, said to be his native city, was in fact not built until many centuries after the Flood but the

Sumerian story has clearly combined with the original record some recollections of a later great flood of the Euphrates which desolated Shuruppak and Erech and a great part of the Euphrates plain about four hundred years before the birth of Abraham so that this must not be taken too seriously. But the fact that the Sumerian traditions all agree that the Ark rested on the mountain they called Nisir in the same mountain range that is indicated in Genesis, that this mountain was ever after venerated by them as the "mountain of the world" and the home of the gods, and the detailed exactitude of the stories of the event emanating from this region compared with those current in other parts of the world, is good ground for postulating the plains of the Euphrates as the scene of Noah's life and labours.

The inference to be drawn from the description of Eden in the second chapter of Genesis, written by a dweller on the Euphrates about twenty-five centuries before Christ and using the geographical names current in his day, is that the first home of man was to the south of the confluence of that river with the Tigris and two others, and therefore at a spot now covered by the waters of the Persian Gulf. It is to be expected that the Flood made changes to the configuration of the land but even so, since the Indian Ocean has existed from before mankind's entrance upon earth and hence presented an impassable barrier southward, and the Arabian highlands and Persian mountains made migration east and west difficult, successive generations before the Flood must have tended to migrate northward, following the courses of the great rivers, Tigris and Euphrates. In such case the principal centre of the antediluvian world, the territory which was most thickly populated and would have attained the highest degree of civilisation, would be this "land of the two rivers", the land which afterwards became Babylonia and Assyria and owned Abraham as its noblest son. Colonists may have gone out into Syria and down into Egypt, thence settling in the Nile valley and along the north coast of Africa. They may have struck eastward, inland towards Tibet and along the seacoast towards India. Westwards they may have penetrated southern Europe. The only concrete basis for assessing the extent to which antediluvian man colonised the earth is by the interpretation of remains of Paleolithic and Neolithic man and hazarding an opinion at what point the Deluge interrupted their respective cultures, and this at best has to be on a very approximate basis. There seems to be general agreement among contemporary authorities that the Neolithic culture originated in the Tigris-Euphrates valley and thence spread, first west into Syria and Turkey, and that not until a time which must have been

the time of the Flood did it extend much farther. Now the principal difference between the Neolithic and their predecessors is that the former grew crops and kept sheep and cattle for food whereas the latter had not attained this stage of development and lived entirely by hunting and gathering wild plants for food. From the Bible point of view this looks very much like an antediluvian world in which a restricted area in the present Middle East boasted an intelligent and perhaps highly cultured and artistic people surrounded by outlying tribes who had so degenerated from the original human stock as to be capable of living only by gathering what Nature provided.

It is perhaps natural to think of the antediluvian world as being populated more or less to the extent that is true of the world to-day. There is every reason to believe that the contrary was the case. It is much more likely that the human community was relatively small and that few had migrated very far from the original centre of the first men. A great deal of publicity attends the discovery of an occasional skull or other relic of pre-historic man but not so much is said about the paucity of such finds relative to the corresponding finds of animal remains, compared with the numerical relation between the number of human beings and of large mammals on the earth to-day. The archaeological evidence is that early man was distinguished by his rarity. Such evidence as the Old Testament gives us seems to indicate that human increase was extremely slow—fantastically slow—in the early days of history compared with later times. In the first two hundred and thirty years (*Septuagint*) of his life Adam had only three sons. Perhaps he had as many daughters. The families of the post-diluvian patriarchs who are said to have lived three or four hundred years were no larger than average families of two or three generations ago. At a rather later date Abraham and his two brothers were born over a period of sixty years. Taking all that can be inferred from the Old Testament into consideration, it is unlikely that world population in Noah's day amounted to more than a few millions. Some check on the validity of these figures is afforded by the investigations of an acknowledged authority (Putnam in *"Energy in the future"*) who estimates that two thousand years after the beginning of Neolithic culture the population of the world would have been between half-a-million and four millions; from the Bible standpoint this would have been the time of the Flood.

In any discussion as to the historical truth of the story of the Flood there arises sooner or later the question as to the extent of the earth's surface affected and whether all mankind in the earth did in fact perish in the catastrophe. The older

commentators used to picture the earth completely enveloped in water standing to a depth of twenty-two feet (the "fifteen cubits" of Gen. 7.20) above the summit of the highest mountain, some five miles high. The fact that if such was the case there would be nowhere for the waters to drain away was overlooked or glossed over. The fifteen cubits, of course, referred to the territory over which the Ark actually passed, being an observation taken at the time and in fact can be shown to be the depth of water required to float the laden vessel. The modern attitude tends to the view that so far as the actual narrative is concerned the description relates only to those facts which were within the observer's own knowledge and, generally speaking, to the territory he was familiar with; in short, the plain of Iraq with its encircling mountains. The word used for "earth" in the narrative means equally either the entire planet or an expanse of territory such as in English is denoted by the word "land". The question of the geographical extent of the catastrophe will be considered later on in connection with an examination into its possible natural causes; for the moment it is sufficient to note that the narrative itself need only be viewed in relation to the area in which it is set.

The question as to whether the entire human race was wiped out, needs more detailed consideration. From the non-Biblical point of view it is virtually impossible to hazard an opinion since the answer depends upon both the extent to which the Flood penetrated and the extent to which man, however small in numbers, had spread over the earth. From the Biblical point of view the problem is different. The narrative is very definite that the corruption of mankind was so complete that the Deity moved to wipe them out and make a fresh start with Noah and his sons. The language used denotes totality; *"all flesh had corrupted his way upon earth"*, *"I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth . . . but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord"*, *"I do bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh, and everything that is in the earth shall die, but with these shall I establish my covenant"*, *"these are the three sons of Noah, and of them was the whole earth overspread"*. It can reasonably be argued that this language, sweeping as it is, applies to the lower animals in equal measure to man, and it is certainly not true that all such were destroyed; the fauna of Australia and Tasmania, for example, include types found nowhere else in the world and those lands have been separated from the other continents from a time before man existed. It is also admittedly difficult for anthropologists to classify all existing human racial types within the limits of three principal ancestors—Shem, Ham and Japheth. The difficul-

ties may be more apparent than real. On the assumption of a limited occupation of the earth at the time of the Flood it is possible reasonably to envisage the destruction of all living, both men and animals, in that area, the more remote animal creation remaining unaffected. Some such hypothesis may go far toward reconciling these discordant factors; so far as Noah and his family were concerned, it was certainly the case that the whole of the world they knew was destroyed and they alone were left living.

When did all this happen? According to the chronological chain which can be constructed from various statements and allusions in the Old Testament, the Flood occurred in, approximately, the 34th century before Christ (taking the patriarchal periods as stated in the Septuagint, which is now established as correct in this particular). This is a thousand years before the beginning of recorded history. Accurate dating still does not go back much before 1500 BC, but the rise of the Sumerian city-states is fairly well established at about 2600 BC. This is useful, for there is evidence of several disastrous floods in the "land of the two rivers" all of which were later in time than the great Deluge. The earliest of these — the one which deposited the eight-foot strata of clay at Ur which Woolley at first thought was evidence of the Deluge—came towards the end of what is called the Ubaid period which might have been round about 2700 BC. Prior to this there had to be time, if the Genesis account is to be accepted, for the increase of population to a figure commensurate with what is known of the primitive Sumerians and Egyptians. An interesting sidelight on the problem is the fact that several widely dissimilar peoples date the beginning of history at about that time. Thus Chinese history commences in the 27th BC century, that of ancient Egypt in the 29th, and the Hindu world era in the 32nd. The Maya of Central America, who had one of the most sophisticated calendar systems the world has seen, started their year on 14th October 3373 BC. Whatever the significance of these various calendar

systems it does seem that something of tremendous significance to all races of mankind occurred some three millennia before Christ.

Reasonably enough, then, we can take the Sumerian legends as affording a very suitable background to the Bible story. We do not need to concern ourselves unduly as to whether the Flood overspread the whole earth or not. We have but to picture it as it affected the Middle East. Then, as now, the land was a wide, flat plain, the size of England, bounded on the north and east by a lofty and tortuous range of mountains. Through the plain flowed the four rivers of Gen. 2, ultimately joining at a point below which lay the lost Eden. Dotted over that plain must have been the luxurious cities of the antediluvians and on those broad rivers they must have taken their pleasures. Somewhere here must have lived Enoch, who served God and was translated and not seen again. Here, on this ground, walked the materialised angels who had sinned against God and were now sinning against humanity; this was the land that more than any other must have fulfilled the words of Gen. 6.11 in being filled with violence. Here the "giants" of Gen. 6.4 roamed abroad, preying on helpless mankind; perhaps the skeletons of those monstrous creatures lie buried there now, deep below the silt and gravel of the Deluge, amidst relics of the magnificence of those early days, deeper down than any of our archaeologists have as yet penetrated. Here must have been the land where Noah was born, and lived six hundred years, and preached righteousness, and heard the voice of God, warning him of things not seen as yet, and so "prepared an ark, to the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Heb. 11.7). To the north-east of that land still stands the mountain, venerated by Sumerian, Assyrian and Babylonian for three thousand years thereafter as the "mountain of the gods in the sides of the north" where the Ark at length came to rest, from which Noah and his family came forth to make all things new.

To be continued

Notice of coming conventions

WARRINGTON. Friends at Warrington announce an Easter convention for three days April 13 to 15 in the Masonic Hall, Winmarleigh Street, Warrington. Details and programmes from F. B. Quennell, 21 Summerville Gardens, Stockton Heath, Warrington, Lancs.

BLABY. The usual Midlands spring convention is planned at Blaby, Leics, for May 25—26. Details and

programmes from A. Charcharos, 55 Greenacres Drive, Lutterworth, Leics.

WINDSOR. The normal June convention will be held this year at Chesham, Bucks, in association with friends at Berkhamstead and other centres, on June 15—16. Details and programmes from H. Charlton, 43 Halkingcroft, Langley, Slough, Bucks. For accommodation write Alex Charcharos, 30 Highfield Road, Tring, Herts.

JAMES THE JUST

A stern, unbending figure, rigid in his adherence to the Law of Moses and a fervent upholder of the Covenant in all its detailed ritual, a Nazarite from his youth to the day of his death; that is James the Just, known and respected by all sincere God-fearing Jews in Jerusalem during the days of Jesus. In one respect he was like the Apostle Paul in that at first he rejected the teaching and ministry of Christ, but after the Resurrection became a convert and died a martyr for the faith. In another respect he differed from Paul in that whereas Paul gave his life to preaching the Gospel to all, whether Jews or Gentiles, travelling the world over in the endeavour to extend the faith, James limited his work and his outreach to Jews alone, Jews of the homeland and Jews of the Dispersion, and after his conversion probably never went outside Jerusalem and certainly never left the homeland of Judea and Galilee.

He was a natural brother of the Lord Jesus, the first born to Joseph and Mary after the birth of Jesus. There were three more brothers—James, Jude, Simon (in Hebrew Joseph, Judah, Simeon) and at least two sisters. There used to be all sorts of theories advanced to avoid the plain implication in the New Testament that Mary was the mother of these children, devised at a time when the idea of Mary having other children after Jesus was considered improper or God-dishouring, a survival of the old theological conception of Mary as the Mother of God. So it was suggested, without a shadow of evidence, that these children were those of Joseph by a former marriage, ignoring the fact that were this so, James, as the firstborn of Joseph, and not Jesus, would have been the heir to the throne of David. Another supposition was that the reference to Jesus' brothers really means cousins and that they were the children of Mary and Cleophas, which contradicts plain Scripture statements. It might be noted here that the frequently repeated assertion to the effect that the same Greek word in the N.T. can mean either "brother" or "cousin" has no foundation in fact. "*Adelphos*" is used consistently for exactly the same purposes as English "brother". Where cousin or other kinsfolk are intended "*suggenes*" is used.

James, therefore, a few years younger than Jesus, grew up with him in the little home at Nazareth, sharing in all the joys and sorrows of the family life centred around Joseph's work as the village carpenter from the fruits of which he supported a growing family of at least seven children. Nothing is recorded of those early years

but there is one vivid side-light which gives a clue to James' later character. Matt. 1. 19 says that Joseph was a "just man". This expression implies much more than it would normally denote in colloquial English. Spoken of a First Advent Jew, it means that Joseph was a whole-hearted and rigid devotee of all the minute ritual and ceremonial of the Mosaic Law. It means that in that humble Nazareth home every requirement of the Covenant was scrupulously observed; the feasts properly celebrated, the Sabbaths kept, synagogue obligations honoured, the Scriptures read and the children instructed in the same, all as commanded by Moses or hallowed by later tradition. In this domestic atmosphere both Jesus and James grew up; the one went through Jordan and preached a new message which took him to the Cross, the other became, as his father doubtless aspired that he would become, a pillar of orthodoxy and an example to all the village in his unyielding allegiance to the Law of Moses.

One wonders what kind of discussions took place between these two youths, fast approaching manhood, the one already reaching out in spirit to the wider understanding of God's purpose, and his own place in that purpose, which was so soon to lead him away from Judaism and make him the Light of the world, the other, steeped in the Rabbinic lore of the past and zealous, like Paul, for the salvation of his own people, not yet ready to receive the new light that was due to break upon Israel. Nothing is said of all that; James only figures in the story of Jesus' ministry twice. Once, soon after choosing the twelve disciples, Jesus' mother and his brothers came to him apparently in some alarm to take him home, saying "*he is beside himself*" (cp. Matt. 12. 46 Mark 3. 21). Again, later on, the brothers cast doubts upon the validity of his mission and work: "*for neither did his brothers believe on him*" (Jno. 7. 3-5). There is not much doubt that James, as the eldest among them, took the lead in all this, and that right up to the Crucifixion he remained at best unconvinced by the ministry and teaching of his brother. It is significant that neither he nor his brothers were present at the Cross.

To the orthodox Jews he was a man to be admired and emulated. "James the Just" they called him because of his outstanding rigid virtue. He was a Nazarite, like Samuel and others of old, having taken the vows of that order in his youth, thereafter abstaining from wine or strong drink, never allowing razor to come upon his flowing

locks, and dressing always in white robes in symbol of purity. Because of his Nazarite status he had the advantage of the priestly concession whereby members of that order were permitted certain privileges of entry into the Temple. He was also called the "camel-kneed" because, it was said, he had knees like those of camels from being so often alone in the Sanctuary in prayer for Divine forgiveness of the people for their sins. James the Lord's brother was an outstanding Judaist of his day.

But immediately following the death and resurrection of Jesus he became a Christian!

No explanation for this sudden about face is given in the New Testament. The first intimation of the fact appears in Acts 1 where the brothers of Jesus are found gathered with their mother and with the Apostles in the "upper room" in that continuing fellowship which preceded the stirring events of the Day of Pentecost. An apocryphal work, the *"Gospel according to the Hebrews"* does offer an explanation but its historical accuracy is doubtful. It certainly represents a tradition current in the Early Church and there may be some basis of fact. It states in brief that Jesus, immediately after his resurrection, "went unto James and appeared to him, for James had sworn that he would not eat bread from that hour wherein he had drunk the Lord's cup until he should see him risen again from among them that sleep... He took bread and blessed and brake and gave it unto James the Just and said unto him, My brother, eat thy bread, for the Son of Man is risen from among them that sleep." There is one obvious fault in this account; James the Just was not at the Last Supper. The account cannot be taken as true history, but it may well enshrine the conviction of the Early Church that the conversion of James did take place in consequence of the Resurrection. Paul says definitely, but without indicating the source of his information, that Jesus appeared to James at least soon afterwards. (1 Cor. 15.7). The evidence, scanty but precise, is that James threw in his lot with the believers immediately after the death of Jesus, his life thereafter being bound up with the history of the Christian community in Jerusalem.

Paul met him, perhaps for the first time, five years later (Gal. 1.19), but there is no indication of James' precise position in the Jerusalem Church then. By A.D. 48, however, fifteen years after the Crucifixion, he was the acknowledged leader. By this time most of the Apostles were scattered over the Roman world fulfilling their commission of preaching the gospel to all the nations. It seems that home affairs were by common consent left in the hands of James. Some six years earlier the Apostle James, brother of John, had been killed

by Herod. Now the Church was entering into a theological crisis, the gathering storm over the burning question whether Gentile converts were to be subject to the Law of Moses. The native Jewish Christians in Judea still observed the Mosaic Law; it had never occurred to them to do otherwise. But there were Gentile churches beginning to spring up; Paul and Barnabas with others had laboured mightily at Antioch and a zealous and missionary-minded assembly was the result. Now some of the brethren from Judea came to them with the demand that they take upon themselves the obligation of the Mosaic Law (Acts 15.1) and this they would not have. So a general council was called at Jerusalem, and Paul, Barnabas and others attended to plead the case of the Gentiles.

At this, the first Church Council called to discuss a major doctrinal controversy, James presided. He was still a Nazarite; he must have presented a striking figure with his flowing, uncut locks cascading over the shoulders of his snow-white robes. He must, too, have realised the momentous nature of the conference over which he was called to preside. On the one hand his eyes swept across the serried ranks of the converted Pharisees and others who, though having accepted Christ for themselves, retained their fanatical Jewishness which refused entry into the Christian fellowship to any Gentile who would not submit to the Mosaic Law and become, in effect, a proselyte to Israel. The wider outreach of God's purpose to all mankind meant nothing to them; Messiah had come, but Messiah was for Israel alone and those who became Israelites by adoption. On the other hand, he looked upon the representatives of the Antioch Church there present, and those of Jerusalem who had themselves begun to see that "God is no respecter of persons, but that in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him", and he must have prayed silently for wisdom and grace to direct the issue aright.

James' concluding judgment shows the progress he had made in that fifteen years of knowing Christ. His every instinct must have urged him to add his sympathy to the arguments of the Pharisees. His own life's training cried out Amen to all that they said. But he could not be blind to the fact that there were wider and longer vistas in the Divine revelation than he or his had ever dreamed of or could be contained within the framework of Judaism. He would have listened attentively as Peter, a native-born Jew like himself, adduced his own testimony to the manner in which God had used him to carry the faith to the Gentiles. There had been much "disputing" (Acts 15.7) which incidentally means orderly debate and argument, not acrimonious wrangling as the

English word would imply to us. Then Paul and Barnabas held the assembly silent as they recounted the story and the success of their own extended missionary work among the Gentiles of Roman Asia.

James' summing up at the end reveals how clearly he had grasped the fundamentals of the Divine Plan as revealed by the life and death of Jesus. His knowledge of Old Testament prophecy and doctrine came into focus with all that Jesus had said, and with the logic of events as related to the missionary endeavour of those who had gone into the world with the Christian message. For the first time, perhaps, a clear and succinct expression of the three-fold purpose of Christ's Advent was enunciated and placed on record; he quoted the words of Amos of old to demonstrate his point. Israel must first be scattered ("sifted") among the nations and the word of God go to those nations that from them all God might find and take a "people for his Name", the Church of this Age, partly Jew and partly Gentile. Following the completion of that work the scattering of Israel would be reversed and the nation be restored and rebuilt in its own land, purified, converted and an instrument in God's hand for the future. Finally an opportunity for all of mankind who remain, the "residue", to call upon God and be reconciled. The twin purposes of this Christian Age and the forthcoming Messianic Age are well expressed in the words of James. The conviction with which his conclusions struck home, no less than the respect in which he was held by all present, ensured the unanimous acceptance of his judgment. The threat of a serious division in the Church was averted and the delegates from Antioch went home with, maybe, a new respect for the rigid Judaist who had until then stood before their minds as an immovable exponent of the old order which they knew was now in process of passing away.

This was James' greatest recorded achievement. He and Paul met once more, some ten years later, upon the occasion of Paul's final visit to Jerusalem. Even then it is obvious that elements of the Mosaic Law lingered within the practices of the Christian fellowship and it was through getting himself involved with these at the entreaty of James and others that Paul figured in the Temple riot which led to his arrest and eventual despatch to Rome and his first trial (Acts 21). It is probable that there was always a certain amount of more or less tolerant difference of viewpoint between these two. Paul's breadth of vision, his depth of doctrinal understanding, and the restless spirit which drove him ever on to conquer in fresh fields of service probably grated upon the other man with his essentially narrower outlook and quiet determination to serve the interests of the flock in the place where he himself found Christ. James

on his part, try as he might and undoubtedly did, never really had much enthusiasm for the wider missionary outreach. Probably each man was best fitted for the particular function he was called upon to exercise.

The Epistle of James was most likely written after all these things had happened, when he was approaching sixty years of age. The Church at Jerusalem was well established by then and included a good proportion of "second generation" converts; the outward events in Judea and Galilee began to portend the fearful tragedy which was to befall the nation ten years later at the hands of Titus the Roman general. The Epistle reflects all this. First of all it breathes an atmosphere of the Mosaic Law with its insistence upon "works". Paul brought to light the doctrine of justification by faith but James still insisted upon the place of "works"; *"faith without works is dead"*. His zeal for the Law, though, is tempered by his Christian interpretation. There are probably more references and allusions to the words of Christ in this epistle than in any other. He wrote to the Christians of the "twelve tribes scattered abroad"—this fact alone dates the epistle as late in James' life since there were no Christians in those lands until the missionary journeys of Paul and others—and the abuses such as "respect of persons" in the assemblies to which he refers show that some of these assemblies were already losing their first love. His strictures on the "rich men" in chap. 5 might very well refer to the state of Jewish society generally at the time, just before the nation came to its end. In fact, it has been said that the Epistle of James is the final appeal to both Jews and Jewish Christians before the end of their existence as a nation. Although not of the twelve, James did, like Barnabas and Paul, rank as an Apostle, and it might be a fair appraisal to say that he exhibited at one and the same time the marks and characteristics of a Hebrew prophet and a Christian apostle. At the very end of the Jewish Age he stood before his fellows and his nation as representative both of the old dying covenant and the new one which came in with Christ.

He died, a martyr, in the year AD 63, seven years before the destruction of Jerusalem. During the few months' interval between the sudden death of the Roman governor Porcius Festus—the one who sent Paul to Rome—and the arrival in Judea of his successor Albinus, the High Priest Ananus took advantage of the absence of Roman authority to persuade his colleagues illegally to condemn James and murder him by throwing him from a pinnacle of the Temple. Thirty years of faithful service to the church founded by Peter and the eleven on the Day of Pentecost came to an end, and the first Bishop of the Church at Jerusalem sealed his testimony with his blood.

LOT'S DAUGHTERS

The incident, related in Gen. 19. 30-38, whereby the two daughters of Lot became the mothers of children by their own father has been used by many a commentator and in many a homily to illustrate the depravity and corruption of that far-off day but the strictures all too often do not take into account vital differences between that day and ours. The standards and conventions of four thousand years ago were not as those of to-day and some of the reasons that similar conduct is now rightly regarded as reprehensible did not then apply.

The story is set in the shadow of the catastrophic overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah. The patriarch Lot, with his two young daughters, had been saved from the holocaust and taken refuge in a cave on the high mountain which stands at the south-east corner of the Dead Sea. From their refuge, five thousand feet above the plain, they could see the devastated area below them and realised that all life had been obliterated. They had at first found shelter in the little town of Zoar some sixteen miles from Sodom but, the record tells us, they "feared to dwell in Zoar", perhaps because the Canaanite inhabitants were not too friendly or perhaps they feared that Zoar in its turn would be involved and destroyed; the conflagration probably went on for weeks and spread over a wide area. So they were eking out a sparse and primitive existence on this uninhabited mountain-top. It was here that the two girls, despairing of finding husbands, resorted to this desperate expedient in order to ensure posterity to their father. "*Our father is old*" said one to the other "*and there is not a man in the earth to come in to us after the manner of all the earth*". This need not necessarily mean that they thought all human life had been destroyed from the earth; the word for "earth" here can be limited in its meaning to the land around them and from their elevated position they could see some seventy miles to the horizon which would take in much of the land of Canaan where Abraham dwelt; they would perceive that the highlands of Judah were still green and fertile. More likely they saw no avenue of escape from their mountain fastness across the desolated plain below and felt that they

were permanently cut off from the rest of the world.

The daughters justified their action by necessity, but the entire episode is better understood when it is remembered that at that early stage in the history of the race marriage was customary within much closer relationships than is considered either ethically or biologically sound now. The progressive physical degeneration which has continued from the beginning had not sapped human vitality to the extent it has now. Men and women lived longer and were more virile. In Old Testament history we find that Abraham and Nahor his brother both married their nieces; nearly a thousand years later a possible marriage between David's son Amnon and his half-sister Tamar was considered quite proper (2 Sam. 13.13) although this was in fact forbidden by the Mosaic Law. Another and earlier Tamar saw nothing improper in bearing a child to her father-in-law Judah in order to maintain the family line (Gen. 38). Outside Old Testament records, it was a frequent occurrence for kings of nations to marry their own sisters with the object of keeping the line of descent in one family. Every one of the eleven Pharaohs of the famous Egyptian 18th dynasty, under some of whom the Oppression and Exodus of Israel took place, took their own sisters, daughters or half-sisters to wife, one even marrying two of his own daughters. Abhorrent as the idea might be to modern minds, therefore, it has to be admitted that Lot's daughters were not so far removed from the general thought of their times and the solution they found to their problem should be viewed accordingly.

The two children became ancestors of nations which multiplied to inhabit the territory east of the Dead Sea, the Moabites and the Ammonites. Both nations were thorns in the side of Israel in after days. One noteworthy fact is that Ruth, an ancestress of Christ, was a Moabitess. Had it not been for the action taken by the two daughters in that cave on the Canaanitish mountain above the ruined cities, one of the most appealing characters in the whole of Bible history would not have lived, and the Book of Ruth would never have been written.

The Christian life is a life of self-sacrifice, of self-immolation, of self-consumption, if it is to be pleasing to God. This is what we have covenanted to do—this is our compact with God. The

lure of the easy chair, of sloth and lethargy is fatal to the spirit of sacrifice. It requires a white-hot glow in the heart to keep the sacrifice steadily consuming from day to day.

THE MILLENNIAL GOSPEL OF JESUS

PART 2. (Conclusion)

3. The Testimony of Two Apostles

The teachings of Christ were made known to the world by the men whose works are recorded in the Book of Acts. The predominant thought in their minds at that stirring time was the coming of the Kingdom. "*Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?*" they asked Jesus hesitantly at the moment of his ascension (Acts 1. 6-8). They received no direct answer to their question; they were given instead a commission to be his witnesses and to preach the Kingdom to all nations, but in that commission the promise of his return to earth was reiterated and that to them was the Kingdom.

Peter's first sermon, given on the day of Pentecost and recorded in Acts 2. 14-17, illustrates this. "*This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel*" he said "... *in the last days ... I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.*" Reference to the prophecy quoted (Joel 2.28) shows that this outpouring of the Divine Spirit upon mankind is to come after the restoration of Israel to their ancient land, their conversion and purification for God's purposes. Peter hoped to convert Israel to Christ there and then, and knowing that the next step was to be the Millennial outpouring, announced the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy as commencing at once. Hence the enthusiasm of the early Christians; they expected that the Lord would return and establish his Kingdom on earth in their own lifetime.

Peter's second sermon, delivered a few days later in the Temple, shows how clearly he had grasped the fundamental principles of the coming Age. "*Repent ye therefore, and be converted*" he cried, "*that your sins may be blotted out, in order that times of refreshing shall come from the presence (face) of the Lord, and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you, whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began*" (Acts 3. 19-23). By repentance and conversion on a national scale, the times of Millennial refreshing, of relief from pain, disease and death, could at once come to Israel. They did not so repent, and their times of refreshing have been delayed in consequence. The expression "restitution of all things" refers to the restoration of Edenic conditions on the earth, and of the original human purity, which Israel associated with the Kingdom, and is synonymous with our Lord's

expression in Matt. 19.28, the "regeneration". It is quite true that this coming "Golden Age" was referred to by the prophets from earliest times.

A clear view of the Apostolic expectation regarding the earthly Messianic Kingdom and the conversion of the nations is found in the proceedings of the Council at Jerusalem. The story is told in Acts 15. 13-21. There had been differences of opinion in the Jerusalem Church as to the acceptability of Gentiles into their number. The Council represented the last struggle of the old conservative position, that the invitation to rulership in the Kingdom, to be of the promised "Seed of Abraham" which was to bless all the families of the earth, was confined absolutely to the Jewish people, against the newer and broader understanding that God intended to select the "Seed" from among any and every nation upon earth. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit the new view prevailed, and the Church formally accepted the principle that Jew and Gentile stand equally before God in this matter of the "Call of the Church". James, leader of the Church at Jerusalem, voiced what was evidently the general feeling of the assembly when he said "*God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name; and to this agree the words of the prophets, as it is written 'after this I will return, saith the Lord, and will build again the tabernacle of Jacob which is fallen down, and I will raise the ruins thereof and I will set it up, that the residue of men may seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord.'*" (Acts 15. 13-21). The implication of these words is that after God has taken out of the Gentiles (the nations), a "people for his name", the Church. He will restore the tabernacle (dwelling place) of Jacob (Israel), the re-establishment of Israel in their own land and their preparation for their future work; and then, all preparations being complete, the remainder of mankind will be invited to "seek after the Lord".

The public utterances of the Apostle Paul confirm these conclusions. He based his whole hope for man's future upon the resurrection of the dead and the coming Day in which God will afford all men, dead and living, an opportunity for conversion. So he says to Timothy (1 Tim. 2.4) that God "*will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth*". Addressing the Athenians in the Court of the Areopagites (Acts 17), he preached Jesus and the resurrection, declaring that God "*hath appointed a day in the which*

he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained". That day is the Millennial Day, when Christ will rule, teach and ultimately decide the destiny of men, in righteousness, even as was predicted of him in Isa. 11. After his arrest and arraignment before Felix, the Roman governor of Judea, Paul re-affirmed his belief in the teachings of the law and the prophets to the effect that *"there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust"* (Acts 24, 25) and went on to reason of "justice, righteousness, and judgment to come", at which latter expression, we read "Felix trembled" and terminated the interview. The "judgment to come" of which Paul spoke was the disciplinary and remedial judgment of the Millennial Age; Felix, who is known to have been an unscrupulous and base man, might well have trembled to be told that all his deeds would come up for inspection and judgment "in that day".

When, two years later, Paul was brought before Porcius Festus, the successor of Felix, a man of very different stamp, the new procurator gave Paul a careful hearing and then invited Herod Agrippa, nominal "king" under Rome, to give him the benefit of his opinion, as one well versed in Jewish religion and customs. Accordingly Paul had the opportunity of stating his case to one well qualified to understand its relation to traditional Jewish hopes. Paul again stressed the resurrection to a day of judgment as the great foundation of Divine purpose. *"I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers... unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night hope to come... Why should it be thought a thing incredible unto you, that God should raise the dead?"* Having thus presented his case he threw out the tremendous challenge *"King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest!"* The impression Paul must have made upon Agrippa is evidenced by his historic reply *"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian"*. Although modern commentators have tried to gloss this as "Would'st thou so easily make me a Christian?" the Greek text does justify the A.V. rendering. There is little doubt that on that fateful day King Agrippa was not far from the kingdom of God. And it is evident that his knowledge of the Old Testament prophecies persuaded him that Paul's application was correct.

In his Epistles to the Corinthians Paul stresses the necessity for a resurrection from the dead. In 1 Cor. 15 he insists that the resurrection of Christ is the basis of hope for the world. *"As in Adam all die"* he says *"even so in Christ shall all be restored to life"* ("made alive" does not correctly convey the meaning of the Greek word used). It is

a self-evident fact that all men do die, and Paul insists that this is due to Adamic condemnation. Just so certainly will all men be restored to life, a restoration which is due to Jesus. What use they may make of that restoration is a different matter; some may prove quite unamenable to the missionary endeavour of that day and so, having rejected the Divine offer of life, will incur the only alternative; but that there is to be, first of all, a resurrection both of the just and unjust is very plainly taught in this passage as well as in the Book of Acts. *"Then cometh the end"* he concludes *"when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and all power."* This is the end of the Millennial Age, and the time when resurrection work—not only the actual restoration from death but the raising up to human perfection and into the Divine likeness—has been completed. Thus it becomes true, as the next verse declares "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death". It is with this in mind that he wrote to the Romans *"the earnest expectation of the creation"* (*ktisis*—a created thing or creation) *"waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God"* (Rom. 8, 19-22). The world is waiting in suspense, unknowingly, for the time when Christ and his Church will be manifested in glory for the work of the Millennial Age. Isaiah said *"It shall be said in that day 'Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us'"* (Isa. 9:25); both prophets and apostles pointed to the same event, the coming of the Kingdom on earth, the "desire of all nations" (Hag. 2:7).

Peter and Paul both placed this "gospel of the Kingdom" in the forefront of their teachings, Peter stressing the kingship of Christ and the necessity of repentance and conversion on the part of those who would benefit from that kingship, and Paul the fact that the restoration of all men to the opportunities of the Kingdom will be afforded them by means of a resurrection from the dead.

4. The Parable of the Sheep and Goats

The basic principles of the Messianic era are vividly portrayed in the Parable of the sheep and goats. This parable refers to the period of Christ's reign over the earth, from his assumption of power at the commencement of the Millennium to the cleansing of the world from the last trace of evil. *"When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats"* (Matt. 25, 31-32). Jesus set this parable against the background of Daniel's vision (Dan. 7, 9-10) in which that prophet saw the "Ancient of Days" seated upon a throne of

splendour with myriads assembled before him for judgment, one "like the Son of Man" coming with the clouds of heaven and the kingship of earth being formally committed to that Son of Man and his companions, the "people of the saints of the Most High" that they might possess the kingdom for ever. Meanwhile the evil powers and institutions of the old world were being destroyed in a great holocaust of fire. The "Son of Man" is the Lord Jesus Christ at his Second Advent and his companions are his loyal followers of this Age, translated to be joined with him in that Kingdom.

The disciples must have understood this parable more clearly than any other parable. They were so accustomed to this view of the Messianic reign. Jewish literature of the date of the First Advent is full of such references, and Jesus himself must have been thoroughly familiar with them. It is thought that the very phraseology of this parable was suggested to his mind by passages in the Book of Enoch, a book with which he would certainly be well acquainted: "*On that day mine Elect One shall sit on the throne of glory and shall try their works . . . and I will transform the earth and make it a blessing . . . for I have provided and satisfied with peace my righteous ones, and have caused them to dwell before me: but for the sinners there is judgment impending with me, so that I shall destroy them from the face of the earth*". (1 Enoch 45. 3-6).

The vision of the Great White Throne of Revelation 20.11 is parallel to that in Daniel 7 and to this parable. In Revelation there is the same standing of the nations, the "dead, small and great", before the Throne, the same judgment and separation between good and evil, and the same condemnation of sin and sinners. These three passages between them afford a wonderfully vivid picture of the work of judgment that is carried on throughout the Millennial Age, a work that divides and separates men into two classes, those who choose righteousness and life, and those who choose unrighteousness and death. The basis of the selection, feeding or not feeding the hungry, clothing or failing to clothe the naked, and so on, is an allusion to the very practical ideas held by thinking men in Jesus' day as to what constituted fitness or unfitness for eternal life. Such "good works" have always been features of the religious life of true Jews. There is a parallel to our Lord's words in another apocryphal book, the "Secrets of Enoch" describing Enoch's visits to Paradise; his guides say to him "*this place, O Enoch, is prepared for the righteous who . . . accomplish a righteous judgment, and also give bread to the hungry, and clothe the naked, and raise the fallen, and assist the orphans who are oppressed, and who walk without blame before the face of the*

Lord, and serve him only. For them this place is prepared as an eternal inheritance". The likeness of these words to the parable is obvious. A succeeding reference to the sinners is significant. "*And I (Enoch) said, Woe, woe, how terrible is this place! And the men said to me: This place, Enoch, is prepared for those who do not honour God: who commit evil deeds on earth . . . oppressing the poor and spoiling them of their possessions . . . who when they might feed the hungry, allow them to die of famine: who when they might clothe them, strip them naked . . .*" (2 Enoch 9 and 10). If in fact Jesus did take these passages as the basis of his parable it is easy to see how readily his hearers would grasp his meaning, and connect the "sheep" and "goats" who "did" or "did it not" with the final judgment upon righteous and evil men.

In the parable the "sheep" manifest the practical Christian virtues towards their fellows—feeding the hungry and thirsty, sheltering the stranger, clothing the naked, caring for the sick and delivering those in bondage. It has been pointed out that of the seven obligations laid upon the Christian in the New Testament only one—visiting the fatherless—is omitted in this parable. The reason is not hard to discern; there will be no fatherless in the Millennium! All will have been restored to life by the Redeemer, Jesus, and all may thenceforth become sons of God by reconciliation with him. But there will be many hungry, naked and in prison, at first. Men, returning from the grave, will have the characters and dispositions that were theirs at death, and the result will be that, although physically whole, many will still be mentally and morally sick, in prison by reason of bondage to past vices and depravity, naked as respects fitness for the new world into which they have come, and whether they realise the fact or not, hungry and thirsty for the blessings of life and knowledge that the Kingdom is designed to give them. There is a link here with the Parable of the Good Samaritan; it will be remembered that Jesus gave that parable in answer to a question "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" and the Samaritan who undertook the care and healing of the distressed wayfarer was the one shown to be worthy of such. So in the Millennial Age; the man who is making progress toward perfection and harmony with God will be actively employed in helping and assisting his fellows in every conceivable way; the selfish and the sinner will be indifferent to such service and Jesus in the parable points to this as a touchstone by which the true state of the heart can be indicated.

The question put both by sheep and goats "*When saw we thee an hungred, or athirst . . .*" and so on, is a rhetorical one, put into the mouths of the characters in order to throw into promi-

ence the essential principle of these "good works"; inasmuch as ye did it—or did it not—unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it—or did it not—unto me. Our Lord's concern for those he came to seek and to save is such that every service or disservice rendered to them he feels as if rendered to him. More; since he gave his own life, at the cost of great suffering, for the salvation of men, and is to establish his thousand year reign on earth for the purpose of persuading as many as can possibly be persuaded to "turn from sin to serve the living God", it follows that every service or disservice rendered to men in that day is either a help or a hindrance to the execution of the King's plans, and therefore can be aptly said to be done, or not done, unto him. No one in that Age can escape working either for or against the purposes of God—and all will be judged accordingly. *"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, 'come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world'"* (vs. 34). This "kingdom" is not the same as the Millennial Kingdom of Christ. That is a kingdom in which all men are under discipline, and all, good and bad alike, are present in that kingdom and must perforce remain so until they have come to a full knowledge of the truth and made their choice between "life and death, good and evil". This is a kingdom entrance into which is granted only to the proved righteous, to those that have passed the test and are in no sense unclean. It thus corresponds to the Holy City of Rev. 21 and 22, into which nothing unclean or that defileth will ever enter. It is the kingdom of the earth after the Millennial Age, which men inherit as kings in their own right, living, moving and having their being in God and conducting their affairs on a basis of equality with each other in harmony with the laws of righteousness.

5. The Holy City

The last book of the Bible is the Book of Revelation; few passages in that book are so dramatic as that in which is described an angel descending from heaven with a great chain in his hand, by means of which he proceeds to bind Satan, the Devil, cast him into the abyss, and shut him up so that he can deceive the nations no more. The correct understanding of this twentieth chapter of Revelation is the key to a right view of the Millennial Age. The Divine restraint which is to be put upon the Devil and the power of evil is an essential preliminary to the evangelical work of that Age, a work which culminates in the reconciliation to God of "whosoever will". The chapter presents that aspect of the Millennial Age which has to do with the moving of Divine power against Satan, and the restraint of the outward practice

of evil in the world. It includes the time at the end of the Age when the restraint is relaxed in order to permit mankind, after their period of education and evangelisation, to make their choice for good or evil. With the final end of life of those—if such there be—whose hearts are firmly set in them to remain at enmity with God the last shadow of evil flees away, and the Age comes to an end, being merged into the everlasting kingdom of the Father.

It is only in this chapter that the Bible gives the duration of the Millennial Age—one thousand years. The figure is evidently intended to be understood literally; it was the opinion of antiquity that the Messianic Age was to endure for one thousand years, that the Divine Plan would then reach its consummation so far as this earth was concerned. When John used the term—and he uses it six times in this chapter—it was as an expression well known to Jew and Christian and already appeared in certain apocalyptic books then extant in which the thousand year reign of righteousness was mentioned. This same chapter indicates that the Millennial Age is the great Day of Judgment, that the Church is exalted to "reign with Christ" at the beginning of the thousand years, and the rest of the dead restored to earthly life during the thousand years for the completion of their probationary term of life's experience. Appropriately enough, therefore, the First Resurrection, that of the Church, takes place when Satan is bound and the Millennial Kingdom inaugurated. *"And I saw thrones—and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."* (Rev. 20.4). The next thing in order is the General Resurrection, and here verse 5 in the AV has for fourteen centuries been responsible for some departure from Apostolic teaching. The verse runs *"but the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection."* On the authority of this text, as rendered in the A.V. it has been held that the resurrection takes place, not at the beginning, but at the end of the Millennium. This creates confusion, for if the dead are not to return until the Millennium is ended, it follows that only the living nations at the time of Christ's Advent will share the glories of the Millennial reign, and there can be no question of an opportunity of conversion for all men—only to those who happen to be living when the Kingdom is established. It seems clear, however, that this clause has no rightful place in the Scriptures. It first appeared in the 5th century, and is not to be found in any earlier manuscript. Many authorities on the Greek text reject it as an interpolation, pointing out that its construction and metre are different from the rest of the text, and that it breaks the sense and symmetry of the passage. The reason for its appearance in the fifth century is not

difficult to surmise. It had been a feature of Jewish belief for centuries that there was to be a "resurrection of the just" at the beginning of the Messianic Age, and a "resurrection of the wicked", which generally meant the Gentile nations, at its end, for their condemnation and punishment. This belief was carried over into Christianity, and although not authorised by Apostolic teaching, lingered in the minds of many. It is probable that this clause was originally a marginal comment made by some reader, who thought it necessary to add this item of popular belief to John's account of the First Resurrection, and was afterwards copied into the text by a later transcriber who failed to distinguish between the text and the comment.

This is the end of the Millennial work of Christ. During the Age, evil having been restrained, men have had opportunity to appreciate and enter into heart harmony with the Divine principles of life. By its end there will no longer be any excuse for ignorance or failure to measure up to the standards of life required by God, for all will have had abundant opportunity to come to Christ in true conversion, and to attain that state of mental, moral and physical perfection which will enable them to keep the Divine laws without failure. The removal of the Divine restraint on evil must come, for God will have men living righteous lives on a completely voluntary and willing basis, not because they have no power or ability to do otherwise, and this will at once constitute a test of loyalty. Those who have not eschewed sin and evil thereby demonstrate that they are unworthy of life, and that further prolonging of life is useless

in their case; so God leaves the sinner to his way, and the end of that way is death.

The vision of the new Jerusalem, the account of which concludes the Book of Revelation, is a symbolic representation of the final phase, the consummation, of the Divine Plan. John saw a wonderful city descending out of the heavens to settle everlastingly upon the new earth. This city was to become the dwelling place of God, where He would dwell with men, and into it there should nothing defiling ever enter; only those that were accounted worthy of everlasting life. From the city there flowed a "River of Life", having "Trees of Life" growing upon its banks, and from this water and food of life the sinsick nations of the world were to derive sustenance and healing. The vision closes with a gracious invitation to all men, that they come and partake of the water of life freely.

Here the veil is drawn. The Scriptures do not take us beyond the end of the Millennial Age to talk in detail of the "ages of glory to follow". Of the condition and life of the redeemed through the everlasting years they say nothing. We are shown the Plan of God for this earth at its triumphant conclusion, sin and evil banished for ever, all nations fully converted to God and enjoying his munificence on the restored and perfected earth. For the further glories of revelation, of knowledge and activity that must assuredly be the lot of all the redeemed, we must wait, until the time shall come; but we can wait in full assurance that as Isaiah predicted (Isa. 32:17) "*the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.*"

Waters of Death

A writer in the "*Jerusalem Post*" bewails the polluted state of some of Israel's rivers. He says "*Wadi Sorek, which was once a most beautiful approach to Jerusalem, has now been turned into a 40 kilometer sewer, open and running all the way from Jerusalem itself to the Mediterranean*". We in this country, of course, are equally familiar with polluted rivers, but in this particular case there is a special association which highlights the circumstance very vividly. The Wadi Sorek is the river which was in the mind of Zechariah when, in his vision of the Millennial Kingdom, he spoke of living waters going out from Jerusalem "*half of them toward the hinder sea*" (Zech. 14:8). In his

vision he saw the two rivers he knew so well, the Kidron running into the Dead Sea and the Sorek into the Mediterranean, and pictured them as rivers of life, carrying everlasting life to all the people of earth. But under the conditions of this present world the Sorek is a river of death, foul and polluted, no fitting subject for Zechariah's eloquent simile. It will take the remedial judgments and the living gospel of the Age of Christ's rule over the earth to convert it to a river of life, "living waters", a fitting symbol of the purifying and ennobling influences which will cleanse men from the defiling impurities of evil.

THE GREATER BLESSEDNESS

*A reflection on some
unwritten words of Jesus*

Admonishing the Elders whom he had called from Ephesus to meet him at Miletus, the Apostle Paul sought to impress upon them the wonderful privilege they had of doing for the Lord's people a service very much akin to the service of the Lord Jesus himself. Pointing to his own faithful life also as an incentive to them, he quotes one of the unrecorded utterances of our Lord to give emphasis to his admonition, to show them that the essence of the Christian's course (and especially the Christian Elder's course) in his relations with others was much more a matter of "giving" than receiving. *"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"* The nearest that any recorded words of Jesus come to this utterance is in Matt. 10: 8. *"Freely ye have received, freely give."* None of the evangelists place on record the words of Jesus in the particular form here expressed, but evidently He had said them; some one or other of his immediate hearers had remembered them and passed them on to Paul, who treasured them up in his heart, and now made use of them to incite his brethren, sharers with himself in the ministry of grace, to be ready to lay down their lives for the brethren—not serving with any idea of recompense, but of a ready mind.

Paul's quotation of these words leads us to realise that there must have been many of the sayings of Jesus left unrecorded. It is not for a moment thinkable that the few chapters of incidents given from his busy life was anything like a full chronicle of his sayings and doings. As John says (John 20: 31-32) *"Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book; but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name."* Just a few episodes from his activities, and just a few excerpts from his many and varied utterances are given, but, under the Holy Spirit's guiding care enough to enable the believer to understand and appreciate the "way that leadeth unto life".

As with the Lord, so with many of the prophets who preceded Jesus. Even though the book of Isaiah has sixty-six chapters and Jeremiah fifty-two and Ezekiel forty-eight, it is hardly likely that these records contain all their warnings and pleadings and chidings as they sought to turn a wayward people back unto the ways of the Lord, and

one feels very sure that some of the minor prophets spoke much more fully in the name of the Lord than has been left on record to come down to us. Part of our difficulty of understanding them lies in the fact that only a resumé of their appeals were written for our learning, but of one thing we may be sure. The Holy Spirit of God has given us the essence of all they said. No essential point has been omitted of their many and varied utterances. The sweet fragrance of their self-sacrificing lives has been concentrated, and the sweet aroma of God's tender watch care over his chosen people was distilled by them into a very few inspiring promises of a rare charm and beauty.

Let us think of these things in the same way that we do of the "scents of Araby". Those skilled craftsmen who knew the secrets of the perfumer's art would gather every flower that grew and lay it under tribute so that nothing of its matured blooming fragrance would be lost. The petals and stamens of millions of blooms were collected and the precious odours they contained extracted from them, reduced to a form in which they could be stored up and easily transported from place to place. Compacted into small compass and to last for long periods, they were capable of being expanded and dispersed again at pleasure by all who joy and delight in the fragrance of flowers.

In the same way the Heavenly alchemist has concentrated the Divine Principles enunciated by his prophets into small compass, like the precious spikenard of Mary, into the brief restricted utterances put on record for us in his Holy Word. Distilled by the Spirit of God and sealed up within his beautiful flask, the God of the Holy Book has stored up fragrance ravishing beyond words, and when the seals are broken and the alluring fragrance is unstopped, the odours fill the house. Like a casket of Attar of Roses, the concentrated essence of thousands of beautifully tinted rose leaves, full grown and mature, put into that form with a view to its subsequent expansion and distribution as and when required, so facts and truths and principles of the profoundest importance to man are laid up and enshrined in the Scriptures in comparatively few words with a view to their being, in God's providence, and as He sees fit from time to time, expanded and distributed to the delight and profit of those who diligently and humbly give themselves to the study of his Holy Word.

"AND NOW ABIDETH . . ."

A series of studies
in I Cor. 13

2. The graces of Love

In turning attention to the list of graces which go to make up the Master-grace of Love, we find some of them described in terms of a positive nature, "Love is . . .", while the rest are defined in terms of their opposite, "Love is not . . .". Do not assume from this that Love is a compound of negatives. There were good reasons for Paul's adoption of this form of statement to the Corinthian Church; the context preceding offers proof enough of envy, of vaunting, of pride, of callous indifference to purity in their midst. Life, with them, was rough and raw, little removed from heathen ways. Paul desired to have them know that these carnal vicious practices were not accordant with the principles of the *Agape*, and would not win them approval in Heaven's sight, nor fit them for the nobler service to which they had been called. For men such as these—just as with Israel of old—it was essential to lay emphasis on the negative, and tell them precisely what "thou shalt not do". Such men, as yet, were unready for the deeper liberties of Christ, unready for the "golden rule" of doing unto others as they would others should do to them.

It is to our advantage to survey these negatives from their opposite point of view, for as we turn them round into positive elements, we can see why the *Agape*, the Love of God, will achieve such wonderful results in the hearts of men in days yet to come, and why they mean so much to the saints today. God's upper standard methods are based upon the principle "do this", not upon a "thou shalt not". Hence the "*Agape*" will be assertive, aggressive and positive.

In this world, where evil reigns, the impact of these assertive qualities on other lives is bound to have a disturbing influence. They differ greatly from the legislative enactments which control and shape the ways of common life. As they impinge upon that life, men are apt to see themselves as targets for the marksmanship of men with a better weapon, and to feel resentment towards the more efficient marksman with his superior advantages. But such disturbance of the muddy waters by the inflow of a purer stream is God's way of purifying the stagnant reservoirs of human thought. The impact of Divine Love upon the empire of sin will be the greatest disturbing factor the world has known. It will uproot ancient concepts and overturn age-encrusted institutions as nothing else has done. What this mighty dynamic is in its whole, it must also be in all its parts. As the whole is an aggressive thing, so also is every part.

It is well for us to see these parts in their positive shape and dress, and to realise that there is deeper intent in their cultivation than mere adornment of character. Like the truth which Jesus taught they are as a sword (Matt. 10.34.) sent forth into the earth to assail the citadels of sin, though for this present Age restricted in their assault to outpost skirmishing ere the main attack begins. We have the same weapon of attack today, though by less skilful use we cannot achieve the same results. But our feeble assaults with Love and Truth are not without some effect.

Taking the words of Paul as they stand in the text, we note that Love, on its positive side, suffers long and is kind; it rejoices with truth; . . . it beareth, believeth, hopeth and endureth all things. On its negative side it envieth not, it vaunteth not, and is not puffed up. It does not behave itself in unseemly ways; it seeketh not its own; is not provoked; takes no account of evil, does not rejoice in iniquity, nor does it ever fail.

Translating these negatives into the terms of their opposites they would read in tabulated form:—

Love envies not
but is generous and benevolent.
Love vaunteth not itself
but is modest and decorous.
Love is not puffed up
but is humble and knows its place.
Love doth not behave unseemly
but is courteous and polite.
Love seeketh not her own
but is sacrificing and charitable.
Love is not provoked
but is evenly minded and good tempered.
Love takes no account of evil
but is guileless and pure.
Love rejoiceth not in unrighteousness
but is genuine and sincere.
Love never fails
but is always a success.

Writing up these qualities as positive elements they will read: "Love suffers long, and is kind; love is generous and benevolent; is modest and decorous; is humble and knows its place; is courteous and polite; is sacrificing and charitable; is evenly minded and good tempered; is guileless and pure; is genuine and sincere; rejoices with truth; bears all things; believes all things; hopes all things; endures all things. Love always succeeds."

To all appearances this is a list of simple quali-

ties. Having passed the Master-grace through the prism of his own sanctified understanding, it comes out to Paul's pen broken up into its varied constituents, thus enabling us to take note that all have common names, and that they are qualities to which men of good faith pay lip service every day. Simple though they are, they are too exacting for the ordinary man to observe and practise in the common round of life. It may be granted that some of the noblest of humanity, nature's gentlemen, have possessed some of them, in proportion as culture or circumstance brought refinement to their lives, but of this we can be sure, as history will attest, the balanced whole constitutes a standard of moral character too high for men unassisted by Divine help to reach. Once and once only that balanced whole has been exemplified before the eyes of men, and that once is the standard for all time. Men have scrutinised and analysed Christ's life but it has stood every test. Even non-believing men have had to confess that He stands alone, separate and apart from all men. The lustre of that One incomparable life is the measure of the outstanding worth of these simple graces blended and co-ordinated in the balanced wholeness of the *Agape*. There, in him, we see the elements for what they are; there we see the balanced whole for what it is. Love is not any one of these elements alone, but a complete synthesis of them all. As with the diamond, the synthesis makes it what it is. The diamond, like the more common graphite, is composed of carbon elements, but it is the way the atoms are arranged and interlocked that makes all the difference between the two. So it is with the *Agape*. The blending and interfusing of these elements so that each is permeated and tintured by all the rest makes Love the unique thing it is. There is no such quality as simple long-suffering or benevolence; it is always long-suffering or benevolence "plus". All that is of the real, the good, the true, goes into each one of them, but shines through this facet or that as the sparkling gem is turned.

From the evidence of Scripture, as well as of human experience, it seems that this synthesis of Love is an activating power peculiar to this reign of sin and death. Under no other set of circumstance could a synthesis like this be required. This spark from the Divine Flame which has been kindled in our hearts had its origin in the heart of God. In him it represents his attitude to fallen men. From him it passed first to his well-beloved Son, and kindled there the ready response to come down to man's relief, regardless of the cost.

While we can see the need of God's long-suffering with members of a fallen race, we cannot see the same need for the exercise of that quality towards the sons of light above. Long-suffering is

not called for in his Love for them. Nor can we see the self-sacrifice of Jesus in "seeking not his own" was needful in the heavenly courts. "Seeking not one's own" to the point of sacrifice could scarcely be an element of Love in the heavens. But notwithstanding such a lack those heavenly courts must have their codes of respect and esteem, with love each for each, befitting to such sacred atmosphere. Love, as sons of the same Father there surely must be, but even so it would seem to be minus some elements of the *Agape*, as that Master-grace has been made manifest towards fallen man. Nor does there seem to be reason or need for the perfect man, restitution being complete, to show long-suffering to his fellow-men, nor yet present himself in self-sacrifice on his behalf. There will be no cause for envy in that new earth, for all will have enough to make life complete. Nature's gentlemen will have grown mature and beautiful in righteousness and holiness, and brother-love will link them together in one happy relationship with God as the Father of all.

From considerations such as these it would seem that the "*Agape*" is Redemption Love, that the wider range of its elements is peculiar to these present times, on this sad old earth. And more than that, they seem to be the tie that binds the saint to his Saviour and his God, and that the saint alone of the teeming millions of earth is the honoured casket for those precious elements, of this deeper, fuller Love. In him, it is still Redemption Love, a love that spurs him on to graduate as a co-deliverer of a suffering world. These precious elements, thus exclusive to the Church, constitute the very essence of Christ-likeness, and as none but God's Elect can be conformed to the very image of his Son, so none but these can scale the heights, or plumb the depths of this very special Love.

It will be a great thing indeed for Restitution's gentlemen to take on the perfect Love of that new earth, but it is a greater thing—an infinitely greater thing—for the saint of God in these present times of sin and death to put on this adornment of Christ, as a co-ordinated and balanced thing, with Satan and his hosts at large on every hand to tempt and harass and oppose. Nothing but the power of God can accomplish this amazing thing, and nourish into completeness and maturity the "likeness" of his Son.

Thoughts like these should invest our calling with deeper urgency and seriousness every day, for the opportunity to grow like Christ is flitting by with every setting sun. When once the body of the Elect is complete, the opportunity will not recur again. It is no easy thing to transform conceptions into character, but if it is to be accomplished in any heart, it must be done today. These

simple elements must be put on, and must interpenetrate and permeate each other in their entirety if the Love that is shed abroad by the Holy Spirit is to reach its maturity in Christ-like character. The very desires of the heart of God must infiltrate into every saintly heart, and fill it with the same burning zeal to live and labour for this groaning

world's redemption and deliverance from sin and death. That is the end and purpose of the "Agape"; that is the objective towards which our simple elements must grow. Neither are these graces an adornment just for today; they are the equipment for a great work on the grand scale in another and better day.

To be continued.

BAPTISED FOR THE DEAD

A note on
1 Cor. 15. 29-30

"What shall they do which are baptised for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptised for the dead? And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?" (1 Cor. 15. 29-30).

A strange passage! The majority of commentators are frankly uncertain of its meaning. There is really no evidence that baptism in proxy for the dead was practised by the Early Church, despite the efforts made by some to substantiate the surface interpretation of the words. In any case, even if any such practice could have been shown to have existed, it has no Scriptural foundations whatever, and would in fact directly contradict the Scripture doctrine. The baptism of a believer is a symbol of something already having taken place in his own heart, his own intelligent and deliberate consecration of himself to God's service and discipleship of Christ. *"We are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."* (Rom. 6. 4). No person can be baptised into Christ's death on behalf of another; the symbol performed under such circumstances would lose all significance. It is in the highest degree unlikely that the Early Church during St. Paul's own lifetime would have developed so variant an understanding of the matter, and even if they had that Paul himself would countenance it in this manner.

Perhaps the key lies with the final sentence "Why stand we in jeopardy every hour". The argument is that those who are "baptised for the dead" base their position upon the veracity of Christ's resurrection. If He has not risen again, says Paul, why are we baptised for the dead and stand in jeopardy. Is it possible that he was thinking of the theme exemplified in his own words to the Romans already quoted and recalling that those who are baptised into Christ's death are in fact being baptised in behalf of a dead world.

The purpose of our being "buried with Christ by baptism into death" is that we might "rise to walk with him in newness of life." The purpose of that new life—at any rate that part of the purpose which is of the most immediate importance—is that the faithful of all ages, thus baptised and risen with Christ, may ultimately be glorified together with him and associated with him in his future work of blessing all nations of earth and reconciling "whosoever will" to God. The real hope of the world lies in the final opportunity for life which will be afforded them by the Church in association with her Lord in the days of the Messianic Kingdom. In a very real sense, then, those who are now baptised are baptised for the dead world and will one day extend the fruits of their baptism to that dead world. Every baptised Christian stands "in jeopardy" every hour, in danger of being enticed away from his lofty calling by the wiles of the Evil One. Not until his call to "be with Christ" at the end of the way can he expect to hear the words "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joys of thy Lord" and until then he stands in jeopardy. Why is he thus baptised, and why does he stand thus in jeopardy, asks Paul, if in fact Christ has not risen and no basis exists for the accomplishment of human salvation as promised in the Divine Word? The whole underlying principle of the Christian calling, the whole reason for the existence of Christians, is not that Christ lived and inculcated a new code of conduct, but that Christ died, and rose again, and is exalted to the right hand of God, from whence he shall come to judge the living and the dead. And when He thus comes, to judge the nations righteously, we, who have been baptised for the purpose, will be with him to share in that work of judgment. *"Know ye not"* says Paul in another place *"that the saints shall judge the world."*

EVENTIDE

"So he bringeth them unto their desired haven"

"So he bringeth them unto their desired haven".

This may be said to be the Eventide of all Eventides to us, for it holds memories which no other eventide in all the year can hold. Often we have asked ourselves as we gathered to the Table of the Lord "will this be the last time we shall celebrate together these memorials of his death?" We may have come together in the Lord for ten, twenty, in some cases even fifty years to "show the Lord's death till he come", and have always found this to be the night outstanding from all other nights for us. At other times, by means of study or address, our minds might range the whole wide field between Paradise lost and Paradise regained, but on this night there is but one theme to which we may rightly turn. *"As oft as ye eat this bread and drink this Cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come"*. (1 Cor. 11.26). So at his request it has come about that pious souls, over the centuries, have drawn together to "remember him", and commemorate the act that made his broken body and shed blood available for their needs.

That sacrifice has accomplished something for needy men which nothing else in all creation could have brought about. It is in that body broken for our sakes, and in that blood shed for our sins, that all the satisfying merit has been found. Some may claim to see more of one thing, others more of another in that sacrifice, but however much we may seek to define or apportion this or that, it was his death that made redemption in its every phase a possibility. Upon that death the plan of God was made to hinge and turn. It is that death we have before us this eventide. Out of very gratitude we can sing.

*"Saviour, thy dying Love
Thou gavest me,
Nor would I aught withhold
Dear Lord from thee.
In love my soul would bow
My heart fulfil its vow
Myself an offering now
I bring to thee."*

If we have also seen this opportunity as an occasion to renew our consecration vows, and to repeat our affirmed desire to be made "dead with him"

to God's sovereign Will, that simple stanza can be our fervent prayer.

Let us not forget that there is a communion "in the blood of Christ", and "in the body of Christ" (1 Cor. 10.16) which calls for the fullest consecration to the Will of God (as to an Altar. 1 Cor. 10.18) and while there is no thought of vicarious merit or of ransom-purchase here, it calls for the outright surrender and fullest consecration of all we have, and are, and hope to be to the sovereign purposes of Almighty God. And if we see it thus, the drinking of the Cup and breaking of the Bread can carry to our hearts the double thought, and we can also say,

*"Jesus, our Mercy Seat, covering me,...
My grateful heart looks up, Saviour to thee,
Help me the news to bear
Thy wondrous Love declare
Spread thy truth everywhere
Dear Lord for thee.
All that I am and have, thy gifts so free;
All of my ransomed life, dear Lord, for thee!
And when thy face I see
Thy sweet 'well done' shall be
Through all eternity,
Enough for me."*

Once more, by the grace of God, we have been spared to meet together at the Table of the Lord, and partake, with those who love his blessed Name, of those simple emblems that stand for so much to us. We have acknowledged our indebtedness to him for his redemptive sacrifice, and have re-affirmed our own desire to be dead with him. Let us now ask the God of all grace and comfort to help us in the fulfilling of our vows, that thus our communion with Christ may be complete and entire, and that we may yet the more be "conformed unto his death". Let us in this quiet eventide so resolve to appreciate what we have done, that should it be our last, we may be found of him acceptable and ready to appear before his glorious face.

*"What rapturous joy shall then be ours
Forever Lord, with thee,
Clothed with our resurrection powers
Thine endless praise shall be."*

Dryden



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

BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

Vol. 51, No. 3

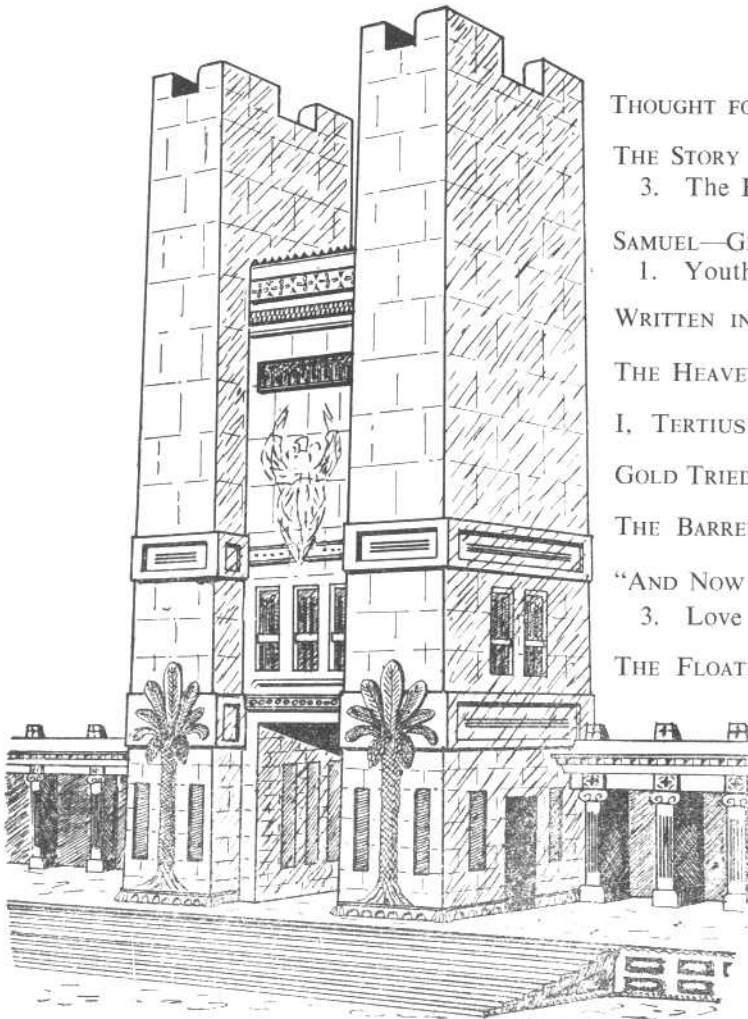
MAY/JUNE 1974

Published May 1st

Next issue July 1st

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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.*

*This journal is sent free
of charge to all who are
genuinely interested, on
request renewable annually
and is supported by the
voluntary gifts of its readers*

Published by
Bible Fellowship Union
11 Lyncroft Gardens, Hounslow,
Middlesex, England

Bible Study Monthly

FOUNDED 1924

This Journal is published for the promotion of Bible knowledge and the furtherance of the Gospel of the Kingdom, its circulation being largely among independent Bible fellowships and study circles which share in varying degree the viewpoint of the Divine

Plan herein set forth. It is supported entirely by the gifts of well-wishers, and all such gifts are sincerely appreciated. Enquiries are welcomed, and all who are genuinely interested may have the journal sent regularly upon request.

Communications and donations to Bible Fellowship Union, 11 Lyncroft Gardens, Hounslow, Middlesex, England.
Secretary & Treasurer: B. G. DUMONT (Hounslow) Editorial & Publishing: A. O. HUDSON (Welling)

NOTICES

New Features

A four-part series, "Samuel-Greatest of the Judges", dealing with the life of Samuel as related in the O.T., commences in this issue.

From time to time readers draw our attention to some one or other oral or published criticism of the factual accuracy of the Bible, particularly the O.T., chiefly from the viewpoint of modern scholarship which tends to view the Bible as a compilation of records of man's feeling after God rather than the Divine revelation to man having the oversight of the Holy Spirit in its preparation and preservation. A regular series commences in this issue under the caption "Written in the Book" which comments briefly on such points in this connection as are submitted by readers; where there has already been comprehensive treatment in past issues

reference is made to same and a copy may be had on short loan by anyone interested.

Coming Conventions

Blaby, Leics, May 25-26. Details A. Charcharos, 55 Greenacres Drive, Lutterworth, Leics.

Chesham, Bucks, June 15-16. Details A. Charlton, 43 Halkingcroft, Langley, Slough, Bucks.

Changes of address

Overseas readers advising change of address are reminded that since the "Monthly" is in transit for seven or more weeks there is sure to be at least one issue in the mail at the time notification is received here so that at least one issue will still go to the old address. If such copy is never received we will replace on request.

Thought for the Month

"They be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matt. 15.14).

It is said that "blind leaders of the blind" was a common proverb in Jewry; the Rabbis were known as "leaders of the blind", the inference being that the common people were blind as to the things of God and the Rabbis gave them enlightenment. The proverb reflected, somewhat caustically, the general impression of their effectiveness in this direction. The further comment was that of Jesus himself on the consequent situation. He referred several times to the leaders of Judaism in his day as "blind guides" or similar expressions (Luke 6. 39-40, Matt. 23. 24-26). There is perhaps a warning here to every Christian leader or teacher against treating the message and the life of Christ, or the contents of the Word of God, in such mechanical or worldly-wise fashion that the guidance of the Holy Spirit is lost, and, to use the

scathing words of Isaiah, *"the vision is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed"* (Isa. 29.11). So many modern expositions of the Scriptures are like that, propounded as though the Book is just an ordinary book written by ordinary men about ordinary things and subject to no overruling guidance and direction and inspiration from above. And when it comes to the deriving of genuine spiritual instruction and counsel from the living Word, or understanding of the purpose and ways of God in creation and towards men, and the earnest enquirer comes with his request *"to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee; and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed"*. So different, so sadly different, from he whom our Lord approvingly described as a *"scribe which is instructed into the kingdom of heaven, like a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old"* (Matt. 13. 52).

THE STORY OF THE DELUGE

3. The Building of the Ark

A moderately detailed specification for the construction of the Ark is given in the Book of Genesis. It must be remembered that the vessel was not intended to proceed by any kind of motive power nor to steer a course. It had but to float on the surface until the flood had abated; its construction had to be of a type that would withstand turbulent water but it required neither sails, oars or rudder. It is true that the Babylonian legends include a steersman to manipulate the steering-oars characteristic of Babylonian ships, and even recorded his name, Puzur-Amurri, but to steer a ship the size of the Ark by the primitive methods known to the Babylonians would have demanded a veritable army of steersmen, and this part of the ancient legends is certainly an embellishment.

The word "ark" is, in the Hebrew Bible, "tebah", a word so archaic that scholars do not know to what language it belongs. Dr. Yahuda has suggested that it comes from the Egyptian "tebet", meaning a box or chest; the only other occasion on which the word is used is to describe the covered basket of bulrushes in which the babe Moses was committed to the river, which supports the suggestion. The Greek "kibotos" and Latin "arca"—from which the English "ark" is derived—both mean box or chest. The term is well descriptive of the structure which Noah built; it was nothing at all like the orthodox ship's hull surmounted by a gable-roofed dwelling house which is so often pictured, and caricatured in children's toys. Students of the Genesis account decided many years ago that the Ark was a three-floored structure having a flat base and two sides which sloped toward each other and met at an angle at the top. It was, so to speak, triangular in cross-section, the ground floor being the widest. The length was very great in relation to the width and height so that it presented the general appearance of a long three-sided box. With the ends rounded to withstand the force of the waves, such a structure would float partially submerged and be, to a great extent, unaffected by the violence of waves and currents.

Seventy years ago an experimental vessel was built in Denmark to the same proportions as the Ark—but very much smaller—and of the same constructional style. This boat was thirty feet long, five feet wide, and three feet high from the flat base to the angle formed by the meeting of the two sloping sides. Tests carried out in the Baltic sea by the designer, a naval architect named Vogt, showed that the proportions of the vessel were

ideal for maximum resistance to stresses set up by the force of the sea. The Copenhagen newspaper "Dagbladet" of 31st August, 1904, reporting these experiments, said, in part: "*The Royal Shipbuilding yard has recently completed the construction of a remarkable vessel. It is 30 feet long, 5 feet wide, and 3 feet high, and with its slanting sides most resembles the roof of a house. It is a new Noah's Ark, constructed after the design of Mr. Vogt, the engineer, the Carlsburg Fund bearing the expense of its production . . . The remarkable thing about the Bible measurements is that after thousands of years' experience in the art of ship-building they must be confessed to be still the ideal proportions for the construction of a big ship . . . the Ark was not intended to sail, but to lie still on the water, and to give the best and quietest condition for the comfort of its inhabitants, and this is ensured by means of the triangular shape. In a storm the motion of the Ark would be reduced to a minimum . . . If the greatest living engineer in the world was given such a commission as this, to construct as large and strong a vessel as to lie still upon the sea, and as simply constructed as the Ark, he could not make a better vessel.*" According to another Copenhagen newspaper, "Dannebrog," the vessel "drifted sideways with the tide, creating a belt of calm water to leeward, and the test proved conclusively that a vessel of this primitive make might be perfectly seaworthy for a long voyage."

Three hundred years earlier, in 1609, Peter Jansen, of Noorn, Holland, had embarked upon a much more ambitious project. He built a vessel to the proportions of the Ark, one hundred and twenty feet long, twenty wide and twelve high. It was found to behave so steadily in the sea and to have such ample stowage in relation to its weight that a number of similar boats were built. They fell into disuse only because of the difficulty of arranging for motive power and steering.

We come then to the Divine instructions to Noah relative to the building of this celebrated vessel. It is not necessary to suppose that God gave all the details in the form of a kind of celestial set of working drawings and that all Noah had to do was blindly to follow them. Much more likely is it that the knowledge necessary to build this amazing structure came to Noah over a long period of perhaps many years and that a great deal of study and research was necessary on his part before he could pick up his tools and commence.

It is probably true that no one who has not had the benefit of an engineering training can properly appreciate the tremendous mechanical problems with which Noah was confronted. It was not just a question of nailing a few planks together and making them water-tight. If our understanding of the length measures of the ancients is well founded, the Ark was some 540 feet long, 90 feet wide and 54 feet high. Lest it be thought that such an enormous timber structure could never be built, and even if it were built, would never float, it can be pointed out that the Egyptians in the third century before Christ were building ships 400 feet long by sixty wide, propelled by four thousand rowers. The British warship "*Victoria*", in the early nineteenth century, one of the last wooden warships to be built, was nearly 300 feet in length. Since the advent of iron the sizes of ships have exceeded that of the Ark. The famous steamship "*Great Eastern*," built in 1854, was 680 feet long by 82 feet wide. In more modern times many of the oil tankers which are so familiar a feature of the high seas exceed 1,000 feet in length, twice that of the Ark. There is nothing unreasonable therefore in the apparent size of the Ark, but Noah must have been an engineer of considerable technical qualifications even to design on paper—or the then equivalent of paper—the structure which became the means of saving those who were to start life afresh on the earth.

"*This is the fashion which thou shalt make it of*" says the account "*the length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits.*" (Gen. 6. 15.) There were many "cubits" in the ancient world, for each nation had its own system of length measures, and cubit lengths in one historical period were not necessarily the same as in another. As Babylonian, Assyrian, Jew, Egyptian, Greek, met and mingled so their length measures were modified to suit each other. The records from which Moses translated the story as we have it in Genesis were probably in terms of the ancient Sumerian cubits but Moses would almost certainly have converted the figures to the Egyptian cubit of his time, just as we now convert them to English feet to make them intelligible to the modern reader. Various authorities give values for the Egyptian cubit in common use at the time of Moses as between 20.6 and 21.6 inches; taking the larger figure the Ark would be, as just stated, 540 feet long by 54 high by 90 wide. The fact that it was a three-floored structure and that the outer shell as well as the floors must have been enormously thick to withstand the stresses imposed by the initial impact of the flood waters requires something in the region of this height as a minimum in order to give adequate headroom

and in this respect the story is consistent with itself.

Interestingly enough, one of the accounts of the Flood from the library of the Assyrian king Asshur-bani-pal, written by an Assyrian scribe about 650 B.C., gives the dimensions of the Ark (as translated by the Assyriologist Francois Lenormant in 1880) as 600 cubits long by 60 high by 60 wide. The Assyrians at that time used, for buildings and large constructions, the ancient Sumerian short cubit of 10.8 inches, and this rendered into English feet gives the same length and height as in the Genesis account. Completely to correspond, the 60 cubits width in the Assyrian tablets should be 100, but it is very possible that the original archaic tablet, believed to date from about 1700 B.C., from which the Assyrian scribe made his copy, did have 100 at this point and that a small illegibility or obliteration in the clay tablet misled him. The obliteration of four small marks from the cuneiform numeral 100 converts it into 60, and such obliterations on cuneiform tablets are common and mislead modern scholars in the same way that they must have misled copyists in much older times. The ancient tablets leading to the Assyrian story diverged from those leading to the Genesis account certainly not later than about 2100 B.C. so that this agreement as to the measurements is quite a good witness to the historicity of the narrative.

(For the benefit of the studiously inclined it may be interjected here that this 10.8 inch length for the short cubit was established by another Assyriologist, Oppert, nearly a century ago when he investigated the ruins of the royal town of Sargon of Assyria at Khorsabad, finding an inscribed tablet giving the length of the city walls as 24740 short cubits; the walls were still there and he found them to measure 7422 yards, a figure which has since been repeatedly checked, so that it was easy to fix the precise length of the short cubit, or "span" as it is often called nowadays.)

It is perhaps not readily appreciated that in all probability Noah and his family carried much more than a collection of animals and a store of food in the Ark. According to the narrative he had been plainly told that the world he knew was to be completely destroyed with all its works. Only his own family would survive the Deluge to start a new world. It is in the highest degree unlikely that a man possessing the faith to believe such a Divine intimation and the intelligence to build such a vessel would fail to take with him as much in the way of useful materials as he could with which to commence his great task when the Flood was over. The antediluvians must have attained a high degree of proficiency in the arts and sciences and it is very probable—almost a certainty—that

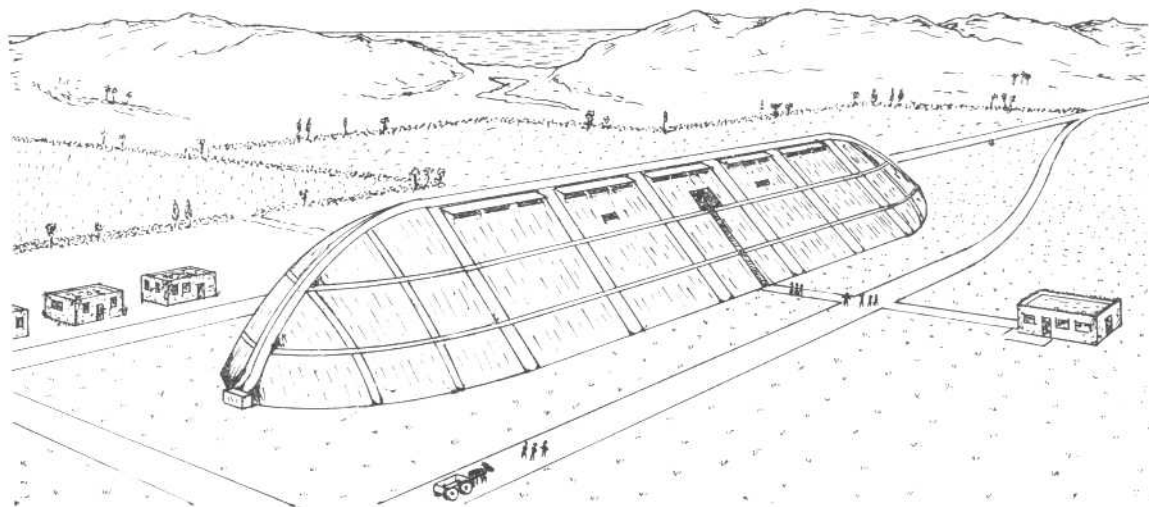
the vast lower floor of the Ark was crammed with materials, tools, useful articles, and perhaps objects of art and beauty too, saved from the old world wherewith to facilitate the commencement of life in the new. It is perhaps significant that the Babylonian accounts do catalogue in some detail the treasures of gold and silver and articles of daily life which Noah is supposed to have stored aboard his vessel.

This tremendous construction had three floors; "with lower, second and third stories shalt thou make it" (Gen. 6.16). More than half of the total capacity was on the lower, the ground floor, the flat bottom of the vessel, ninety feet wide and perhaps fifteen high from floor to ceiling. This great space, amounting to nearly 50,000 square feet, was almost certainly used for storage.

The middle floor, sixty feet wide, was perhaps devoted to the storage of food and "articles wanted

"cubit" and the primitive pictograph which preceded it in the days of picture-writing (this at the time of Heber and Peleg, Gen. 10.25), suggested an angle and this expression "finished in a cubit (or angle) above" might well denote what we call the "apex", the angle at the top of the Ark formed by the meeting of the two sloping sides, much as we might say it finished in a V at the top. This is shown more clearly in the accompanying engraving, which incidentally also gives an impression of the size of the Ark compared with the persons and houses shown to the same scale.

How did the navigators fare for light and air? Flood or no flood, they could not exist without either. There were apparently two kinds of windows in the Ark, both on the upper floor only. "A window shalt thou make to the ark" is the Lord's instruction in vs. 16. The word "window" here is "tsohar" which is a technical term meaning



Probable appearance and size of the Ark

on voyage". When the Ark was afloat, fully loaded, it would be anything from half to two-thirds submerged, so that both this and the lower floor would be below the water line. Only the top floor could receive air and light directly from outside.

The top floor, thirty or more feet wide and over five hundred long, would afford ample living accommodation for the family and the animals that had been taken on board. Here were the "rooms" or "nests" of vs. 14—compartments, pens and stalls for the various classes of creatures. This would be a strange-looking place, like a long corridor with its two walls sloping steadily above until they met at an angle about sixteen or eighteen feet overhead. This is probably the meaning of the rather obscure phrase in vs. 16 "in a cubit shalt thou finish it above." The cuneiform sign for

an opening for sky light and air. The same word is used about twenty times in the Old Testament for "noon", "noonday", and "midday". In its structural sense it denotes a long and narrow aperture running along the tops of buildings near the roof to admit air. All Egyptian temples had such an aperture, usually about six inches high, broken up by supporting columns every few feet. It would seem that such a narrow opening ran along the entire length of the Ark, on both sides, just below the top, and this served for the entry and egress of air and sufficient light, in the brilliant sunshine of Iraq, for the inmates.

The "window" of chap. 8. 6 through which Noah put the birds who went out to explore the drying earth, is "challon" which is the regular Old Testament word for windows of the orthodox

type. We may reasonably conclude that the "tsohar" was high up along the "eaves" of the Ark and gave fresh air and light at all times. Lower down in the sides of the upper floor, and perhaps only in the living quarters of the family, were other windows, probably made of transparent material, which could only be opened when the water was calm.

Chap. 8, 13 tells how Noah, after the abating of the waters, "removed the covering of the ark, and behold, the face of the ground was dry." This allusion to a "covering" is interesting. The word is "mikseh" which is used elsewhere for the covering of ram's skins and "badger" (dolphin) skins which covered the Tabernacle in the Wilderness as described in the Book of Exodus, and is allied with words meaning to cover as with garments. It will be shown later on that at the first onset of the Flood the Ark must have been completely submerged for a few minutes and must therefore have been made completely watertight from the outside world. Evidently the "tsohar" or window which normally gave light and air to the vessel was fitted with some kind of watertight covering which could be locked in position at will to exclude all possibility of ingress of water, and opened again once the Ark was safely afloat in calm water. This may have been the "covering" which Noah removed, apparently for the last time, fifty-seven days before leaving the Ark. In the meantime it probably served as protection against spray, rain and wind in stormy weather.

"The door of the Ark shalt thou set in the side thereof." (6, 16.) Somewhere along the upper floor existed the only means of entry and exit—a door capable of giving admission to the largest creature or article intended to be taken in, and made completely watertight when closed, as it was for the whole of the time the Ark was afloat. The lower floors would of course be reached from the upper floor by means of stairways or sloping ramps.

Gen. 6, 14 says that the Ark was built of "gopher wood" but nobody knows just what particular species of the vegetable kingdom is thus indicated. Commentators of the nineteenth century used to assume an air of oracular wisdom and discourse learnedly of "cypress or other resinous wood, capable of withstanding immersion in water" which was a pretty safe guess having in mind the purpose of the Ark's building. Gesenius connected the word with "kopher" which was used for pitch and from that obtained the idea of "resinous wood". It has been left to linguistic experts to find the truth. "Gopher" is the Hebrew transliteration of the Babylonian "gipparu" which means forest timber of any kind. Noah was told to build the Ark of timber well covered with pitch

(bitumen) to make it watertight. Some later copyist or translator, not recognising the meaning of "gopher", took it as a proper name and added "wood" after it.

Those who like figures may be interested in the result of a simple engineering calculation which shows that the Ark may well have absorbed something like 6,000 tons of timber in its building, requiring the felling and dressing of a veritable forest of giant trees. Thus built, it would be capable of carrying some 25,000 tons of cargo without danger of foundering. But an apparently casual remark in Gen. 7, 20 may enable us to approximate its lading a little more accurately. "Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail, and the mountains were covered." That apparently implies that at no point in the Ark's course was the water less than fifteen cubits deep; that fact could only have been observed if the Ark itself "drew" just that depth of water. It seems a logical conclusion that the vessel floated submerged to a depth of fifteen cubits, just half its height, when loaded, and this in turn means that it displaced three-quarters its own volume of water, some 27,000 tons. It follows that if the structure itself did weigh about 6,000 tons, then Father Noah must have stowed away animals and goods to an aggregate weight of 21,000 tons!

How long was this gigantic craft in building? It is not possible to say, for no hint is given. The cryptic reference in Gen. 6, 3 to a period of one hundred and twenty years has sometimes been suggested to denote a "period of grace" during which the antediluvians had the opportunity of repentance while the Ark, taking visible shape before their eyes, gave additional point to the preaching and warnings of Noah. We do not know. The work must have taken a good many years and it must have employed hundreds of workers. There cannot be much doubt about that. Noah must have been a man of wealth and power to have had the material means to plan and execute so stupendous a project. The ancient legends depict him as King of his country and there is nothing impossible about that. Suffice it that he was a man of faith and he believed God and acted out that belief in carrying out a command that must have seemed utterly fantastic to all who heard of it. And the greatest test of faith must have been at the moment when, with all his twenty thousand tons of stores and goods and animals safely inside, Noah and his family climbed into the giant vessel which they had built, heard the door close heavily upon them and shut them away completely from the outside world, and sat down in the darkness, to wait . . .

To be continued.

SAMUEL, GREATEST OF THE JUDGES

I. Youth

"And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision... And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli." (1 Sam. 3. 1.).

They were dark days in Israel, those days when the lamp of God was going out in the Temple of God, and the vision had become to all as a book that was sealed. It was a day of old men, a day in which the inspiration and fervour of youth had been lost in a timorous and apathetic old age. The leaders of the people, who for the time they had known the God of Israel and his mighty power should have administered their charge with the maturity and mellowness of character that a life-time of service in Divine things can give, had become spiritually blinded, and their eyes were darkened, and they knew not that the holy and royal nation was already a long way from the covenant God had made with their fathers. The Judges had ruled Israel for several centuries; in the first days of the settlement in the land, immediately after its conquest at the time of the Exodus, they had been upright and noble men, men of insight and determination, men who went in the power and strength of God, and who prospered accordingly. But the rule of the Judges had grown old, and the stirring days of Joshua and the Conquest were as far away from them as the days of Queen Elizabeth and the Spanish Armada are to us now; and as remote in the minds of leaders and people. So the nation languished and fell under the power of its enemies, the while judges and priests alike accepted the privileges and emoluments of their respective positions and ignored their obligations.

The time was ripe for a change. In one more generation there were to be kings in Israel, with all of the glory and power, patriotic fervour and national pride—and all, too, of oppression and misery—that the rule of kings involves. But the change had to come; the old system of rule by judges could no longer serve the multiplying interests of the developing nation, and the Judges were doomed. But in their passing, and before they passed, God raised up one who should be the glory of the old order and the guiding star of the new—Samuel, the last and the greatest of the Judges.

He was such a small boy, this child whom Hannah, in the love and adoration of her heart, had brought to the sanctuary to serve the Lord God for ever. None could have guessed then that he was destined in after days to guide the nation

through one of the most perilous times of its career. Probably very few of the people knew that he was there at all; he must have spent much of his time in the priests' living apartments attached to the sanctuary, employed in the performance of trivial menial duties for the High Priest, and—who can doubt it?—learning with assiduity everything about the laws of God and his dealings with his people Israel that the aged Eli was able to teach him.

So the years rolled by, and Israel departed farther and farther from the Lord. The child would be about six years old when his mother brought him to the sanctuary. He could not have been less than fourteen when the great thing happened. And in all those intervening years he was laying the foundations of his future life of service, in the quietness and seclusion of the sanctuary, storing up in his receptive mind the details of his people's history, of their covenant with God and their holy calling, of God's promises and intentions with respect to their future, and his determination that one day evil should be done away and all the earth filled with his glory. The principles of truth and justice, of love and mercy, became embedded in the boy's character and moulded his outlook, even although as yet he had no opportunity to learn anything of the outside world where those principles were so universally despised and disesteemed.

So it came to pass, one quiet night, when the countryside around Shiloh was bathed in the silver light of the moon sailing serenely across the heavens, that the light of the seven-branched lampstand in the Holy of the sanctuary flickered uncertainly as the lamp wicks tried unavailingly to extract the last scanty drops of oil from the vessels. It was the duty of the priests to keep that lampstand trimmed and filled so that the light should burn perpetually. But they were neglectful of their duty, and Eli, the old High Priest, was too apathetic either to see that they performed their task or to reprove them for not doing it. And as it flickered, casting huge and grotesque shadows on the wall and ceiling of the Holy, there came from behind the Vail, where the Ark of the Covenant reposed in solitary splendour within the Holiest of all, a Voice.

"Samuel!"

The lad was not asleep. He was laid down in his place, in one of the little apartments that flanked the sanctuary. Perhaps he was pondering over the things he saw and heard every day,

puzzling over the apparent inconsistency of that which Eli was teaching him and the manner in which Eli and his sons conducted their sacred mission. Maybe he was thinking of the things he in his turn would do for God when he was grown up and able to engage in the service of which, more than anything else, he wanted to be a minister. He might have wondered how it could come about, for he was not a priest and could never be a priest; he was not of the family of Levi and only those who came of Levi could be priests. And yet he wanted to serve his God with all the ardour and zeal of his young heart. Surely there could be some way! The need was great; he realised that now. He had seen something of the state of Israel's affairs in the incidents that took place in and around the sanctuary itself, and gleaned some understanding of the position from the offerers who came from time to time with their sacrifices. He wanted so badly to serve; he was only a lad, but surely there was something he could do. Surely God could make use of him somewhere—

"Samuel!"

He sat up, listening. The voice had been soft, but clear. It seemed to have come from the sanctuary itself, but of course that could not be. No one would be in there at this time of night and even if they had they would not have called him. He was not allowed to enter where only priests might set foot. It must have been Eli, in need of some small service. He rose and went softly into the High Priest's apartment. The older man seemed to be asleep.

"Here am I; for thou calledst me." He had to speak twice to gain the other's attention. Eli sat up. It was a few moments before he could take in the situation.

"I called not, my son", he said, "Lie down again".

Obediently, the lad returned to his place and lay down. His thoughts went back into their accustomed channel. The night was very quiet and the hour was late, but he was not tired. His mind was alert, active.

"Samuel!"

Roused from sleep for the third time, Eli looked grave. This was no ordinary thing. The lad was not given to idle fancies. He had evidently heard something. Dim memories of his own youth, when he himself had been in closer touch with God than he seemed to be nowadays, filtered into his mind. Perhaps—if an angel had spoken to the lad—

"Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

It was with beating heart that the boy went back to his place and lay down, eyes wide open,

ears alert. So the Voice *had* come from the sanctuary, after all. And It had called him; the Voice of God had called him

"Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

* * *

The gray light of dawn was filtering in and revealing the outlines of his simply furnished room. He must go presently and open the outer doors of the people's court, for some would be there with sacrifices which they required offering to cleanse them from petty uncleannesses and defilements. And then he must tell Eli. He feared to do so, for he revered the old man and it was a staggering blow to learn that his teacher and mentor from childhood had passed under the judgment of God; must be deprived of his priesthood, his family to remain under Divine interdict for ever. He had never dreamed that such things could be, but now he realised that there was such a thing as Divine judgment. It was a sobering thought; his teacher and instructor had failed him; his idol had feet of clay. He must find another guide, another leader. Where should he find him? Where should he obtain the guidance he knew that he needed that he might be fitted to take up the work of God.

And then he remembered the voice from the sanctuary.

* * *

How often, in years much nearer to us than the days of Eli and Samuel, have the old men failed to measure up to the greatness of their privilege, and forsworn the zeal, the faith, the largeness of vision and the spirit of progress which characterised their early youth, and so failed the younger ones who have looked up to them as fathers in the faith. The cumulative disappointments and disillusionments of mounting years, no less than the instinctive desire to protect what one has built against the disintegrating effects of times and change, often produces in the outlook of the elder in the way, an attitude the complete antithesis of that which characterised his early days. Where once he sought to blaze a new trail through the unknown country that lay between him and his and the heavenly Kingdom, he now seeks but to wall round the little preserve he has made for himself. Where once he looked to the future with eyes of eager anticipation he now looks back over the past with thoughts only of retrospect. Where once he followed the leading of the Spirit, blowing where it listeth, he now wants only to protect the circle of Truth which he has drawn through the years from any fresh incursion of that same Spirit. And so, unconsciously perhaps, not realising what he does, he resents the freshness and zeal of the younger generation, fails to sympathise with their characteristic impulses and immature

understanding, and as often as not succeeds in driving them away from the life of service and faith that could have been theirs had right guidance been given them. Thank God that it is not always so amongst us; that there are some, advanced in the tale of earthly years, who have attained a mellowness and maturity of Christian character which gives them to look with kindly and understanding eyes upon those who must needs pick up the torch of Truth from their own failing hands and carry it onward to greater heights. Their own early zealous activity and ardent minds, denied full exercise now because of advancing years, finds its satisfaction in the encouragement of their sons in the faith, and in understanding counsel to those who are seeking to follow in the way they themselves walked these many years since. There is no need for the story of Eli to be repeated in our day; no need for the lamp of God to burn dim in the Temple of God. Eli and Samuel can so easily walk and work together in loving understanding and harmony, each contributing that for which he is fitted; the

younger, action and tumultuous zeal; the elder, maturity of thought and quiet counsel in the things of God. In such manner may we all play our part in maintaining the radiant light of Divine Truth in the world, and pass, at length, beyond the inner Vail in the quiet satisfaction of a covenant with God fulfilled to the end. *"I have fought a good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith."* There is no need for our younger ones to be disappointed in their elders as was Samuel in Eli.

The boy had learnt a great lesson. Henceforth his instruction, heretofore at the hand of an earthly minister, was to come from God himself. A great step forward had been taken. He was no longer a "babe" in the faith; no longer imbibing only the "milk" of the Word. Upon that morning when Samuel opened the doors of the House of the Lord with the consciousness of the midnight revelation in his mind, he saw all things become new. The child Samuel was no more; henceforth he was a man, a man destined to be a power for God in Israel.

(To be continued.)

WRITTEN IN THE BOOK

Comments on
Bible criticism

This page discusses points cited by modern scholarship apparently impugning the veracity or reliability of Bible history or miracle.

Where did Cain get his wife?

This rather unthinking question is sometimes put with the intention of discrediting the Genesis claim that the whole human race is descended from one pair. The implication is that with no other women in the world the sons of Adam and Eve would be unable to marry. The obvious answer is that Cain and any brothers he possessed married their sisters. Genesis declares that Adam had daughters as well as sons. Lest it should be protested that such unions are to-day regarded as incestuous it must be remembered that the prohibition of marriage between close blood relatives is on account of the intensification of detrimental physical or mental characteristics in the offspring due to both parents possessing identical inherited defects. Man came from the hand of the Creator virile and perfect, without defect, so that the biological objection which now exists did not apply in those early days; the farther back one goes in history the closer are the degrees of relationship within which marriage was normal. The progressive effect of sin is responsible for the racial degeneration which now demands these restrictions. It is worthy of note that animal breeders habitually produce families of healthy

young from the mating of a male and female born of the same parents; there is nothing unusual in that. Biologically there is nothing against the idea of all men being descended from one human pair at the beginning and the Genesis story of Adam and Eve cannot be rejected as unhistorical on this particular account.

(Loan copy full article "Cain and Abel" Mar. 1969 on request.)

Can it be seriously believed that the Red Sea parted to allow the Israelites to cross when leaving Egypt?

Of course it can, the more so since the same thing at the same place has happened since. The story must be considered in relation to the natural conditions at the site of the occurrence at the time. The geographical indications in Genesis show that the crossing was made at a point just south of the Bitter Lakes, now dry land but known by geologists to have been below the sea level at the time of the Exodus and in fact up to Roman times. The Gulf of Suez extended nearly to Ismailia and the Roman port of Klysma existed not far from there. This extension of the Gulf was a few miles wide at the point of crossing but only about eight feet deep. The record says that a strong east wind blew all night and parted the waters, and the geological structure of the site shows that a stretch of some

fifteen miles between the present Bitter Lakes and Suez could have had the water completely blown off the sea bed over this stretch and driven towards Suez, so that men could easily cross to the other shore on foot. The same phenomenon still occurs, not at the same spot which, owing to the slow elevation of the land in historical times is now twenty-seven feet above sea level, but at nearby points. British Army surveyors in 1895 found the waters of Lake Menzaleh lowered in level by six feet at the eastern end by this wind, and the records of the old Suez Canal Company show that water level at the present head of the Gulf of Suez was at times lowered by various amounts up to ten feet; men were able to cross from the African to the Asiatic shore on foot on some occasions. There is therefore no reason to doubt that the incident recorded in Exodus could have taken place exactly as stated. The miracle resided in the fact that the natural phenomenon occurred at the precise time needed to enable the fleeing Israelites to cross. That was specific Divine intervention.

(Loan copy "Crossing of Red Sea" May 1973 on request.)

It is suggested to me that the references in the three Synoptic Gospels to the supernatural darkness at the Crucifixion is against Nature and did not actually happen, and this is an example of the "marvel stories" engrafted on the recorded life of Christ. There could not have been an eclipse because being Passover the moon was at the full

at the time.

Supernatural or not, there was a darkness sufficiently real to be recorded by the Greek historian Phlegon Trallianus (c AD 50-140) as occurring at the sixth hour (just as in the Gospels) on a day during the 4th year of the 202nd Olympiad (July AD 32 to June AD 33; the Crucifixion was in April AD 33). Phlegon infers that the phenomenon with its accompanying earthquake was experienced as far north as Bithynia on the shores of the Black Sea. A contemporary Syrian historian, Thallus, is said to have recorded a similar occurrence in his own country.

A precisely similar occurrence took place on May 19th, 1780, over an area of some 400,000 square miles in eastern U.S.A., when complete darkness reigned from 11 a.m. to 2 a.m. the following morning although the moon was at the full. No scientific explanation has ever been discovered.

No eclipse of the sun can last at any one spot for more than seven minutes. The Gospel incident lasted three hours and Phlegon says the darkness was greater than had ever been known before. No solar eclipse visible in the Middle East occurred in A.D. 33.

Matthew, Mark and Luke lived at the time and are trustworthy historians. They wrote of that which they knew.

(Loan copy full article "Darkness at the Crucifixion" January 1967 on request).

? Question Box ?

Q. What is the meaning of "shutteth up his bowels of compassion" in I John 3. 17, "if any bowels and mercies" in Phil. 2. 1., and similar texts?

A. The word had a rather different meaning in Apostolic days to that which is its general use to-day. Anatomically, it meant the vital organs, the heart, lungs and liver, and metaphorically was used to denote the tender affections, love, sympathy, kindness, etc. (much as to-day the heart is regarded as the seat of the affections). There are two instances where the word is translated in this manner, in 2 Cor. 7. 15, "His inward affection is more abundant toward me", and Luke 1. 78, "through the tender mercy of our God whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us". If the occurrences where it is translated "bowels" be examined it will be seen that in all instances save one (Acts 1. 18), the reference is to this inner feeling of compassion and tenderness (see 2 Cor. 6. 12, Phil. 1. 8, 2. 1, Col. 3. 12, Philemon 7, 12 and 20). The same word used in its verbal form, is rendered "moved with compassion" in Matt. 9. 36, 14. 14, 18. 27, Mark 1. 41, 6. 34;

and "had compassion" in Matt. 15. 32, 20. 34, Mark 8. 2, 9. 22, Luke 7. 13, 10. 33 and 15. 20. In every case except the latter (the story of the prodigal son) the One thus moved to compassion is Jesus himself. It is worth while to turn up all these texts in order to realise how full of meaning they become when their true import is understood.

There is a link, too, with the Old Testament. In the Levitical types the "inward parts" of the sacrifice, the heart and other organs, were offered up on the Brazen Altar "a sweet savour unto God", and it has often been pointed out that this symbolises the heart's best endeavours and affections, given to God. Now this same word translated "bowels", *splagchna*, was the term used by the Greeks to denote this sacrifice of the inward parts of animals, having the same idea in mind. We can say therefore that the proof of our understanding of this element in the Tabernacle sacrifices lies here in the New Testament. The "inward parts" represent our hearts' best affections, manifested toward each other and to our Lord, offered up to our Heavenly Father in sincere consecration of life in his service and the service of his people.

THE HEAVENLY VISIONS

A brief survey
of Revelation

Mankind is living in difficult days. Not, perhaps, so difficult for dedicated followers of the Lord Jesus Christ for we are especially privileged. We have been shown, in the Word of God, something of the meaning of what is happening around us. By the grace of God we have been called to fellowship in Christ to the extent of adoption as sons of God; it has pleased Him to reveal much of his plans and purposes, and of their outworking. We know in part, but it is still a walk by faith, and increasingly a walk alone with the Lord. So the triumphant words come home to us "*Behold, I am alive forevermore, and have the keys of hell and of death*". This word, BEHOLD, occurs frequently in the Bible, marking out important things; fix your attention, stop and think, spend time in consideration! Here it stands at the beginning of a Book which is declared to be the Revelation of Jesus Christ to show things which must shortly come to pass. This is the Heavenly Father's message to all in Christ throughout this Age, including ourselves. "*And he*" (Jesus) "*sent and signified it*". It had necessarily to be given in signs, or symbols. How else could it have been given?

The title of the Book is one key. The Greek word is "*apokalupsis*" meaning "to take off the covering; to unveil". The book reveals Jesus in glory, Jesus in action; in grace, in power and might, in judgment towards the Church and last as the victorious King of Kings. It reveals the Church in his care, the Church in the world, the Church judging the world. It reveals the forces arrayed in opposition to God and the outcome. There are visions intended not so much for the early generations of the Church's history as for those undergoing the wilderness experiences of which the Book speaks; we are still in those experiences and in the closing period when the final crisis is imminent. Thus do we recognise our Lord's presence, his superintendence, his special care for his church as He gathers them home.

There are two main sets of visions—heavenly and earthly. The heavenly scenes are dwelt upon here as of special interest, in line with Paul's words in Eph. 2. 4-6 "*But God . . . hath made us sit together in the heavenlies*". It should be possible at least in part to understand these heavenly visions given by the Father for the comfort and assurance of his people.

The first introduction (chap. 1. 13-18) is to the Lord; one like unto the Son of Man. "*God hath highly exalted him*" says Paul but John had

known him personally as the Son of Man, remembering the days when he walked and talked with him. In the vision John saw his glory as the actively engaged High Priest, clothed in appropriate garments—a robe to the foot, a golden girdle. He was in God's service, moving in the midst of the seven candlesticks which are the seven churches, symbols of the entire Church of this Age. His hair, white as snow; knowledge derived from experience. His eyes a flame of fire; wisdom in excellence. His voice as the sound of many waters; the Church is called from out all nations. In his right hand seven stars; angels, messengers, speaking surely of complete control, power and protection. In his mouth the sharp two-edged sword of absolute truth and perfect judgment. His countenance as the sun in his strength; nothing is hidden from him. His feet as burnished copper, in their perfection speaking of activity in all these qualities. What a contrast to Isa. 53, yet the same Jesus! All that glory came upon John with overwhelming force and he fell at his feet as one dead. But the Lord laid his hand upon John saying "*Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead, and, behold, I am alive forevermore*". He is now the High Priest of the order of Melchisedek, not of the dying priesthood of Aaron, but in his glory "*abideth a priest eternally*". John was appointed to record all that transpired that each of the churches might be encouraged, strengthened and prepared to meet that little portion of these tremendous events that would affect them. What does this mean for those who live at this end of the Age? The revelation of Christ in glory is but a prelude to his revelation in grace. "*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches*".

Chapters 2 and 3 are not records of visions but messages from the Lord which in view of the declared object of the Book must be applied to the entire Age. Most likely they were very much to the point in John's own day and would be very necessary admonitions to the local assemblies. The whole course of the Church in both its true and nominal aspects can be traced in its experiences as shown in history from the beginning to the present. The importance of such messages from the Lord demands the heeding of the principles embodied. They are of two kinds; first, judgments consequent upon failing to abide in him, and second, qualities necessary in those who would become overcomers. The messages are seven in

number, addressed in the first instance to seven of the leading assemblies in Roman Asia, assemblies to whom John had ministered before his incarceration on Patmos.

Ephesus—the judgments; back sliding and the danger of total loss. But—the exhortation; the primary requirements warm love for the Lord, a glowing, growing love. Such a love will be rewarded by everlasting life in a garden in which God walks.

Smyrna—A time of persecution and suffering in which only the faithful, rich in faith and love, can stand. To them is awarded the crown of life which cannot be annulled.

Pergamos—Here is the doctrine of Balaam, trying to serve both God and Mammon. Here is danger from the desires of the flesh, seeking ease and release from spiritual control. But for the faithful the promise of the hidden manna, and a white stone, a trysting stone which the Lord will honour if the possessor is faithful.

Thyatira—Now love has ceased to maintain attachment to the Lord; it has become cold. The faithless are under condemnation, in danger of tribulation and death; But, we have an Advocate and there is need for watchfulness, for the promise is of power over the nations in the day of the Millennial reign.

Sardis—A name based on Works esteemed by men, but in the Lord's sight they were dead. Exalted in the earth, but dead! But; some were still living close to the Lord and would yet be owned by him, their names recorded as overcomers in the Book of Life.

Philadelphia—Faithful to opportunities of service. No word of judgment but the assurance of his early Presence and in the meantime the Word of God as a lamp for guidance.

Laodicea—A church without spiritual life, blind and naked, a disowned church. Rejected as useless and ripe for destruction. But, a call to come out and follow the Lord, who promised in return a personal fellowship. As the night descends He will not leave or forsake us; his promise will be fulfilled: partners with him when He takes his power to reign.

The next heavenly scene is the burden of chaps. 4 and 5. The scene pictures God receiving worship from all in heaven as the Almighty, the supreme Lord of the Universe, followed by the vision of the sealed scroll containing the outworking of his plan and purpose. The emphasis is upon the character of our Lord; strong as a lion, humble as a lamb, a slain lamb, the perfect sacrifice for the sin of the world. John wept; until such could be found there was cause indeed to weep. But now the Lamb emerges as the one having the right to open the sealed scroll and become executor of the

Father's purpose. So is pictured the Church complete in heaven and every creature upon earth joining in a song of praise and adoration to the heavenly Father who planned, and the Lamb who gave his all, for their salvation.

The breaking of the seals reveals the knowledge of our omniscient God respecting all that should occur before the kingdoms of this world become the Kingdom of our Lord and of his Anointed. Particularly must be noted the plight of those described under the fifth seal, a time of oppression and suffering for the saints. Apparently forsaken, but not really so, they are given the assurance of acceptance. But the time of judgment was not yet; their number was not yet complete. So we are led onward to the vision of chap. 7 describing the sealing of the servants of God. But who is the angel from the east having the seal of the living God wherewith to effect this work? Who else but our risen Lord? And who are the sealed? Surely Eph. 1.13 is sufficient to answer that question, where St. Paul says "after ye believed ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession."

Chapter 8 presents a new vision. The seventh seal is opened and there is silence for a short time. Here, it seems, is the completion of the opening of the scroll of God's purpose in outline. Subsequent visions will reveal greater detail within this framework. But before these commence there stands here the High Priest offering incense "with the prayers of the saints". This is one aspect of the ministry of our Lord throughout this Age. The place it occupies in the Book is strategic, in the midst of past, present and future trials as they have affected and will affect his Church. Verse 5 mentions certain effects which arise from the prayers that come into the ears of the Lord of Hosts.

The next vision of moment is that in chap. 10, in which the cloud and rainbow clad angel descends from heaven in glory, the Lord beginning his great work of preparation for his Kingdom. John, representing the Church, received the little book, enlightenment concerning the then conditions of Antichrist's rule, persecutions, upheavals, controversies, thunders and lightnings, these latter picturing those illuminating truths then coming to light. The time of judgment is to be no longer delayed. A flood of truth upon every subject which Satan can no longer suppress.

So to chaps. 14 and 15, a preview from heaven of events yet to come concerning the winding-up of earth's affairs. A grand picture; the Lamb on Mount Zion in company with the Elect? Vs. 13 shows that some members of this company are still upon the earth and are joined to him as and

when he calls. Here is a picture of his Advent; his first act on his return is to comfort and enlighten his own. There is a commission to preach the gospel anew, to open the Books, for this is the time of the judgment of the Age. Parallel with this is the present circumstance of the Church, standing as it were upon a sea of glass mingled with fire. The sea is peaceful but the fire is underlying. As we watch and experience these early stages of the world's judgment with our understanding of the unstable situation so rapidly weakening the world order, we have peace, but we feel the heat. But the Lord is faithful and He has all things under control. This is evidenced by the visions of chaps. 16-17 picturing final aspects of judgment directly inspired from heaven, under symbol of the pouring out of seven vials of wrath. The vials are of gold; the messengers clothed in white linen indicative of their inherent purity and righteousness, and they are girded with the golden girdles of Divine service. All this speaks of the dissemination of truth upon every subject, often with devastating results. One judgment after another comes upon the evil systems of earth until finally the seventh vial is poured out upon the air—Satan's seat, bringing about the utter ruin of his empire. And suddenly in the midst of all this comes a warning to Christ's own; "watch, keep your garments unspotted, for He comes". He comes as a thief, silently, unobtrusively, as He prepares to establish his kingdom of righteousness. So to chap. 19 and the great proclamation, "It is done". Now the "Bride of the Lamb" has been united with her Lord in heaven. *"Faith will vanish into sight; hope be emptied in delight, love in heaven will shine more bright"*. This is the realisation of our Lord's own desire expressed in Jno. 17.24 "Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am". This is when the announcement is made *"Blessed are they who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb"*.

This is not the end. Now we see the Lord, accompanied by his saints,—and possibly other heavenly beings—advancing upon earth to make war upon, and to stamp out, every evil thing. This is a spiritual war; it is the triumph of truth over error. Christ claims his authority as King of Kings

and exercises that authority. His name is Faithful and True, the Word of God. The sword in the vision, proceeding from his mouth, is the Sword of the Spirit, speaking and acting in righteous judgment. The visions of chap. 19 culminate in the final overthrow of all the systems of evil in the world, and run on in the beginning of chap. 20 to show the victorious Lord using the key of the abyss to dethrone and imprison the Devil, the erstwhile "prince of this world".

Thus the way is cleared for the last and brightest of the visions, the world's new government in operation, the outpouring of blessing upon whosoever will accept it, leading to reconciliation with God and a state of human perfection beyond the power of our imperfect minds to appreciate. In the richness of the symbols which adorn these last visions we have on the one hand the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, symbol of the world that is to be, the acme of perfection as is symbolised in its equidistant measurements. The city rests upon the foundation truly laid by the twelve apostles, the only possible enduring foundation, the ransom and sin-offering provided by Christ. Only through him is pardon, cleansing, renewal and restoration to human perfection. He, the King of kings and Lord of lords, requires absolute loyalty from every individual, and that loyalty will be tested. All this is forthshown in the vision of the Holy City. On the other hand we have the Bride, presented in beauty, presented under figures of dazzling whiteness—purity; as precious stones of varying values, but all treasured by the Bridegroom. "They shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I make up my jewels".

Thus, in these vivid pictures, dawns the bright clear promise of the dawn during the darkest hour which comes just before. *"I am the bright and morning star"* says the Lord—it is the last of his titles to be given us in the Book of Revelation. He is the Sun of righteousness who will arise with healing in his wings, his beams, as said Malachi the prophet. And in that rising shall all families of the earth be blessed. Let us set our course by that Morning Star, girding up our loins with determination, knowing that our deliverance draweth near, and that our Lord and Saviour is ever with us, even to the end of the Age.

It is all too possible for the believer to be affected by the spirit of the age in which he lives. He can accept its maxims and adjust himself to its intellectual and social fashions. Perhaps, in the last resort, this is the real meaning of worldliness. To be a worldly Christian is to be a Christian who is unduly influenced by the spirit of the times in which he lives.

You cannot study the New Testament with any prayerful attention without discovering that every single blessing you enjoy as a Christian is yours simply because you are in him. It is all stored for you in Christ; because you are in him everything is yours, and until we are in him nothing is ours. Oh, to reckon upon our union with Christ!

I, TERTIUS

"I, Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord." (Rom. 16. 22).

That is all that we know about Tertius, this first century Greek Christian of Corinth who was Paul's scribe for the writing of the Epistle to the Romans. Nowhere else in the whole of the Scriptures is he mentioned. He looks in at the door, as it were, introduces himself as the one who wrote at Paul's dictation, conveys his greetings to us—and shuts the door again. We have a brief glimpse of—possibly—dark hair, grey eyes, finely modelled features and a pleasing smile, and then he is gone. This is Tertius, whose hand first traced on parchment or papyrus the words of that immortal epistle which the English poet Coleridge declared to be "the most profound work in existence" and Luther "the masterpiece of the New Testament, the purest gospel". Admiration of this epistle has been expressed in many a glowing phrase from the lips and pens of Christian leaders, from reformers and theologians alike. Many in our midst echo their sentiments, and the Epistle to the Romans is a favourite subject for class study. In our thought we naturally see the outstanding figure of Paul, the master-mind whose creation it is; but when we think of the stalwart and indomitable Apostle of the Gentiles laying bare his soul in this his exposition of Christian doctrine, an exposition that has profoundly influenced the lives of Christians in all ages since his day, we do well to grant a fleeting thought also to the zealous and devoted penman who sat so constantly at his side taking down the burning words, filling sheet after sheet with the cogent arguments, at the end adding those salutations in which his own name appears, and then pasting the sheets together to form the long roll which was the original copy of the Book of Romans.

The Epistle to the Romans was written at Corinth in Greece probably during the course of Paul's third and last visit to the Church in that city, and not long before the final journey to Jerusalem which resulted in his being carried a prisoner to Rome, there to be martyred. The Corinthian Church had been founded by Paul about the year 52, nearly thirty years after the Crucifixion, and the Epistle was written, probably, about six years later. Two years more and Paul himself was in Rome, having followed his epistle thence. Tertius was one of the Corinthian converts and might very well have known the truth for six years, but could not have known it longer,

when he was privileged to render this act of service to the Apostle and the Church, and in consequence had his name inscribed, to be preserved for ever, on the pages of the New Testament. Tertius would not have dreamed at the time that his work would have such far-reaching consequences or that the simple, fervent mention of his own name would resound through the world and throughout the centuries, to lands and peoples of whose existence he had no conception, as it has done. He was probably a young man, or at least in middle age, perhaps a scribe or clerk by profession, and an earnest member of the little Christian community at Corinth. When it became known that Paul was minded to send a long and important letter to the Christians at Rome, and because of his own weak eyesight required an assistant to write at his dictation, someone would quickly respond "Why, Tertius. He will appreciate the privilege and he will do the work well".

In the great day of the Bible commentators, nearly a century ago now, it used to be suggested that Tertius was possibly the same as Silas, who figures several times in New Testament narratives and on one occasion—at Philippi—was imprisoned with Paul, an imprisonment that gave birth to the Philippian Church (Acts 16). There is no foundation for the suggestion; it was made on account of the fact that "Tertius" is the Latin for "third" and that the Hebrew consonants SLS found in the name Silas are those forming the Hebrew word for the numeral "three". In point of fact, Silas is the Greek abbreviation for the Latin name Silvanus, which in turn denotes a forestry worker or woodman (compare our English word "sylvan" as applied to woodlands and the like). We are still left therefore with that picture of the young man who puts his head in at the door and says, "I, Tertius, . . . salute you" and is gone.

The Corinthian Church was a remarkable church. It seems that it consisted almost entirely of Gentiles—Greeks. Paul's first work at Corinth had been with the Jews but they had rejected him and sought to have him expelled from the city (Acts 18). The dispute came before the notice of the Roman proconsul of the city, Lucius Junius Gallio (called Gallio in the Book of Acts), a man described by secular historians as a just and cultured man, of a genial and even lovable disposition. Something of his judicious and impartial administration can be sensed in the story in Acts, where it is apparent that he quickly saw through the Jews' trumped-up accusations against Paul and

contemptuously dismissed the charges and acquitted Paul. It was following this that Paul found a hearing ear among the Greeks, and the Corinthian Church began its ordered existence in the house of Justus. It was a church that had many undesirable features, for Corinth was in more than one respect an undesirable city, and the Christians had been born and brought up in that environment and educated in those standards and customs. But it was a church that was very dear to the heart of Paul, and although he had on more than one occasion to be utterly scathing in his condemnation of their shortcomings and their failings, there was evidently much there that he dearly loved. Probably Tertius was one of those whom he held in high esteem, not only for his works' sake but for his Christian integrity and sincerity. Even if Tertius did not realise the importance of this epistle he was writing, it is certain that Paul did, and that he knew it was going to be a text book of Christian instruction and belief, not only for the Roman Christians to whom it was addressed, not only for the scattered Christian churches of his own day, but for all Christians in all ages everywhere to the end of time. Knowing this, he would not be likely to choose other than a clean vessel to enjoy the honour of being the scribe of this Epistle.

We may take it, then, that Tertius was zealous, sincere, full of faith and anxious to serve in whatever way he could be of service. There were others, of course, in the fellowship, of whom Paul speaks approvingly and who sent their greetings also to the brethren at Rome. "*Timotheus my workfellow*" he says—we all know Timothy and the sterling service he rendered in after days as elder of the Church at Ephesus—"... and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you. Gaius mine host, Erastus the treasurer of the city, and Quartus a brother". Erastus must have been an important man in Corinth; he was the city treasurer and Corinth was one of the wealthiest cities of the Empire. But he was a Christian. Quartus was, maybe, a brother in a much more humble and obscure walk of life; he might even have been a slave; but he also was a Christian. And they were all one in Jesus Christ, these men who with the womenfolk met for praise and worship and fellowship in the house of Justus. It is a picture quite at variance with that of the Church of Corinth drawn in other parts of the New Testament, where that church is pictured as being in many respects anything but a model of Christian behaviour and conduct and witness. Perhaps however, the Apostle's oft reproofs had had their effect and there had been, by the time of this his last visit, some repentance and reformation. We do

not know; in any case the Church at Corinth never became noted for Christian fervour and example as did, for example, those at Ephesus and Colosse and Berea.

Nevertheless, it is probably true that even in its darkest days the Corinthian assembly had a minority of earnest ones who did not countenance or endorse the behaviour of the majority and who on that account were drawn together more into a little spiritual fellowship of their own. Perhaps these whose names appear here in his salutation at the end of the Epistle to the Romans were such. We have seen the same kind of thing happen in our own day—most true Christians have in every century—and perhaps we can understand and appreciate the position.

What happened to Tertius after the Epistle had been dispatched and Paul had left Corinth for Jerusalem, never to return? We do not know. He is unknown to history. Perhaps in after years he left Corinth on some kind of missionary work, emulating in some small degree the Apostle he had once served in so signal a fashion. Perhaps he remained at Corinth, serving as a faithful minister, through all the vicissitudes of a life spent in a fellowship that was both light and dark, that savoured much of this world even although it professed much of the next. We like to think that he did remain faithful, that the vessel chosen to do Paul's work in the days of his presence remained a chosen vessel to the end of the way. If such was indeed the case, we can picture him growing older with the passing years, ministering faithfully and consistently, never weary of reminding the brethren of the exhortations left by the founder of their church, Paul the minister of God to the Gentiles. He would have heard, in time, of Paul's death in far away Rome, and with that news would have felt suddenly older. There would be the parting with Timothy, gone to assist the failing John in the administration of the Church at Ephesus and all the communities in Western Asia who looked to Ephesus as a centre. Then perhaps the slow lapse of twenty or thirty years; news comes to Corinth of the death of John, the last of the Apostles. No one is left now who saw the Lord in the flesh; very few remember anything of the early struggles of the infant Church and the herculean labours of its founders. A new generation had grown up around Tertius, and—who can doubt it—he saw, rapidly increasing and flourishing unchecked, more of those evils against which his beloved mentor Paul had spoken and written so many years ago. But now there was no Paul with his forthrightness and fiery eloquence, to bring into the assembly that sense of shame that in times past had brought godly repentance and a

great cleansing. Perhaps in the interim Tertius himself had acquired something of Paul's ability and could himself induce a reformation in the Church; perhaps not. Perhaps he could only pray and intercede for the erring ones in the solitude of his own home, or endeavour by quiet word and remonstrance to turn this one or that one from the error of his ways. Perhaps, at the end, and in spite of all his faithful service, he was ignominiously turned out from the apostate assembly and his name branded as one to be avoided and spurned.

We do not know. We only know that all these things have happened to faithful servants of Christ in church after church, century after century, and that such experiences have often befallen those who have sought consistently and persistently to "warn their brethren night and day with tears" (Acts 20, 31). It would not be a strange thing if it had happened at Corinth to Tertius.

But we also know something else. We know that to every sincere disciple of Christ who has been true to his Master and true to himself, and has not denied his Master's Name, there comes at the end a reflection that must have come at the end to Tertius too, in whatever state he encountered that end. It is the reflection that came to Paul himself and which he expressed in fervent

words, confident words, immortal words, saying them on our behalf as well as his own, that we may take fresh courage in anticipation of the coming of such a time. *"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."* (2 Tim. 4, 18).

One may picture Tertius, in that day, at the time of the fulfilment of the promise, approaching towards the glory of the Throne, around which the triumphant hosts of heaven are standing, beholding the ones he had known and loved in life before, his loved master Paul among them. The weight of earthly years falls away and vanishes, and he steps forward in the wonder and the glory of his resurrection life to greet his long-lost brethren, brethren with whom he had borne the heat and burden of the day back there in the First Century at Corinth in Greece. And as he sees them, at last, face to face in the image of the Master, enshrouded in that radiant glory which is the inheritance of all who have been raised to live with Christ, perchance there comes again, unbidden, to his lips, those words penned so long ago, *"I, Tertius . . . salute thee"*.

On the Pharisees

The word "Pharisee" is thought to have been derived from a Hebrew word meaning to be separate. The sect of the Pharisees had its origin in the time of Ezra and was a movement organised primarily for preserving a sure knowledge of the Mosaic Law and maintaining the Covenant inviolate. It received a great impetus in the time of the Syrian oppressor, King Antiochus Epiphanes, round about 168 B.C., due to his attempt to make Israel pagan. Later on they violently opposed the tendency, by John Hyrcanus and others, to form alliances with foreign nations (135-105 B.C.). Following the reign of Queen Alexandra of Judea, 76-67 B.C., they gained the lead and dominated Jewish national life, and this continued during the Roman occupation. The Pharisaic party became the party of the ordinary people and the people looked to it for guidance. Josephus says that the party comprised six thousand members in his time but most Jews were adherents. They fixed their hopes on the coming of Messiah as an earthly ruler who would deliver Israel from the foreign yoke. But their very zeal for adherence to the laws of Moses and the mass of written and oral traditions and interpretations that had gathered

around that law was their undoing. They became formal and unyielding, wedded to the letter of the Law without heed to its spirit, and this is how Christ found them when He came. The Scribes, often mentioned in association with them, were the "doctors of the Law", their particular vocation being to study, expound and teach the oral and written Law as it was qualified by the interpretations and traditions which had been added to it through the centuries. The Scribes were usually Pharisees themselves. So Christ admitted that "the Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat" and He did not forbid the people to hear and heed them. What He did do was condemn in no uncertain fashion the rigidity and formalism that had drawn an originally noble movement away from its first high ideals and rendered it no longer of value in the sight of God. Some Pharisees, such as Nicodemus and Saul of Tarsus, were able to cast off those shackles and enter into the light of the new revelation brought by Jesus Christ. Of the rest, Jesus said, *"the Kingdom of God is taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."*

GOLD, TRIED IN THE FIRE

An exhortation

"When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold." (Job 23, 10).

The patriarchs of early times saw in gold an emblem of purity and nobility. Job looked upon the trials which befell him as the equivalent process by which gold receives its bright lustre. To rid man of much that is coarse and gross in his nature, to refine him in spirit, to bring out a latent splendour of being was a Divine purpose which that venerable philosopher understood and appreciated.

Without that understanding he could not have said *"Though He slay me yet will I trust Him"*. The words were more than a stubborn declaration of faith. They were an acquiescence to the refining forces of suffering and adversity as a necessary element by which the spirit of man is enabled to rise from a state of blind complacency to an exaltation of conquest. To endure pain and disaster, to vanquish sorrow and trouble, to come out of some gruelling bout of affliction feeling a sense of betterness and strength, of greater wisdom and deeper humanity, is to know an affinity with all that is truly heroic. It is to understand more clearly words that have an old familiar ring, *"Whom the Lord loves he chastens"*.

It is to have fellowship with the prince of sufferers, the Man of Sorrows who was acquainted with grief, who, though without sin, received through his anguish of mind and body a perfection of spirit not previously his. The radiant Alpha and Omega which the Revelator saw walking among the seven golden candlesticks was that same Jesus Christ who once walked on the earth among men, tested and tried at all points of human nature in the crucible of sorrow, temptation, weakness and pain. The highest and best endured the pangs of Gethsemane, the desertion of his friends, the betrayal of his trust, the mockery of a professional priesthood, and the physical anguish of the cross. If he, the faultless, was not spared the tears, the blows, the pain of this world's perfidy, his humble followers with all their faults and failures can hardly expect to escape those refining experiences which reduce crude nature to something of a finer quality.

Any commodity "worth its weight in gold" or any person known to be "as good as gold" has received highest praise. The words are compliments passed into everyday use which rate the best in terms of gold. The very word has a ring about it of splendour, glory, radiance and richness. When men would give of their best they

gave gold. After Job's troubles were over every man brought him an earring of gold.

When the work began on Israel's Tabernacle, apart from all other gifts, every man offered an offering of gold. King David later bequeathed to the temple of God three thousand talents of the gold of Ophir. The chief men of the nation added yet another five thousand talents. Both secular and sacred history record a lavish use of gold. Vessels of solid gold, of pure gold, of fine gold, furniture overlaid with gold, were an essential part of the pomp and pride of life. The image of gold set up by Nebuchadnezzar for all to worship typifies man's age-long worship of wealth, as the golden calf made by Aaron portrays the careless, wanton world obsessed by all the things money can buy, but blindly indifferent to those free gifts of God which money cannot buy.

The wealth and craftsmanship of bygone Eastern civilisations offered to God's pen men both illustration and contrast. The gold of palaces began to pall on men who saw the treachery of princes. Even the splendid vessels of the Temple became baubles in the sight of those who saw a great want of wisdom, justice, mercy and humility on the part of those from whom much was expected, but from whom little was forthcoming. If God wanted gold could he not take it? All the gold was his, laid in the coffers of the earth long before man appeared to find and use it so cleverly and often so selfishly.

Job had a first rate knowledge of the treasures of the earth. He knew where they were to be found. But where, he mused, shall wisdom be found, or understanding? Gold would buy neither one nor the other, for wisdom is beyond price. Gold has bought many a king's ransom but it cannot buy the free gifts of God.

Man has not been redeemed with gold but with the life of the Lamb of God. Salvation is free. Life is the gift of God. Peter at the gate Beautiful had no gold to give to the lame man asking alms but he gave him a gift gold could not buy. He gave him faith, set him on his feet and sent him away to live a free and independent life. The trial of faith is more precious than gold, for it is the conditioning of human character for a prize worth more than its weight in gold; an eternal glory, not comparable with the transitory treasures of this world. Nor can the testing time be considered, however fiery, as anything but "a light affliction" for so great an end.

Poets as well as prophets have put into inspired

words the lesson to be drawn from the refiner's fire. The peculiarity of gold is its necessary subjection to tremendous heat to rid the ore of its gritty impurities. The hotter the furnace, the finer the gold. The hotter the furnace, the brighter the lustre and the better the quality of the precious metal.

Once a liquid fire in the veins of the earth, cooled and solidified by time, between stratas of rock, it is not at its shining best when it first sees the light of day. Rough and shapeless, mixed with the dross of its earthy origins, it must undergo great tribulation before it becomes the crown of a king, the sacred vessels of a temple, the banqueting plate of a great house or the currency of nations. Purified of its scum, plunged into the sizzling water of the cooling trough, hammered and beaten, stretched and pulled, shaped and designed by the goldsmith's art, at last it emerges a thing of beauty: a treasure for all time.

History and biography record that all great, worth-while people have been born out of the fires of adversity, for *"Life is not an idle ore, but metal dug from central gloom and heated hot with burning fears and dipped in baths of hissing tears and battered with the shocks of doom, to shape and use"*.

The heirs of the future are not called to pleasant dalliance down the primrose paths of easy living. "Changed from glory into glory" is not a state achieved by mere idle contemplation, of past events or future visions. There is little of the mystic about the true practising Christian surrounded by the clamour of the world set on going its own way, utterly regardless of Divine advice. Life is an everyday battle with weakness within and buffetings without, designed and permitted by Divine wisdom for a higher purpose than the temporary satisfaction of the human nature for happiness, honour or wealth in a world which is clearly not God's world.

The life intelligently and unreservedly put into the hands of God is in for a hard time. No doubt the end will be glorious but how few can stand the process. "Are ye able?" Christ asked his ambitious disciples. Kings of the East brought him gold at his birth but they also brought him myrrh to mingle with those bitter experiences which transformed even his faultless nature into the supernal glory of the King of Kings. Men crowned him not with spun gold but with woven thorns. The curse of Adam drew blood from the brow that had already endured the terrible sweat of Gethsemane. The sting of that circlet, the tormenting fear of failure in that garden, the loneliness, the grief, the desertion by his friends, the denial, the rejection, the consequent suffering, the mockery and the apparent triumph of evil and

death were a forecast, a guarantee that those who truly sought to follow in his steps should have also something of his experiences. Only metal that could stand such tests would endure to the end.

"Oh, 'tis a pathway hard to choose, a struggle rough to share,

For human pride would still refuse the nameless trials there."

Not only human pride, loving the adulation of men, but human frailty, shrinking from the heat and the hammer, weak when it should be strong, failing when the pressures of life and the powers of darkness seem in league to crush out hope, assurance and fortitude. "Gold tried in the fire" is not too exaggerated a description of that human metal which God passes through the furnace of affliction that it may come forth a shining product ready for high service. Freed from the dross of intolerance, ignorance, self-seeking and all those vanities to which flesh is heir, a metal which has stood the test will be found worthy to become the justification of the eternal purpose.

"A crown of glory in the hand of the Lord and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God". Of whom was the prophet speaking? What company of people did he foresee at some distant time occupying such a position of grandeur in relationship to the Lord that he would exhibit them as the crowning splendour of his own supreme universal authority?

The crown or cap of gold worn on the head of kings and princes signified honour, glory, dignity and rulership. Gold and jewels have been the prerogative of kings. The crown was rarely a simple circlet but a thing which shone in the eyes of the beholder, rivetting an awed attention by its brilliance and beauty upon the wearer as one appointed to reign over lesser mortals. When King David of Israel took the crown from the fallen king of Ammon he "found it to weigh a talent of gold and there were precious stones in it". Yet this age-long symbol of royalty once lay in the earth, a trapped element of primeval fires, needing the slow, laborious struggle of years to bring it to that perfection which exalts a monarch. The gold had no say in its shape or use. It did not exist for its own ends but for the purpose and design of its creator.

It follows then, that the dedicated life is no longer its own. It is chosen and offered for a purpose and place scarcely discerned in a life and a world which resembles the workshop of the Divine craftsman. Daily the old nature perishes while the spirit expands. As the remarkable pliability of gold yields to the fine designs of the smith so the willing obedience of a saint yields to him who fashions a new creation for his own purpose. Without discipline there is no destiny

and without destiny there is no future.

"There is a destiny that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will."

While some appear to have the superfine quality of fine gold dug from Ophir or Havilah, undergoing in this age those trials of faith which fit them for the next, mankind in general is not overlooked. The human metal is still there awaiting the time, the opportunity and the discipline of a benign reign of justice and love which will bring out the hidden best of all that obscure, neglected, undiscovered mass which has not yet had a chance to shine. For a long time human life has been cheap, grossly undervalued and enormously underestimated. The human race is a massive mine of potential worth, its collective resources still hidden in the moral chaos and dark labyrinths of a world in which evil, ignorance and selfishness have predominated. Individually man is a restless dissatisfied being, craving to be something he is not.

"I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even than the golden wedge of Ophir."

Gold is the Divine yardstick, the highest measure of nature. Money and education have produced in some respects civilised man, but God intends to produce regenerated man, man reformed, remade, reshaped after his own image. When the dross of wickedness and arrogance is purged from the earth and from human nature, man will become, by the grace of God, the precious creature he was meant to be, capable of greatness, of moral purity and deep happiness, far more valuable than the literal gold which the

covetous have gone to any lengths to obtain.

As nations in their descent through time have dropped from the head of gold to the feet of iron and the toes mixed with clay, the kingdom of God must bring them back to the gold standard. *"The street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass"*. Here the Revelator depicts the future state of society, broad and spacious, full of light and beauty, golden and true in all its relationships. No longer crooked and perverse, violent and impure, in its dealings with others, but clear as glass, its ascendant virtues reflected in the mirror-like lustre of pure gold.

Whatever men and women may think of their present riches and attainments, whether they be saints or sinners, the counsel of Christ to "buy of Me gold tried in the fire" is timely and Divine. The imperfection of human nature, the unsatisfying quality of all earth's transitory riches and pleasures, grow pale beside that gold of intelligent character, the pure in heart who have passed through the fires, willingly losing their dross, sacrificing self and counting it nothing, that they might win through to the ultimate goal.

For the crown and glory of life is character. It is a grand possession, a great influence and a unique power. The kingdom of God belongs to the pure in heart.

"We must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God." If the means are rough and the methods hard, the future will be found infinitely worth them all for those who endure to the end.

"When He hath tried me I shall come forth as gold."

THE BARREN FIG TREE

Most of Jesus' parables were spoken ones; one or two were acted, and this incident of the fruitless fig tree was one of them. On the way from Bethany to Jerusalem one morning, Jesus hungered, and went to a wayside fig tree hoping to find some figs thereon. Failing to find any—Mark says *"for the time of figs was not yet"*—Jesus condemned the tree to perpetual sterility, and shortly afterwards it withered away. The story is recounted by Matthew (26. 19-21) and Mark (11. 13-20) and on the surface seems quite out of accord with the usual character of Jesus. That at least is sufficient justification for looking at it a little more closely.

First of all, a comparison of the two accounts. The crucial remark differs a little between them.

Matthew has it *"Let no fruit grow on thee for ever"* which is expressed as a prohibition, and Mark *"No man eat fruit of thee for ever"* which is more like a statement of fact than a prohibition. In Matthew the tree "withered away" immediately; in Mark it was twenty-four hours later that it was observed to have "dried up from the roots". Matthew's account makes the incident appear a miracle; Mark's is more matter-of-fact and descriptive, and yields more material for visualising what happened. It is probable though that both were eye-witnesses.

The tree was evidently a wild fig, growing, as is stated, by the roadside, although even if it was a cultivated one and owned by someone, any passer-by had the right to help himself to the

fruit. This was a feature of the Mosaic Law (Deut. 23. 24-25; although this clause refers to grapes and wheat only, Josephus in Ant. 4. 8. 21. states that it was applied to all fruits and crops indiscriminately). Jesus therefore acted quite in accordance with custom in approaching it.

The tree was full of leaves, but Jesus found no figs thereon. Says Mark "the time of figs was not yet". The incident occurred just before Passover, probably in February or March. This is too early for the normal crop of figs, but young green figs would be forming. Besides these, however, it was normal for a few of the previous year's crop to remain on the tree throughout the winter and into the spring. Had the tree been a normal one Jesus could have expected to find something edible thereon even though the time for the real crop was still several months away. But He found nothing. The tree was hopelessly barren. Had it fruited the previous year there would have been a few of that crop on its branches; had it been going to fruit this year there would have been some early green ones visible. There was nothing; only a mass of green leaves that belied the sterility of the tree.

It is important to notice that it was not Jesus who made the tree fruitless for the future. It was already barren, uncultivated, with no husbandman to look after it, a mere useless cumberer of the ground. The Lord's words only confirmed what was an obvious fact. The A.V. of Matthew is unnecessarily prohibitive; the literal Greek is, in Matthew, "no more—of thee—fruit may be produced—for ever" and in Mark "no more—of thee—for ever—no one—fruit may eat". The tree was already doomed and Jesus formally pronounced its condemnation.

Passing that way the next morning, the disciples found that the rich show of leaves had wilted and the tree was "dried up from the roots". The disciples, wondering, asked of Jesus "*how did the fig tree wither away?*" (Matt. 21. 20 RV; not "how soon" as in the A.V.) Peter, more impetuous, came in with "*Master, behold, the tree which thou cursedst is withered away*" (Mark 11.21). He

associated Jesus' words of the previous day with this sudden withering away. The word he used, rendered by the English "curse" means to doom or condemn a thing to destruction, in a case like this a giving up to perpetual sterility, as in its usage in Heb. 6.8, speaking of Christians backsliding into Judaism, "*that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned*". That in turn is based upon the story of Eden and the unprepared outer earth in Gen. 3. 17-18: "*cursed is the ground for thy sake . . . thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee*". It may well be that Jesus did use his power to accelerate the end of this tree, an end which was inevitable any way; this at least might have been intended to use the incident as a parable in action for the instruction of the disciples and all who witnessed it. If they were reflective and observant, they would recall that only a few months earlier Jesus had uttered a parable which bore a striking resemblance to this incident. He spoke of a man who had a fruitless fig tree in his vineyard, and after three years thus he told his gardener to "*cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?*" (Luke 13. 6-9). The gardener begged for one more year's reprieve for the tree and he would dig around it and fertilise it anew, and if after that it was still barren, he would cut it down. To all who heard the parable it was obvious that Jesus was speaking of the Jewish nation which for three years past had refused his message and brought forth no fruit to God and must inevitably suffer the penalty of that failure. They had produced plenty of leaves of profession but no fruit of faith. For fifteen centuries they had been the chosen people of God, given every facility and encouragement to recognise and accept their Messiah when He should appear, and when He did appear they neither recognised nor accepted him. So they were cast off, rejected and destroyed. "*Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground*". Now these same disciples saw that parable re-enacted in real life. The tree which should have borne fruit was barren; of no further use, it was cast off and rejected.

We who come to the feet of Him to learn stand aghast at the limitless expanse of the sea of Divine Truth, and in our littleness feel inspired at once to build ourselves a little enclosure where the revelation of Truth can be kept within bounds and the waters be calm and still; and in our inexperience we discern not and care not that those imprisoned waters cannot but be muddled with some effects of human tradition and misconceptions inherited from the past.

To give praise is very becoming for the believer. It becomes as natural as breathing is to the physical body. Thankfulness and praise are twin sisters and where the one is found the other follows close in its track. Realising the deep need of love and mercy and being the recipient of the same causes the heart to overflow with gratitude to its donor. Like the Psalmist, the language is: "*I will bless the Lord at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth.*"

“AND NOW ABIDETH . . .”

*A series of studies
in 1 Cor. 13*

3. Love suffers long

Coming now to the consideration of the constituent elements of Love, an effort will be made to analyse and define them with the known character of God. Only thus can we be sure of our definitions.

The first constituent is long-suffering, for “Love suffers” long. As defined by Scripture, long-suffering is not that passive submissiveness seen in people subject to the rule of tyrants, dictators, or other autocratic rulers whose domination they are unable to break or remove. True, such peoples may suffer long, but there is no virtue or purpose in their suffering. Since God himself has shown long-suffering, it must refer to a state where the sufferer has ample power to remove the cause of the suffering, yet chooses not to do so, in order to effect some further end or purpose, in accordance with a plan of campaign. That this was not a characteristic of heathen priesthoods or monarchies is very patent from extant history. It was not their practice to suffer long with recalcitrant or rebellious men who ignored or flouted their authorities. Terrible indeed were the curses and punishments which befell the wretch who dared to pit himself against their power. Ruthlessness—severe and speedy ruthlessness—was the watchword of their government, for only thus were their thrones secure.

But has there been long-suffering in God? Here the answer is of quite a different kind. He has always possessed power to overcome those rash enough to range themselves as his enemies, yet He has never used his power arbitrarily to crush them until they have had sufficient opportunity to repent and reform. In the days of Noah He suffered for long years the taunts of wicked men and the perversities of fallen angels ere He brought fitting recompense upon their heads (1 Pet. 3.19). His power was adequate to curb their violence and suppress their rebelliousness, but for his own Name's sake He bore their presumptuous ways with much long-suffering. At a later period God waited for a long time before meting out recompense to the Amorites for their blatant iniquity. To afford them sufficient time to fill their measure full, God kept his own people waiting in Egyptian bondage, as He had told Abraham He would. (Gen. 15.16). Again, with the faithless hosts of Israel God waited and suffered long. “*With vessels of wrath fit only to be destroyed He endured with much long-suffering*” (Rom. 9. 22). He could have destroyed them for their impieties and sins time and again, yet He refrained;

instead, He pleaded and waited over long centuries, desiring to have them repent and return to his care. Even into Jesus' day his waiting went on, until that rebellious generation had filled the measure of their sins (Matt. 23.32).

God is long-suffering towards the wayward and venturesome members of his spiritual family. He is not “*slack concerning his promises . . . but is long-suffering to us, not wishing that any* (taking undue liberties) *should perish*” (2 Pet. 3.9). His long-suffering attitude makes salvation possible even for the back-slider and trifle (2 Pet. 3.15). The special illustration of God's long-suffering, which also brings in our own long-suffering too, is found in the Parable of the Unjust Judge. Annoyed and vexed by the widow's unceasing importunity the unjust Judge gave judgment at last on her behalf—yet not for her own sake particularly, but lest her unceasing coming should weary him. Basing God's seeming indifference to his people's cry upon this illustration, the Lord continues “*Shall not God avenge his elect which cry to him day and night, and He is long-suffering over them*” (Luke 18.7).

The Elect, because they are God's elect, are made to suffer by their enemies. But they do not themselves retaliate upon their enemies nor make recompense to them, like for like, again, because they are God's elect! Instead they have committed their whole interests to God, and wait on him for the avengement of their wrongs. But even though they suffer most acutely God does not move at once to their relief. Like the importuning widow they cry oft and persistently, yet God seems not to hear. Thus the Elect suffer long, exactly as long as God's long-suffering lasts. But relief and recompense will come when long-suffering has accomplished its purpose by its seeming tardy policy.

Another illustration of the same principle is found in Rev. 6. 9-11. Souls under the Altar are here heard crying out to God “*How long, O Master, (R.V.) the holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood upon them that dwell upon the earth?*” Earthly rulers had persecuted to death some who had access to the “Altar”—that is, some who were consecrated to holy things, and their cry goes up “*How much longer shall this go on unchecked and unavenged?*”. They were told to wait and rest a little longer till the persecutors' cup had become filled to the brim by their persecution of still other brethren who would be killed as they had been. Rev. 16. 5-7 depicts the avengement of all these sufferers when the

period of long-suffering was at an end.

God's attitude in all these persecutions of his saints throughout the Ages has been that of sympathy towards them, but of perfect self-control and self-command over himself. He has been working to a Plan, and accordingly has not permitted the enormities of wicked men to deflect him from his pre-arranged purposes. Men have dared and defied his government repeatedly, and He has allowed them to go on for a time unrestrained, inviting them meanwhile to repent. But, in time, their cup became full, their allotted time expired, and judgment fell upon them. "Long-suffering" waited till the clock of destiny struck the hour; then, and not before, recompense was meted out. Thus, at long last, the Sovereignty of the Will of God asserts itself against the perversity of humanity's misdirected freedom of will.

It must be the same with us, as we submit ourselves to his Will. We also must learn to wait till the appointed hour, thus affording time, and still more time, for the transgressor against us to repent. And should repentance not be forthcoming, even after waiting for seven times seventy transgressions to transpire, it is not for us to retaliate avengingly. Avengement belongs to God, and we must learn to bear and suffer just so long as God forbears to strike. To be thus able to bear and suffer long we need *"to be strengthened with all power . . . unto all patience and long-suffering with joy, giving thanks to the Father . . ."* (Col. 1. 11), for his grace to help in this time of need. *"Long-suffering"* says Trench (N. T. Synonyms) *"is the restraint which does not hastily retaliate a wrong, the opposite to wrath or revenge."*

This is no easy grace to cultivate, and only those who commit themselves to God for the righting of all wrongs can grow therein. Like our beloved Lord we must learn to bear the taunting word and stinging blow and "answer not a word", committing ourselves instead to him to bide his appointed time of recompense. But while we learn to bear and bide, it is no passive grace we seek to cultivate, for Love not only suffers long but is also kind. God has been the great example of long-suffering, yet while suffering the sting of man's impiety and inhumanity. He has caused his sun to shine and rain to fall, and made the soil to yield its fruitful harvests for one and all. So also with his child. He must suffer long but he also must be kind, for Love is kind.

There is none of this grace in the ancient priest-hoods, for, with them as with many nations today, kindness was accounted as weakness, to be presumed upon and taken advantage of whenever possible. And we should search the "hay-stack" to find the proverbial "needle" if we sought

royal history for tokens of this grace. But in God there has been much of it. Over and above his gifts in Nature, noted above, the salvation and calling of his saints began in his kindness to men. *"When the kindness of God our Saviour and his love toward man appeared . . . He saved us . . . that we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life"* (Tit. 3. 4-7). Here is kindness and love toward all men in that a Saviour is provided for them, but a special kindness to those who make response thereto, and are saved from their bestial life, and called to higher things. This same thought is expressed again by Paul concerning God's appealing attitude towards the ungenerous critic in Rom. 2. 4. *" . . . Behold then the goodness and the severity of God, to them that fell, severity: but towards thee, goodness."* *"Chrestotes"* says Trench (N. T. Synonyms) *"is a beautiful word, as it is the impression of a beautiful grace . . . it occurs in the New Testament only in the writings of St. Paul, being by him joined to 'philanthropia' (love of man) in Titus 3.4. to makrothumia (long-suffering) and anochē (forbearance) in Rom. 2.4; and opposed to apotomia (severity) in Rom. 11.22. It is also rendered 'good' in Rom. 3.12, and 'gentleness' in Gal. 5.22. In the Latin translations it is rendered 'benignity' in Gal. 5.22, and 'sweetness' in 2 Cor. 6.6. These words speak for themselves. Tertullian (an early church writer) says Chrestotes was so predominantly the character of Christ's ministry that it is nothing wonderful how 'Christus' became 'Chrestus', and 'Christiani' 'Chrestiania' on the lips of the heathen world, and though used by them with an undertone of contempt, it is a standing tribute to the gracious quality and nature of the early Christians' public life. This grace of kindness is well defined as a 'benign sweet-tempered gentleness which is graciously humane and tenderly obliging to all'. It is, too, well represented in the Master's attitude to the outcast woman who had crept in among Simon's guests in order to wash and anoint his feet. In blazing indignation Simon said within himself, 'If this man were a prophet—if He was what He pretends to be—He would have perceived who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him'. True to his creed, this was the haughty Pharisee! To her Jesus said 'Thy sins are forgiven thee'! Of her He said ' . . . she loved much'! That was the touch of kindness that healed and comforted in an hour of exquisitely-expressed repentance. It did not spurn the sinner because of its many sins, but graciously welcomed its approach, and its tear-bedewed bequest.*

In the Age to come there will be many broken weeping penitents who will require comfort and encouragement along the Way of Holiness, and it well behoves all who hope to have qualified as

helpers and comforters to take every opportunity, day by day, to grow proficient in the gentle art of being kind. It is just the art of seeing the thwarted love in the sinner's heart rather than the stigma

that attends the sin. "She loved much" had more potent effect on the woman's heart, than Simon's coldly pharisaical phrase "she is a sinner". It is better to be like the Lord than like the Pharisee.

To be continued.

THE FLOATING AXE-HEAD

An Old Testament story

One of the minor incidents of the Old Testament has been elevated to the position of a miracle largely on account of inadequate translation in the A.V. The prophet Elisha, about eight hundred years before Christ, living with his students at Gilgal, north of Jerusalem, was induced by them to seek a more commodious living space near the River Jordan. The account in 2 Kings 6 tells how they went together to the chosen place and commenced to fell timber wherewith to build themselves a house. During this operation one of them, apparently working close to the river's brink, had the misfortune to lose the head of his axe in the water. In some distress he sought his tutor, Elisha, for help. "Alas, master" he said "it was borrowed". For that reason, obviously, the question of its recovery was doubly urgent.

"And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he showed him the place." Then, says the narrative, Elisha "cut down a stick, and cast it in thither, and the iron did swim".

Ever ready to seize upon the miraculous, past generations of commentators have called this the miracle of the swimming axe-head; more than one volume of Bible Study helps lists this incident under the heading of "Old Testament Miracles". There seems singularly little purpose in such a miracle. No great lesson is expounded or public demonstration of Divine sovereignty given. A careless youth had his lost axe-head returned to him in the sight of half a dozen companions and that is all. The incident is related in a casual, matter-of-fact fashion as though it was not a matter of any great importance and then the historian goes on to talk of something else.

The Jordan near Gilgal is between sixty and a hundred feet wide and varies in depth between four and six feet, with a well defined channel flanked by level terraces on which, more particularly in ancient times, there grew an abundance of trees, canes, shrubs and reeds. The water was too deep to retrieve the axe-head easily and yet not so deep that a little ingenuity would not solve the problem. Elisha "cut down a stick" according to the A.V. "Cut down"—"qatsab"—means to

form or shape, as with a tool of some kind. An example is 1 Kings 6. 25 and 7. 37 "... cherubims of one measure and size" where "size" stands for "shape". The two olive wood cherubims in the Temple were both of the same sculptured shape. Another example is Cant. 4. 2 "Like a flock of sheep that are shorn"; the paring of the wool from the sheep is likened to the paring down of wood that is shaped. "Stick" in the text is "ets" which denotes a tree, a branch or any piece of wood, shaped or unshaped, indiscriminately. Elisha took a piece of growing timber and shaped it to his purpose; probably made it into the form of a flat plank. He then "cast it in . . . and the iron did swim". "Cast" can mean equally cast, throw, thrust or put, and "swim" denotes the ideas either of swimming or floating. This latter word is in the Hebrew grammatical form known as Hiphil, signifying the causative "he caused it to float", giving a different slant on the matter than that indicated by the A.V., which has it as though the iron did swim of its own volition. The true rendering is shown in several translations such as RSV "and made the iron float", Fenton "... thrust it (the stick) there and floated the iron", and the Septuagint "... threw (the stick) in there and the iron came to the surface".

The axe-head was evidently five or six feet down in the water and too far from the bank to be fished out easily. Elisha seems to have shaped a long pole to a roughly flat form and thrust the pole into the water in such a fashion as to insert its end underneath the axe-head as it lay on the river bed. He had only to let go his own end of the pole to have it rise to the surface, bearing upon its farther extremity the lost implement. The relieved youth had then only to reach out for the floating timber, bring it carefully to the bank, and recover his axe-head. This is precisely what the narrative says "And he put out his hand, and took it".

Why so trivial an incident is recorded at all is a bit of puzzle. The historical books of the kingdom of Israel were compiled by many generations of historians over a period of five hundred

years or so and this little interlude, 2 Kings 6, 1-7, might well have been written down in the first place by the youth who lost the axe, a memory of the manner in which the great prophet of Israel came to his aid in a relatively trivial personal problem. Those responsible later on for compiling this part of the Book of Kings might have considered the incident worthy of record as illustrating how Elisha in all his greatness did not abstain from quite minor deeds of helpfulness when the occasion came before him. But we need not only ask why the compilers included such a narrative; they were guided by the Holy Spirit and we also have to ask why the Holy Spirit saw to it that this story was included. There must be a reason, for *"all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correc-*

tion, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3, 16). Maybe it is that an admittedly learned and devoted man of God who might easily be charged with being a mystic and out of touch with the affairs of daily life is here shown, despite his piety and "other-worldliness", to be of a practical mind and definitely aware of the troubles and needs of his fellows. When the lad was in trouble Elisha came to the rescue with a business-like application of elementary mechanics and his pupil was duly grateful. We too, with all our knowledge of and insight into the things of the next world, do well if we can, when occasion arises, render practical assistance to those of our fellows who have become involved in some everyday trouble. To that extent the story has certainly been given for our example and instruction in righteousness.

Nazareth a century ago

"Almost in the centre of this chain of hills there is a singular cleft in the limestone, forming the entrance to a little valley. As the traveller leaves the plain he will ride up a steep and narrow pathway, brodered with grass and flowers, through scenery which is neither colossal nor overwhelming, but infinitely beautiful and picturesque. Beneath him, on the right-hand side, the vale will gradually widen, until it becomes about a quarter of a mile in breadth. The basin of the valley is divided by hedges of cactus into little fields and gardens, which, about the fall of the spring rains, wear an aspect of indescribable calm, and glow with a tint of the richest green. Beside the narrow pathway, at not great distance apart from each other, are two wells, and the women who draw water there are more beautiful, and the ruddy, bright-eyed shepherd boys who sit or play by the well-sides, in their gay-coloured Oriental costume, are a happier, bolder, brighter-looking race than the traveller will have seen elsewhere. Gradually the valley opens into a little natural amphitheatre of hills, supposed by some to be the crater of an extinct volcano; and there, clinging to the hollows of a hill, which rises to the height of some five hundred feet above it, lie, "like a handful of pearls in a goblet of emerald," the flat roofs and narrow streets of a little Eastern town. There is a small

church; the massive buildings of a convent; the tall minaret of a mosque; a clear, abundant fountain; houses built of white stone, and gardens scattered among them, umbrageous with figs and olives, and rich with the white and scarlet blossoms of orange and pomegranate. In spring, at least, everything about the place looks indescribably bright and soft; doves murmur in the trees; the hoopoe flits about in ceaseless activity; the bright blue roller-bird, the commonest and loveliest bird of Palestine, flashes like a living sapphire over fields which are enamelled with innumerable flowers. And that little town is *En Názirah*, Nazareth, where the Son of God, the Saviour of mankind, spent nearly thirty years of his mortal life. It was, in fact, his native village, his home for all but three or four years of his life on earth; the village which lent its then ignominious name to the scornful title written upon his cross; the village from which He did not disdain to draw his appellation when He spake in vision to the persecuting Saul. And along the narrow mountain-path which I have described, his feet must have often trod, for it is the only approach by which, in returning northwards from Jerusalem, He could have reached the home of his infancy, youth, and manhood."

(F. W. Farrar)

Implication



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

BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

Vol. 51, No. 4

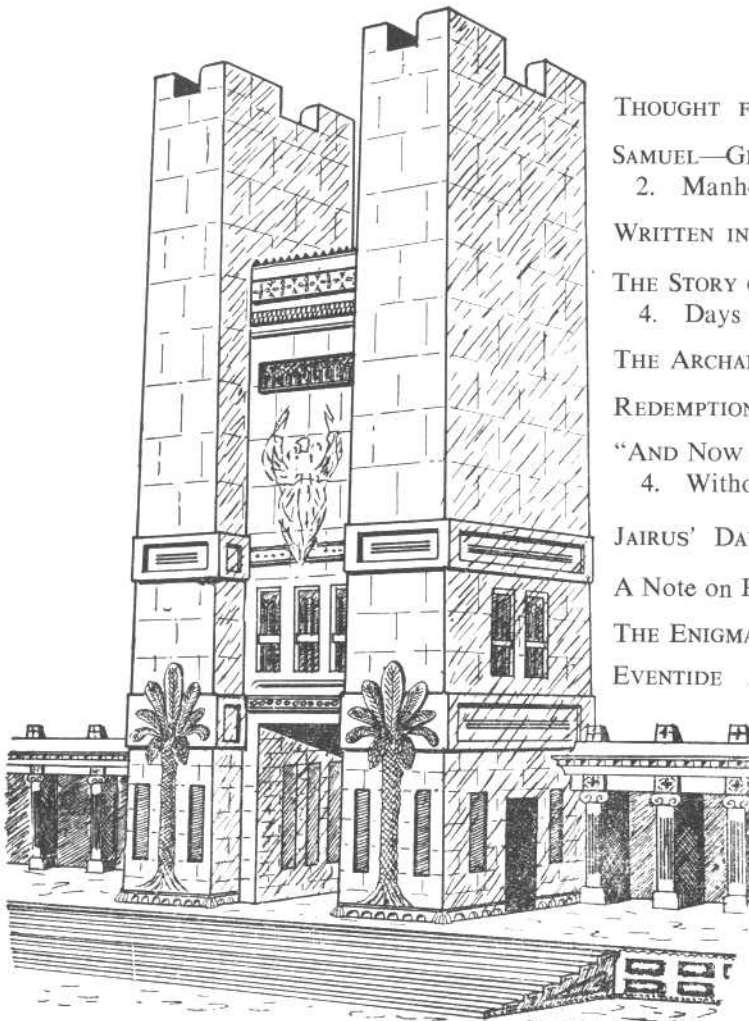
JULY/AUGUST 1974

Published July 1st

Next issue September 1st

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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.*

*This Journal is sent free
of charge to all who are
genuinely interested, on
request renewable annually
and is supported by the
voluntary gifts of its readers*

Published by
Bible Fellowship Union
11 Lyncroft Gardens, Hounslow,
Middlesex, England

Bible Study Monthly

FOUNDED 1924

This Journal is published for the promotion of Bible knowledge and the furtherance of the Gospel of the Kingdom, its circulation being largely among independent Bible fellowships and study circles which share in varying degree the viewpoint of the Divine

Plan herein set forth. It is supported entirely by the gifts of well-wishers, and all such gifts are sincerely appreciated. Enquiries are welcomed, and all who are genuinely interested may have the journal sent regularly upon request.

Communications and donations to Bible Fellowship Union, 11 Lyncroft Gardens, Hounslow, Middlesex, England.
Secretary & Treasurer: B. G. DUMONT (Hounslow) Editorial & Publishing: A. O. HUDSON (Welling)

NOTICES

Coming Conventions

ILFORD. An August holiday week-end gathering is planned by the Aldersbrook friends for Saturday—Monday, August 24—26 at the Labour Hall, High Road, Ilford. Details and programmes from W. R. Chandler, 29 Woodlands Avenue, Wanstead, London E11 3RA.

WEST WICKHAM. The usual autumn gathering will be held on Saturday—Sunday October 6—7 at Justin Hall, Beckenham Road, West Wickham. Details and programmes from J. F. Bignell, 28 Croft Avenue, West Wickham, Kent.

Back Numbers

Sets of the "Monthly" for the years 1969 to 1973 are available on request, at no charge, although contributions to postal and production costs are sincerely appreciated. It may be that new readers would be interested in adding such previous years as they have not seen to their collection. Please state the particular years for which sets are desired. If any such are not received following the

request it must be assumed that our stock for such years has been exhausted.

New Booklet

The two-part series "The Millennial Gospel of Jesus", which appeared in our January and March issues, is now available in booklet form and may be had on request in small quantities for judicious use.

Gone from us

BRO. C. CORNELL (London)

SIS. E. L. HARDING (Hitchin)

SIS. E. IRVING (Liverpool)

BRO. H. G. SMITH (Bournemouth)

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

Thought for the Month

"But no accounting shall be asked from them for the money which is delivered into their hand, for they deal honestly" (2 Kings 22.7).

The fortunate men thus to be trusted with this large sum of money which had been contributed by the people for the upkeep of the Temple in the days of good king Josiah were the workmen, the carpenters, the builders, the masons, and the merchants supplying stone, timber and other raw materials, engaged for the extensive rebuilding and renovation of the sacred edifice which had become necessary. Solomon's Temple, one of the wonders of the world, was now nearly five hundred years old and sadly in need of drastic overhaul. Its original erection is estimated to have cost King Solomon—or rather the ratepayers of King Solomon's time—the equivalent of a hundred million pounds in our present currency. That, perhaps, is

a measure of the amount that must have been involved in Josiah's project, an amount which was expressly commanded not to be subject to auditors or cost analysis, nor yet wage bargaining compacts with the workers. The whole sum was handed over unconditionally in sure knowledge that the workers would deal justly and honourably in the matter and give the king a fair and just bill of expenses.

What bitter contrast with the condition of society to-day! The merchants, seeking by every artifice and sharp practice, not excluding bribery and corruption, to increase their gains; the workers vociferously demanding a constantly increasing share of the "kitty"! If this be progress, perhaps we had better try retrogression. Good it is to realise that the coming Messianic Age will in this respect at least partake more of the spirit of Josiah's day than of our own.

SAMUEL, GREATEST OF THE JUDGES

2. Manhood

Ten years had passed since that memorable night when the Lord spoke to Samuel out of the sanctuary. Now he was grown to manhood, and already "all Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord" (1 Sam. 3. 20). The judgment pronounced ten years previously had not been executed: Eli, an old man of ninety-eight, was still High Priest. His profligate sons, middle-aged themselves, were still apostate from their high mission, and Israel still worshipped false gods. It was not that the true God was quite unknown: all the evidence is that there was always a substantial minority which served God and "sighed and cried for the abominations" that were done in Israel. But in the main the nation was godless. The Tabernacle, made by Bezaleel in the wilderness, still stood at Shiloh and the ceremonies and feasts were still celebrated in a more or less perfunctory manner, but quite evidently the moral state of the nation was thoroughly bad. It was upon this unpromising material that the youthful reformer set to work, and with such vigour that his name and fame speedily became renowned throughout the land. The first sentence of chapter 4, belonging really to the end of chapter 3, tells us that "the word of Samuel came to all Israel". That does not demand that the people heeded Samuel to any extent: the next series of events in their national history, involving one of the greatest disasters they ever suffered, the capture of the Ark of the Covenant in open battle, is evidence that they did not; but the expression itself is sufficient to indicate that the young man was already in process of making himself a force to be reckoned with in Israel.

It was during this period that, as chapter 3, verse 21, tells us, "the Lord appeared again in Shiloh; for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord". The expression "the Lord appeared again in Shiloh" implies that for a long time previously his presence had not been manifest there. If one reads the stories of Israel's national life during the latter part of the period of the Judges there can be little wonder at that. The sad refrain "*In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes*" intones its sorrowful message throughout those dark days after Joshua had died, and the Judges ruled, uneasily, one after another, with troubled times of anarchy in between. The Tabernacle had been standing at Shiloh from very early days. When they crossed Jordan and

entered the land it had at first been erected at Gilgal, quite near Jordan, but before many years had passed a more suitable site was sought and found at Shiloh, in almost the exact centre of the promised land. Obviously Shiloh became the spiritual capital of the country—for Jerusalem was still the stronghold of the Jebusites and not in the possession of Israel at all—and it was to Shiloh that men looked for religious and political leadership. The High Priest, in the days when there were no kings, and the Judges rose, ruled, and passed away at frequent intervals, rarely exercising authority over more than a portion of the land at a time, was the most important because the only permanent figure in the national life, and the High Priest therefore had immense possibilities for good or for ill according to his administration of his sacred office. And for many years now, that office had fallen into disrepute and the nation was suffering accordingly.

What lesson is there in this for us? Is it not that strong spiritual leadership is essential for the community that would make progress in the things of God? Democracy is the cry of the day, but democracy is only good for those who are fit to govern themselves, and that is not true of mankind to-day. Hence the world, in which the masses are claiming and gaining more and more power, is becoming steadily more ill-governed and anarchistic. That was the condition of Israel under the Judges. And this is true to a great extent in the Church also. There are aspects of our communal Christian life together where democratic methods are out of place because the company of believers, for all their zeal and enthusiasm and loyalty to their Lord, are not yet at that stage of Christian maturity where they can fitly order their own course. Therefore God, in his wisdom, does provide pastors, teachers, "fathers in God", for the "perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ". (Eph. 4. 12). It is when such men are affording wise and clear-sighted leadership that the Church prospers; when their vision is fading, or their devotion to their calling is slackening, the people perish. We, no less than Israel, need the wisdom and reforming zeal of a Samuel if the conquests of Joshua are to be retained and maintained; conversely, if the elders of the assembly or the community have eyes that are waxed dim, as were those of Eli, if their faith and zeal has left them, if they have no longer the passionate devotion to the cause of Divine Truth that characterised their

earlier years, then there is most surely cause for deep concern as to the spiritual health of the flock.

Samuel would be about twenty-five years of age when the Battle of Aphek took place and the Ark of the Covenant was captured. His own efforts to turn Israel to the God of Israel, to induce them to forsake their false gods and to renew their covenant with him, could not as yet have borne much fruit. He had become known as a prophet and men were conscious that God was speaking through him; but Israel was notoriously indifferent to the messages of its prophets, and whilst the nation could go on its way without meeting utter disaster they were disposed to enjoy the good things of life they had and take little real notice of the young enthusiast among them. But the sands were running out. The Philistines, who had been off and on the oppressors of Israel for two or three centuries past, were gathering their forces for a fresh attempt to bring them into bondage. Had the nation been true to its Covenant with God there had been nothing to fear. Had it even shown signs of repentance and a desire to come back to its holy calling God would have delivered; but there was no such trend. Despite their half-grudging admission that God was speaking again in Israel at the mouth of Samuel they were still at heart apostate as ever, and the depth of their irreligiosity was shown up when, in consequence of their defeat at the first encounter with the enemy, they determined to take the Ark of God into the battle with them. "It" said they "may save us out of the hand of our enemies". (Chapter 4. 3).

This was the most fearful act of sacrilege ever committed by the people of Israel in their history. They were relying on the belief that God, thus put to the test, would not allow the sacred symbol of his presence to fall into the hands of the uncircumcised heathen. What He would not do for his people He would do for his holy habitation. They would compel God to save them, even against his will. That was probably their line of reasoning, and it shows the depth of ignorance into which they had fallen. This was no repetition of those ancient days when the priests, bearing aloft the holy Ark on their shoulders, set forward with the consecrated people in their wake, and the fervent cry arose on the still air "Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; let them that hate thee flee before thee". It might be that the age-old shout was heard again as the army marched toward the Philistine host with the sacred object in its midst, but the triumphant song must have been quickly changed to cries of dismay and terror as it speedily became evident that God was not going to intervene, and that the defeat of the previous day was nothing to the disaster that was

now to overwhelm them. And to the weak, apathetic old High Priest, without whose permission the Ark could not have been removed from its sanctuary, came the terrible news that the revered symbol was in the hands of the alien, the Tabernacle shorn of its glory, the nation of its centre of worship. It was a tragic ending to a life that could have been mighty in God's service—for Eli had ruled Israel for forty years.

Samuel would have been no party to this, but he would have had no power to prevent it. The part he had to play was yet to come. For the next twenty years the land lay under the harsh rule of the Philistines, and the nation mourned, desolate. Evidently the Philistines had followed up their capture of the Ark by razing Shiloh to the ground, for the name drops out of history thereafter, except for one solitary mention as the place of an obscure prophet in the reign of Jeroboam (1 Kings 14. 2). The fate of the little settlement is described graphically in Jer. 7 and in Psa. 78. The High Priest—dead. His son and successor—dead. The priesthood—scattered. The Ark—gone. The Tabernacle—destroyed or hidden away for safety. The nation—subject to a cruel enemy. That was the condition when Samuel entered upon his life's work.

The death of Eli obviously left Samuel in the position of leadership. During the twenty years that the Ark, restored by the Philistines after the series of plagues it had brought them, abode at Kirjathjearim (1 Sam. 7. 2) the young prophet sought diligently to turn the hearts of the people back to God. His message was an exhortation to repentance, but it also held practical promise. "If ye do return unto the Lord your God with all your hearts" he cried, "then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only; and He will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines" (1 Sam. 7. 3). His message was definite and without compromise, but it held hope.

And Israel turned! The example and preaching of the one who loved and served them so faithfully, because he loved and served God most of all, brought the nation back to God. "Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the Lord only". At forty-five years of age Samuel found himself at the head of a repentant and pious people.

What a lesson for us in these times of discouragement and faint-heartedness when we think all is lost! What an incentive to consistent and persistent witness, both within our fellowship, and outside it to the world! The apathetic Eli, without doubt a good man in his earlier days, had been the cause of national ruin and the loss of the nation's greatest treasure. Weakness of faith,

dimness of vision, had palsied his hands and leadened his feet so that he no longer inspired and led the nation, and the people drifted from belief to open rebellion. So the wrath of God was visited upon them. There could have been no other sequel. Now Samuel, in faith and zeal and by dint of ceaseless endeavour, had restored the people to their rightful position before God, and God, as ever in such circumstances, waited, ready to bless.

The occasion was not long in coming. Samuel, sensing, as did Daniel in a much later day, that the time was ripe for God to intervene to honour his people's faith, summoned a great assembly at Mizpeh. There he said, "*I will pray for you to the Lord*". Can we not imagine how his heart must have beat fast in looking upon that confident host, so different from the fear-stricken armies that twenty years before had borne the sacred Ark into battle to their own destruction. Here was a people for whom the Lord could indeed fight, an army that trusted not in carnal weapons, not in the strength of its own power, but the superabundant power of Almighty God. And as the children of Israel publicly acknowledged their fault and repudiated the past, saying "*we have sinned against the Lord*", God drew near to act.

The Philistines, being made aware of this great gathering at Mizpeh, and fearing insurrection, gathered their forces and came up to quell the rebellion. There was fear in Israel, but there was also trust. "*Cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us*" they cried to Samuel "*that He will save us out of the hand of the Philistines*". That was a significant phrase. "*The Lord our God*". There was no fetish-worship of an inanimate object this time, no appeal even that Samuel pray to *his* God. "*This is our God*" was their instinctive thought. "*He will save us.*" That speaks volumes for the untiring work of Samuel during those twenty years that had elapsed since the disastrous Battle of Aphek.

So God saved! He thundered with a great thunder upon the Philistines, and, wonder of wonders, utterly discomfited them, discomfited them so completely that they troubled Israel no more all the days of Samuel's judgeship. The deliverance that was wrought that day is comparable with the destruction of Sennacherib's host in the days of Hezekiah and of the Moabites in the days of Jehoshaphat. These are three memorable occasions on which God delivered in response to the prayer of faith without his people needing to strike a blow—although they did on this occasion pursue the defeated enemy and complete the work of destruction after God had given the victory. But it was God that saved!

Thus did the last and the greatest of the Judges become firmly established in the seat of power. He was leader by common consent, and Israel willingly accepted his rule. At Mizpeh, and Gilgal, and Bethel, each in turn, year by year, he dispensed justice and ordered the everyday affairs of the people. At Ramah, his home, he guided the nation's destinies and gave Israel perhaps the only period of real peace it had known in all the troubled years that had followed the entry into Canaan. Israel, that forgetful people, never forgot Samuel. His greatness in rulership and in the dispensing of justice passed into a proverb, so that years later the Lord could say to Jeremiah the prophet "*Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight*" (Jer. 15. 1). The little lad who had been given to God in the sanctuary at Shiloh had grown to be classed with Moses, the greatest man of all time in Israel's history.

And in the Temple services, throughout Israel's generations, the sweet singers of Israel chanted "*Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon the Lord, and He answered them*" (Psa. 99. 6). Thus did Israel praise her most famous Judge.

(To be continued)

"*The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice*" (Jno. 13.38) Jesus was not referring to the familiar morning call of the rooster. In any case, it is said that no cocks were allowed to remain in Jerusalem during the Passover feast. What Jesus did refer to was the twice repeated Roman trumpet call signalling the changing of the guard, first at the third watch (midnight) and then at the fourth watch (3.0 a.m.). These two watches were called the "cock-crowings", the trumpet or bugle used for the purpose being known as the "Gallus", meaning "cock" or "crower". (see

Ferrar Fenton footnote on Matt. 26. 34). This is the meaning of the allusion in Mark 13.35 "*ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning*". The second of the calls was habitually called "the cock-crowing" by the people generally because it more noticeably heralded the coming of dawn within another two hours or so; Mark is the only one who speaks of the double cock-crowing and this because he, as so often in his Gospel, seems to have preserved the actual words spoken by Jesus.

WRITTEN IN THE BOOK

Comments on
Bible criticism

This page discusses points cited by modern scholarship apparently impugning the veracity of Bible history or miracle.

What is the truth about the frequently repeated assertion that Moses could not have written the Pentateuch because writing was unknown prior to the 8th Century B.C.?

Anyone making such a statement nowadays only betrays his own ignorance. It is true that up to the middle 19th Century no examples of actual written documents or tablets earlier than the 8th B.C. Century were known, and this fact gave opportunity for the earliest "critical" scholars to take this position. Thus Schultz, in "Old Testament Theology" (1891) says "of the legendary character of the pre-Mosaic narratives, the time of which they treat is sufficient proof. It was a time prior to all knowledge of writing". Unfortunately this impression is still maintained in some quarters. A book for use in Religious Education published only two years ago stated that the time of King David, 9th Century B.C., was the earliest period for which a "major written document exists". In point of fact, discoveries in many parts of the world since the beginning of this century have established that writing was known as far back as history, outside the Bible, can be traced. Over half a million clay tablets have been recovered from the sands of the Middle East, written in the tongues of Babylon, Assyria, Persia, Sumeria, Armenia and Phoenicia, of which a good proportion go back to 1400 to 2000 B.C. The lost empire of the Hittites became known by the recovery of their written records going back to 1600 B.C.; the writings of ancient Crete, still undeciphered, to 1500 B.C. Papyrus records from Egypt extend nearly as far back as the clay tablets of the Sumerians. The oldest writing of all yet discovered is the semi-pictographic script of which only a few examples have been found at Kish and Jemdet Nasr in the Euphrates valley. These must date at about 2300 B.C. at latest. It is now clearly established that writing was a very usual accomplishment in every part of the ancient civilised world and there can be no doubt that Moses was well versed in the art.

(Loan copy full article "Antiquity of the Books of Moses" Sept./Oct. 1971 on request.)

* * * *

It is suggested that there is no evidence that Moses ever existed and that the Books usually

attributed to him were "written up" during the Israelite monarchy, five hundred years after his reputed time, incorporating traditions and legends of which he had become the mythical hero.

No one ever doubts that William the Conqueror and George Washington actually lived although the evidence for the facts is exactly the same as that for Moses. First, the undoubted present existence of a nation which avowedly owes its existence to the man—England and America in the latter cases, Israel in the earliest;—second, the existence of acknowledged written national histories detailing the circumstances in which these men founded their respective nations. So far as Moses is concerned, virtually the whole of the Old Testament, a compendium of many writers adding their quota at various times over a thousand year period up to 400 B.C., then the writers of the Apocrypha for another four centuries, then the New Testament, rests upon the principle that this man did live and did do the things that are related of him. Jesus spoke of him as a definite historical personage and upheld his authority which by means of the Law he gave originally was binding on Jews even in Jesus' day. To give just one example "there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (Jno. 5. 45-47).

* * * *

Some scholars say that Moses could not have written the Book of Deuteronomy since it contains the account of his death and a few events immediately following thereafter.

It does not require more than a minimum of imagination to realise that the details of Moses' death would naturally and very properly be added by his successor—either Joshua or Eleazar the High Priest—to complete the story of his life. In fact the Book reveals this very clearly. Practically the whole of the book is written in the first person; "I" and "we" occur nearly a hundred times, except in the last two chapters and a few in the centre of the book. The final chapter, 34, relating the details of Moses' death and expressing the esteem in which he was held by Israel, is obviously a eulogy written by another. It is possible that chap. 33 is also by another hand but there is every internal evidence that the rest of the book is from the pen of Moses himself.

THE STORY OF THE DELUGE

4. Days of Preparation

"And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark . . . and Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood" (Gen. 7. 1 & 7).

So far as the record reveals, Noah had three sons, all married at the time of the event, and no daughters. Neither, at this point in time, were there any grandsons. Strange, perhaps, for a man six hundred years old. His predecessors, living lives of comparable length, mostly had their first-born at less than two hundred years and in every case had "sons and daughters". This latter expression is not used of Noah, only that he begat Shem, Ham and Japheth, that Shem was a hundred years old at the time of the Flood, and the others somewhat younger.

Here we are introduced to the family of Noah. These eight people were the only ones saved and the implication is that they were the only righteous or God-fearing people left in the world; had there been others they surely would have had the same opportunity of salvation. It is difficult to think otherwise. The Flood is said by Peter to have been "a judgment upon the world of the ungodly" and that must demand, from our knowledge of God, that anyone who had faith to escape that judgment would in fact so escape. Noah had brothers and sisters, for Lamech, after Noah's birth, "begat sons and daughters" (Gen. 5. 30). They, unless they had already died, all perished. It is at least conceivable that Noah had raised an earlier family in earlier life, perhaps by a first wife now dead, and that these also were unbelievers and—after maybe three centuries of life—had separated from their father and because of their unbelief are not so much as mentioned in the narrative, so that the three sons we do know represent a second and later family. The same thing happened in the case of Abraham with his later wife Keturah after the death of Sarah, when he too was well advanced in age. The point is not of any importance except that it can be cited as a possible explanation in rebuttal of the occasional critics' argument that the narrative is untrustworthy because of the apparent advanced age of Noah at the birth of his first child.

It seems certain that Shem was the eldest. The expression in Gen. 10. 21 making Shem the brother of "Japheth the elder" is certainly incorrect and is rendered in most translations (RSV NEB RV Leeser etc.) "Shem the elder brother of Japheth". Ham is described in Gen. 9. 24 as the

"younger son" of Noah but there are doubts as to the meaning of the term and the fact that the order of the names is consistently the same in each of the five occurrences would seem to indicate that Japheth was the youngest. Since all three were married there could not have been a great deal of difference between their ages.

These eight people had the care of a great number of animals while the Flood persisted. The common impression, hallowed by tradition rather than a critical reading of the text, is that Noah selected one male and female of each species for preservation. This may well be an oversimplification of the position. The Lord's instruction was "*of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female; and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female. Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and his female*" (ch. 7. 2-3). When Noah entered the Ark, "*of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of everything that creepeth upon the earth, there went in two and two unto Noah into the Ark*" (ch. 7. 8-9). The distinction is that the clean beasts were those that were good for food and the unclean those that were not (see Lev. 20 and Num. 14). This is one of the indications that, contrary to what has been suggested by some commentators, the antediluvians did eat flesh foods; the knowledge of which beasts were suitable for this purpose did not originate with the Mosaic Law but was known long before. A problem presents itself here. If there were but two of a species of unclean and seven of a species of clean, the requirement of vvs. 9 and 15 that they all went in two by two, male and female, cannot be met. One of the seven must have been "odd man out".

The Hebrew word "*shenayim*", which denotes two in number, also includes the ideas of dual, double, two-fold, couple or pair. The text becomes more consistent if it is read to indicate that Noah was to take two pairs and seven pairs respectively, so that all could enter the Ark "male and female" as stated. In any case it would have been very risky to rest the future of a species upon the preservation of one pair only; all kinds of accidents or shortcomings might easily frustrate the intention. In fact the knowledge that specimens of the clean beasts and birds were offered in sacrifice by Noah upon his emergence from the Ark, and the necessity of speedy provision of food for the eight survivors during the first few years of their new life, might well indicate the desir-

ability of a greater number of each species being taken into the Ark than the first cursory reading of the narrative might suggest. One wonders, too, what happened when the carnivorous animals—lions, tigers, leopards, and so on—were let loose and started looking for something to eat. This whole question of the animal creation in the story can bristle with difficulties and perhaps the most reasonable solution is to accept that Noah was an experienced and knowledgeable man well able to plan intelligently for the problems that would face him in the new post-diluvian world.

The problems are considerably eased when one reflects that the patriarch did not have to cater for all known terrestrial species and to collect them from the four corners of the earth. Many of such which were and still are peculiar to Australasia, the Americas, Oceanic islands, and so on, were inaccessible to Noah anyway. The most reasonable estimate of the extent of the Flood confines it to the Euphrates valley and the animals in the Ark were probably only those normally inhabiting that area. Commentators of the Nineteenth Century went to a lot of trouble investigating the number of animals Noah had to accommodate and came up with estimates ranging from 1,000 to 1,700 species of mammals, 1,000 to 2,000 reptiles, and 6,000 to 10,000 of birds. Some, carried away by enthusiasm, even added insects, 120,000 of them. A much more sober appraisal made early in this century and based upon what was then known of the fauna of Western Asia in the early days of man gives about 10 species of clean beasts, i.e., reared and maintained for food, 300 not clean (wild animals) and 200 birds. This catalogue represents nothing more extensive than a small zoo and a few pairs of each would be well within the capacity of Noah's family to collect and care for under the stated conditions, besides fitting reasonably comfortably into the available accommodation.

The Babylonian accounts depict Atrahasis (Noah) as saying quite laconically "*All that I possessed of the substance of life of every kind I gathered together . . . the cattle of the fields, the wild beasts of the plain . . . and caused them to ascend into the vessel*". He, at any rate, was apparently quite unperturbed and took the whole process as all in the day's work. Genesis, in addition to clean and unclean beasts and birds, specifies "creeping things of the earth"; this word (*remes*) denotes the smaller animals such as mice, lizards, serpents, and so on, but is often used as a term for land animals generally.

All these animals needed food, sufficient for at least twelve months. That of itself required some careful forward planning; once afloat, no mistakes could be rectified. The Lord said to Noah

(ch. 6.21) "*Take thou unto thee of all food which is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee: and it shall be for food for thee, and for them*" (the animals). The quantity would be almost impossible to appraise at all accurately without much more detailed knowledge of the creatures involved, but at the very least it could not be below several thousand tons. All of this had to be grown and harvested and carefully packed for long storage. Here again, with an unconscious touch of humour, the Babylonian story says "*I instituted rations for each day. In anticipation of the need of drinks, of barrels of wine I collected in quantity like to the waters of a river; of provisions in quantity like to the dust of the earth*". There is also the fact that Noah would require a supply of seed of all kinds for sowing immediately the catastrophe was over. They emerged from the Ark in the second month—November—at just the right time for ploughing and sowing in those lands, but no harvest could be gathered until the following April so that they would be dependent upon their stores for the intervening time. It is possible, on the assumption that the Flood affected only the Mesopotamian plain, that the Ark finally came to rest not too far from undevastated land in which case they would perhaps have access to wild-growing cereals and fruits to supplement what they had. It is obvious though that upon setting foot on their new world it was not just a question of picking up life where they had left it; a lot of work had to be done before life became normal. The Ark itself probably remained their home for a long time after they first emerged.

Everything was now ready. The Ark had been well stocked with supplies of food. Its bottom deck was without doubt heavily laden with as many useful articles and materials as Noah could lay his hands on and store away for use when the catastrophe was over. No reference is made to this latter in Genesis, but it is inconceivable that the patriarch would not realise the necessity of preserving what he could of the old world to facilitate his re-establishment in the new. The size of the Ark is a pointer in the same direction. From the dimensions given it must have had a carrying capacity of at least 20,000 tons and the weight of its living inmates and stores of food can account for only a fraction of this. Tools, implements and constructional materials are among the items that come most readily to the mind. Works of art and objects of value are perhaps less likely; Noah may have felt the situation too serious to account such things worthy of attention, and anyway they may have been associated too much with the godless and decadent civilisation now going into destruction to be deemed worthy of preservation.

The Babylonian account says that all his treasures of gold and silver were stowed away in the vessel but this is certainly an embellishment. Gold and silver would have no commercial value to the solitary family soon to take root in an otherwise uninhabited world, any more than it will in the soon coming day of Christ's Millennial kingdom on earth when mutual trust and love and the absence of greed and acquisitiveness will likewise render the precious metals useful only for works of art and articles of adornment without monetary significance. Written records of the old world must have been taken in, for there can be no doubt that the art of writing had long since been developed, even though all such records save the extremely abbreviated account of those early days which now survives in the first few chapters of Genesis have long since been lost.

So the word of the Lord came to Noah (ch. 7. 1) to herd his living cargo into the Ark, take up residence himself and close the door. He had seven days' notice (ch. 7. 4), which was probably necessary to embark the animals and get them safely housed in pens and stalls. According to vs. 16, *"the Lord shut him in"*. A bit difficult to know just what this means; one would not expect the Most High to reach down from heaven to shut the door, an action which Noah could do perfectly well by himself. We do not know either just how the Lord transmitted the many instructions to Noah which are recorded. In the days of Abraham and at other times visitants from the celestial world did appear in human form to convey the word of the Almighty and carry out various commissions. Perhaps during the entire period of the building of the Ark there was one such visitant speaking in the name of the Lord coming to Noah from time to time. In such event it might be that the literal door was finally literally closed by that emissary as a kind of ceremonial indication to Noah that he must now stay inside until all was over.

"And it came to pass on the seventh day that the waters of the flood were upon the earth. In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights" (ch. 7. 10-12). The critics find a contradiction here, saying that verse 13 has Noah entering the Ark on the day the Flood broke, and verse 4 seven days earlier. There is, of course, no contradiction. The critics picture the loading of the Ark as occupying about ten minutes without considering the practical implications. The story reads quite logically that Noah was given seven days' warning and commenced

operations straight away, himself and family naturally being last of all to go on board after a week's hard work.

The possible and probable causes of the Flood and the physical nature of the catastrophe will be considered later. At the moment only the narrative itself will be examined. The first thing to notice is the length of time the Flood persisted. Noah was in the Ark for a year and ten days. This period is made up from an initial forty days during which the full severity of the Deluge was experienced and the waters steadily accumulated until, as the narrative has it, all the high hills and all the mountains were covered (ch. 7. 12, 17-20). There was then a period of five months (one hundred and fifty days) in which matters appeared to be more or less static; *"the fountains also of the great deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained"* (ch. 8.2), at the end of which time the floating Ark became stranded in mountainous country without however any mountains being visible. Then the water level began to fall but it was nearly three months before any surrounding peaks were seen. The Ark, however, was still marooned and Noah waited another forty days before setting free a raven and a dove to test the likelihood of there being any nearby dry land. The result was negative. Seven days later he tried again and the dove returned with a freshly plucked olive leaf in her mouth which did at least indicate the presence of growing trees not too far away. But evidently egress from the Ark was still not possible, so after another seven days he sent out the dove again *"which returned not again to him any more"* (ch. 8. 12). Even so, it was a further three months before the waters were sufficiently abated for Noah to set free the animals and emerge himself to take stock of the situation.

The narrative is remarkably detailed and precise, and bears all the marks of an original record made at the time of the happening and to have been written down by an actual eye-witness. Some of the points could hardly have been otherwise and certainly not imagined by a later writer as is suggested by advocates of the "folk-lore turned into history" school. Ch. 7.20 *"fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail"* could only have been discovered by measuring the minimum depth of water needed to float the laden Ark which again could only have been determined when it grounded. This figure, too, is just what would result from a nearly completely loaded Ark of the dimensions given in Genesis. The wind that passed over the earth to reduce the waters, given in ch. 8. 1 as the cause of the retreating waters, was a climatic phenomenon the nature of which has been known only in modern times (to be discussed

in a later chapter) and could not possibly have been known to any ancient writer except the one who actually experienced it at the time. And no writer of fiction, or of re-constituted folk-lore, would be likely to delay the drying-up of the ground to allow Noah to leave the Ark for so long as three months and ten days after the dove found the growing olive tree. These are points that stamp this narrative with the seal of antiquity and we can be sure that it was written in its present form at the time to which it relates. As one writer has well said "In Genesis 6 to 8 we have Noah's own ship's log-book of the most memorable voyage in human history".

Where did the Flood come from and what was its cause? The Genesis narrative is not a scientific treatise on the subject but it does enshrine the observations of an eye-witness. The principal manifestations were the emergence of waters from the "great deep"—the sea—and from heaven—a torrential downpour of rain. The Septuagint has it "the fountains of the abyss" and "the cataracts of heaven". This idea that the floodwaters derived from two sources—the ocean and the skies—is supported also by tradition. The Babylonian and Sumerian accounts describe a terrific storm approaching from the horizon, and deluging the earth with rain the while a great waterspout or tidal wave emerged from the abyss and rose up to the sky, spreading desolation over the land. The general impression is that of an invasion of the land by the sea accompanied by a torrential downpour of water from above. This is so consistent a picture in all the written legendary accounts ranging from 1700 BC to 700 BC in addition to Genesis that we must have here an original impression so powerful that it has survived unchanged through the ages in both history and legend. Even the prophet Mahomet, deriving his information probably from Arabic folk-lore, has the same idea in the Koran, chapter 54. "*The people of Noah accused that prophet . . . saying,*

he is a madman; and he was rejected with reproach . . . So we opened the gates of heaven, with waters pouring down, and we caused the earth to break forth into springs so that the waters of heaven and earth met". Chapter 11 of the Koran says that the waters of the Flood came out of a "*tannar*" which is an Arabic word meaning either an oven or a fissure in the earth and although in English translations of the Koran "oven" is used it is evident that the other meaning is intended. This idea that the earth was cloven to allow the waters to escape has a parallel in the Babylonian accounts which speak of earthquakes associated with the Flood.

The entire narrative is consistent with the view that the immediate cause of the Flood was a giant tidal wave or series of tidal waves emanating from the southern seas—the Indian Ocean or the Antarctic—sweeping up the Persian Gulf and deluging the whole of the Mesopotamian plain up to the foothills of the Kurdish mountains at least. Such disasters are not unknown in history although this was without doubt the greatest of them all. The rapid transfer of so great a body of water from the tropics to more temperate regions would induce atmospheric disturbances creating typhoon-like storms in the upper atmosphere which would account for the torrential rain which figures in the story. Such an inundation would build up quickly to its maximum—forty days in the story—but take considerably longer to drain away, all of which is consistent with the Genesis account. Such a visitation would obviously destroy all living things and all traces of man's handiwork and cover everything with many feet of sand and silt; its initial impact on the stationary Ark would be terrific but once the vessel had taken the first shock it would ride placidly if aimlessly on the waters until they began to recede.

But the full story of that momentous voyage must form the subject of another chapter.

To be continued.

One hundred and ten miles south of Delhi lies the ruined city of Fateh-pur-Sikri. Prior to 1569 it was an insignificant village, but then the Grand Mogul Akbar, emperor of India, chose it as his residence and transformed it into a magnificent city. He lived there only until 1585, but then in 1601 he once more made a triumphal entry into his former capital. As a memorial to that day he had an inscription carved over the southern main gate of the great mosque. Today the whole area is deserted by man, but in the archway over the silent walls, that 300-year-old inscription still

stands. And after the usual statement about the occasion and the date, there is added this comment:

Jesus, on whom be peace, said

"This world is a bridge.

*Pass over it, But build not
your dwelling there."*

It is the most impressive of all sayings of Jesus preserved in the Mohammedan world.

"Sabbath Observer"

THE ARCHANGELS

*Study in an
unusual subject*

There is a very general impression that the Bible asserts the real existence of two chief angelic beings—archangels—named respectively Michael and Gabriel. It may come as something of a surprise therefore to learn that the word “archangel”—chief angel—occurs only twice in the New Testament and not at all in the Old. In point of fact very little is said about these two personalities, the only two members of the celestial world identified by name, although what little is said is full of significance.

Much more is related about these two in the apocryphal Book of 1 Enoch; although it must be remembered that this only enshrines Jewish tradition of the 2nd century B.C., when that book was written, and its value assessed accordingly. In that book—which does not use the term archangel, this being confined to the New Testament—Gabriel is pictured as the messenger of God, standing in his presence continually to receive his commissions and hasting then to carry them out. Michael is the warrior and guardian of Israel, always at hand, when danger threatens the chosen nation, to defend and deliver. The Bible, for all its brevity on the subject, supports these positions so that to this extent at least the old Jewish traditions appear to be well founded.

Of the two, only Gabriel is recorded as having actually intervened in human history and held converse with certain human beings, and that on three occasions only. He is said to have appeared to Daniel (Dan. 8. 16 & 9.21) to convey information to the prophet regarding God's future plans for mankind and the manner in which future world history would be affected; to Zacharias (Luke 1.19) to apprise him of the forthcoming birth of his son, John the Baptist, with details of the mission for which John was destined; and to Mary of Nazareth (Luke 1.26) to tell her that she was to be the mother of Jesus. The veracity of the latter two instances rest on the reliability of that very sober historian, Luke, and the truthfulness of his informants, and on one other factor. That factor is the overriding power of the Holy Spirit superintending the composition of the Book which is the Divine revelation to man. It is unthinkable that God would have allowed two such vital happenings as the birth of Jesus and his herald John to be associated with alleged circumstances which never really happened and it is essential therefore to believe that the conversations related by Luke really did take place and that the messenger really did come from the celestial world

and really is known—so far as humankind at any rate is concerned—as the angel Gabriel.

The fact that nobody in modern times can vouch for having been visited by an angel from heaven and the possibility should be denied therefore is irrelevant. No one in the Fifteenth Century believed that there was another world of intelligent beings on the other side of the Atlantic but it was there all the same and eventually Columbus reached it. The Bible is a very reliable authority on a great many things which lie completely outside the range of present human experience but are not necessarily untrue on that account.

Gabriel is nowhere referred to as an archangel. The reference in 1 Thess. 4. 16 to the “voice of the archangel and the trump of God”, which heralds the Second Advent of our Lord, is very generally accredited to Gabriel—from which is derived the expression “Gabriel's trumpet” as applied to the Last Day—but the only foundation for this impression is the general belief that Gabriel is the Divine messenger to men on earth. It may be a true impression; it may well be that there is one particular celestial being high in honour in the courts of God, whose specific duty is the discharge of special commissions to mankind in connection with the onward progress of the Divine Plan. If such be indeed the case it might well be that other occasions of angelic visitation recorded in the Scriptures, such as those to Paul and Peter, to Abraham, Balaam, Gideon, Manoah, and so on, were examples of the coming of this Gabriel to earth to discharge some specific duty. His appearing in the form of a human being upon such occasions is consistent with the necessity of the case; Gabriel in his normal state would be impossible of perception by human senses, and he must needs temporarily assume a body of human flesh in order to communicate.

Gabriel's most spectacular appearances, to use the term, were to the prophet Daniel. It has long been recognised that of all the Biblical writers Daniel received the most detailed and comprehensive view of the manner in which human history would develop and culminate in the collapse of earthly power and the establishment of Christ's Kingdom upon earth. Fourteen years before the fall of Babylon at the hands of Cyrus of Persia Daniel was the recipient of a Divine revelation relating to the yet future clash between the empires of Persia and Greece, with the triumph of the latter (Dan. 8). Gabriel stood beside him and explained the whole matter. Fifteen

years later, in answer to Daniel's earnest prayer that the Babylonian captivity be ended and the Jewish people allowed to return to their own land. Gabriel again visited the prophet and extended the foreview of "things to come" to include the coming of Christ, at that time still five centuries future (Dan. 9). Two years after that he came again, for the third and last time, to carry the story still farther to the consummation of all things at the Second Advent and the Messianic reign (Dan. 10-12).

It was at the time of this last visit that Gabriel passed a remark which represents one of the most intriguing problems of the Old Testament. Daniel had been in prayer session with God for three full weeks, interceding for his people and awaiting the reply. Gabriel now explains the reason for the delay. *"The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, and I left him there with the kings of Persia"* (ch. 10. 13). Who was this "prince of the kingdom of Persia" possessing power to withstand the archangel of God on his way to execute his Divine commission? Who or what is it that can obstruct the answer of God to the sincere prayer of one of his children? This whole subject is so momentous as to require separate treatment; suffice here to say that the general conclusion is that Gabriel was referring to some conflict with unknown spiritual powers behind the scenes of the political stage of Persia and that his involvement in this conflict—which might well have been one for the influencing of the mind of Cyrus king of Persia for or against Israel—had to take precedence over his coming to Daniel. The impasse, he says, was resolved by the coming of Michael, "one of the chief princes", to his aid so that he was able to proceed to the execution of his mission.

Michael was looked upon as the great warrior champion of Israel, working behind the scenes to defend and deliver the nation from its enemies whenever by reason of loyalty to the Covenant they had merited such deliverance. As with Gabriel, he is mentioned by name only a few times, three times in the book of Daniel and twice in the N.T. Here in Daniel he is pictured in ch. 10 as holding off the enemy forces which would forbid the restoration of Israel after the Babylonian captivity, and then again in ch. 12. 1 as "standing up" to overthrow the world forces of evil at the end of this Age which would oppose the incoming Messianic Kingdom. Whilst in ch. 9. 13 there is no doubt that Michael is as literally real a personage as is Gabriel, it may be that in the metaphorical narrative of ch. 12 his name is a *nom-de-plume* for the Person of the Lord Christ who is

to take his great power at his Second Advent and bring to an end the powers of this world—unless, of course one can envisage this celestial warrior for righteousness being appointed to some active duty in the whole catalogue of events which are to comprise the end of this world and the beginning of the next.

An unknown incident involving Michael is alluded to in Jude 9. *"Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee"*. No book now extant includes any reference to this incident; according to Origen (*De Princip* 3. 2. 1) it was derived from a work called the Assumption of Moses but that book is not now known to be in existence. The Targum of Jonathan, commenting on Deut. 34.6, says that Michael was appointed to be guardian of Moses' grave but this is most certainly a Jewish fable. Since, according to the Bible account, no man knew the place of Moses' burial there would seem singularly little point in detaching a celestial dignitary of high rank from his normal duties to look after it. The reason for Michael's reputed dispute with the devil in Jude does not emerge; it has been suggested that the Devil wanted the body to make it an object of idolatry but this looks like another story invented to fit the case. Jude may have had access to some historical document since lost; on the other hand he may merely have been alluding to some popular First Century tradition familiar to his readers without necessarily endorsing it as true history, to illustrate the point he was making.

There is another possible explanation, which involves the conclusion that Jude was not talking about the death of Moses at all.

Moses, on the way back to Egypt to deliver Israel, accompanied by his wife and child, met with some unexplained threat to his life. The narrative runs (Exod. 4. 24) that *"in the way to the inn, the Lord met him, and sought to kill him"*. His wife took a knife and circumcised their son—apparently the rite had not been carried out—whereupon the threat was removed and the Lord *"let him go"*. Why the Lord should thus seek the death of the man upon whom he had just conferred the responsibility of leading the people of Israel out of Egypt does not appear and is difficult to understand. It so happens, however, that the apocryphal "Book of Jubilees", written about 250 B.C. and from internal evidence believed to be based upon a Hebrew text of the Old Testament differing somewhat from both the Masoretic and the Septuagint, says that it was Satan who thus sought to kill Moses. (It is not unknown in the Old Testament for deeds inspired

by Satan to be accredited to the Lord in recognition of his overruling responsibility for all that He permits—compare 2 Sam. 24. 1 with 1 Chron. 21. 1). It is usually thought that Moses was seized with some sudden illness which threatened his life. Now if it be surmised that Satan, in the endeavour to frustrate the plan for Israel's deliverance, was the one who sought thus to kill Moses, and was withstood by Michael the archangel "behind the scenes", as it were, maybe this rather perplexing incident would be better understood and Jude's allusion with it. The word in Jude for "body"—*soma*—means equally well a living body and does not necessarily imply a corpse.

The only other allusion to Michael is in Rev. 12. 7 where it is clearly metaphorical. After the "catching up to heaven" of the "man child", away from the grasp of the "dragon", we are told that "Michael and his angels" fought the dragon and his angels, who were in consequence expelled from heaven. The dragon is symbolic of a strong earthly power—Pagan Rome; this much at least is agreed by most expositors—and Michael, with his angels, must be symbolic of the power which engages the dragon in combat and expels him from his position of rule and authority. A complete exposition of Rev. 12 would be out of place here; let it suffice to say that here, as in Dan. 12, the name of Michael is used as a symbol to convey a definite idea—the uprising of a righteous power to challenge and overthrow the forces of evil at a time of great need.

It is often stated that the meaning of the name "Michael" is "One who is like God" and on this rather slender basis it is sometimes suggested that "Michael the archangel" is in fact identical in person with our Lord Jesus Christ in his pre-human state. This is really not justified. Assuming that the name is of Hebrew origin—which is not necessarily the case—the meaning is an inter-

rogative expression "Who is like God?" the implication being, of course, that no creature can be like God. The prefix "*micha*" is derived from the interrogative personal pronoun "*mi*", and appears in other names such as "Micah" and "Micaiah", meaning "who is like Jehovah?"

Jewish tradition held that there were seven archangels. In addition to Gabriel, the messenger of God, and Michael, whose special care was Israel, there were Raphael, who looked after the remainder of mankind, Saraquel, who had authority over the fallen angels, Uriel, who looked after the terrestrial earth and the nether regions (tartarus), Remiel, the sun and moon, and Raquel, custodian of the five planets. All of this was probably derived from Babylonian mythology. The Babylonians had seven "Watchers" who were the intermediaries between the gods and the human race. These "watchers" are referred to in Dan. 4. 17 in connection with Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the tree. No trace of this is found prior to the Babylonian captivity, neither are the angelic visitants to earth then distinguished by specific names. The early Israelites were content to recognise the fact that when the occasion so demanded an emissary from heaven would come to earth for some specific purpose. The names first appear in Daniel; perhaps it was from that time that it began to be recognised that there are in the courts of heaven two greatly honoured personal beings, Michael and Gabriel, chief angels among the angels, who have intimate connection with earthly affairs. They may even take a much greater part in the supervision and direction of events in our own day than we realise. The brief glimpses that the Scriptures afford us do at least indicate that there must be great activity going on "behind the veil" in respect to the forces which are working together to achieve mankind's deliverance from sin and death.

Men and women stand in need of Jesus Christ as they have never done before, yet He can only reach them through his Church. Ordinary folk are frustrated by the wild, unrealised claims of scientists and politicians. Two world wars have left a legacy of sorrow, disease and immorality. Broken homes are not mended by the assurance of a "good time coming" nor are broken lives restored by intellectual dogma. These things need the personal touch of the Saviour who walked this earth healing sick hearts and sick bodies. He gave them a message embodied in simple lessons from Nature, which if accepted changed the very lives

of his hearers. It is to him that we must point, and we can only do so if we really know him ourselves. We can only direct men and women to the cross of Jesus if we have felt its power in our own lives. If we have been broken and humbled at the foot of the cross and left our burden of sin there, then we shall have a testimony for our neighbour which will turn his eyes towards Jesus. If we walk each day in the light of the cross, with our own lives bared to the penetrating gaze of the Saviour, we shall reflect light upon the pathway of some lost soul seeking the way to God.

REDEMPTION AND REDEMPTION'S DAY

A doctrinal discourse

Just as a ray of sunlight, passed through a triangular glass prism, comes out split up into a number of colours, so the purposes of God, passing through the Spirit-illuminated mind of Paul, come out split up into a wide range of inter-related themes, each of which has its own special terms and phrases to describe it. The design is vast, embracing heaven and earth; angels and men; good and evil; holiness and sin; time and eternity. This great array of principles, some finite, some infinite; some relative, some absolute, is far too comprehensive for man to grasp with ease. Even the cleansing of the earth from sin is *a project much too deep for the earthbound mind of man to comprehend without aid from God.*

Living in an environment of sin, and with emotions of sin fighting against his better self, the Christian finds it difficult to understand the revolting nature of sin as it is seen from the standpoint of Divine holiness. The deliverance from sin which the Christian enjoys is only a deliverance in part—he still finds the earth-bound senses warring against the spirit of his new mind, and realises at times that he cannot always do as he would. It is also a task too big for him to realise what it will mean to have a sin-cleansed earth, with every countenance radiating perfect health and perfect love to God and man. The scenes of sin and sounds of woe are too prevalent around him today to allow the contrast to be drawn sharply enough between the perfections of that future day and the sinfulness of this. Thus because of frailties in himself and sin in the unbelieving world around, the Christian cannot assess, at its proper value, what the present and future phases of “Redemption through his blood” really mean. At best we see things but darkly—as in a brassen mirror, in which the details are indistinct even though the outline may be clear. It is thus with the opening section of St. Paul’s letter to the Ephesians. So far as the earthly phase of the promised universal redemption is concerned Paul shows it to us through the mirror of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness. He has that structure, with its hidden meanings and ceremonies, in his mind as he sets forth the tremendous thoughts of cleansing from sin, and the full redemption to be realised when the appointed day has come.

Paul’s mind was saturated with the teachings of Mosaic and prophetic days, and though he was the chosen vessel to proclaim the deeper things of God the thoughts he was inspired to make known were mainly cast in the ancient mould of Taber-

nacle days. Both training and experience had made the Tabernacle to him the mirror of “the Truth”. Sin and sacrifice were the main features of his nation’s religious polity, which met him at every turn. When the great change came into his own life on the Damascus way, these same realities of sin and sacrifice came over his Christian outlook and philosophy, and were thenceforth linked to higher things. Ugly, repulsive, rebellious and forbidding as sin had been in his earlier days, it became more intensely wicked than before, making the need for an expiatory sacrifice more imperative than hitherto. Always, and in all places, *from the early labours in the oldest city of the world (Acts 9. 20-22) through all his chequered services and wanderings, he wrote and spoke of “Redemption through the blood of Christ”.* In the first letter from his pen we read *“God appointed us . . . unto the obtaining of salvation (redemption) through our Lord Jesus Christ who died for us . . .”* (1 Thess. 5. 9). In Corinthians he says, *“Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf . . .”* In his letter to the Romans he reaches great heights when he writes *“ . . . all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth to be a propitiation through faith by his blood . . .”* (Rom. 3. 23-25). Such are the words written by Paul in his pre-prison days. Space does not permit quotation upon quotation from all these epistles, but every student knows they are there.

This scarlet strand woven into his Ephesian letter is composed of the same two related threads —“Forgiveness” or cleansing from sin and “Redemption”. They are the same thoughts which belong to Tabernacle days, but now transferred to higher things. There was no other reminder or definer of sin, except the Law—nor was there any mode of cleansing from sin, except by sacrifice. That ancient system of Mosaic days out-crops at several points in familiar words and phrases in Ephesians which, when strung together form a revealing background to the enunciation of eternal things which stretch from those far-distant times when God first laid out his Plans, to the still future days when those plans will be complete. Here are the outcropping layers of thought, to which we refer—“He chose us in him;” “that we should be holy and without blemish before him;” “redemption through his blood” “forgiveness of sins;” “sealed with the Holy Spirit;” and “the

redemption of God's own possession". Every phrase and word has its counterpart in the Tabernacle privileges of the Aaronic priest, the possession of which gave him right of entrance into the typical "heavenly places" of his system and his day.

Let us briefly review some of these correspondences. First, let reference be made to the remarkable phrase of verse 14, as it stands in the Greek text. Paul tells us that the Holy Spirit is an earnest of our inheritance until "the redemption of the possession" (see the Diaglott word-for-word text for this shortened phrase). What does this mean? Exposition of this point has always been laboured and difficult, most expositors believing that Paul left it as an unfinished phrase—an ellipsis, as so many of them call it. It is not an unfinished phrase, but a perfect and complete phrase, if we can take Paul's own standpoint when explaining it. The sense of "possession" that ran throughout all Israelitish days, and all Israelitish things and to which all her past and future experiences had been directed or have yet to be directed, were repeatedly expressed in a two-fold phrase, "I will be yours, and ye shall be Mine". "I will be your God, and ye shall be My people". The intention always was that Israel should "possess" her God, and that God should "possess" his people. This great "possessive" thought had its primal expression in God's promise to Abraham (Gen. 17. 7) "... I will establish my Covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee ... to be a God unto them". It took still more definite shape in Lev. 26. 12 "... I will walk among you and will be your God, and ye shall be My people". Many times Moses reminded Israel that Jehovah was their God, and that they were his people. Passing to the time of their return, Ezekiel repeats the double-phrase in chapter 11.20; 34.28; 36.28; and 37.27, and assures the people that henceforth the possession shall become a reality—exactly as it is pictured in no less a place than Rev. 21.3. As the Holy City settles down to earth to end the long night of sin and estrangement in Israel, a voice from the Divine throne assures all in the city of God that "they shall be his people and God himself shall be their God". Here the hopes of long ages past find realisation, and thenceforth Israel "possesses" her God and God "possesses" his people.

This is the great thought that Paul weaves into his argument—a golden thread that links Abraham's distant day with the great future Day of God. For the time being that "possession" had been suspended by reason of Israel's blindness and hardness of heart. When God's time came to move on and up to higher things, Israel was unready and unwilling to leave the "beggarly ele-

ments" of the old days. She preferred to continue under her old covenant, with the consequence that God refused thenceforth to accept her carnal sacrifices, and she was left to suffer the penalties of her broken law, without any "kaphar" or "propitiatory covering" as theretofore. All that that old covenant can now do for her is to remind her of her sin. She is a captive to a useless arrangement, wedded to a system which cannot confer Divine blessing, but which loads her life and experiences with sufferings and maledictions.

The relationship of the Church of the Firstborn to the "people of the redemption" is akin to that of the ancient priesthood in Israel, but on a higher level. That is the thought suggested when Paul says God had "blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ". In these words he draws a comparison with Israel's tabernacle reared up, as it were, "end-on" with its Most Holy Place in Heaven, in God's glorious presence, and with its Holy Place set far above earthly things. Those who are in Christ, anointed and enlightened by the Holy Spirit, have the related but loftier privilege accorded to Aaron and his sons, who after their anointing were permitted to enter the Holy Place, and walk by the Holy light and feed on holy food. All such have received, as a first instalment of the "Redemption", the forgiveness of their sins.

This places the Church of the First-born on a parallel with the House of Aaron at that stage on their Atonement Day when the blood of the bullock had been applied, as a propitiatory covering for their sin, when they were accounted clean and free from sin. The "nation" had to wait a little longer till the "Lord's Goat" had been slain, and its blood presented in the Most Holy Place. So with the "people of the possession"—Israel has to wait a little longer yet, till all the sacrificing is complete, and the great High Priest appears a second time without sin—without any more sacrificing for sin—"unto salvation" or redemption.

Thus the linking together of these separated phases even though set amidst such tremendous lofty thoughts regarding God's eternal purposes, bridging as they do the vast stretch of time from eternal ages past, to distant ages yet to come, reveals to our minds the Hebrew mould in which Paul's thoughts were cast. Paul sets two institutions of God in parallel, and illustrates the greater invisible institution by a lowlier visible organisation.

As God predestinated Aaron and his house to the Priesthood before calling them to their sacred office, so God, when planning his purposes, predestinated the entire Christ. As Aaron and his house received the anointing with the holy oil, so the entire Christ have received the anointing with

the Holy Spirit. Thus, the typical anointed and the real anointed were predestinated and set apart.

As the anointed in Israel had access to hidden blessings in a holy place so the anointed in Christ have access to "all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies". As the anointed in Israel were first to experience ceremonial forgiveness of sins, so also the anointed in Christ are first to experience real forgiveness of sins, and as redemption of the "possession" came in Israel with the end of the Atonement Day, so again, the full redemption of the "possession" will come with the close of a great and better Atonement Day.

What a wonderful mind the Apostle Paul had! How easily in his maturer days he comprehended the deep things of God, and how sublimely he set them out for his brethren of a later day, so that we may understand more of the heights and depths, the lengths and breadths of God's great love and of his great Plan, stretching from the eternities past into eternal years to come, revealing and cleansing and restoring powers of grace Divine as it overcomes and eradicates the sins of men, yet cast into the Divinely appointed mould of Israel's tabernacling days when priest and people, with blood of bulls and goats, were used to represent the "better things".

But let us pause to ask ourselves if it could possibly have been otherwise, when everything in Mosaic days was made and instituted according to a pattern shown to Moses in the holy mount. The Heavenly Architect of the great Divine Plan accorded to Moses a vision of those plans, delineated and drafted in the shape and pattern of a tabernacle, and its furnishings, with express command to copy it in every detail and particular. If, then, Divine wisdom compressed and crystallised eternal Truth and an eternal plan into the lines, angles and measurements of a curtained

court, and a skin-covered tent; into the shapes of altars, a table and candlesticks; into the form of a mercy-seat, crowned with open-winged cherubim, and into the robes and ministries of anointed priests, need we wonder when we behold the reverse procedure employed, and find Tabernacle and Priesthood becoming the shadowy semblance of eternal truth again! Is there really any ground for marvelling when the Holy Spirit of truth draws forth, and expands the same eternal truths which it once compressed and incorporated into that Tabernacle?

There is something here of supreme importance to think about. We cannot successfully put asunder that which God has joined together! If God has been graciously pleased to compress and concentrate the redemptive features of his Plan into the shape of a Tabernacle, and has illustrated what He purposes "in redemption" to do, by its ceremonies and services, no student of the Divine Word can hope successfully to comprehend the extent of that redemptive Plan without frequent and continued reference to that Tabernacle, and its services. No student can progress in the Truth except by aligning his doctrine with God's designs in that structure built in conformity with his own original "Pattern"!

Let us then apply ourselves more diligently in days to come to these sacred Oracles of God, for in them we have in very deed the way of life and Truth. And let us not neglect those old shadows of the Truth, thinking we need them not because we have access to the newer and better realities of this Age, and because our calling is to heavenly things. God has blended the realities into the shadows—to get them down to our human consciousness—and none may separate what God has joined without injury to his faith!

"And if (thy brother) trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him." (Luke 17. 4).

That verse has well been called the "gospel of the seventh chance". It enshrines a principle of Divine dealing which has been measurably overshadowed in Christian theology by the zeal of believers for judgment upon sinners. That death is the wages of sin is a firmly established doctrine of Scripture; we do not always realise so clearly as we should that no individual soul will incur that penalty until God has used every weapon in His armoury to reclaim the sinner from the error of his way. Salvation is not a niggardly offer grudg-

ingly held out before men and quickly withdrawn if not accepted at the first presentation. *"I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, wherefore turn yourselves and live ye"* says God through the prophet (Ezek. 18. 23 and 32). God will coerce no man's will, and one who deliberately refuses the way of life after full opportunity to understand and accept it places himself beyond the reach of God; but it is true, as Dr. Paterson Smyth wrote many years ago (*"The Gospel of the Hereafter"*) that *"no one will be lost until the Heavenly Father has as it were thrown His arms around him and looked him full in the face with the bright eyes of His love and that of his own deliberate will he would not have Him"*.

"AND NOW ABIDETH . . ."

A series of studies
in 1 Cor. 13

4. Without envy or conceit

"Love envieth not", but is generous, benevolent! In the Greek we have a word capable of a two-fold definition, the one beneficial, the other harmful, and we have to take care which bias we give to the word. The wrong bias will give us "envy" for our definition, the right one will give us generosity and benevolence to a great degree. The Greek original is *zeelos* and its two possible meanings come out as "zeal", as in John 2.17, Rom. 10.2 and 2 Cor. 9.2; and as "jealous" (jealousy) as in Acts 5.17; Rom. 13.13; Gal. 5.20; and James 3.14. In this latter passage it is quite clear what *zealos* is intended to mean, because it is qualified by the addition of the word *pikros*, which means "bitter". The Diaglott translates it "bitter rivalry".

The primary meaning of *zeelos* is "zeal" of course, but that does not inform us to what end the zeal is directed. It is only too easy for zeal and honourable pursuit to degenerate into a much meaner passion, and for two, or more, who together aim at the same objective (and in doing so become competitors) to become open enemies as well, and employ their zeal to promote open enmity. Thayer's Lexicon defines *zeelos* (a) as ardour in embracing, pursuing and defending anything, and (b) as an envious and contentious rivalry, jealousy, which cover, first, the stirrings and motions of the mind, and secondly its outbursts and manifestations.

When *zeelos* becomes degenerate it may reveal itself at two distinct levels; that of the mind, and that of the outward act. If opportunity serves, it may make open war upon the good it observes in another person, and try to defile and make it less good than it was; or if the opportunity for the open act does not present itself, there may be the desire or wish to make the good less good. "He that is conscious of this wish" says Trench "is conscious of no impulse or longing to raise himself to the level of him whom he envies, but only to depress the envied to his own". Contrariwise "zeelos", rightly directed, works the other way, and would prompt the man of good intent to seek to raise the less good man to the level of himself. Not only does it not manifest jealousy against the other man; it uses all its strength and energy to lift the less good to the standard of the good. Hence our definition of generosity and benevolence.

There had been much depraved jealousy in the heathen world. Their rival priesthods and rival

ways of life had been replete with jealousy for centuries, causing much blood to flow and much sorrow to many aching hearts. There had been much of this evil quality in the Corinthian Church, to their great detriment spiritually. Their zeal had been directed to wrong ends and purposes, and produced undesirable results. There has been an intense zeal in God's thoughts and ways, but it has not degenerated to a jealousy intent on debasing what is good to the level of the bad. A glowing, burning zeal for righteousness has led him to formulate a great Plan for the overthrow of sin and impurity, and for the establishment of righteousness everywhere. All the resources of Omnipotence and Divinity have been brought to the prosecution of this Plan, so that He might recover to himself the hosts of sinful men, for whose love and loyalty He yearns. This is "zeelos" as it stands revealed as a constituent of the *Agape*. Likewise in all possessed by the *Agape* there must be an ardent zeal, directed, like God's own, to the uplift of fallen men. To retain its place as a constituent of the *Agape*, it can never degenerate to rivalry, either in the Church or outside. It can never wish to depress the good, either in the Church, or in a brother's life, to the level of the contentious or the envious. It will not covet another brother's place, nor envy him his natural gifts in the service of the Lord, but will bring the energy and thrust at its own command to supplement that of his friend. It will never seek to "get and keep" only for itself; its zeal will always be to give and give again. Nor need there be any rivalry in their running for the "crown". No one is ever called to compete with his brother, for a crown has been set apart for every one who runs as to obtain. There is no envy therefore in Love, but there is a mighty energy of zeal. It is a mighty flow of generosity to each and all, prompting the least to emulate the best, and all to emulate the Lord, in the interests of the Plan.

"Love vaunteth not itself". There is not much help available on this word, either in the Greek classics or the Lexicons. Nor do other Scriptures help, for it occurs but this once. Such help as Greek usage gives indicates that it is used of self-adulation. To "vaunt" is to boast, to brag, to utter self-praise. And in this sense the Diaglott rendering is as good as any; "Love is not boastful". No child of God has any ground for boasting, except as he shall make his boast in the Lord. He has brought nothing of value to the structure

of the Plan; at his best he is no more than an unprofitable servant.

"Perfect love is humble . . ." It does not sound a trumpet before it. Its good deeds are not done to be seen of men, but would be done just the same if no one saw or knew but God only. It is neither boastful of its knowledge or of its graces, but in humility acknowledges that every good and perfect gift cometh from the Father, and it makes return for every mercy to him. Someone has truly said that Love saves a man from making a fool of himself by consequential conduct, and by thrusting himself into positions which betray his incompetence. Modesty and decorousness is the opposite of vaunting, and should characterise every child of God.

Nor is Love "puffed up". Here again is a word for which the Greek classics afford but little help. And it is a noteworthy thing that of its eight occurrences in the New Testament, no less than seven of them are addressed to the Corinthians—six in the first epistle alone. The remaining one is found in Col. 2. 18, in connection with men who, puffed up by their fleshly mind, "hold not the Head". Its primary meaning is to "breathe"—and its Latin equivalent "inflatio" gives it its proper sense. "Knowledge (*Gnosis*) puffeth up" said Paul (1 Cor. 8.1). It was just this factor that had made some of the Corinthians what they were, and had caused much of the trouble amongst them. While knowledge had inflated them with pride, Paul assured them that only the *Agape* could build them up. Not a little mild sarcasm went into that illustration, for all residents near watery places would know of a certain amphibian creature which, to appear more fearsome to its foes, inflated itself with air, increasing in size without increasing its effectiveness. But the *Agape* is as solid masonry; foundations, walls and roof built for usefulness and service.

It is one thing for God to say "I AM that I AM", for that is bedrock truth. If He says "I am the Lord, I change not" it is a statement of absolute fact. Again, if Jesus says "I am" it is also perfectly true. It was a just estimate of his proper place in the Divine scheme of things. To say "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" was not over-stating the basic facts of his position before God and man. It is altogether a different thing for man to say "I am" or "I can". Facts have a way of belying the claim. No man who knows his need for grace to help, and for redemption by Jesus' precious blood can possibly be puffed up or proud. He will never dare to stand up in the sight of God and say "I can" unless he adds forthwith the words "through Christ which strengtheneth me". If he loved the Lord he will

know his "place" is at his feet.

"*Love doth not behave itself unseemly*". The classical Greek writers define this word, "to act unbecomingly", without specifying in what way it is unbecoming. We have to turn to Scripture parallels to ascertain its more precise and definite meaning. A very helpful passage is given in Rev. 16. 15, which reads "Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments lest he walk naked and they see his shame". Here, the removal of the garments exposes the unwatchful to shame. Alongside this Scripture a statement in Rom. 1.27 may be placed, "men with men worked unseemliness", a statement revealing utter shame. The thought we need seems to be—Love does not prepare disgrace for another soul by removing its garments, thus exposing it to shame. It does not take away its cloak of honour and integrity to leave the frailties of the soul exposed, as a sorry spectacle for foes to gloat upon. Instead of this, Love would hide known faults with a mantle of charity, remembering betimes that one's self might also be frail and full of faults. Knox translates this "Love is never insolent" but that is much too negative a thought to state what is needed here. It is the grace which is the opposite of insolence that is wanted as Love's constituent. A more exact thought would be "Love is ever courteous and considerate". In this we have the standards of the Royal Court implied. Though we know that the many politenesses and points of etiquette may be insincere, it is the code of conduct in the presence of royalty—not the insincere pretences of man—which is the substance of our thought. Courtesy requires the strict observance of honour towards all, forbidding any act or word which involves a fellow-courtier in shame. Among those who have access to the Heavenly Court by faith and prayer, this courtesy is specially appropriate. For any child of God whose interest is represented in that Court by our beloved Lord, to snatch away the garment of another brother's honour and good name, in order thus to reveal his weakness and expose him to shame, would be acting unbecomingly to an infamous degree. The "*Agape*" would never lead to that, for it is God's way to hide our weaknesses under a robe of perfect righteousness, and it is never He that strips that robe away. The "*Agape*" is ever courteous and considerate in the best sense of the word and its code of etiquette is always that of the Heavenly Court. There will be many weaknesses to cover up in the coming Age, and only those who learn the lesson good and true in this present Age will be adequate to grapple with the situation of that coming day.

To be continued.

JAIRUS' DAUGHTER

A Study

We have three versions of the story of Jairus' daughter, by Matthew, Mark and Luke respectively. This allows points of possible doubt to be examined by comparing what the three writers had to say on such.

When Jairus approached the Lord, he said, according to Matthew, "my daughter is even now dead", and to Mark "my little daughter lieth at the point of death", while Luke, telling the story, says "she lay a-dying". Mark's Gospel is the earliest and to that extent the more likely to have preserved the truest memory of Jairus' actual words on that occasion. It is evident, however, that the girl was considered to be as good as dead if not actually so: perhaps Jairus had set out to come to Jesus fully expecting that he would not return to see her alive, and that the power of Jesus alone could restore her. "Come and lay thine hand upon her" he implored, "and she shall live".

Whilst he was away, some change took place in the child's condition, for according to Mark (10. 35) "*While he yet spake (to Jesus) there came (from his house) certain which said 'Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further?'*" The girl was conscious when Jairus left her: he hoped that Jesus could restore her to health *before* life finally flickered out. When she relapsed into unconsciousness after his departure his servants sent after him saying in effect "Too late; she has died". It seems that they, believing in Jesus' power to restore the desperately sick to health, did not know or believe that He could also give life to one that was dead.

Jesus, hearing the words, said to Jairus (John 8. 50) "*Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole*". That expression is more consistent with the idea of a restoration to health than a restoration from the dead. There can be no doubt that Jesus, although He had not yet seen the child, by virtue of his Divine power was already quite aware of the exact position.

So He went to the house. So far we have no reason to believe that the child was dead apart from the evidence of those attending her and who had sent the message to Jairus. They may or may not have been mistaken. They honestly thought she was dead; but in such circumstances people have oft-times been mistaken, and this child may very well have lapsed into an unconscious state that could pass into death later on.

A careful comparison of the three accounts shows that Jesus entered the house with at least

Peter, James and John, and encountered first the professional mourners and the family friends, who were weeping and wailing according to custom. It was to these that He made the remark "*Why make ye this ado, and weep? The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.*" And they laughed him to scorn, Luke adding the remark "knowing that she was dead". Ignoring the laughter, Jesus passed on into the inner room where the girl was lying, allowing only "*Peter, and James, and John, and the father and mother of the maiden*" to accompany him, and there for the moment we must leave them while we consider that last remark.

"The maiden is *not* dead, but sleepeth." The three evangelists give the same words: there is no difference. That fact points to a very vivid impression left on the memory of those who heard, and who passed on what they heard so that in after times the Gospel writers should record the words. Matthew would probably have been there in the outer room: Mark, possibly. We can take it that Jesus did speak those exact words. And what did they mean? What were they intended to convey? They were all under the impression that the girl was dead, and they were weeping therefore. "Do not weep" said Jesus "for she is not dead, she is only sleeping". It is true that death is spoken of metaphorically as a sleep, because it is to be ended by a resurrection, an awakening to life in the last day: but the mourners in Jairus' house knew that as well as we do. They had no need to be told that death was a sleep. And if that was the sense in which Jesus used the term "sleep" He would not have committed the inaccuracy of saying "the maiden is *not* dead but sleepeth", for, in that case, she *was* dead, even though death be a sleep. He would more properly have said "The maiden *is* dead, but death, remember, is but a sleep" as He did do in effect in the later case of Lazarus.

But what reason is there for thinking that Jesus intended other than the plain everyday meaning of the words He used? So far we find no evidence to suggest that the child was dead beyond the impression that the mourners had. Jesus corrected that: He said "the maiden is not dead". "And they laughed him to scorn, *knowing that she was dead*" (Luke 8. 53).

This is rather more definite. So far, of course, no physician had certified her to be dead: only the people in the house had come to that conclusion: but they were so certain that when Jesus declared the opposite they were incredulous. It is

only Luke who adds the words "knowing that she was dead". "Knowing" in this verse is the Greek *eidotes*, meaning to perceive by any of the human senses, i.e. by sight, sound, touch, etc. In other words, their "knowledge" was based on physical evidence: it "appeared" to them that she was dead and the word "knowing" would more correctly have been rendered by our "perceiving". So far as they could discern, she was dead: but they were not infallible. They could but go on appearances, and Jesus could see deeper than they.

Now as to the word "sleepeth". It is the Greek *katheudo*, and in no case where it appears in the New Testament does it signify other than natural sleep. (Its occurrence in 1 Thess. 5, 10 'whether we wake or *sleep* we should live together with him' is held sometimes to indicate a reference to death: but it has first to be established that Paul is talking of death here. Up to this verse he is certainly talking of another kind of metaphorical sleep, the bemused condition of slothful believers: 'let us not sleep as do others'.) Anyone may confirm this for himself. The places where *katheudo* is used are

Matt. 26.40 43/ 8.24/ 9.24/ 13.25/ 25.5/ 26.45,

Mark 4.38/ 4.27/ 5.39/ 13.36/ 14.37, 40, 41.

Luke 8.52/ 22.46. Eph. 5.14, 1 Thess. 5.6, 7, 10.

The Greek version of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, does use the word *katheudo* to refer to the dead, on some occasions, but usually in the

sense of their *lying-down* in the grave, and hence the word is often rendered "lie". It is also used for "lie down" in other connections. Here are a few examples.

Psa. 88.5 "Free among the dead (*nekros*) like the slain that *lie* (*katheudo*) in the grave.

Dan. 12.2. "Many of them that *sleep* (*katheudo*) shall arise."

Gen. 28.13. "The land whereon thou *liest*"

2 Sam. 12.3. "And *lay* in his bosom".

2 Chron. 12.16. "Rehoboam *slept* with his fathers".

From all the evidence then, it seems possible that our Lord meant only what his words implied. The mourners' belief that the girl was dead, although natural under the circumstances, was wrong. She was not yet dead: and taking her by the hand the Lord said to her "Little girl, arise". It was at that point that his healing power was exerted and the miracle performed. The dying child came back from the shades, the disease from which she was suffering was cured in an instant, her spirit came again, and she arose and walked straightway. Practical as ever, Jesus instructed that she be given something to eat. The expression "her spirit came again" is the natural one that would occur to the mind of those witnesses who saw the processes of life re-commence in the still form.

Note on Psa. 126. 5—6

"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Psa. 126. 5-6).

This theme of sowing in tears and reaping in joy was more than mere poetic fancy. It was an allusion to a pagan custom with which the Israelites, only just returned from Babylon, must have been thoroughly familiar, associated with the worship of the Babylonian god Tammuz, the god of vegetation and springtime and new life. The sowers went out casting seed into the ground, weeping as they did so because the seed must die; when the time of harvesting the corn was come they went out again with ceremonial rejoicing because it was the time of new life for the world with the gathering of the crop. In their old legends Tammuz, the young and beautiful god, had been treacherously slain and had gone down into the

underworld, and with his going the trees and plants wilted, the flocks and herds failed to bring forth their young. But the underworld could not hold him and he came back, and with his coming new life blossomed forth on earth and all was well. It is impossible not to see in that old pagan legend an anticipation of the death and resurrection of Christ with all that these entail; in that ceremonial weeping because the sown seed must die, and rejoicing when it sprang forth into new life, an anticipation of Christ's own words "*except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit*" (Jno. 12.24). The elaborate mythology of the Babylonians contained some seeds of truth which must have survived from an older and happier time when men, not so far removed from the Fall in Eden, possessed a tolerably clear knowledge of the principles of the redemptive plan of God.

THE ENIGMA OF BALAAM

Part I.

One of the strangest characters in Bible history is Balaam the soothsayer-prophet, who was hired by Balak king of Moab to invoke a curse on Israel as they gathered for their entrance into the Promised Land, but found himself able only to pronounce a blessing. Although from his own account he was a loyal prophet of God, he led Israel into the grossest sin and met his death at their hands in consequence; yet he foretold Israel's glorious future and their ultimate triumph over all their enemies. The main account occupies the 22nd to 24th chapters of the Book of Numbers and the scene of the story is the land of Moab east of the Dead Sea. The time, the beginning of the fourteenth century B.C., when Israel, newly come out of Egypt under Moses, were stationed around the border of the country endeavouring to find a passage to the Jordan so that they could cross into their inheritance. Balak, king of Moab, was apprehensive that his own land might be invaded and with the superstition of his time wanted the curse of the gods imposed upon the intruders in the belief that thus they would melt away and cease to constitute a threat.

Balaam the son of Beor was a noted soothsayer and invoker of curses. He lived, according to the narrative, at Pethor on the Euphrates in the land of Aram, nearly four hundred miles away. He must have been a soothsayer of no mean order for his fame to have penetrated so far. Aram was inhabited by Semites of the same racial stock as Abraham, and Balaam was probably of the same stock, which would explain how he came to be a worshipper of Abraham's God. Nevertheless there would have been a great deal of pagan superstition mixed with his worship and this goes far to explain his later actions.

So the messengers of Balak, elders of the Moabites and Midianites, took the long journey northward to entreat the prophet of Aram to return with them and use his magical arts against Israel. Belief in the efficacy of such formal "curses" was widespread at the time. There exist Babylonian tablets containing such invocations to the gods to visit some unlucky recipient with the direst misfortunes, couched in such malevolent language that the psychological effect alone might conceivably have produced the desired result. Without much doubt Balaam himself was well trained in such exorcisms and the fact that he could reconcile all this with his worship of God only goes to show how much the patriarchal worship of the "most high God" had degenerated in

the non-Israelitish world by the time of Moses.

Balaam was not very accommodating. It must be admitted that at the outset his behaviour was perfectly correct. "*Lodge here this night*" he said to the messengers "*and I will bring you word again as the Lord shall speak unto me*". That night God came to him and he told God all about it. A people had come out of Egypt, covering the face of the earth, and Balak king of Moab wanted him to go and pronounce curses over them so that Balak could drive them away. "*Thou shalt not go with them*" said God "*thou shalt not curse the people, for they are blessed*" and at that Balaam told the princely messengers of Balak quite curtly "*get you into your land, for the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you*".

This was a rebuff for Balak, but the Moabitish king reacted as does a modern business man seeking a favour from a man in some position of power. The price offered was not enough; he would make a better offer. He sent new messengers of higher social standing empowered to offer not only the original monetary inducement but the conferment of other, unspecified, "very great honour"; "*and*" he added hopefully, "*I will do whatever thou sayest unto me*". The immediate response could still not be faulted; "*if Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more*". This sounds like true and uncompromising loyalty and rigid allegiance to right principles and had Balaam left the matter there all might have been well. Unfortunately it is evident that the prospect of vast riches did pull a bit and led him to do something which none of us should ever do—offer God a chance to change his mind. "*Now therefore*" he continued "*I pray you, tarry ye here also this night, that I may know what the Lord will say to me more*". God had already given him a definite ruling, and moreover indicated the reason, viz., that the people he was asked to curse were in fact ordained to be blessed by God. Here, apparently, was the beginning of that most insidious of all temptations "I will do what God wants me to, but I do wish I did not have to". Balaam had no intention of disobeying God, but he began to harbour a hope that God might relent and allow him to go after all.

It has been said that "God answers a man according to the idol in his own heart". That was certainly true in the case of Balaam. No sooner had he given the desire entrance into his heart than God spoke to him again. "*If the men come*

to call thee, rise up, and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do" (ch. 22.20). The next we know is that "*Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab. And God's anger was kindled because he went*". (vs. 21-22).

Inconsistent on God's part, say some. Why be angry with the man for doing what he had just been told to do? A careful reading of the text throws light on this point. God had come to Balaam by night, when he was on his bed. "*If the men come to call thee . . .*" but they had not so come. Balaam rose up in the morning, without having been called; nevertheless he saddled his ass and set out with the men. Anxiety to interpret the Lord's command in the loosest possible manner in order to persuade himself that he had Divine permission led him to ignore the letter of the instruction and yet claim to himself that he was being obedient. No wonder the Lord was angry.

But even when God is angry with man's self-will and sin He still does all He can to show the sinner the error of his way and bring him back into the path of rectitude. He goes to the extreme to avoid condemning the man and will do all that can be done to save him. So here; Balaam was determined to go, and go he did, but the Lord sent an angel to awaken him to a realisation of his mistake if such were possible.

Now here we come to one of the occasions when the celestial world touches the terrestrial. A celestial being, charged with a mission from God, came to Balaam and stood in front of him as he rode upon his ass. Balaam, of course, could not see him—the angel was from another world, on another wave-length, so to speak, and Balaam's physical senses were unable to discern him. The ass, however, did, which poses something of a puzzle, for the ass, also a terrestrial creature like Balaam, should have been equally unable to see the angel. Perhaps the Lord gave the animal a kind of second sight, an impression in the brain produced by an influence other than the optic organs, what is called a "subjective" appearance, or maybe there was something similar to the quite reliably established fact of dogs sometimes evincing fear, with growling and hair standing on end, at some mysterious presence in some so-called "haunted" spot which is imperceptible to humans standing by. Whatever it was, this was an intervention from the other world and the ass sensed it and tried to avoid it by turning off the road into the field, and Balaam smote the ass to turn her back again.

That did not avail him much. The angel took up a position where the path ran between two vineyards bounded by the low stone walls which even now are a feature of rural Eastern lands. The

ass could only get past by pressing herself against one of the walls and in doing so crushed Balaam's foot against the wall, whereupon, probably in some irritation this time, he smote her again.

But now the angel "*stood in a narrow place where was no way to turn either to the right hand or the left*", and the ass solved this problem by abruptly sitting down in the middle of the road, undoubtedly tipping Balaam off in the process. In considerable anger this time the irate prophet began to belabour the unfortunate animal with his staff and the ass spoke to him.

Considerable ingenuity has been expended by commentators in attempting to explain this unexpected departure from the usual role of dumb animals. Whether it has been worth while is a matter of opinion for from the nature of the case no one can be quite sure what actually happened. Whether the ass was given, miraculously, human intelligence and the faculty of speech, or whether the ass protested in normal ass language at her master's treatment and that was transmuted miraculously in Balaam's ears into spoken words, or whether a voice came from heaven and to Balaam seemed to come from the ass, or whether the whole thing was a subjective impression made upon his mind and there were no actual sound-waves on the air at all, really does not matter. Whatever it was, it was of God and outside normal natural law and therefore, by definition, a miracle. Balaam does not seem to have been unduly surprised at hearing his ass speak with man's tongue; at first he heatedly told the ass that if he only had a sword in his hand he would kill her but upon the ass reminding him that she had never before been guilty of the behaviour he was complaining about, he assented quite mildly. Perhaps it was beginning to penetrate into his irritated mind that there was something strange in this proceeding, that asses, even prophet's asses, did not normally converse with their masters in human language. Perhaps the hand of God was in this matter somewhere—and with that thought his mind snapped into tune with the unseen world and he too saw the angel of the Lord standing visibly before him with his drawn sword in his hand.

That, of course, brought Balaam up with a jerk, especially when he learned that he had been in imminent danger of death at the hands of the angel and only the cavortings of the ass had saved him. He realised now that God had no intention of allowing him to curse Israel and he might as well forget the prospect of riches and honour at the hands of Balak. "*I have sinned*" he said "*for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me; now therefore, if it displeases thee, I will get me back again*" (ch. 22.34).

On the whole, this looks like the language of true repentance. At this point Balaam realised that he could only be truly loyal to God by being truly obedient. His unstable nature veered away again from the desire to please Balak and take his money to the resolve to be faithful to God. He was now ready to put himself in the hands of God's angel, and his fellow-travellers the emissaries of Balak could go on without him. That this was in fact the situation is suggested by the sequel. The angel of the Lord told him, contrary to expectations, to continue in the way to Balak. He was now God's man again; as such he could be trusted to deliver the message God would give him. *"Go with the men"* said the angel *"but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that shalt thou speak"*. True to the injunction, when at last Balaam did meet Balak, all he would say to the Moabite king's enticement was *"the word that God putteth into my mouth, that shall I speak"*.

So it came to pass that the Aramaic prophet found himself conducted up to the "high place" of Baal the god of the Moabites, and there on the top of the hill he prepared seven altars upon which he offered seven bullocks and seven rams, wherewith to propitiate the heavenly powers upon whom he would shortly call for the message. He has been accused of downright idolatry and a swift repudiation of his recent repentance in this procedure, but unjustly. Balaam, like all others in his native land, knew the Lord as *El Elyon*, the Most High God. Here in Moab he looked upon Baal as the local national equivalent, and saw nothing unfitting in using the sanctuary of Baal to call upon God. It is almost certain, though, that Balaam included the mythological gods of his own land as worthy of worship even if to some extent subordinate to the Most High God and this is the explanation of the seven altars and seven sacrifices. These were obviously in honour of the seven deities of the heavens, the sun and moon and five planets (only five were known in that day) each of which manifested some aspect or attribute of the Most High God. Long before Balaam's day it had been laid down by the thinkers of his forefathers that because God is light, all the shining bodies in the heavens, the sun, moon and planets, were emanations of God and all working some part in God's Plan. This led eventually to the deification of those bodies so that they all were worshipped as gods. From this it was easy to deduce that the planets had an influence and effect upon the events of human life upon earth and this in turn led to the "science" of astrology which was invented by the ancient Sumerians and continues today, four thousand years later, particularly in the columns of popular journals. Balaam

himself was an astrologer and understood all the technique of divinations and enchantments by means of which he found the basis of his predictions. So the smoke of his offerings went up, to Marduk the Sun-god and Sin the Moon-god, to Nebo (Mercury), to the goddess Ishtar (Venus) the warrior-god Nergal (Mars) to Niburu (Jupiter) and Adar (Saturn). Each of these represented the Most High God in one of his many aspects and in offering sacrifice to all Balaam was sure that he could find some avenue of access to the counsels of God himself. It was this kind of worship which God so sternly forbade the children of Israel at this same time, that they should not lift up their eyes to the sun, and moon, and host of heaven, and worship them (Deut. 4.19; 17.3.). The theology of Balaam was a long way behind that of Israel, and although he acknowledged and worshipped the Most High God, he did not know him as the God Who is ONE: he acknowledged also a crowd of lesser gods.

And yet, despite his ignorance and despite his idolatry, God used him. He was, for the time being at least, sincere in his profession and God can always use sincerity. Whilst Balak remained standing by the smoking altars Balaam went off to a solitary place to find and talk with God. Even though the ground was sacred to Baal the false god, even though the offerings were to deities that were not, even though the prophet awaited his Lord in a place given over to idolatry, God did not hesitate to meet him there and talk with him. It may be, perhaps, that the Lord does not regard so much the outward circumstances or the outward appearance as he does the heart. That at least, was what he told Samuel four centuries later (1 Sam. 16.7). It is worth noting, too, that according to ch. 24.1, it was by means of "enchantments", the divination of signs and portents, the "tricks of the trade" of his astrological profession, that Balaam discerned the voice of the Lord. It may seem passing strange that the Lord would communicate his will by such means, and yet, after all, is it not a case of God speaking to a man in the language he understands? When the Lord spoke to Moses in the wilderness of the Exodus, he talked with him *"face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend"* (Exod. 33.11), but Balaam was not Moses, and his whole life and upbringing had been spent in an atmosphere of strange and tortuous ways of serving and knowing God so that it is perhaps a wonder that he had any valid conception of the one God at all. After all, the same God who *"at sundry times and in diverse manners spake unto the fathers by the prophets"* (Heb. 1.1), was perhaps speaking to this poor semi-heathen who for all his ignorance and failings was never-

theless used wonderfully as a prophet, in one of those "diverse manners".

So Balaam came back to the expectant king, charged with the word of the Lord that he must speak.

The next issue will describe how Balaam faithfully discharged his Divine mission, predicting a future for Israel which history has justified, and at the end inexplicably failed God and led Israel into gross sin, so coming to a miserable end.

EVENTIDE

*"So he bringeth them
unto their desired haven"*

What a strange enigmatical world this is unless one has received Divine illumination concerning it! Itself a tiny molecule rotating in an uncharted ocean of space, subject to a mighty Force which imposes law, regularity and cohesion upon its multifarious parts, yet bearing on its bosom a reign of chaos, illegality and disintegration. Seated at the telescope the scientific mind will bow in awe before the unknown ordaining Cause, and confess vague belief in the intuitive wisdom and omnipotence of the creative God. Turning from his telescope our scientist will deplore the lack of step between the sidereal and the moral worlds. Does the same God rule here as there? Does the same Authority stretch its empire to this chaos as to that ordered regularity? Man has parcelled out the bosom of this earth, saying for a moment "this is mine", "that is thine". In some mad moment he will jump the fence, smite his fellow to the ground, appropriate his land and wealth, exalt his throne, and strut in regal colours through the earth. Of such have been the "Shahs", the "Caesars", the "Tsars", since the unlawful riot began. Each in turn has claimed a prerogative known as "Sovereignty". Co-incident therewith the orb, the sceptre, and the purple caused the notion to be spread around that the non-royal was subject to its power and must obey its behest. "Knowest thou not that I have nowers..." was the condescending query of the representative of one such Imperatorship to the One who stood before it unabashed and unashamed! Greater mistake was never made, for though in a secondary sense, there is no power but derives from God, absolute and primary power they have not! God has foreseen and foretold the rise and fall of empires over long centuries, but their coming and going are but pro-tem arrangements until He shall come whose right it is. The absolute and unforfeitable is still in God's hands, and here, sometimes, among the chaos and the change, those hands reach down to make a place of shelter above one of his own. Unmindful though He was to defend His own good Name, the Man of Sorrows was instant and alert to defend Divine prerogative. "Thou couldst

have no power against me, except it were given thee"—from whom, Caesar?—No! "from above"! The seat of all authority is still "above", and Omnipotence can still reach down when time and circumstance require. In quiet and measured tones that truth was reiterated to the disdainful prefect's ear, and changed the situation. Was Jesus standing at Pilate's bar? Yes, in a way—but more immediately Pilate was standing at Heaven's bar.

To Jesus this was the Cup which his Father had given him—nothing more, nothing less. He over-looked the Roman, and the Jew, and saw himself beneath his Father's Hand! That was enough to keep his heart at peace and rest, even though Satanic malice fanned Pharisaic passion to cyclonic force. "Thou canst have no power over me, except..." is still a truth to be warmly embraced by all who have made full surrender to the Most High! Irrespective of what the outcome might be, the truth still stands unmoved. Jesus went to death, but it was his Father's choice, not Pilate's, nor the Pharisees'!

So again, when strange and evil forces converge upon our lives, the Divine Supervisor can see and understand the outcome of every buffeting experience, and when the second causes are allowed to operate, the primary object is still in his own care, and the issue will be directed to his praise and to our good. There is some ordering and directiveness in this chaotic world—there is indeed a Divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them though we may.

*My times are in Thy hand
My God, I wish them there,
My life, my friends, my all I leave
Entirely to Thy care.*

*My times are in Thy hand,
Whatsoever that may be,
Pleasing or painful, dark or bright,
As best may seem to Thee.*

*My times are in Thy hand,
Why should I doubt or fear?
My Father's hand will never cause
His child a needless tear.*



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

BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

Vol. 51, No. 5

SEPT./OCT. 1974

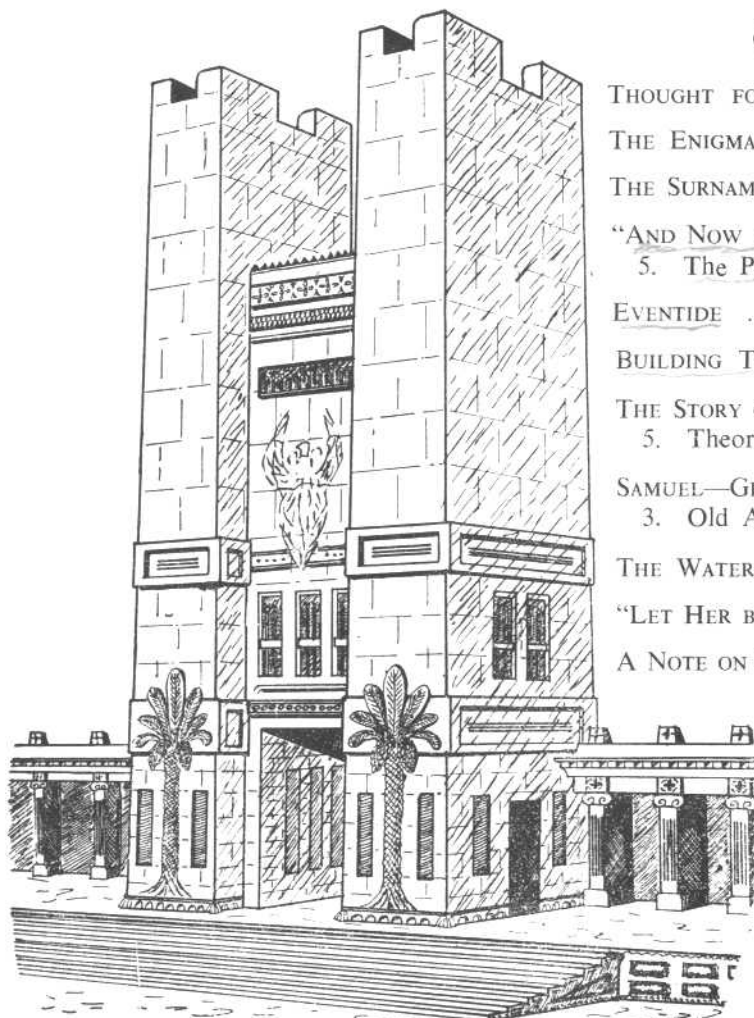
Published September 1st

Next issue December 1st

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This Journal is sent free
of charge to all who are
genuinely interested, on
request renewable annually
and is supported by the
voluntary gifts of its readers



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

Published by
Bible Fellowship Union
11 Lyncroft Gardens, Hounslow,
Middlesex, England

Bible Study Monthly

FOUNDED 1924

This Journal is published for the promotion of Bible knowledge and the furtherance of the Gospel of the Kingdom, its circulation being largely among independent Bible fellowships and study circles which share in varying degree the viewpoint of the Divine

Plan herein set forth. It is supported entirely by the gifts of well-wishers, and all such gifts are sincerely appreciated. Enquiries are welcomed, and all who are genuinely interested may have the journal sent regularly upon request.

Communications and donations to Bible Fellowship Union, 11 Lyncroft Gardens, Hounslow, Middlesex, England.
Secretary & Treasurer: B. G. DUMONT (Hounslow) Editorial & Publishing: A. O. HUDSON (Welling)

Thought for the Month

It was a summer evening. Several friends sat watching two small boys busily engaged digging themselves a paddling pool at the edge of the sea. With youthful enthusiasm they excavated a shallow depression and banked it round with walls of sand; then came the task of making a channel to lead the waters of the incoming tide to their excavation. The work was at length finished, and with excited shouts the two youngsters splashed and paddled as the sea came rushing into their pool, a swirling, muddy stream. For a while their contentment was complete, but then with alarm one noticed that the rising tide was threatening their walls. The sand was giving way—there was danger of all their work being ruined; and so with tremendous energy they sought to repair the damage with fresh shovelfuls of sand. To no avail, the remorseless sea came on. Then, with the necessity for desperate measures becoming evident, they brought great stones, dug out of the beach, to reinforce the bulwarks. Still the waves battered down the defences, washing over the sandy rocks and leaving them clean and white, until at length, with cries of defeat, the two small boys abandoned their stronghold and made for the wider spaces of the open sea.

The watchers looked again, and now there was nothing to be seen of the fenced pool with its muddy water, but in its place a broad expanse of billowing waves sweeping ever forward and upward.

A parable in action! How many a time and oft have the angels looked down upon just such a scene as this. We who come to the feet of him to learn stand in awe before the limitless expanse of the sea of Divine Truth, and in our littleness feel driven to build ourselves a little enclosure where the revelation of Truth can be kept within bounds and the waters be calm and still; and in our inexperience we discern not and care not that those imprisoned waters cannot but

be muddled with some effects of human tradition and misconceptions inherited from the past. And perhaps it may well be that in such a placid and circumscribed place we are enabled as babes in Christ to learn to keep our balance in the water and become adapted to this strange new medium of life . . . It is when the onward sweep of "Truth now due" demands that the "traditions of men" be swept away and we enter into a "cleansed sanctuary" that fear comes in to say we have not confidence or strength to receive this Divine revelation; or love for the work of our hands proves stronger than our love for the Truth which it was built to serve. And then with impetuous haste there comes that frantic effort to build up the walls in order to keep out that very life-giving influence which they were first erected to admit and retain. Even as the small boys dug rocks from the sand to reinforce their structure so do some worthy souls resurrect the partial truths of past ages to buttress their already tottering defences, not realising that the light of Present Truth sweeps over and reveals those same teachings in nobler guise.

And it is all of no avail. As soon endeavour to emulate King Canute and command the tide to come no farther than try to stem the power of Divine Truth. All our little castles, our mediums of service and organisations, can be only used in the service of God whilst they are acting as inlets for the waters of Truth.

The scope of the Divine Plan and depth of its teaching are, like the sea, immeasurable. We do well to build with our hands booths, temporary abiding places, where in quietness and fellowship we can learn of each other—but we must expect the pillar of fire to be lifted up ever and again from the Tabernacle, that we may proceed stage upon stage in our journey, ever through new experiences, that we may at last, appear before God in Zion.

THE ENIGMA OF BALAAM

Part 2.

Last month's instalment described the call of Balaam, prophet of Aram on the Euphrates, to help Balak king of Moab by invoking the curse of God upon Israel, about to enter the Promised Land. Torn between his sense of loyalty to God and his desire for the reward promised by Balak, Balaam has arrived in Moab and has to make his decision—to curse or to bless (see Num. 22-24).

* * *

Balak waited expectantly as Balaam returned to the still smoking sacrifices on the altars, and stood beside the king surveying the hosts of Israel encamped on the plain far below. In the distance, just visible on the horizon, lay the river Jordan, the river which Israel must shortly cross into their Promised Land—unless Balaam's curse should bring down the wrath of all the gods and scatter them to the winds of heaven. That was Balak's hope, a hope that was rudely dashed when, at length, the prophet spoke. *"Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, curse me Israel. How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? Or how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied? . . . who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his"* (ch. 23. 7-10).

The Aramaic prophet had passed the first test. Despite the inducements offered by Balak and the temptation of the rich reward, he had fulfilled his declared intention of saying only what the Lord had commanded him to speak, and in so doing had not cursed, but had blessed, Israel. And Balak was furious. *"What hast thou done to me? I took thee to curse mine enemies, and behold, thou hast blessed them altogether"* to which the prophet calmly rejoined *"Must I not take heed to speak that which the Lord hath put in my mouth?"* With that his commission from the Lord was discharged and he would have done well immediately to leave Balak and go home, but once again his fatal predilection for giving God another chance to change his mind came to the top and he acceded to the Moabite king's request to take another look at Israel from a different vantage point to see if that would make any difference. So the old procedure was repeated, the seven altars and the seven sacrifices to the seven luminaries of heaven, all representing aspects of the Most High God, and then Balaam went aside again into a solitary place to hear what the Lord had to say.

One cannot but wonder at the patience and forbearance of our God. This was the fifth time the matter had come before him and each time the answer to Balaam had been positive. Nevertheless the prophet kept on coming back to ask, in effect, if the Lord really meant what he said. Was there any chance at all that he would reverse his attitude to Israel and allow them to be formally cursed. Still in the back of Balaam's mind was the fact that there was a lot of money involved in this matter and if by any means the Lord could devise a formula which would both preserve Balaam's loyalty to him and at the same time give Balak the satisfaction necessary before he would pay over the money the outcome of the affair could be eminently satisfactory. But the Lord was not so accommodating. *"Go again unto Balak and say thus"*. And when he went back and did so, the situation was worse than before. His first words do seem to indicate that he realised at last that God was not going to change his mind and that the promised wealth and honours were definitely lost; it is to Balaam's credit that he did not allow this reflection to temper or water down the message he had been commanded to give. *"Rise up, Balak, and hear . . . God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Hath he spoken; shall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless; and he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it"*.

That is a wonderful affirmation of faith and loyalty. The man was at the parting of the ways: he had only to repudiate his loyalty to God, utter a curse in the terms expected of him and the wealth and honours of this world would be his without question—and of course God need not, and would not, take any notice of the curse, so that Israel would be quite safe after all. But he would go back to his home on the Euphrates a saddened and unhappy man because he had denied his God. On the other hand he could maintain his loyalty and integrity, deliver the message with which he had been entrusted, and go home a poor man in respect of this world's goods, but rich in faith toward God and most certainly richer for the experience. He chose to be loyal.

Now Balaam declared the full message he had been given. God had brought Israel out of Egypt, by his mighty power, for a great purpose. It would be said of them in time to come *"what hath God wrought?"*. The people would rise up as a lion and not lie down until they were surfeited with

victory. The Lord God was with them and the shout of a king among them; and at that Balak could stand no more and he cried out in desperation "neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all". He wanted nothing now but to stop the mouth of this man who was destroying all his hopes. But again he got the reply "I told you that all that the Lord speaketh, that I must do!".

Accepting, at last, the prophet's determination, Balak decided to go beyond Balaam to Balaam's superior and try to succeed there where Balaam had failed. "Come, I pray thee" he said "I will bring thee unto another place: peradventure it will please God that thou mayest curse them from thence." It is not very clear why God could be expected to be more amenable if appealed to from another spot; the new place was fifteen miles from the camp of Israel down on the plain whereas the old one was only five but there does not seem to be any point in that. Balaam, too, was not very sanguine as to the outcome. It is true he told Balak to build seven altars and offer seven sacrifices again as on the previous two occasions, but this time he himself did not go off to meet God. He had accepted the fact that God would not change and he was still in the mood to be God's mouthpiece. "When Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments" (auguries or omens) "but he set his face toward the wilderness" (the plain of Jordan on which Israel was encamped) "and Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding according to their tribes, and the spirit of God came upon him" (ch. 24, 1-2).

This is an expression which has to be taken very seriously. When the spirit of God is said to come upon a man it means that God is about to use him powerfully and that the man is in the right condition of heart so to be used. Here, in the final scene of this drama being played out on the hill-tops of Moab, Balaam was more than ever God's man. He was about to give the first of the prophecies concerning the End-Time, the events characterising the end of this world-age which is to be succeeded by the Messianic Kingdom of God, six centuries before the next such prophecy, that of Joel, and on account of that prophetic status alone he deserves due credit.

This time, then, he did not need to go and seek the Lord. The Lord came to him, and by virtue of his Spirit gave him words to speak. Once again, to Balak's exceeding chagrin, Israel was blessed. "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel . . . Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee". And Balak could take no more. Brusquely he dismissed Balaam and told him to return home. "I thought to promote thee to great honour, but, lo,

the Lord hath kept thee back from honour." To which Balaam only responded by repeating what he had said before, that notwithstanding whatever reward Balak might offer, he could still do no more than speak what the Lord had told him to speak.

But before going, he turned to the king and invited him to listen whilst he would "advertise to thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days." The ensuing passage (ch. 24, 15-24) bears all the signs of a Spirit-guided foreview of the far distant future and the "long-term" operation of the Plan of God insofar as Israel is concerned. The key is this expression "the latter days". In the Old Testament this phrase invariably refers to that time in history when the kingdoms of this world have run their course and are about to be superseded by the Millennial reign of Christ. At that time, the time of the Second Advent, all relevant Scripture concurs in viewing the ideal Israel restored to the Holy Land in a condition of faith in God and readiness for her future destiny as light-bearers to the world. In the meantime any nation or people which opposes Israel's onward progress to her destiny is thwarted in its aims and rendered impotent. The foreview commences with the nations which were hostile to Israel at the time then present, Moab, Edom, Amalek, Midian, but it sweeps on through all history until it reaches its grand climax at the close of this world age when the then descendants of Asshur and Eber, contemporary with Israel in Balaam's time, are found still maintaining the enmity and are likewise rendered powerless. The details of that momentous prediction must form the subject of a separate treatise; suffice here to say that Balaam saw, in the mists of futurity, the rising of Israel to its zenith of power in the days of the Davidic monarchy and again at the end, the "latter-days", when the final triumph of Israel merges into the Second Advent of our Lord Christ and the establishment of his Millennial Kingdom. All that he told to Balak, and having done so, he "rose up and went his way", leaving the Moabite king to his own thoughts.

Had this been the end of the story, one could have concluded that Balaam maintained his integrity to the last and went home with honour unblemished. Unfortunately that is not the end of the story. Within a few weeks a great calamity fell upon Israel; they were seduced into wholesale participation with the women of the Midianites and Moabites in the licentious rites of Baal worship and in consequence the wrath of God fell heavily upon them. The instigator of this seduction was named by Moses shortly afterwards—Balaam. "These" (the Midianite women) he said "caused the children of Israel, through the counsel

of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor" (Num. 31. 16). There is no other O.T. reference to this sudden about face on the part of the Aramaic prophet, but John in the Book of Revelation (2.14) records the words of the glorified Christ concerning "*the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.*"

That is all that Scripture has to say on the matter, but what actually happened can be inferred. It is plain that Balaam did not go home after his sessions with Balak for he fell into the hands of the Israelites when they fought Midian a few weeks later. The two passages just quoted show that he must have given Balak advice which, acted upon, led to the terrible apostasy of Israel. It could only have been that Balaam, conscious of having discharged his obligation to God not to curse Israel publicly but instead to invoke a public blessing upon them, felt that he might now gain some moiety of the promised reward by suggesting to Balak another way of attaining the desired end. If Israel could be persuaded to turn to idolatry, Balaam reasoned, God would cast them off and Balak's end be achieved. The plan worked, and it cost Israel dear, the loss of twenty-four thousand men and a blot on their escutcheon which was never effaced and never forgotten. But God did not cast them off. In the fury of reaction Israel utterly destroyed the Midianites who had ensnared

them, and with them Balaam himself. "*Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword*" (Num. 31.8. Josh. 13.22).

So the man's covetousness caught up with him at the last. His reverence for God was only a superstitious reverence and once he had obeyed the letter of the Lord's command he felt at liberty to follow the dictates of his own distorted reasoning without regard to the morality of the matter. Although at times Balaam did have the Spirit of God on him and in him, at the end he lost the Spirit because, to quote the words of Peter, (2 Pet. 2.15) he "*loved the wages of unrighteousness.*" Had he rooted out of his heart that which was alien to the spirit and purpose of God, and served him in absolute sincerity and dedication, he would have gone down in history as an honoured prophet. But this he would not do. Balaam is the classical example of the man who tries to make the best of both worlds. He tried to serve and obey God on the one hand and make the best bargain he could with Mammon on the other. He failed to realise he could not serve God and Mammon. So the canker remained in his heart, and at the end it destroyed him.

* * *

A detailed examination of Balaam's foreview of Israel's future, related in Num. 24. 15-24, will appear in next issue.

THE SURNAMING OF PETER

*Significant point
in Jesus' ministry*

"Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16.18).

Jesus it was who gave Peter the name by which he has always been known in history and literature. When first taken from his fishing to be a disciple of Jesus he was Simon the son of Jonas. More than two years must have elapsed before the new name was conferred and it seems evident that it was upon the occasion of Peter's avowal of belief in Jesus as the Messiah. Although the new name is mentioned in Mark 3. 16 and Luke 6. 14 in connection with the original call of the twelve disciples, it is probable in both cases that the mention is by way of explanation and identification, not that Jesus conferred the name at that time. This conclusion emerges more clearly when the incident of the avowal is examined more closely. It is also significant that in the Gospel of Mark, which besides being the earliest is also the most attentive to detail of all four Gospels, Mark

calls him Simon five times before the avowal and never afterward, and Peter seventeen times afterward and only once before, with the one exception where he records Jesus' own use of the name Simon in the scene at Gethsemane (Mark 14.37). It is evident that Mark took the change of name very seriously.

The Lord had asked his disciples, first, whom men in general thought him to be, and second, who they themselves thought him to be. Peter came out at once with his own answer: "*thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*". Jesus had been observing Peter for two years or more and was evidently satisfied that, despite his several manifest shortcomings, he was the one best fitted to take the lead when He himself was no longer among them. "*Blessed art thou, Simon son of Jonas*" He said "*and I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter*" (*petros*—a small rock or boulder) "*and upon this rock*" (*petra*—a crag or cliff, or mass of rock in the sea) "*I will build my church.*"

So Simon became known as Petros, the rock.

What did our Lord mean? An interpretation favoured by some commentators is that the shade of difference between the two Greek words in Matthew's account indicates that the "rock" upon which the Lord was to build his Church is the "rock foundation" of Christ's Messiahship so definitely stated at this moment by Peter and that the words do not convey any special primacy to this particular Apostle on this account. Whilst there is no doubt that the Christian Church is founded upon Christ, there does not seem to be any obvious link between "this rock" of vs. 18 and Peter's avowal of vs. 16. Grammatically, there is no link at all; the "this rock" of vs. 16 can only be the "rock"—*petros*—of the same verse. The A.V. is misleading here in rendering "Peter". Where "*petros*" in the Gospels is a proper name, it is prefaced with the definite article "the" as with all names of persons in the Greek; in this verse there is no article and the word should properly be rendered "rock". It is probably not wise to build too much upon this difference between "*petros*" and "*petra*"; our Lord would habitually talk to his disciples, not in Greek, but in their native Aramaic; this is confirmed by the fact that in John 1.42 Jesus used the Aramaic word for "rock" and John records it and gives the Greek equivalent, when Jesus says "*thou shalt be called Cephas*" (Aramaic *Kephas*, a stone or rock) "*which is by interpretation, a stone*" (*petros*). Paul used the name Cephas five times in his epistles which would seem to indicate that Peter was habitually known by his Greek and Aramaic names both meaning "rock". At the time of the avowal, therefore, Jesus probably used "*kephas*" in both instances, and this would more or less clinch the case for concluding that Peter was indeed the "rock" on which He would build his church.

But what church? Instinctively one thinks of the Christian Church as such and it is on this basis

that Peter's primacy has been claimed. But the Christian Church did not exist at the time of this incident; it could not, until after Pentecost. The word "church" here is *ekklesia*, and this means any kind of assembly or group. The riotous assembly in the theatre at Ephesus was an *ekklesia*, and so was the "church in the wilderness" of Acts 7.38. The "congregation" of Israel becomes "*ekklesia*" in the N.T. quotation in Heb. 2. 12. The word "church" in both this incident and the admonition of Matt. 18. 17 "*if he neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church*", refers to the community of Jesus' followers at the time—an incipient Church, perhaps, but still not the Church in the true sense. It was this community of disciples and believers that was to be built upon the rock-like character Peter; he was appointed, not a kind of super-ruler over all the Church of all generations,—that office belongs to the Lord alone—but leader and inspiration to the growing company of believers that was to espouse the cause of Jesus both before and during the formative period following his death.

This is how things developed. Peter became the acknowledged leader of the twelve while Jesus lived; at Pentecost he was automatically recognised as such. He received the first Gentile convert, Cornelius, into the church. Paul, after his conversion, conferred first with Peter before taking up his own characteristic ministry. The first Christian community in Jerusalem was stamped with his personality. At a later date he is said to have ministered and led for a number of years at Antioch, the leading Gentile church. Finally he is supposed to have laboured, and died, at Rome. It might very reasonably be said that it was this building of the early believers' fellowship, the commencement of that structure which later on became the world-wide Christian Church, that Jesus said was to be built on Peter. With his death the foundation had been well and truly laid and the intent of Jesus' words amply fulfilled.

Thomas Chisholm was the writer of the well-known hymn "*Great is Thy Faithfulness*". He was also a man of prayer. He was once in a desperate financial situation from which he could see no way of escape. That evening he and his wife put their dilemma before the Father in prayer, and left it there.

On the following morning a letter came. It was from a lawyer acting on the request of his client a day or so earlier to send a monetary gift to Thomas Chisholm; having had his heart touched by the singer's ministry of song, he had felt a leading to send the gift just at that time. It was sufficient to defray the debt.

"Not only the supply of the need" Chisholm wrote later, commenting on the text "*My God shall supply all your need*", "but the timing of help has signalled his providential care". In that precise timing resided what some men might call coincidence, but those versed in the ways of God, a miracle.

Convention Notice

Annual Manchester Convention Saturday/Sunday, 14/15 September in Cheetham Town Hall. Details and programmes from H. Chrimes, 2 Cheam Road, Timperley, Altrincham. WA15 6BQ.

"AND NOW ABIDETH . . ."

A series of studies
in 1 Cor. 13

5. The Patience of Hope

"Love . . . seeketh not her own." This is not an easy passage to comprehend and explain, as may be seen from the wide variations in the translations available. In the Diaglott, the word-for-word sub-linear translation renders it "Love . . . not seeks the things of herself", but in the translator's text it reads "Love . . . seeks not that which is not her own"—which, with its double negative, means "Love seeks that which is her own". The word-for-word translation is a fairly accurate transcript of the Greek text, but the primary sense and meaning of the phrase seems to have been so uncertain to the translator that he took the liberty of adding the second negative to make the phrase agree with his conception of what Love ought to seek. Both original and translation leave undecided what is meant by "things of herself", or "that which is her own". Other translators render the phrase, "Love . . . seeketh not her own" (R.V.); "seeketh not her own things" (Rotherham); "is not self-seeking" (Ferrar Fenton); "is not self-seeking" (Concordant); "is never self-seeking" (20th Century); "is never selfish" (Moffatt); "does not insist on its own way" (R.S.V.), "does not seek to aggrandise herself" (Weymouth); "does not claim its rights" (Knox). Obviously the precise thought is difficult to define, because the "things of herself" are not specified in particular.

Some of the difficulty arose, perhaps, because certain translators seem to have thought of the individual, and not the Master-Grace itself. Paul is outlining the elements of the *Agape* at their highest level, as they exist in the Love of God, and as a consequence, selfish love or self-centred love is ruled out from the start. But some of the translators seem to have taken it to be the much lower level as seen in man, where some self-centred disposition is possible. Evidently the Corinthian Church furnished some examples of this and it may have been to these that Paul addressed his negative, thus informing them that self-acquisition and self-aggrandisement were not accordant with Love, for Love sought not the things for which they craved. Now the fact is that Love is very much a seeking principle. From its highest expression in the heart of God, down to the lowest in the heart of the saint, it is always seeking its own. In God, this *Agape* is the activating cause in the formulation of his Plan to redeem and recover his erring sons. The Love that He feels for them leads him to seek for the restoration of the love they should feel for him. He desires the

whole universal family to be complete, each part to love and be loved in return. Hence the *Agape* in him sets out most deliberately to seek that which was and is its due—"its own".

That tiny spark of it in the Christian's heart is most Godlike when it is active on the same quest. The saint also is seeking "its own". It is this that prompts ready willing service, even to the point of self-sacrifice, and affords deepest joy when that service or sacrifice is more exacting and intense. To accomplish its great ends, it makes great demands. It required God to give his Son; it required that Son to give himself; it requires of the saints that they follow in his steps. All this is Love's demand—not the Law's demand. It is the "*Agape*" that called for all this, but its end in calling for this was the blessing of all the unblest members of the universe.

Hence in the tiny circle of the Christian's life in the home, in the mart or the ecclesia, that tiny spark from the heart of God is a driving, seeking factor, ever working onwards to the destined end, but always at the cost of sacrificing self. Under its urge the child of God can never be self-centred or self-satisfied. It confers no gratification to the flesh, no name, no fame, no pedestal, no wealth, simply because it cannot work just for the interests of one solitary individual. Its motto is "for all—and for all the greatest good". Thus, Love can seek its own—its own ends and purposes, but in so seeking, it seeks the good for all. Love is thus "not selfish", "not self-seeking", "not self-aggrandising" but truly "seeketh not that which is not her own", which, as said before, means "she seeketh only what is her own".

"Love . . . is not provoked." In this phrase the sense is indicated by the Greek word employed. It means "to irritate, to rouse to anger". In the Septuagint the same word (in Hebrew thought) also means "to make angry", "to exasperate", "to burn with anger". This provocation must be understood as men usually understand it, and as members of the Corinthian Church understood it, that is, provocation by personal slights, or libels. They appeared to have been provoked to anger frequently and scrupled not to take the offender to law. The *Agape* can be provoked, but it is to assist good works (Heb. 10.24) and acts of kindness. It can also be provoked to indignation (as Jesus was in Matt. 23) but only for the truth's sake and for righteousness, and not for one's own slights and injuries. For his Father's sake Jesus was provoked to intense indignation, but for his

own sufferings He uttered not a word.

"Love..... thinketh no evil". The word translated "thinketh" really means "to take into account; to make account of". In a more strictly calculating sense it could mean "to pass to the transgressor's account the evil he has done". So far as the child of God, in these present times, is concerned, he passes this matter over into the hands of God, and leaves him to deal with it in his own way. God's way is to deal with it in Millennial days through his Son, when any unrequited wrong can be dealt with as the sinner finds a consciousness of good overcoming the evil in his heart. Love seeks to interpret the conduct of others charitably. If pure and good-intentioned itself, it prefers, and so far as possible endeavours, to view the words and conduct of others from the same standpoint. It does not treasure up animosities or suspicions, nor manufacture a chain of circumstantial proofs of evil-intentions out of trivial affairs. Love makes all possible allowance for errors of judgment, rather than impugn the motives of the heart.

"Love.... rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth." These two clauses stand in contrast and show that Love has no pleasure in wrongdoing anywhere, but rejoices when truth gains its victory. This is true on the universal scale as well as in an individual sense. "My country right or wrong" has too often been the touch-stone of morality for centuries. Reduced to a local setting it would read, "Me first, right or wrong". In this way wrongdoing and iniquity have been made to abound as a cause of rejoicing by the unscrupulous. But the *Agape* finds no rejoicing in this. It finds cause of rejoicing only when truth prevails—the right as against the wrong, the good as against the evil, the pure as against the taint, the holy as against the vile. It rejoices if it sees the truth abound today in little things; it rejoices yet more as it looks forward to the coming day when Truth will abound universally.

"Love..... beareth all things." The word used here means, in part, "a root or a covering". An old English equivalent to it would be "to thatch". Love provides a covering for the faults and frailties of a friend, and hides them from the light of day. Hence, in this sense, it can mean "to cover over with silence, or with charity; to keep secret and conceal". This is exactly God's way with our sins. He has provided ample means to cover our frailties and blemishes. In a very real sense He has made a roof and covering for our nakedness. He has made ready the same roof and covering for the whole guilty world in its days of "drawing near" also. Placed beneath the over-spreading *Kaphar*, (or covering) of Christ's righteousness, the whole race of men will find protection from

the rigours of exacting Law. Love "covers" a multitude of sins—and sinners too. But there is another side to the word which means "to bear up and sustain"; many translations prefer this meaning. We also should do the same in both senses of the word. We should cover up the frailties of a brother from the common gaze, and sustain him with our love to the best of our ability. Indeed, if that spark of burning fire which we have received from him is all aglow in our hearts, we can only do to others what He has done for us. It is a case of "like" resembling "like".

"Love..... believeth all things." This of course can only be taken in the sense of confidence in the other man—as when a man can say of a friend in time of strain and difficulty "well, I believe in him". It bespeaks an attitude of confidence in the struggling one's integrity, knowing he has it "in him", with help, to "make good". It is a great thing indeed for our fellow men, struggling under the law of sin and death, for Almighty God to say that He "believes" in them, that He has shown by his attitude towards them that He knows there is still a germ of manliness within them which, with help afforded, and Satan removed, can respond to the magnetic pull of his Love and fatherhood. That same thing goes for "hope" too. Though God once subjected the whole race to vanity, of his own sovereign Will and decree, He did so entertaining a sure and certain hope in their future responsiveness to him when, in due time, that "subjection decree" is revoked. (Rom. 8.20-21). When man's opportunity to make free choice is restored, God anticipates that man will choose the way of life. And thus Love hopes on, and still believes in man's innate potentialities, spite of the havoc sin has wrought.

"Love..... endureth all things". Here we conclude on a note closely related to that on which our study of these constituents began. Here we have patience enduring unflinchingly to the end. This grace is closely akin to long-suffering, but there is a difference. Trench says that the Greek word here (*hupomone*) is to be compared to the Latin "*perseverantia*" (perseverance) and "*patientia*" (patience) both in one, or more accurately still to "*tolerantia*" (tolerance). He goes on to say "Long-suffering will be found to express tolerance in respect of persons, patience in respect of things. The man, who, having to do with injurious persons does not suffer himself easily to be provoked by them, or to blaze up in anger concerning them, is exhibiting long-suffering, while on the other hand, he who under a great load of trials bears up, and does not lose heart of courage, is manifesting his patience or endurance.

This has been the attitude of God throughout the long dark reign of sin and rebellion. He has

never doubted what the consummation would be, nor has He wavered in his determination to see it through till righteousness is established throughout heaven and earth, for the *Agape* can never fail. It is fully competent to accomplish all that it has set out to do, for it is the warm solicitude of the heart of God, backed by the power of his strong

right arm reaching down to lead the erring prodigal home.

We have now untwined the cord and examined every strand, but not one strand in itself is "Love"—for Love is the whole thing—the "amalgam" which embraces every minor grace.

To be concluded.

EVENTIDE

*"So he bringeth them
unto their desired haven"*

"So he bringeth them unto their desired haven".

It is impossible for us to realise the depth of disappointment that swept through the Master's heart as He wept over a callous Jerusalem and resigned himself to its fate. How repeatedly, but unsuccessfully, He had tried to gather it beneath his wings, and protect it from its own perverted self as well as from its enemies! Oh! the bitterness of that sad lament ".....I would... but ye would not....."! Had his coming and presentation to the nation not been the theme of psalm and prophecy over many preceding centuries the situation could not have been so tense, nor fraught with such tragic disappointment when, at last, He came to them. Had Scripture forecast not touched his life at so many points, the nation might have been able to tender some excuse for rejecting him, notwithstanding his miracles! Everything that could be done to prepare his way before him had been done..... and yet when He, the subject of every type, psalm and prophecy, "came to his own, his own received him not".

The waves of time stand not still on the broad bosom of history. Mis-spent years, with their unembraced opportunities return no more. Their intended blessings pass away unrequited, but more than that, the crucial moments, passing unimproved, turn the drift and set of circumstance into an ebbing tide, thenceforth to bear away towards the deep the unresponsive and heedless dreamer in the boat. So had it been with Jerusalem. Her hour had come—the hour for which the city and the nation had waited long, and with his coming a tide of opportunity had presented itself to people and priesthood alike, and He, as Heaven's messenger, as Pilot and Ship-master too, had presented himself to guide the ship into port, to bring this hitherto supremely favoured nation into the haven of its centuries-old desire. But they would not let him take them to his heart, nor would they take him to theirs. The crucial eventful moment passed, and the opportunity, ungrasped, was gone ".....I would... ye would not—henceforth....."; bitter sequence indeed!

But there was another side to that story. There are some better things to relate. It was not true to say of all "but ye would not". There had been

a few who had heard, as it were, the tender call and found shelter beneath his protecting "wings". As a brooding hen He had gathered them and drawn them close to himself, and when at last the long-threatening storm broke destructively upon the nation, these cherished objects of his care were kept safely nestling close to his loving heart! The hour of opportunity, rightly taken by this few, had brought them to rest beneath the out-spread wings of heavenly love and care, so fitly represented by the golden cherubim above the sprinkled Mercy Seat!

Again, another hour of opportunity is with us today. A fuller, deeper call to consecration has come to us. Of many churches and peoples in many lands the Master will yet have to say "...I would... but ye would not....."! Again, a spirit of indifference, and of "little faith" prevails among those whom He expected to hear his call. The opportunity will pass—has almost passed, and few indeed have heard the invitation to pass under his wings and find comfort and shelter here.

Do you know the warmth and shelter of his loving heart, dear brother and sister in the Lord? It is open to you to be as one of his "chicks", by day and night, safe kept by love Divine amid the gathering storm-clouds of this momentous day! One tiny word makes all the difference to the comfort and protection of your life—it is either "ye would not" or "ye would", that is all! Of himself our loving Master can still truly say "I would"—what can He say of you... and of me? Let our prayerful resolve henceforth be to remain "Under his Wings."

Under his wings I am safely abiding,

*Though the night deepens and tempests are wild,
I know I can trust him, I know He will keep me,*

He has redeemed me, and I am his child.

Under his wings; what a refuge in sorrow,

*How the heart yearningly turns to his rest,
Often when earth has no balm for my healing,*

There I find comfort and there I am blest.

Under his wings, O, what precious enjoyment,

*Here will I hide till life's trials are o'er,
Sheltered, protected, no evil can harm me,*

Resting in Jesus, I'm safe evermore.

BUILDING TOGETHER WITH GOD

"Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work if what sort it is. If any man's work shall abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved so as by fire." (I Cor. 3, 11-15).

Do you know that every individual Christian who is striving to enter the Kingdom of God is represented in the Scriptures as putting up a structure, a building, a faith structure, if you please, and that upon the kind of material we use in that building depends our future, whether for happiness, peace, contentment and reward; or sorrow, chagrin, disappointment and loss?

The Apostle first counsels us as to the proper foundation for our faith structure, stating that no man can lay a foundation that can bring us eternal life; because no man can give a ransom for his brother. No man can lay a foundation that can give a hope of future blessings. Therefore, *"Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. (I Cor. 3, 11). 'There is no other name given under heaven, or among men, whereby we must be saved.' (Acts 4, 12). But now, since Jesus is the proper foundation for our building, upon what does the foundation rest; what was it laid upon? All foundations must rest upon an underlying basis of some kind, and we reply by quoting our Lord's own words. He said He came not to do his own will but He came to do the will of his Father in heaven. And his Father's will was his Law, which is as eternal as God himself; therefore Christ, the Foundation Stone, was laid upon the eternal principles of God himself.*

The Apostle uses very powerful symbolism to represent the material we use in the construction of these buildings, namely, gold, silver, and precious stones. These symbolise those things in our faith that have the qualities of gold, silver and precious stones, qualities that are fireproof, qualities that fire will not burn; they are also rain and waterproof. Water is a symbol of Truth, and water will not melt them, cause them to decay or wash them away.

On the other hand, both fire and water will purify them and cause them to shine the more brightly, because they represent most beautiful truths. Gold represents Divine truths of the Kingdom; silver represents heavenly or spiritual truths of the Kingdom; precious stones represent the human or earthly phase of the Kingdom. On the other hand, Paul uses wood, hay and stubble to represent speculations, theories and opinions of men, which have qualities corresponding to the qualities of wood, hay and stubble. These are plentiful and cheap; they are neither fire nor storm-proof, but are subject to decay and destruction by both fire and storm. Therefore, the Apostle urges, "Take heed" what kind of material you are using in these faith structures, for we ourselves have to do with the kind of material we are using in our buildings.

It is our building in the sense that we individually are responsible for the material we use. God permits us to select the material, and He further permits us to supervise and arrange our entire faith structure.

Nothing is forced upon us by God. He does say, however, through his mouthpiece, the Apostle Paul, *"Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon."* But if we co-operate with him, by using the materials he offers us and his advice in the selection of material, and labour together with him, then He is pleased to have us call it "God's Building," for by so doing it gives us and our building a distinction and a reputation for first-class building and workmanship. *"For we are labourers together with God, ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building."* (Verse 9). The kind of building we erect depends on the kind of material we use in the building, for no building is better than the material in the building. A building built of wood, thatched with straw, and covered with paint, may look fairly well, and its builder and occupant may for a while feel reasonably secure and contented. However, in the time of fire, rain or storm, the building will be almost certain to be damaged, if not altogether ruined or lost, with only the foundation remaining. Similarly, a faith structure made up of uncertain theories, opinions, guesses and speculations of men, may be put together quickly, cost but little, and when glossed over with oratory and fine speeches, may look reasonably well so far as outward appearance is concerned and its occupant may feel quite satisfied for a time.

But when the fiery experiences and the storms and floods of life come, the weakness and undesirability of such a structure will be clearly manifest, resulting in sore disappointment and loss.

God has the mine and the quarry (the Bible) and that contains all the materials for the best of buildings, the gold, silver and precious stones. God freely offers these materials to us for our building, if we will only spend our time and labour to dig them out of his mine and quarry. And for our helpfulness, God has provided the tools by giving us concordances, Bible dictionaries, histories, helps, teachers, for we could not have all these if God had not given them to us. And, still more, God has given us the blueprints in the "types and shadows" of his Law. He has laid before us the plans and the specifications, and urges us to build well; and he assures us that if we do so our structure will stand the test of the fire and the storm which will try every man's work. Upon the other hand, the cheaper and destructible materials will but feed the flames and result in utter disappointment and loss to its owner.

Now let us keep in mind that all who build their faith structure upon the proper foundation, Christ's great redemptive sacrifice, are Christians, regardless of whether or not they are wise or unwise in the selection of material for their faith structure. If part or all of our faith structure is composed of the wood, hay and stubble of men's theories and speculations, we may be called very unwise or foolish virgins. The Apostle's word further declares: *"Every man's work shall be revealed, for the day shall declare it, of what sort it is."* God has arranged for trying experiences, symbolised by a fire and a great storm, which will be permitted to test the life-work of every man in the church so that it is but a question of time until every vestige of the wood, hay and stubble—the opinions, theories and speculations of men—everything that is of man and not from God, shall be destroyed.

But why all the destruction? We answer: God is building a city called "The City of God," "The Holy City," "The New Jerusalem," and all these buildings we are erecting, with their inhabitants who have passed the test of the fire and the storm, shall become a part of that city, and that city will be the Divine government. A city of gold, with streets of pure gold, with pearly gates and precious stones in its foundation, and its inhabitants with garments wrought with pure gold; therefore that which is represented by the wood, hay and stubble, can have no place in that city. Then how will all these tests be applied?

Christ said, *"I am the Light of the world"*; and

light is the enemy of darkness. The coming of light dispels the darkness. Darkness of error, superstition and men's opinions is giving way to light and truth, and will so continue until the world is cleansed of all human philosophies and speculations. Paul further tells us that these unwise Christians, because of the poor material used, will in this time of fire, suffer loss. What will they lose? They will lose their buildings, their faith structures, their cherished opinions and conceptions, concerning the Lord and his Plan, upon which they may have spent many days of toil and labour to put together. All will be shown to be false, without a Scriptural basis. And all hopes and ambitions resting on those unsound teachings and principles must go down also. Yet so long as they continue to remain on the rock-foundation, *CHRIST*, and give evidence of sincerity in the same, we are assured that they will be saved, *"yet so as by fire."*

While it is true that the gold, silver and precious stones are scarce and difficult to obtain, they are of great value, because of their inherent qualities which endure the fire and the storm. Since these materials symbolise the Truth, we observe the significance of their scarcity, and the fact that they are difficult to obtain and the necessity of digging for them as for hidden treasures.

Those who build with the material symbolised by the gold, silver and precious stones are erecting a structure that will abide throughout all time; they are using indestructible material and proving themselves real overcomers of the world, the flesh and the adversary; for it is the Truth, and the spirit of the Truth, that enables the true Christian to stand firmly against all the enemies of God. It is the revelation of Divine Truth that supports faith in the hour of trial and when all earthly friends forsake us. Such overcomers *"follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth,"* and at last will be with him, as the Bride of the Lamb, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord.

There are some who build their hopes of acceptance with God, and of becoming heirs of the Kingdom, on the basis of their good works, or their wonderful works of service, and outward activity, to the neglect of the character within, which should be godlikeness. Such are surely building with poor material; their structure will not stand the final test which the Lord will apply. The good works, and the service in the ministry of the Word are all important enough, but Paul tells us that the Lord is pleased with all this only when it is the Love of God in our hearts causes activity for him; saying *"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing."* And further, the Apostle Peter tells us to add to our faith structure, Chris-

tian character such as Virtue, Knowledge, Temperance, Patience, Godliness, Brotherly Kindness and Love; that, by so doing, we shall have granted unto us an abundant entrance into God's Kingdom. He says not a word about "service"; and emphasises the thought that Christian character is far more important and pleasing in God's sight than all the service we can render.

It is also interesting to observe the close connection between St. Paul's words on the subject of Christian work and the faith structure.

Jesus, also, in the closing verses of his Sermon on the Mount, said: "*Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which buildeth his house upon a rock. And the rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock. And everyone who heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell; and great was the loss thereof.*" (Matt. 7. 24-27). The lesson that Jesus intended to convey is that the truths He taught them were not merely to be heard, but to be put into practice in their everyday lives, if they would have the favour of God.

Our Lord warns us against the mere hearing of his words, and not obediently receiving them into our hearts, and not conforming our lives thereto, by making them a part of our faith-structure. Such, our Lord says, are building upon the sand; such are not acting in accordance with our Lord's instructions; such are unwise and certain to suffer loss in the time of storm. We are reminded, in this connection, that while God has committed to each one of his children the work of constructing a faith building and has lent his aid and providential care in the same, yet in another and much larger sense God is constructing a glorious edifice, the "Temple of God." The Tabernacle in the Wilderness, with its rough covering of badger skins, typified the Church in her humiliation while on this side the veil, while the Temple, on the top of Mount Moriah, typed the Church in glory, and each individual child of God is referred

to as a stone in preparation for that Temple. So, the Apostle says, that Christians, as living stones, are built up into him, a royal priesthood and a holy temple in the Lord. Following the various symbolisms of the Bible that refer to this matter, we find that this Temple, which God is erecting is, in other words, the Kingdom of God, the Divine Government, to whom will be committed the responsibility of the world's future sovereignty. Therefore, throughout the Gospel Age, God's Building, or Temple, has been in process of preparation, in the sense that the material, the stones, and so on, are being dug out of the quarry of this world, and are undergoing the hammering, shaping and polishing of God's disciplinary providences, so that each one may take on the proper shape, and thus fit in the place designed by the Great Architect of that holy Temple.

Surely we are near the time for the finishing of this great Building of God, his Holy Temple; surely we are close to the time when the last of the Temple stones are receiving their polishing and finishing touches, and soon the Temple will be raised in the First Resurrection. The world's great luminary, the Sun of Righteousness, "The Light of the World," is brightening the eastern horizon. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. May the light of God shine in and on increasingly until his Church, whose foundation is the "Rock of Ages," shall lift her head above the falling debris of earth's decaying systems and bid defiance to the storm which shall sweep the world of its vain schemes and traditions—its houses of sand, its castles of air; its wood, hay and stubble, the fabrications of man—until the Church, now in the wilderness, shall be the Church in glory.

How are we building? Are we building on the "Rock of Ages", by hearing and heeding our Lord's instructions; or, are we building on the shifting sands by hearing and not conforming our lives thereto? And with what are we building? Are we building with the gold, silver and precious stones; or are we building with the wood, hay and stubble of human speculation and sophistry? Let us consider well the material with which we are erecting our faith-structure, our character building, today!

Bunyan was the supreme example of the forceful Christian. Simple, direct, he spoke as he thought, and the positiveness of his expressions bespoke a firm and unyielding conviction of a righteous cause. Hear him on the subject of sectarianism. "Since you would know by what name I would be distinguished from others, I tell

you I would be, and hope I am, a Christian. And for those factious titles of Anabaptist, Presbyterian, Independent, or the like, I conclude that they came neither from Antioch nor from Jerusalem, but from Hell and Babylon, for they tend to divisions; you may know them by their fruits."

THE STORY OF THE DELUGE

5. Theories of the Cause

A great many theories, some well-founded and others not so well founded, have been advanced to explain the physical cause of the Deluge. They range from comparatively minor terrestrial floods in the flat plain of Iraq to major catastrophes of astronomical dimensions originating from sources outside the earth itself. It would require a long and comprehensive treatise to explore the details of all these theories and the results would not be particularly profitable. The Bible tells us the important fact, that the world of Noah's day was destroyed by a deluge of water extensive enough for the purpose, and it really does not matter to us in our acceptance of the story to know where the water actually came from. Nevertheless it is worth giving bare mention to the leading theories if only to show that the Flood story is by no means so incredible as some critics would have us believe; there are so many ways in which it could have happened.

The traditional and very elementary idea that once Noah was safely inside the Ark it commenced to rain and went on raining until the entire world was flooded to a depth of twenty-two feet above the highest mountains is the first casualty in a serious consideration of the subject. Terrestrial rain comes only from water already existing upon earth, evaporated from the oceans and lifted to the skies, carried along in the form of clouds and condensed to fall again as rain. No source of supply existed for that quantity of water falling as rain. And since the downrush from heaven lasted for only forty days it would have required more than the heaviest of rainfalls to deposit six miles or so in depth; it would in fact take more than sixty years at the rate of the heaviest sudden "cloudbursts" which are sometimes experienced in tropical countries. The rain mentioned in Genesis is but a secondary factor; the primary causes were two, the "breaking up" of the waters from the "great deep"—the sea—and the opening of the "windows of heaven", whatever that may mean. The LXX calls it the "cataracts of heaven" and one modern translator the "floodgates".

A very favourite suggestion is that an unusually heavy spring inundation flooded the Iraqi plain and drowned all its inhabitants. Every springtime the rivers Tigris and Euphrates carry down vast quantities of floodwater from melting snow on the Armenian mountains, and since Iraq is virtually flat for some five hundred miles the water floods over the land and remains so for some weeks before slowly draining away into the Persian Gulf.

(At least that was the position before the Babylonians built their extensive system of canals and reservoirs to regulate and control these floods, and since the time of the early centuries of the Christian era when the system fell into disuse and disrepair. Only in our own day is the Iraq Government restoring the old system of flood control.) This theory suggests that a particularly heavy winter snowfall, followed by an unusually warm springtime, brought unprecedented quantities of water down at once, making a flood deep enough to cover all the cities and destroy all the works of man in the plain. Exponents of this hypothesis have overlooked the fact that according to Genesis the Deluge did not commence in the Spring but in the Autumn, November. There are no river floods at that time of the year; they occur in April-May.

Despite this fact, a great deal of investigation into records and evidences of ancient floods in the Tigris-Euphrates plain has been and is still being conducted. Because devastating floods have been so frequent on the plain the association of Noah's Flood with one of them does seem to be the natural conclusion. Woolley's discovery of an eight foot strata of water-laid clay during his 1928 excavations at Ur of the Chaldees, widely proclaimed at the time to be that laid down by the Deluge, but now demonstrated to be due to a later flood, was the start of a kind of competition among archaeologists and Bible scholars alike to find more and more "flood layers" in Iraq and fit them to the Genesis account—and the effort still goes on. Of the many local floods of which evidences have thus been found there are least four major ones, at Ur, Uruk, Shuruppak and Kish, separated by two or three centuries, which have become prime favourites, but they all suffer from the demerit that they were river floods whereas the Bible and the Babylonian legends insist that the Deluge came up from the sea. "*All the depths of the great ocean were heaved up*" says Ferrar Fenton in his translation and this represents the literal idea. The ancient Hebrews and the Babylonians both believed that the oceans communicated with the "waters under the earth" and that these waters burst forth in this great cataclysm to deluge the lands, hence the use of "*tehom*" (deep or abyss) instead of "*yam*" (sea). In the Babylonian account the waters burst forth from the abyss so that the sea "swelled up to the sky" and frightened even the gods who feared the water would reach them; it then advanced over the mountains and plains overthrowing everything in

its path. No river in flood could be described in terms like that.

The "flood layers" of river-borne clay and silt which have been investigated do not go back earlier than round about 2800 B.C. or so and the Deluge of Noah's day was five centuries before that. It is highly probable that the terrible nature of the visitation precluded the survival of any signs of its occurrence; the entire world of the day was destroyed and only virgin land remained upon which an entirely new world was built.

A variant of this theory supposes that the waters of Lake Van in Armenia, near which the rivers Tigris and Euphrates have their sources, had been held up by a vast dam of ice which had formed in consequence of glacier action, and that the eventual breakdown of the dam released the pent-up waters of the lake down both river valleys, causing an even greater flood than could have been the case with the former suggestion. There are raised "beach" lines along the shores of Lake Van which indicate to geologists that its waters once stood a hundred or so feet above the present level. It is calculated that the amount of water that would thus suddenly have swept down from the lake, which has an area of fifteen hundred square miles, could have flooded the entire plain to a depth of thirty or forty feet; it would of course be the impetuous onward rush of the waters that would do the damage rather than their depth. Some people now living will recall the Indian disaster of August 1929, when such an ice dam across the river Shyok, a tributary of the Indus, gave way and flooded the plain of north-west India, drowning thousands of the inhabitants. Many more will remember the disaster of 1963 in the Italian Alps, when six million tons of mountain fell instantaneously into the man-made lake of the Vajont Dam, the highest dam in the world, sending a raging flood three hundred feet high over the village of Lingarone. The village was wiped out in six minutes and three thousand people died. The Deluge must have been something like that but extended over an infinitely wider area. Nevertheless this Lake Van suggestion, like the last, does not really fit the terms of the Genesis narrative.

The next class of theories attempts to conform to the Bible account by crediting the Deluge to a vast invasion of the sea. Here the physical and geological evidences are much more favourable. The whole of the extensive Iraq plain, from the Armenian foothills to the Persian Gulf, some five hundred miles north-west to south-east, and from the Syrian desert to the Persian mountains, about two hundred miles in width, is to all intents and purposes a level stretch of light, stoneless, silty soil, just as if it had once been the bottom of a

quiet inland sea. Towards the north, where the ruins of Nineveh now stand, there rise a succession of low rounded hillocks of soil all bearing evidence of having been deposited and moulded to shape by the action of water. The general belief is that this great flat plain has been formed by the action of the two rivers through countless ages, carrying fine earthy matter from the mountains and depositing it as mud; it is equally likely that the fine silt was laid down by a gigantic inrush of the sea. Within the last twenty years geologists have found marine fossils in strata in which they could only have been deposited within the last seven or eight thousand years and this is strong presumptive evidence that an invasion of the plain from the sea has occurred during the historic period.

The only possible source of such an inundation would be from the Persian Gulf in the south. According to Sumerian legend, it was around the head of the Gulf that the antediluvian cities were built. It is likely that there the men who lived before the Flood had built their world and there that they were "*eating and drinking, planting and building, marrying and giving in marriage*", until the Flood came, "*and took them all away*". A giant tidal wave, of well-nigh unimaginable proportions, sweeping up the Gulf and submerging all those cities, going on then to devastate the plain right up to the Armenian mountains, would naturally carry the Ark with it and strand the Ark eventually in the very district where the Book of Genesis says it did come to rest—in the mountains of the north-east. Moreover, interestingly enough, the course of the Ark from the place of its building to the place of its resting in Sumerian legend would also be consistent with the hypothesis of a flood from the south sweeping northwards. There is also the very significant statement in the Sumerian King Lists; after listing the ten antediluvian kings the tablet reads "*The flood came up*." Had the historian wanted to indicate that the waters came down from the river sources he would have said "down". As it is, he obviously meant that the floodwaters came upstream from the sea.

All kinds of things can cause tidal waves. The most common is an earthquake or volcanic eruption under the sea. The Japanese earthquake of 1896 started a tidal wave which travelled across the Pacific ocean at a speed of 450 miles an hour and reached San Francisco ten and a half hours later. The Lisbon earthquake of 1755 so disturbed the sea at Rotterdam, eleven hundred miles distant, that large ships moored there broke their cables. When the volcano Krakatoa, in the seabed between Java and Sumatra, blew up in 1883, throwing a cubic mile of rock twenty-five miles

into the air, a tidal wave three hundred feet high travelled in every direction at an initial speed of 400 miles an hour, eventually reaching South Africa, five thousand miles away. The effects were felt in the English Channel, eleven thousand miles distant. More recently, an earthquake in the seabed off southern Chile in 1960 sent tidal waves racing over the entire Pacific ocean at 450 miles an hour, causing damage in Japan, New Zealand, Hawaii and California. And only a few years ago scientific investigation revealed the story of the volcanic eruption on the island of Santorin in the Aegean Sea, between Greece and Crete, at the time of Israel's Exodus from Egypt. The resultant tidal wave, 350 feet high, completely destroyed the civilisation of Minoan Crete and left the island a desolate ruin. These examples are sufficient to show that a tidal wave adequate to deluge a flat land like Iraq is by no means an incredible proposition.

A hypothesis advanced by some geologists is that there was a rapid sinking of the land over a wide area which allowed the sea to come in and cover the mountains as stated in Genesis; a year later the land rose again and the sea retreated. Such a happening would meet the requirements of the case but whether it is the true explanation is another matter. Hugh Miller a century ago, in *"The Testimony of the Rocks"* gave reasons for thinking that the whole of the Caucasus and Iraq down to the Persian Gulf did so sink some sixteen thousand feet and was later elevated to its former level; this, he says, was the cause of the Noachic Flood. He explains that such a depression of the land level over so great an area would be quite imperceptible to the inhabitants; the relative heights of mountains and depth of valleys would look much the same and the impression would be that it was the sea-level which was rising and invading the land. Similar statements were made later on by Prof. G. F. Wright, in *"Scientific Confirmations of Old Testament History"* (1906), in which he gave details of his geological researches in Western Asia upon which he based his theory.

Such earth movements are always going on in the world—not always so rapidly as would have had to be the case in this instance, but there are enough on record to show what could have happened at the time of the Flood. In the year 1822, for example, an area between the Andes and the Pacific Ocean as large as Great Britain rose seven feet, and the coast of India dropped at the same time. There is, twelve thousand feet above sea level in the high table-lands of South America, the shore line of an ancient sea which can be traced for over eight hundred miles. That shore-line was at sea level at some time since man came upon earth, for it is studded with ruins of buildings,

roadways, canals and wharves, showing that a seafaring people once lived there. At twelve thousand feet the air is rarefied and the climate always cold—but these ruined temples contain carvings of tropical fish and animals, evidence that when those buildings were erected the whole area was at approximately the present sea level now twelve thousand feet below.

There is no possible means of relating such a happening, if it did happen, to the precise date of the Flood. Geologists have to time the changes they discover in terms of thousands of years and this suggestion can never be more than a possible theory.

A somewhat different primary cause of the Flood is pictured in what is known as the "tilting earth" theory. It is well known that the earth turns on its own axis once every day on its journey round the sun. That makes the alternation between day and night. There is also another motion which can be crudely described as a "wobble", something like the behaviour of a boy's spinning top when it is almost at the end of its spin and about to fall over, which brings any given spot on earth alternately more under the direct rays of the sun and away again, so giving us the succession of the seasons, summer and winter. The technical term for this is the "earth's obliquity", but for everyday use the word "wobble" is perhaps more immediately expressive. The "tilting axis" theory supposes that before the Flood this obliquity did not exist. The earth, it is claimed, turned steadily with the sun always shining directly on the Equator and there were no seasons, the climate at any one point being constant. It further supposes that at the time of the Flood the earth's axis was suddenly tilted to its present position. Now the effect of such a happening would be to alter the speed of movement of any part of the earth's surface by something like 300 miles an hour, and that in turn would cause the oceans to move in a spiral direction around the earth at that speed as gigantic tidal waves, inevitably drowning out all the continents.

All this has been worked out in great detail and could constitute a possible explanation of the cause of the Flood. But no astronomer of standing has yet discovered any evidence that such a shifting of the earth's axis has ever occurred. This also, it would seem, must remain a theory.

Finally, there are the astronomical suppositions, which are by far the most spectacular but not necessarily to be ignored on that account. William Whiston, in his *"New Theory of the Earth"* published in 1696, propounded the view that the Flood was due to a tidal wave caused by the passage of a comet near the earth. Whiston's scientific attainments qualified him to make the necessary calcu-

lations which resulted in his announcement that on Monday, 2nd December in the year 2926 B.C., Halley's Comet passed close to the earth in the neighbourhood of China, where it appears Noah was living at the time, and not only caused huge tidal waves to sweep over the entire planet, destroying everything upon its surface, but also discharged a generous supply of vapours at a velocity of twelve hundred miles a minute which descended to the earth, condensed into water, and covered the earth all over to a depth of six miles. That does at least attempt to explain where the water came from. Fissures in the earth opened and most of the water drained away to the inside, where, presumably, it still remains.

Quoth the worthy but somewhat wordy Professor in explanation of all this, ".....according to which 'tis plain, that the Comet pas'd by the Earth, broke up the fountains of the Deep, and began the forty days rain about Noon; at which time, tho' the waters fell with the greatest violence in the Earth, yet they affected the opposite Hemisphere only: And this most nicely and wonderfully corresponds to the greatest accuracy of the present case, and of the Mosaick History. So that now we may, agreeably both to the sacred history, and the calculations from the present hypothesis, assert, that the Deluge began at the Meridian of Pekin, in China, about noon. Which exactness of solution wherein not only the Day, but time of the Day assign'd from the Mosaick History, is correspondent to the present hypothesis, how remarkable an attestation it is to the same, and how full a confirmation of the most accurate verity of the Mosaick History, I need not remark; such reflections, when just, being very natural with every careful reader." And if the careful reader was not satisfied with this, there were some three hundred and fifty more pages to the same effect. Proving the historicity of the Deluge was a serious business in the Seventeenth Century!

Whiston was a scientist and mathematician of repute in his own day, a co-worker with Sir Isaac Newton, and a convinced Christian. Much of his scientific work, however, has been superseded by later knowledge, and his "comet" theory need not be taken too seriously.

The basic idea, that the Flood was caused by tidal waves set up by the near approach to the

earth of some heavenly body, is however still sometimes elaborated. In our own century Bellamy (in "*Moons, Myths and Man*") is the chief protagonist of the "moon capture theory". According to this, the moon was originally a planet which got too near to the earth and was drawn into the latter's gravitational system. The consequent disturbance caused mighty ocean tidal waves to rush from both poles to the Equator and drown out the extensive civilisations which Bellamy envisaged as existing, some eleven thousand years before Christ.

D. W. Patten in "*The Biblical Flood and the Ice Epoch*" (1966) propounds the suggestion that the Deluge was due to the gravitational attraction exerted by the near approach to earth of one of the "minor" planets—small bodies normally orbiting the sun in the space between Mars and Jupiter. Some of these regularly pass in the vicinity of the Earth but not near enough to exert any perceptible effect and they are so small—most only a few miles in diameter and none more than about 400—that they would probably have to come within range of the Earth's gravitational attraction to do so and then would themselves fall upon the earth.

All these "astronomical" solutions suffer from the demerit that there are no geologic or other concrete evidences as to their likelihood. There is one other suggested cause, however, also to be classed among the astronomical hypotheses and involving the greatest of all tidal waves, which does afford rational explanations of a number of other puzzling phenomena noted by geologists. The "Canopy theory" as it is known, was primarily advanced to explain the evolution of the earth from its original chaotic state, and its connection with the Deluge is incidental but does furnish a solution which fits many observed facts that are not explained by most of the other alternatives. First mooted by the German scientist Leibnitz about 1690, endorsed by the French naturalist Lamarck about 1788, and developed more fully by the American Professor Isaac N. Vail in 1874, the thesis has been sustained, not without adverse criticism from some geologists, to the present day.

But the details of this final explanation must form the subject of next month's instalment.

To be continued.

A Press report from a Texas, U.S.A. town says; "Rev. Henry V. Collins plans to try a new twist Sunday in an attempt to boost attendance at his First Church of God. Each person attending the services will receive 120 trading stamps."

What neither Press nor minister revealed was

whether the trading stamps will be redeemable in heaven for harps, trumpets, white robes, etc. or what St. Peter will say when they are presented. And do trading stamps come under the category of "treasure laid up on earth" or "treasure laid up in heaven"?

SAMUEL, GREATEST OF THE JUDGES

3. Old Age

"And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel." (1 Sam. 8. 1).

There is a world of tragedy enshrined in those few words; tragedy, because the sons of Samuel were not fit for such exalted office. It is one of the most puzzling things in Scriptural history that the man who owed his own position of leadership to his predecessor's failure in the training of his children should, after a lifetime of honoured service, have himself failed in the same respect. The man who saved the nation and gave it its first ordered system of justice and administration did not restrain his own sons from going on the wrong path. Joel and Abiah had not followed in the upright course of their father; they had no share in the piety and godliness of their grandparents, Manoah and Hannah, by now long since laid to rest. They were of a more modern generation and largely heedless of their father's and grandfather's God. So the chronicler records, doubtless sorrowfully, that when they had been promoted to leading positions in Israel, they *"turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment"*.

Whether it was Samuel's judgment that was at fault, or his advancing age—he would now be about seventy-five—or some secret hope that God would honour his family for his own work's sake, and make his descendants pre-eminent in Israel, we do not know. What is certain is that his choice did not meet with the approval of the elders in Israel, and they were not slow to express the fact. It is plain that Samuel's authority was on the wane; perhaps for some time now the people had maintained their allegiance out of gratitude and for sentiment's sake, remembering what great things he had done for them in the days of his maturity, but at this, the first sign that he was in process of relinquishing his personal direction of the nation's affairs, long-suppressed thoughts came to the top, and they gave voice to the desire they had refrained from broaching to him before. *"Behold, thou art old"* they said *"and thy sons walk not in thy ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations."*

In a way, their request was a testimonial to Samuel's own faithfulness to the interests of his people. In the days of Eli apparently no one had cared whether the High Priest's sons were profligate or not, and it had required the labours of Samuel's lifetime to awaken Israel to a sense of responsibility. Is it that they had at least learned

that lesson; that they did wish for strong and decisive leadership and looked with some dismay upon the prospect of another disaster such as had happened in those bygone days, half a century earlier, when the Ark of God had been taken and the country plunged into anarchy? We must not be too unsympathetic toward these men's desire for a king; there might very well have been laudable elements in the mixture of thoughts that led them to make this request of Samuel.

How plain it is that leadership cannot be handed down; the mantle cannot be awarded; it must fall upon the shoulders of the one who is ready to wear it. *"If thou see me when I am taken from thee"* said Elijah to the man who had prayed for a double portion of his spirit *"it shall be so... but if not, then it shall not be so."* That Elisha was such a man, ready to carry on the work begun by his master and mentor, and to exalt it to greater heights, is evidenced by the admission of his companions *"the mantle of Elijah is fallen upon Elisha."* We may have been blessed with great privilege in the Lord's service while we enjoy the full use of our powers, but when the time that we must go hence is come, it is the Lord who determines what shall be done with the remnants of the work that has been our joy and care.

Samuel was disappointed. He did not take readily to the request of the elders, and he took the matter in prayer to his God. The answer is kindly; it is sympathetic; but it is firm. *"Hearken unto the people in what they say, for they have not rejected thee; but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them."* That does not mean, as is so often assumed, that the people had rejected God in *desiring* a king. David and others in after times *"sat on the throne of the Lord"* with full Divine approval and endorsement. The nature of the Messianic prophecies that were yet to be given required that a king reign in Israel to give colour and form to those prophecies, and in order that attention might be focussed on the king who one day should *"reign in righteousness"*. Their refusal to accept the overlordship of Samuel's sons because they were not upright men must also have had the approval of the Most High. And their loyalty to Samuel himself, God's appointed man, was not in question. Their rejection of God lay in the fact that, now Samuel was manifestly nearing the end of his life, they were not prepared to trust God himself to raise up a successor who would lead the nation in right ways. They had

forgotten that all they then enjoyed of national peace and prosperity was the result of God having raised up one to serve them, one who had been but a small boy in the Tabernacle, unnoticed by and unknown to the nation until the time of need had come. Now, instead of waiting upon God for a further manifestation of his overruling providence, they had rushed in with their own desire that a man of their own choosing and acceptance be installed as king over them. The homage and obedience they should have reserved for God they were anxious now to render to a man of themselves, like the nations that were around them. The terms of the Covenant were largely forgotten, the fact that they could never be quite like the nations about them, but must always be a chosen nation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people, set apart to illustrate in this world and Age the principles that are to govern the next world and Age, when all the world is to come to the throne of Jesus and worship him as King and Lord. They had forgotten all this—or perhaps had never really believed it—and it was this failure that constituted their rejection of God. Samuel they knew and honoured for his past works' sake, but God they did not know.

Thus it was that Samuel was brought into contact with Saul—Israel's first earthly king. The circumstances of their meeting show more vividly than ever how much the star of Samuel was in the descendant. Saul, a comparatively unknown young man, had left his home district to seek his father's lost asses. In company with his servant, he had explored the countryside fruitlessly when suddenly the servant had an idea. "There is in this village," said he, "a man of God—now let us go thither; peradventure he can show us our way that we should go." Neither Saul nor the servant knew the name of this man of God; they only knew that one who was somewhat renowned for his sanctity lived there, and the thought came to them that he might be induced to use his supernatural knowledge or insight to tell them at once the whereabouts of the straying animals. A biting commentary on the religious state of Israel at the time is afforded by the fact that Saul did not anticipate the small service to be rendered for nothing; the "man of God" would expect some appropriate remuneration for services rendered; and so a quarter shekel of silver (to-day's value equivalent to about one pound) which the servant had on his person was set aside to flavour the deal. It would appear that Samuel's professional skill was not rated very highly.

It is evident that Saul did not know Samuel. Upon entering the village he inquired of a passer-by the whereabouts of the house of the seer (the older term for prophet). "I am the seer" was the

reply. In the providence of God Saul had accosted the very man he had come to seek. Samuel was able to assure him that the asses were found, and safe; but he went on to tell Saul that his coming to Ramah was for something far more important than the recovery of a few farm animals. He had come, unwittingly, to be anointed king over Israel.

But how does the position of Samuel stand out in all this? At one time known by "all Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba" (1 Sam. 3. 20) as a prophet of the Lord, and established as the first man in all the land, going annually on circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh to judge the people's causes, and so home again to Ramah (1 Sam. 7. 16) he had now evidently retired to a considerable extent from active service and contact with the people, and in consequence was quickly being forgotten by them, so that Saul, coming from less than a hundred miles away, knew him only by repute as a "man of God". Quite evidently Samuel had not been in Saul's home district for many years or the latter would surely have known him by sight. The handing over of judicial responsibilities to the two sons, Joel and Abiah, tells the same story. The conclusion seems to be that in his old age Samuel had commenced to "take things easy" as we would say. And the disruption of his life's work was beginning in consequence.

How many there are, Christian believers who have borne the heat and burden of the day in times gone past, who do this same thing. When the tale of years begins to mount and physical strength commences to ebb, they succumb to the ever present temptation to lay aside the privilege of active service and hard work for the Master, and turn instead to intensive contemplation of the written Word from the recesses of an armchair. So do they become progressively more and more out of touch with the realities of the Christian way. Our Lord has provided that our devotional life and our growth in the knowledge of his Word and his Plan shall be tempered with the experience and broadening effect of outward service, ministries to our brethren and evangelical ministry to the world. The Apostle Paul, notwithstanding his advancing years, his physical disabilities and his many deep excursions in the doctrinal teaching of the Word of God so manifest in his written works, at no time lost sight of that part of his commission which had to do with God's witness before the world. "*Woe is unto me*" he cried "*if I preach not the Gospel*". The zeal and assiduity with which he carried out the Christian's age-old commission is evidenced by the churches that sprang up wherever he went. If we believe, as we say we do, that we are "immortal until our work is finished", then surely we should continue with undiminished faith and zeal in doing with our

might what our hands find to do, until we are physically able so to do no longer.

Reading between the lines, it does seem that this visit of Saul to Ramah had the effect of causing Samuel to bestir himself. He appears to come into the picture again and stand out more prominently in the affairs of Israel. Perhaps the communion he had with God over the matter of Saul's anointing caused him to realise the direction in which he had been tending to drift. Perhaps the demand for a king brought home to him such shortcoming in administration as could rightfully have been attributed to him. At any rate, we hear no more of his sons being judges over Israel. Evidently he brought that arrangement to an end, and from the 10th chapter of 1 Samuel onward, Samuel the aged is once again supreme in Israel and a name to be respected. But that same chapter is also a pointer to the outcome of Samuel's temporary lapse. The Philistines were once more in power in Israel. How long they had been there we know not, but in chapter 10, 5, where Samuel is giving Saul his instructions, he refers, quite casually, to a place in the midst of the land "where there is a garrison of the Philistines". Now the Philistines had been heavily defeated at Mizpeh thirty years back and had troubled Israel no more; for them to be thus in occupation again at this time means one thing, and one thing only. It means that the reformation initiated at Mizpeh had lost its force and the people had relapsed into apostasy and idolatry, for only thus under the terms of the Mosaic Covenant would their enemies have been able to overcome them again. Samuel's life ended, and Saul's reign began, under the same shadow that had covered the land when Samuel was a small boy in the service of Eli, the shadow of the Philistine occupation.

So once again Samuel, re-asserting his former

authority, called the people to Mizpeh that he might formally present to them their king. This was a renunciation of authority of a different kind; as Saul's authority increased so that of Samuel must decrease. It must have been with a heavy heart that the aged judge recited in the ears of the people the past blessings they had enjoyed from their heavenly King, the future miseries they would experience at the hands of their chosen earthly king, and exhorted them nevertheless to continued faithfulness to their covenant that, ultimately, God could accomplish his purposes in and through them. Then Samuel wrote for them "*the manner of the kingdom in a book, and laid it up before the Lord*" (1 Sam. 10. 25). In other words, he drafted the constitution of the monarchy, defining the duties and the privileges and the liberties of king and people respectively. It was the last great service he could render to the nation he loved; perhaps it was his greatest service. Perhaps, after all, the order of things that directed and moulded the ways of the kings of Israel for the next five hundred years, honoured to a considerable extent by good kings and probably to some extent at least by even the bad kings, played a great part in making the nation of Israel what it was when the time came for its true King to be presented in the way He came. The prophetic zeal of Samuel blazed up and performed a good work during his own lifetime, but it died away and was extinguished almost before he was dead; the kingdom of which he, under God, laid the foundations, must have owed its five hundred years of existence in great measure to the wisdom and foresight—and experience—that he had put into its constitution, "laid up before the Lord". The effects of that day's work are with us yet, and will never die.

(to be concluded)

Note on Phil. 2.10

"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, both in heaven, and in earth, and under the earth." The reference to some who "under the earth" will bow the knee to Jesus sometimes provokes a question. Those in heaven, and those on earth—that is easily understood; but who are those "under the earth?" The Greek word which is translated by these three words is *katachthonios*, which is composed of *kata*, meaning down, *chthonios*, which is defined by Liddell and Scott as having reference to anything in or under the earth but especially to the gods below the earth. These gods in Greek mythology were the Titans,

who rebelled against the gods of heaven and after being defeated were cast out of Heaven and imprisoned below the earth. These Titans correspond to the fallen angels, and it would seem that Paul used the word to refer to those fallen angels who are described by Peter as being imprisoned in Tartarus. In other words, when the Divine Plan for man is complete, not only will all in heaven and earth bend the knee, but also those who were "disobedient in the days of Noah" unless of course by wilful and continued opposition to the ways of God they reap the inevitable wages of sin—death.

THE WATERS OF SHILOAH

*Spiritual truth based
on a natural fact*

"Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son; now therefore, behold, the Lord will bring up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory, and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks." (Isa. 8. 6-7).

Deep down beneath Jerusalem there is a strata of hard, impervious rock, sloping very gently towards the south-east. All the rain that falls upon the city and percolates into the ground gathers at last upon that unyielding shelf and forms underground streams which emerge at length as springs upon the hillsides outside the city. By far the most important of these springs is that known as the Virgin's fountain, halfway down the steep sides of the valley of Jehoshaphat. This spring never fails; the underground reservoirs feed it constantly and from time immemorial it has formed Jerusalem's most reliable water supply. The Jebusites, long before Joshua invaded the Promised Land with his hosts, had bored a tunnel from the fountain into the mountainous mass upon which their stronghold was built and had then made a vertical shaft to the surface so that they could descend and draw water in times of siege without having to venture outside their walls. In much later times the Israelites—probably in the period between David and Ahaz—had built a covered aqueduct just under the ground to convey the water from the Virgin's Fountain to the Pool of Siloam, with the same purpose in mind. When Sennacherib invaded Judah in the reign of Hezekiah the son of Ahaz it would seem that this aqueduct had been blocked up and knowledge of its course lost, for Hezekiah set to work and excavated another tunnel through the mountain to convey the water to the Pool of Siloam, which was by then inside the city walls. In our days both Hezekiah's tunnel and the remains of the earlier aqueduct have been found, the latter buried far underneath the soil and rubbish which has accumulated in the Valley of Jehoshaphat since the days of Isaiah.

It was this lost aqueduct to which Isaiah referred in the text. That overflowing water coming out from the heart of the mountain below the city and the Temple, never failing, always fresh and clear, was a very real Divine provision for the people. It was a kind of literal counterpart of the spiritual provision—sustenance, refreshment, protection—which God had made for his chosen.

Quietly, unobtrusively, safe from all attack by enemies, the waters of Shiloah "flowed softly" to meet the needs of dwellers in the city, and in just the same way God's provision for his people was always there and always effective to meet all their needs and shield them from all harm, provided they would but exercise the faith necessary to avail themselves of its benefits.

But the people would not. They turned away from the gentle, pure, life-giving stream and fastened their covetous eyes upon other waters, waters that were outwardly more spectacular and more pleasing to the natural senses: but waters that, had they but realised the fact, were not waters of life at all. They were waters which in the end brought trouble and disaster and death.

Away across the desert, in the land of Assyria, there was a mighty river. Men to-day call it the Tigris, but the Assyrians gave it a name which meant "shining water". They had built their capital city of Nineveh upon that river and from there they had set out to conquer the world. The Assyrians are known chiefly to students of the Old Testament for their military skill and their ruthlessness, but they were also an industrious and an artistic people, and they had harnessed their great river so that it became the principal support of their economy. The river and its tributaries had been dammed at various places to create artificial lakes, great reservoirs which stored up the water that came down from the highlands in abundance in springtime, when the winter snows melted. From these lakes they had cut canals, leading in every direction through the desert, and irrigated the soil so that it became one of the most fertile countries in the world. The children of Israel knew of this lovely country, so different from their own rugged, austere Judea—many of them visited Assyria as merchants and brought back tales of its grandeur; Jonah had preached in Nineveh only a century or so before Isaiah's day—and as they compared the earthly beauty and the man-made efficiency of that widespread network of rivers and canals with their own modest, quiet, hidden stream of Shiloah, they turned away from the living waters and gave preference to the waters of the great river. They forgot that their own stream had never failed them and had always sufficed for their needs, and turned instead to embrace the appeal of a worldly creation the continuance of which depended upon the will and the whim of imperfect men.

To-day, the great dams are in ruins, the canals choked up with silt and sand, the onetime fertile fields returned to desert. The river, once alive with boats and teeming with activity, now winds sluggishly through marshes choked with reeds and rushes. The work of man has utterly failed and all the glories of yesterday have become as a fading flower. But the waters of Shiloah flow still, as abundant and as fresh and pure as in the days of Isaiah. The women of Jerusalem still draw water from the Pool, and the gardens around the south-east corner of the city are still watered from its overflow.

Assyria was the undoing of Israel eventually. Because the people had refused the waters of Shiloah, God told the prophet, He himself would bring upon them the waters of the great river to overflow and submerge them in a great destruction. And so it came to pass. In the midst of their unbelief and wilfulness and apostasy the Assyrian hosts overran their land and took them away into captivity. Thus was fulfilled the word of the Lord *"I will bring upon them the waters of the river, even the king of Assyria and all his glory, and he shall come up over all his channels and go over all his banks"*. That is always the fate of the people that turns away from the Lord's guidance and leading and permits itself to be dazzled by the more spectacular attraction of worldly things and methods. Doubtless the scientifically arranged canals of Assyria were technically much more efficient in watering the land than that quietly flowing underground stream emerging from the rocky hillside outside Jerusalem, but those canals could only be kept in operation by a prodigious amount of labour, and when the labour failed, as all human effort and organisation must eventually fail, the wonderful channels with their sluice gates and regulators and mechanical contrivances quickly went out of action and the water ceased to flow and the land dried up and became a desert. The stream that was the river of God has always remained full of water and has always made glad the city of God. Jeremiah saw this very clearly, and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit he cried out aloud *"My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water"* (Jer. 2. 13). How often, in the days that have passed since Jeremiah, have God's people repeated that tragic mistake! And it is not as though there had been no warning, no entreaty. *"O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments"* comes the voice of the Most High, regretful, sad, pleading. *"Then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea."* (Isa. 48. 18). Impos-

sible not to see in that eloquent appeal the picture of the waters of Shiloah, flowing softly, quietly, steadily, surely, through their narrow channel, to supply all the needs of the people of God in the holy city. We may enjoy those waters, in a spiritual sense, if we but rely upon them and turn our backs upon the shining waters that have been gathered together and remain held together by the mind and power of man. David in the twenty-third psalm sings of his being led by the Lord beside the still waters, where his soul became restored and where he found the quiet pathways of righteousness. Perhaps he too had followed the course of that crystal stream and seen in it a fit symbol of the Divine sustenance which he knew his soul needed.

This is a great truth, enshrined in this vivid picture. Divine provision for all our needs! The lesson is as necessary to us as it was to Israel after the flesh—perhaps more so, for we live in a day that offers far more in the way of distraction and attraction. There are more theories abroad, more subtle reasonings that tend to turn our minds away from the "truth as it is in Jesus". Especially is it so in this latter day, the day of the world's trouble and world's judgment, when the keenest and brightest of human minds are busy devising plans and schemes to restore the balance of the world without calling upon the aid of God, and the constantly deferred expectations of the "saints" tempt more than a few to give some ear to the alternatives suggested by man. Is that why the forty-sixth Psalm, in the midst of its description of world judgment, reminds us once more of the river of God that will supply all our needs? *"Though the earth be removed . . . though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea . . . though the waters thereof rage and swell . . . though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof . . ."* Yet, for all this . . . *"there is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God."* In the midst of the din and clash of earth's kingdoms, locked in deadly conflict, falling and disintegrating into irretrievable ruin, the waters of Shiloah flow softly still, yielding refreshment and strength to all who continue to put their faith in them. *"In quietness and confidence shall be your strength."*

It is only to be expected that this Divine provision for the people of God should evoke a response of praise to God. That at any rate is the theme of the Psalmist's words in the sixty-fifth psalm. The whole psalm is one of praise. It opens with the well-known words *"Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion; and unto thee shall the vow be performed"* and in verses 9 and 10 the singer seems clearly to have brought the under-

ground "river of God" into the scope of his song, *"Thou visiteth the earth, and waterest it; thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water"*. Now this could be a poetic phrase with no intentional application to any particular river, just a rapturous acknowledgment of the blessings of rain and water wherewith the land could bring forth its increase. On the other hand, the expression "the river of God" is significant, and the phraseology of the next verse does seem to indicate that David had the waters of Shiloah very specially in mind when he composed this noble psalm, *"Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly; thou settlest the furrows thereof."* The word for "furrow" is *geled*, meaning a man-made channel or a mechanical excavation. It is used to describe the aqueducts which were made all over the land to convey the precious water without risking its loss by evaporation. "Settlest" means to descend, to go down, or to deepen. There is the thought here of the life-giving water descending or flowing down an excavation in the course of its beneficent work, an apt description of the stream from the Virgin's Fountain flowing through the underground aqueduct to the Pool of Shiloah. In his joy at the continued providence of God thus manifested David cries *"thou crownest the year with thy goodness . . . the valleys are covered over with corn, they shout for joy, they also sing."* A continuous song of praise is pictured as rising to God from all things in the land, animate and inanimate, because the living water is flowing and does not fail.

In a spiritual sense our lives should be like that. In all our circumstances and in all our activities the background of praise should always be evident. We may not at all times see the river flowing; our ears may not continuously hear the murmur of its waters; the outward evidence of its presence may become for a while hard to discern or appreciate, *but the river is always there*. The waters of Shiloah will never fail, they can never fail, for they come forth from God. And while the waters flow our welfare is assured and we can—and should—continue to give praise to God. Like the sunlit valleys in David's psalm, we can shout for joy; we can also sing!

Isaiah, too, rises to this high plane of praise for the blessings of the river of God, but true to his character he wants to bring all men into the picture and extend his view far beyond the Gospel Age and the Church, into the Messianic Age and the world of men. Neither has he yet finished with those Assyrian canals on which he poured such scorn previously, even though knowing, and declaring, that the great river would triumph temporarily over the river of God insofar as

unfaithful Israel was concerned. But Isaiah knew that the great river would be rolled back and the river of God come into its own again, in due time, and by a bold reversal of imagery he sees the quiet waters of Shiloah expand and increase and invade the territory of the great river and reach, with its life giving waters, all the world.

"Look upon Zion" he cries *"the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams, wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby."* (Isa. 33: 20-21). These "broad rivers and streams" are the ship canals and irrigation channels of Assyria, intersecting the level fields of that almost completely flat country in all directions, used both for agriculture and the transport of men and goods. Shipping of all kinds, from tiny coracles made of wickerwork and covered with bitumen, to boats capable of carrying a hundred tons of goods, crowded those waterways continually, Isaiah looked at all that in the spirit of his mind, then at the quiet little stream bubbling out of the hillside below the Temple, and said, in effect "In that day when Jerusalem is pronounced holy to the Lord, He will cause those quiet waters of Shiloah to become great rivers and canals overspreading all the land and bringing life wheresoever they come. But there will be no ships"; the "galleys with oars" and "gallant ships" were the merchant vessels and the war vessels, for the Assyrians had battleships suited to their day and age; and Isaiah made it plain then and there that the evils of commercialism and militarism will have no place in that new land of living waters which the Lord God is to introduce when the "broken cisterns" of men have passed away.

The waters of Shiloah will not always flow in secret, hidden from sight, disesteemed of men and precious only in the sight of God and those who trust in God. Men will not always look to the shining waters of Assyria for their needs and put their trust in that which is man-made to the ignoring of that which is God-made. The waters of Shiloah will one day flow forth to meet the needs of all the world. It is Ezekiel who makes that so very plain. In his vision of the Millennial Temple he sees waters emerging from underneath the sanctuary, at the south side of the altar, flowing eastward and emerging again under the outer wall at the south side of the east gate. It is an interesting fact that the literal stream that has its source in some undiscovered subterranean recess deep

down below the place where Solomon's Temple stood does emerge below the city wall, half way down the side of the valley, on the south of the Eastern Gate, from thence flowing into the Virgin's Fountain and onward to the Pool of Siloam. Ezekiel's description is really a poetic replica of the stream that actually exists at Jerusalem. It is impossible to avoid the thought that he had that well-known stream in mind when he saw the vision. And he saw it going outward into the country, growing wider and deeper all the time, until at last as a mighty torrent it reached the eastern sea, the Dead Sea, and healed those salt-laden waters so that they too became fresh and pure. *"Everything shall live whither the river cometh"* he said. (Ezek. 47. 9). And as he looked, he saw trees, trees on both sides, growing rapidly and coming to maturity, evergreen trees whose leaves never faded and whose fruit was borne continually. That fruit, he said, was to be for the food of man, and those leaves for medicine, for the healing of the nations, and the source of the

virtue that resided in both fruit and leaves was the river of life in which the trees were rooted, a mighty flood that will encompass all the world and will reach every man, the waters of Shiloah, flowing out from the sanctuary, becoming a river of water of life to which all are invited to come, and of which all are urged to partake. *"The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."* (Rev. 22. 17).

The waters of Shiloah will flow to all eternity, for life can only be sustained by the continuing power of God. Through all the long cycles of the endless ages of glory, man will depend upon God for life and will look to him for life, and that life will come ceaselessly, surely, enduringly, out of the sanctuary where God dwells, and reach to the farthest bounds of his material creation. The waters will never cease, for man himself will never cease to be. In God, the Father of all, men will live, and move, and have their being.

"LET HER BE COVERED"

"Every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head; for that is even all one as if she were shaven. . . . Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? . . . For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head, because of the angels" (1 Cor. 11. 5, 13, 10).

The Apostle Paul was of course not referring to hats, which were not in use by women in his day. He was talking about the long veils, or mantles, with which Eastern women enshrouded themselves when in the open air or in any place of public resort. These veils completely covered the face and head with the exception of the eyes, and it is this complete concealment of the features to which Paul refers. There were two definite reasons for the prohibition, neither of which have any application in this twentieth century. It will be remembered that the Christian church was gaining a footing in a pagan world, and sought to show by the purer and holier lives of its adherents the power which resided in the faith of Jesus Christ. To this end the Apostles were careful to counsel the avoidance of any custom or practice which might bring reproach upon the body of believers.

It was usual for women devotees of paganism to throw off their veils and dishevel their hair when under the stress of strong emotion in their worship. This practice was sometimes carried to extreme lengths, and the woman would relapse into a trance, and exhibit all the symptoms of

demon obsession. The damsel who brought much gain to her masters by soothsaying, and who, meeting Paul and Silas, called out: *"These men be the servants of the Most High God, which show unto us the way of salvation"* (Acts 16. 17) was one such example. It would be in the highest degree undesirable that any suspicion of such practices should rest upon the Christian assemblies, and hence Paul's instruction that the Christian women remain veiled. He said that to be unveiled was equivalent to being shorn or shaved, a reference to the fact that priestesses at the pagan altars usually had their heads shaven; the reputation of these priestesses was such that Paul found it necessary to dispel any impression that the Christians had similar priestesses associated with their worship. In the background hovered the sinister forces of demonism, and it is this fact which explains Paul's allusion to the woman having "power" on her head *"because of the angels"*. He was referring to the fallen angels, the "wicked spirits in high places" of Eph. 6. 12, "angels that sinned" of 2 Pet. 2. 4, whom the Lord himself recognised as demons. It was a Rabbinic belief that the wearing of the veil by a woman was a safeguard against evil spirits, who, as in the days of Genesis 6, still sought to ensnare *"those whom they chose"*. And although Paul should not be understood as necessarily endorsing Rabbinic teaching, it is evident that he perceived a connection between the pagan religion and demoniac

forces and would have no suspicion entertained by any that the Christians had any such association. The word rendered "power" is *exousia*, which means "authority"; Paul's meaning here seems to be that the wearing of the veil by the woman became a sign of her submission to the authority of Christ, and there should be no suspicion on the part of neighbours or strangers that she had any part or lot in the practices for which the pagan women were notorious. Paul's use of the word "power" to denote the veil reveals his familiarity with the Old Testament scriptures, for the Old Testament word for "veil" or "mantle" is *radid*, which comes from the idea of spreading out or prostrating on the ground, hence introducing the idea of submission. In the Old Testament, therefore, the wearing of the veil involved the thought of submission, the woman subject to the authority of her husband, or if unmarried, to her father or the menfolk of her house. In Paul's epistle, this thought is carried to a higher plane, and the veil is made a symbol of submission to Christ,—for woman stands on an equal footing with man "in Christ", where there is neither male nor female, bond or free, Jew nor Greek, but all are one in him.

It is obvious that these pagan considerations have not now applied for many centuries, and that St. Paul's prohibitions in this chapter no longer have any force and should not be invoked as the basis of modern customs. Nevertheless, whilst rejoicing in the liberty which is ours as Christian believers in these things, we need to remember that the spirit of Paul's injunction still holds good. It was to avoid the behaviour of Christian believers and their assemblies falling into disrepute that he, by the leading of the Holy Spirit, established the rule. In our own day we should regard this as still important, and if in some particular assembly the abandonment of a custom which has the sanctity of centuries would lead to misunderstanding and reproach it is our Christian privilege to maintain the tradition, not of necessity but that the faith may not be lightly spoken of. That is not often the case nowadays; it is thirty-one years since the then Archbishop of Canterbury ruled that the wearing of hats or head coverings in church need not be considered obligatory, but it may well be that an explanation of the true reasons for St. Paul's words on the subject would lead some to feel easier in mind on the matter.

A Note on Isa. 52.11.

"Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord" (Isa. 52.11).

The RSV has it "purify yourselves". The injunction was to the exiles returning from Babylon to their homeland, carrying with them the sacred vessels of the Temple to be reinstated in the new Temple they were going to build in Jerusalem. It was necessary that they be clean, upright in God's sight, for they were touching holy things. The simile has often been used in exhortations to purity in Christian living on the part of those who name the name of Christ. God does not use unclean instruments, so runs the theme; those who would serve him must be "purged from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb. 9.14). "Every man that hath this hope purifieth himself" said John (1 Jno. 3.3.).

It has often been suggested that, to the Christian, the "vessels" picture or represent the foundation truths or doctrines of the Faith, especially in a time of enlightenment such as the present end-of-the-Age period, rescued from a time of obscurity and ignorance when these truths were submerged and hidden in a kind of "Babylonish captivity", now revealed and placed in their proper setting before the "Household of Faith". The picture is an apt one, although there is a still greater extent of

meaning that can be attached to the term. The word rendered "vessel" is the Hebrew *kel*; this means, variously, vessel, instrument, jewel, weapon, armour or furniture, (signifying "adornment") and is translated by all these words in the O.T. By extending the same application of the text to all these terms every aspect of the Christian calling can be covered. We are to be clean, to be purified, not only in bearing and holding the truths of the Faith, the "vessels", but also the "jewels", which one might see in what the Apostle calls the "fruit of the Spirit", the facets of Christian character which are developed in us as we follow Christ. So must we be in respect to the "adornment", that outward demeanour and conduct toward our fellows which stamps us as His followers. Likewise, too, in our use of the "instruments" we have, that which is put into our hands wherewith to engage in His service, the facilities and opportunities we have and the talents and possessions with which we serve Him. Neither must we forget the Christian warfare, and the manner in which we adopt and make use of the "armour" and the "weapons" which St. Paul calls the "whole armour of God"; in our offensive warfare and defensive stand we must needs retain the purity, the cleansing, which must certainly be our possession if we are truly the sons of God.



BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

Vol. 51, No. 6

NOV./DEC. 1974

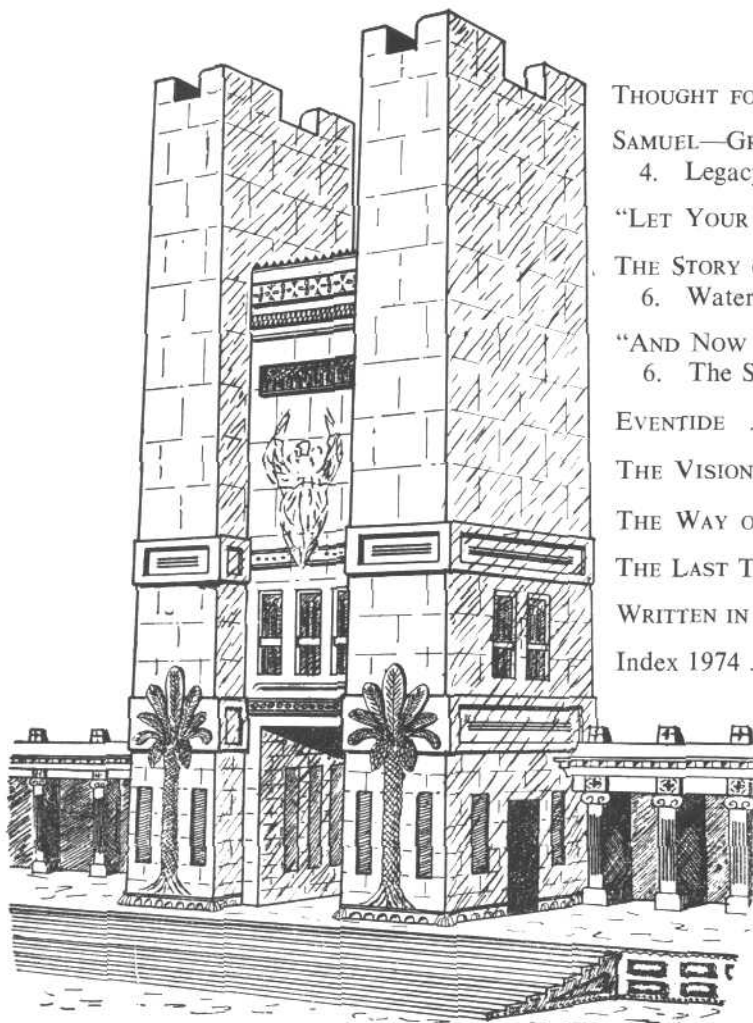
Thou, therefore, endure
hardness as a good
soldier of Jesus Christ

Published November 1st

Next issue January 1st

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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.*

*This Journal is sent free
of charge to all who are
genuinely interested, on
request renewable annually
and is supported by the
voluntary gifts of its readers*

Published by
Bible Fellowship Union
11 Lyncroft Gardens, Hounslow,
Middlesex, England

Bible Study Monthly

FOUNDED 1924

This Journal is published for the promotion of Bible knowledge and the furtherance of the Gospel of the Kingdom, its circulation being largely among independent Bible fellowships and study circles which share in varying degree the viewpoint of the Divine

Plan herein set forth. It is supported entirely by the gifts of well-wishers, and all such gifts are sincerely appreciated. Enquiries are welcomed, and all who are genuinely interested may have the journal sent regularly upon request.

Communications and donations to Bible Fellowship Union, 11 Lyncroft Gardens, Hounslow, Middlesex, England.
Secretary & Treasurer: B. G. DUMONT (Hounslow) Editorial & Publishing: A. O. HUDSON (Welling)

Thought for the Month

"Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shalt gather little in; for the locust shall consume it" (Deut. 28.38)

This was the predicted penalty that Israel would have to pay if they ignored the Divine way of life and chose to follow their own way instead. They did choose their own way, becoming at last under Solomon and some of the succeeding kings a commercially oriented nation of traders which brought them much of the luxuries of this world and destroyed the original national attachment to the land culture and husbandry which gave them their early virility as a people. From tillers of the soil and breeders of cattle they became merchants and traders and builders and artisans, all for monetary profit. They left the villages for the towns, and the land died under them. Isaiah declaimed scornfully against their luxury and material wealth and prophesied the disaster that it would bring them. When Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem at the end he took from the Temple treasures the value of which at to-day's prices is estimated at two hundred million pounds, and left the sacred edifice a smoking ruin.

History ever repeats itself. Today we sow our seed in soil that is increasingly devitalised and polluted and reap the result in constantly decreasing or impoverished harvests. The food that does get grown is taken up by commercial interests and converted, treated, preserved, canned, frozen, packed in cardboard and polythene and coloured tinsel and made subject to all kinds of Government regulations regarding the extent to which harmful additives to conserve flavour and colour and so on may be included, and the resultant product is often a caricature of the original. So

much wasted effort and the end is inferior to the beginning. The business man jets to the other side of the world in six hours or two hours at the expense of a heavy consumption of fuel and energy and once there he has to rest for twenty-four hours before he is sufficiently adjusted to do his business. Great corporations swallow up their competitors and become so big that there are ten administrators to every one who actually does the work for which the corporation exists. Schools in Britain now have a thousand or more pupils and again so much effort is needed to operate the centralised administrative machinery that the personal aspect of the children's education is submerged with consequent repercussions on the efficiency of their instruction.

Mankind was not designed to be big or to do things in a big way. Anthropologists have noted that aboriginal tribes living near to Nature allowed their communities to grow usually to about fifty persons and then "hive off" to start new communities. Not for them the big city with all its problems. Scientists have found—to their surprise and dismay—that the native peasant with one cow and a crude wooden plough produces his food with an energy consumption only one fifth of that demanded by all the intermediaries in up-to-date practice culminating in the modern combine harvester. In a world where sources of energy are at a premium, the big man with all his paraphernalia of large scale production machinery uses five times as much energy to produce a ton of food as does the small man with primitive devices. Perhaps Isaiah "had something" when he foresaw the time when men will build their own houses and live in them, and plant their own vineyards and eat the fruit of them!

SAMUEL, GREATEST OF THE JUDGES

4. Legacy to Posterity

The last days of Samuel were days of disappointment. The man whom he had anointed king over Israel had proved himself unworthy even before he had well taken up the duties of kingship. When the Ammonites threatened the land of Israel (I Sam. 11.) Saul sent to all the tribes calling upon their warriors to rally to his standard and resist the invader. Three hundred thousand men of Israel and thirty thousand men of Judah were at his side almost immediately. It is evident from the story that Saul had not yet fully assumed the reins of power; Samuel was still looked upon as the head of the State, and Saul in his call to arms joined his own name with that of the old judge. *"Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel..."* And Samuel, in his wisdom, called the people, not into immediate conflict with the enemy, but to Gilgal, one of Israel's sacred sites, that he might reason with them concerning their calling and their covenant, pleading with them and beseeching them that despite their great fault in asking God an earthly king, they might still walk before God in his ways and reap the blessings of obedience promised in the covenant. There is something grandly pathetic in this glimpse of the saintly old man, conscious perhaps that this was the last opportunity he would ever have to witness to his God before the people on a national scale, conscious certainly that his own days were numbered and his influence fading fast, pleading with the people that they might remain faithful. *"God forbid"* he exhorted earnestly *"God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and right way"*. And then his mood changed—or was it that he realised a demonstration of the Divine disapproval of the nation's attitude was long overdue—and with vehemence he cried *"Now therefore stand and see this great thing which the Lord will do before your eyes. Is it not wheat harvest today? I will call unto the Lord, and he will send thunder and rain, that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking you a king"*. (I Sam. 12. 17). So Samuel called upon God, and there came thunder and rain, sweeping down upon the standing crops, crushing them to the earth, so that the people were affrighted and stricken with remorse. Here was an enemy their king could not overcome; foreign invaders he would oppose and perhaps

overthrow by his own prowess and that of his followers, but the powers of Nature only God could control. When they asked Samuel for a king like those of the other nations they had forgotten that. And now they came before him with some tardy acknowledgment of their sin. Too late, they relented of their purpose and came to their father in God for help in their dilemma.

It is to Samuel's credit that he did not take advantage of the situation to force a return to the old order. The people had asked for a king and had chosen a king, and now they should have their king. Samuel must have realised that all of this was in higher hands than his own, and that God had a purpose in permitting the institution of the monarchy. Moreover, Saul was now the Lord's anointed; he had been anointed by Samuel at the express command of God. Neither he nor the nation could go back on that now. So Samuel exhorted them to frame their national life within the limits of the new order but always in conformity with the laws of God. *"for"* said he, *"the Lord will not forsake his people for his great Name's sake; because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people"*. A wonderful phrase, that, and one that stands as a beacon light through all Israel's history. No matter to what depths of unbelief and apostasy they have fallen, it is still and will always be true that they are the people of the Lord, that mainly from them is to come at last the nation which will shine forth from Jerusalem and turn the peoples of the earth to righteousness. There will be a remnant fitted for the purpose of the Lord.

Now that is true of spiritual Israel also on the higher plane. The Christian Church has been guilty of many failures, many denials of its Lord. Institutional Christianity has become a byword, and the lives of individual believers often a cause for reproach. But despite all this the purpose of God stands firm, and in his own due time He will have gathered a people, a remnant, from the work of these two thousand years, which will be amply qualified for the spiritual rule of the world, in association with the Lord Jesus Christ in the heavens, throughout the Millennial Age. The Lord will not forsake his people... because it hath pleased the Lord to make them his people. Despite all the failures, all the shortcomings, all the hardness of heart, there will stand revealed at the end

of this Age two companies of "holy ones", one earthly, in the Promised Land, one heavenly, with Christ, in the glory beyond, each ready to take up its own part in the final work of world reconciliation. Samuel must have had faith in some such eventual outcome of God's work when he bade Israel on that day to walk before God in sincerity and truth.

There was not much more for Samuel to do in this life. Saul was beginning to take things into his own hands and at eighty years of age Samuel would not be able to do much to stop him. That faith in the hearts of the people that had kept the Philistine hosts at arm's length during Samuel's judgeship was ebbing away fast now. Saul was engaged in war with the ancient enemy during the greater part of his reign, and although he nominally acknowledged God and rendered due homage to Samuel there was little true religious feeling or piety in his make-up. Eventually the day came when, flushed with his victory over the Amalekites, he ignored the command of Samuel that all their flocks and herds and possessions were to be utterly destroyed, and retained the best of them as spoil. Samuel, learning of all this before he set out to meet Saul after the battle, knew that Divine judgment could not be much longer delayed. In that same night Samuel had heard the voice of the Lord saying to him "It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king; for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments". And it grieved Samuel, and he cried unto the Lord all night. (I Sam. 15. 11).

Did the old man's mind go back seventy years to that night when first he had heard the voice of the Lord, and upon his youthful ears had fallen the dread news of the doom of the house of Eli? What were the thoughts that possessed his mind as now he heard the sentence pronounced again? First it was his teacher who had been dispossessed, and Samuel kept in the favour of God; now it was his pupil who was cast off, and he himself remained. The wheel had turned full circle, the cycle of history had come back to its starting point, and again was Israel without a leader. Once more the full care of the nation before God must fall upon his shoulders. But there was a difference! In that long-since-gone day when Eli had been deposed, he himself had been in the first flush and bloom of youth, with all the zeal and enthusiasm that is characteristic of youth. He had thrown himself into the work of God with all the zest and ardour of his young heart, and had worked—only his God knew how hard he had worked—to restore Israel to God and keep them there. But now he was old; physical and mental powers

were failing. The will to serve was still there; but how could he take up the work of the reformer and the national leader again as he had done those many years ago, and discharge it with the effect that had changed the life of the nation in that day? How could God expect him to bear this new and crushing burden in the evening of his days? Wearily he got up and set out to make his way to where Saul awaited him.

"*Blessed be thou of the Lord*" was the bland greeting with which he was hailed as he came within sight of the jubilant king "*I have performed the commandment of the Lord*". Samuel had loved Saul, even as had all Israel, and he had spent a grief-stricken night with the Lord on the other man's account. But there was no softening nor any indication of his inner feelings in the curt, uncompromising reply that quickly swept the complacent smile from the king's face. "*What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?*" The old man was not going to be trifled with; he had in his younger days seen the dire result of Eli's own easygoing toleration of disregard for Divine laws and he was not going to condone or pass this by even though Saul were to him as a son. Saul immediately realised that the old prophet was in no mood for honeyed words and fair speeches, and hurriedly began to make excuses. He tried to explain that it was the fault of the people, that they had insisted upon keeping the best of the spoil alive "to sacrifice" he said hopefully "unto the Lord thy God", as though to soften Samuel's stern demeanour by a compliment. He might have spared himself the trouble, for the old man brusquely interrupted his labouring words. "*Stay*" said Samuel "*and I will tell thee what the Lord hath said to me this night.*" And Saul had sullenly to listen to the sentence of excommunication which blasted all his hopes and schemes for a dynasty that should sit on the throne of Israel and bear his name through all succeeding generations. It was this happening that gave occasion for words that have been the inspiration for countless disciples throughout all ages since. "*Hath the Lord as great delight*" queried Samuel scornfully, "*in sacrifice and offering as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams!*"

That was the end. Samuel never came to see King Saul again. He retired to his home at Ramah and there he remained, whilst Saul went on hopelessly fighting the Philistines and never getting really free from their yoke. The king who was to have led the forces of Israel out to battle like the kings of other nations never succeeded in making Israel a truly independent kingdom. He never

achieved the resounding victories for which his ardent followers hoped and for which purpose they had clamoured for his appointment. It was Samuel who had given the nation freedom—Samuel, who trusted not in carnal weapons but in the power of the living God, who had pinned his faith not to the prowess of men but to the Covenant of Moses. In rejecting the way of Samuel Israel had rejected the way of peace.

Israel went on fighting, and Samuel mourned for Saul, and for the blighting of a life that had opened with such promise, and for the disasters that must inevitably fall upon Israel. Until, in the fulness of time, there came to his inner consciousness, as it had done so many times in past years, that familiar Voice.

"How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite; for I have provided me a king among his sons".

The aged prophet might have been excused for demurring. His first venture at anointing a king had turned out an arrant failure. Israel was in worse condition than before. What guarantee could there be that this fresh attempt would turn out any better. If Saul got to know about it, he would certainly wreak his vengeance on Samuel. He could expect nothing less than death for treason of that nature. It is clear that Saul was by now king in every sense of the word and Samuel's influence in national affairs was nil. But that was only as man seeth; God had work for him to do yet, work that would bear much fruit in days to come. Samuel demurred no longer but took up his staff and made his way to Bethlehem.

The story of David's anointing is well known. It was the last service that Samuel performed. He handed the torch, all but dropping from his failing fingers, to the fifteen-year-old lad who stood before him, so fresh and lovable in his innocent and vigorous youth. The friendship that sprang up on that memorable day between these two, between whom three generations arched their years, was never broken. In after days, David, fleeing from Saul, came to Samuel at Ramah for protection. He found the old man presiding over a school of the prophets, a national leader no longer, but still in the intensity of his zeal using what remained to him of physical and mental strength in the giving of instruction in the things of God to a few young men who looked up to him as pastor and father.

Could there have been a more fitting close to such a life? From being pre-eminent in affairs of state, one to whom the whole nation looked for guidance and judgment; from being the defender

of his people against their inveterate enemies the Philistines and the means of freedom from those enemies over a lifetime of years; from making and unmaking kings; from all this he had retired into the seclusion of his native village, content to spend his last days in the day-by-day teaching of a handful of young lads.

How many who in these later days have exercised great privilege of service and held prominent position before the Lord's people have found themselves able so gracefully to give place and serve at the end in such unnoticed and humble position, if so be that they might thus still glorify the God in Whose Name they have done all things? The humility of Samuel, as revealed by this final phase of his recorded history, throws a flood of light upon his character, a character that in this respect is worthy of all our emulation.

The King of Israel came on one more occasion, when the madness that was to darken the last years of his life was already gaining its hold upon him. It is a strange account, this story of the three bands of soldiers who went, each in turn, to arrest David at Samuel's Ramah retreat, and how they were overawed and subdued by the environment in which they found themselves, falling down and prophesying with the prophets they found there; and how Saul, impatient at the non-return of his messengers, went himself to Ramah and was himself overtaken by the same prophetic fervour. He fell down and prophesied before Samuel, we are told, and lay until the morning; and then got up and went away. (I Sam. 19. 13-24). To understand this strange passage we must realise that the term "prophesying" included many kinds of emotional orations and it was more than likely that Saul's outburst on this occasion was a more or less incoherent frenzy born partly of baffled rage at his inability to win back Samuel's support and those blessings of God which he had lost by his own selfwill and pride, and partly of his fearful dread, both of David, whom he now knew to be the Lord's anointed, and the ever-present Philistine menace. It is hardly likely that the Holy Spirit spoke in any way through this man whom God had rejected. The momentary excitement over, Saul arose, and for the last time passed out of sight and ken of the one who had placed him upon the throne and established the kingdom under him.

So Samuel breathed his last, an old man and full of days. He died as he had lived, in the company of the Lord's people and in the exercise of devoted ministry. The last sight of which he was conscious, as the failing eye-lids flickered down over the serene eyes, was that of the young men, the sons of the prophets, gathered around

his couch, mute promise of the continuation of his life's work. He rested from his labours, but his works continued. Israel was to pass through strange and troublous times, but the light would break through again and the standard which Samuel had held aloft for nearly a century would

be honoured once more. Many a generation yet to be born was to rise up and bless the name of Samuel, his sterling faithfulness to God and to his fellows echoing down the corridors of time for ever.

THE END

"LET YOUR WOMEN KEEP SILENCE"

"Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak, but to be under obedience, as also saith the law" (1 Cor. 14, 34-35).

The Apostle Paul has a reputation for being hard on the sisters in Christ, arising from his directions here and in 1 Tim. 2, 8-12. Whether the stricture is deserved is another matter; it might well be that the intention behind the words is not fully understood: the Authorised Version does not always convey the precise meaning intended and it has to be borne in mind that the Apostle was directing his remarks to peoples living in a very different Age and under very different social customs than ours and this has to be taken into account when considering the relevance to us of his words.

The importance of these two passages lies in the fact that upon them rests the age-old objection to women ministers in the Church, and, among some smaller but intensely earnest Christian bodies, the absolute prohibition of a female voice in the assembly. It cannot be disputed that if the statements as they appear in the Authorised Version are taken strictly literally, and without reference to the context, this position is abundantly justified. The words are concise and definite, and in the English language bear the meaning which is commonly attributed to them. The increasing tendency to admit women to the Christian ministry nowadays is not due to any denial of these facts, but rather to a growing conviction that whatever the necessity of the Pauline regulations at the time they were laid down, they are not relevant to modern times. The serious Bible student, however, is likely to require some solid basis founded on Scripture for this conclusion before deciding that Paul's words can safely be ignored.

Looking first at the Corinthian passage, the apparent command is that the voice of a woman may not be heard in the church meeting; if any woman desired enlightenment on what was said she must acquire it from her own men folk in the privacy of her home. Now this does not harmonise with the evident fact that Paul did provide for participation in the proceedings by the sisters,

here in Corinth. Chapter 11, 4-13 makes it plain that both men and women did habitually offer prayer and "prophecy", viz., exhort and expound their understanding of Scripture. Paul advises that whereas men in such case should do so with uncovered head—unlike Jews in synagogues, who prayed with heads covered—the women should never thus participate unveiled; they must always be wearing the habitual veil which completely concealed the face and head and covered the shoulders. Again in the 12th chapter Paul talks about the interdependence of the various members of the Christ community, the "Body", without giving any indication that the bestowal of the "gifts of the Spirit" (vss. 4-11) was restricted to the male sex. (The A.V. rendering "every man" in vs. 11 is incorrect; the Greek is "distributing to each as it will" indicating every member of the Body without distinction of sex, nationality or social status.) To confine what is said in this chapter to the men alone is completely to invalidate all that Paul is saying respecting the work of the Holy Spirit.

It should be noted also that women are not the only ones bidden to "keep silence". When in chapter 14, 27-30 a man feels led to speak "in an unknown tongue" but finds there is no interpreter present to translate his words, he also is bidden to "keep silence" and speak only to himself, and to God. Again, when the time comes for informal public prophesying in the meeting, it seems that one who has held the attention of the meeting awhile must "hold his peace" when another shows signs of readiness to say something. In each of these three instances the same Greek expression is used, one that occurs some eleven times in the New Testament and always with the meaning of ceasing to speak, of becoming silent, of quietening down. Typical instances are Acts 21.40 "when there was made a great silence, (Paul) spake...", Acts 15.13 "after they had held their peace, James answered...", Acts 12.17 "beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, (Peter) declared...", and Luke 20.26 "and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace". It seems that in all cases, that of the man with an unknown tongue and no interpreter (vs. 28), that of the prophet having too much to say when another

was waiting his turn (vs. 30), and that of the sisters claiming a greater share of the praying and prophesying than propriety demanded (vs. 34), the same golden rule applied; let them "hold their peace" in deference to the dignity and general profit of the meeting. And so far as the sisters were concerned, anything further that had to be said would be better said at home.

There is also another factor to be considered. The position of a woman in the social structure of ancient Greece was an invidious one. If she was a wife and mother and keeper of the home she remained very much in the background and took no part in public life; when she did appear in public she was, like the Jewish women, closely veiled. An element of Greek society, however, was another class of women who did appear in public, mixed freely with the men, and often attained prominent intellectual or social standards, claiming and exercising a freedom which was denied their more "respectable" sisters. In addition there were the pagan temple "priestesses", women consecrated to one or another of the many gods of Greece, and although their conduct was dictated by the nature of their religion it was completely obnoxious to the Christian community. These undesirable characteristics were more evident in Corinth than in any other Greek city; it is obvious that Paul was at pains to keep the Christian church at Corinth free from any suspicion of connection with such conduct or practices. Hence his warning against any undue exercise of feminine participation in the church service. It might well be that what he had particularly in mind was the ever-present temptation, probably stronger in a woman than a man, to immoderate exercise of the "gift" of speaking in tongues. This may be the true meaning behind his words "it is not permitted unto (women) to speak" "it is an indecent thing for women to speak in the church" (vss. 34 & 35). He had already referred without comment or objection to women praying and prophesying in the assembly (ch. 11.5.); it is notable that chapter 14, which deals exclusively with the subject of speaking in tongues, uses the word "speak" almost solely in that connection. If then Paul is counselling the sisters, who in normal life were rarely, if ever, seen or heard outside their family circle, to judicious use of the privilege of praying or prophesying, but virtually an absolute prohibition of speaking in tongues, the passage may be more easily understood. This "gift" of speaking in tongues, if exercised by a woman, could very easily be identified by the hearers, or by pagan outsiders, with the incoherent and hysterical "prophesyings" of the unveiled and often dishevelled pagan priestesses which formed an

essential part of their behaviour. Paul's instruction that the sisters should not "speak in tongues", and should be veiled when they did speak in prayer or exposition, and perhaps in reading of the Scriptures, would save them, and the entire church, from that loss of good repute which would accrue if their actions were confused with the disreputable behaviour of the priestesses or the *hetaira*, as the "emancipated" women of Greece were called.

In which case, of course, Paul's rule laid down in this passage has no application whatever to the present time since the social and religious conditions which called it forth no longer exist. In a modern assembly meeting where open discussion, reading, prayer or the giving of testimony is proceeding it is fundamentally no more indecent for a woman to stand up and speak than it is for a man. The logical conclusion is that Paul was legislating for a condition peculiar to his own period and that it was not intended to be applied after that condition had ceased to be.

The admonition to Timothy (1 Tim. 2.8-12) treats of a different aspect, the position of women as teachers in the assembly. Here again there is first of all tacit agreement that the sisters did in reality share in some features of the ministry. The men, says Paul, (vs.8) whom he appoints to pray "in every place", in whatever church meeting it may be, are to do so lifting up holy—spiritually clean—hands, in a reverential spirit, not in one of rancour or debate. "In the same way," or "in like manner, the women also," he goes on; this expression indicates that they also are commissioned to pray as do the men and in the same attitude of mind, but, in addition, they are to be modestly and soberly appropriately attired, not flaunting jewellery or other typically feminine adornments, and known for their good works "*which is becoming for women undertaking the worship of God*" (vs. 10. *Diaglott*). There is much here reminiscent of the qualities required of those who were recognised as deaconesses in the church. But here Paul does express one definite prohibition which allows of no compromise. "I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man"—not "the man" as in A.V.—"but to be quiet. For Adam was first formed, then Eve" (vs. 12-13). That last remark affords the clue. No woman is to exercise the prerogatives or duties of an elder or minister in the church in the presence of a man, and that because the one who officiates as elder represents our Lord, the true Teacher. In the Divine order the man speaks on behalf of the woman when standing before God just as Adam was first created and was held responsible for his wife in addition to himself. Writing to the Ephesians (ch. 5. 22-32) Paul explains that the

husband is thus the head of the wife in the same way that Christ is the head of the church and yet not in an oppressive or dominating manner but in the sense that the head and body of any human being is one entity but the head speaks for and represents the whole. So in the assembly, the Church, the one representing Christ the Head, the one exercising, by proxy as it were, the duty of leading and teaching the Church, must be a man, must, in fact, be one whom the Church has already recognised as marked out by the Holy Spirit as fitted thus to lead and teach. In this sense the woman may not "assume authority over the man".

Thus is the dignity of the Church and acknowledgment of Christ its Head preserved. Paul does not say, and there is nothing to suggest that he thought, that a woman is by reason of her sex necessarily unfit to teach. It might have been that the more secluded position of women in Paul's day rendered them not so suited for such a duty as would be the case today but this is not his point. There is no question of inferiority involved. It is the fact, unrealised by men in general at this present, but fully to be understood and implemented in the world that is to be, that man and woman together form a single unit in the sight of

God, and the man is the spokesman. So in the church, the one who stands before the assembly to represent it in God's sight as prayer and praise ascends, and who conveys to it the heavenly instruction which comes from God by his Holy Spirit, must be a man.

As if to show that there are compensations for the denial of this particular form of service to God, the Scripture records the names of many women who were used mightily in the course of God's developing purpose and have become famous for their faith and their works. Miriam, Rahab, Ruth, Deborah, Huldah, Esther, Anna, Dorcas, Lydia, come readily to mind, and there are others. And to the everlasting glory of womanhood, when the men disciples at the trial of Jesus lost their faith, panicked, and dispersed, it was a small knot of women who in those dark days retained their faith and were first at the Tomb on the third day, and were honoured by being the first to know of the Resurrection and the first to see the risen Lord. In the final analysis we shall find that God has used and will use each one of us in that position and for the duty in his creation for which we each are best fitted, without partiality or favour, "*for there is no respect of persons with God*".

On Languages

As illustrating the facility with which new languages can develop, as they must have developed in the early days of Genesis when men began to spread abroad over the face of the earth, it is an interesting fact that in 1893 a wild tribe of some thirty people was discovered in the Wentworth district of New South Wales, Australia, speaking a completely unknown dialect. It was found that this little community had sprung from one "blackfellow" (aboriginal Australian) and a few "gins" (native women) who had gone into hiding in this remote country thirty years previously. The ordinary natives who were with the white men who found this little tribe had considerable difficulty in making themselves understood or in understanding the wild men's speech, although they were of the same race. That separation of thirty years and the growing up of a new generation which had never had contact with the world around had sufficed to create what was virtually a new language, understood only by the thirty or so wild people who spoke it.

It was the scattering of men into remote parts of the earth that gave rise to differences in language; as they migrated into new territories and lost all touch with their former friends, so new words came into use, new methods of speech, diverse

grammatical structures, so that quite soon the speech of men of different tribes became mutually unintelligible. Each succeeding generation added its quota of new and changed terms, and the process has continued from that day to this. A simple illustration will demonstrate the fact. Wycliffe translated the Bible into English only five centuries ago but our language has changed so much since then that we, his countrymen, can read his translation only with difficulty and in some places it is almost unintelligible. Here is an example: "*Whether profeicies schulen be voidid either langigis schulden ceeße*". That is one of the most well-known passages of the Bible—"whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease". Here is a sample from Richard Rolles's translation of the fourteenth century also: "*Faine and glade genge, mare and lesse, for thou demes folke in euennesse*". Who would think, now, that sentence to be English as it was spoken only five centuries ago, for "*O let the nations be glad and sing for joy; for thou shalt judge the people righteously*". (Psa. 67, 4.)? If Wycliffe and Rolles came back from the dead to-day they, likewise, would have the same difficulty in reading our modern translations.

THE STORY OF THE DELUGE

6. Waters above the Firmament

Of all the suggestions which have been put forward to explain the cause of the Flood, the most intriguing is that which has been associated with the system of terrestrial geology known as the "annular hypothesis". Although disputed by some modern geologists, its proponents have assembled so many arguments in its favour that it deserves mention in this connection especially since a number of Biblical allusions become luminous in its light.

The basis of this hypothesis was laid down three centuries ago when geology was in its infancy. Scientists of the day were beginning to understand that the early stages of the earth's formation were characterised by intense heat which melted and vapourised the heaviest rocks and minerals. It was at that time—and until quite recent years—universally believed that the earth commenced its existence as a flaming mass of gas which gradually condensed into the present solid form. For æons of time the whole of the elements of which it is composed were of such extreme heat that they floated in space in the form of a vast mass of vapour. Slowly that vapour cooled until the heavier materials, such as iron and nickel and granite and gold, solidified into a central core which became the nucleus of the earth we now know. Through the ages, more and more of the surrounding vapours cooled and passed into the liquid state, descending in storms of fiery rain upon the heated planet below, often being vapourised again and ascending once more into the skies. But as the tremendous heat of the primitive earth radiated away into space, the central globe began to retain the material which fell upon it from the heavens, and so there emerged the beginnings of the world we know today.

The vast amount of water which forms part of the economy of the earth made it inevitable that long after the heavier metallic and earthy materials had gravitated to the earth's surface, a great deal of water vapour and other light gaseous products remained circling the earth, held there by centrifugal force. Sooner or later these condensed and fell to the earth in a succession of deluges which reached the surface at the poles, where centrifugal force is at the minimum, and swept over the planet towards the Equator.

During this last half-century geologists are increasingly coming round to the idea that the earth did not start as a ball of hot gas; rather, it is thought, it has been "built-up" by the accretion

and coming together of masses of small celestial bodies and miscellaneous material from space, welded into one great mass by the force of gravity. Whichever of the alternative theories is correct, there is little difference in the present respect, since it is admitted that such a mass coming together would generate intense heat by reason of its gravitational attraction and the consequent high pressures involved in the interior so that the vapourising and condensing process would go on just the same.

It seems that the German scientist Gottfried Leibnitz (1646-1716) was first to describe this process, in 1690. "When the outer crust of the earth had cooled down sufficiently to allow the vapours to be condensed, they fell, investing the whole globe", he said. He was followed by French naturalist Jean Lamarck (1744-1829), the man who paved the way for Darwin, who said that the older naturalists prior to him were convinced that some great oceanic flood must have invested the earth long after it became the home of living beings. At about the same time the German scholar Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) was asserting (1750) that the Deluge of the Bible was caused by these waters falling to the earth, so bringing in the scientific thought of his day to corroborate the Bible story. The famous French zoologist, Georges Cuvier (1769-1832), commenting upon the early finds of frozen mammoths in Siberia—a much more commonplace matter a century later—drew attention to the biological evidences—nowadays freely admitted—that these great creatures were frozen solid instantaneously and this pointed to the celestial vapours falling as snows, suddenly. Then in 1886 Prof. Isaac N. Vail (1840-1912) an American, followed these eminent scientists with the publication of *"The Earth's Annular System"* in which the entire subject was exhaustively reviewed. Without necessarily accepting all of Vail's conclusions, it may be taken as reasonably likely that such deluges have occurred in pre-historic times and it is at least possible that the Flood of Noah's day was in fact the last of such.

Says Vail *"During the Igneous age the oceans went to the skies, along with a measureless fund of mineral and metallic vapours, and if we concede these vapours formed into an annular system, and returned during the ages in grand instalments, some of them lingering even down to the age of man, we may explain many things that are dark and perplexing today"*.

It is a remarkable fact that the Bible seems to know a lot about the existence of terrestrial waters high above earth's atmosphere. Without entering upon any discussion at this moment as to how geologic facts only now coming to light could have been known and written in the time of Moses, or earlier, certain statements, mainly in the Genesis story of creation, can be noted as having a bearing on the subject. Genesis states that God created an atmosphere to divide the waters *below* the atmosphere from those *above* it. "God said, let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament. And God called the firmament heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day". (Gen. 1. 6-8). This word "firmament" is *raqia*, which means something expanded or stretched out, and in this connection is an expressive description of the upper atmosphere or the sky. Some modern translators use the term "expanse" which is more fitting. When the Hebrew Old Testament was translated into Latin the Ptolemaic cosmology held sway and the sky was believed to be a solid crystalline sphere encircling the earth, hence the Hebrew *raqia* was rendered by the Latin word *firmamentum*, meaning something solid, and this was carried over into the Authorised Version; in 1611 the Ptolemaic cosmology still held good so no reason existed for change. According to Genesis this "expanse" was something in which birds could fly (Gen. 1. 17); the point here to consider is the definite statement that there were waters both below and above this expanse or atmosphere.

One or two other allusions are relevant. In Psa. 104. 5-9 the Psalmist, speaking of the creation of the earth, says "thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away. They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys into the place which thou hast founded for them. Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over, that they turn not again to cover the earth". That passage is very consistent with the Genesis position of waters above the atmosphere which eventually descended to flood the earth and mingle with the oceans. Again, the Lord, speaking to Job, demands "where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?... who shut in the sea with doors when it burst forth from the womb, when I made clouds its garment, and thick darkness its swaddling band, and prescribed bounds for it, and set bars and doors, and said, Thus far shall you come and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stayed". (Job. 38. 4-11 RSV). It does not take

much thought to see in this a vivid impression of the violent ejection of earth's waters from its surface to stupendous heights where they vapourised and formed a cloud garment around the earth, remaining there until, as it were at God's command, they descended again as the vehicle of his judgment in the days of Noah. It might also well be that St. Peter made reference to this same thing, when, speaking of the antediluvian world, he said "There were heavens from of old, and an earth compacted out of water and amidst water, by the word of God; by which means the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished". (2 Pet. 3. 5-7 RV). It does seem that the Bible writers did take very literally the Genesis implication that in antediluvian times there was water above the atmosphere, and this constituted the immediate cause of the Flood.

Prof. Vail explains that the molten and vapourised substances, including water, ejected to distances of thousands of miles above the primitive earth, developed a rotary motion, keeping them "in orbit", to use a modern term, for immense periods of time. Eventually, however, gravity brought them back to earth, just as it does with modern satellites. By the time man appeared on the earth, he suggests, the only element that still remained in the upper skies was water. This, due to the absence of appreciable atmospheric pressure, could have been in vapour form or, having regard to the excessively low temperature of outer space, minute ice crystals. Too high up to float on the atmosphere as do normal clouds, it was kept aloft by its rotational speed and centrifugal force. As, in the course of ages, that speed decreased, these vapour clouds commenced to decline towards the earth. Coming in contact with the increasingly dense atmosphere of the earth's environment they would tend more and more to "float" and move towards the poles. Thus the temperate and polar regions acquired a kind of "roof" or canopy of frozen vapour and ice crystals which acted as a greenhouse canopy and created a genial and warm climate right up to the Poles. The climax came when the accumulating masses, having lost their centrifugal force, descended on the polar regions bringing with them the intense cold of outer space. Once the process had started it would be accelerated by the forced passage of Polar air to the tropics, where the displaced tropical air ascended into the skies and impelled the remaining vapour clouds to the Poles until the whole had descended to the earth. Giant tidal waves rushed south and north from the Poles, and the rest of the fallen waters remained as ice-caps like those which today are up to two miles deep.

The advocates of this hypothesis are able to urge as evidence the present existence of a number

of physical phenomena, which have long puzzled scientists and which can hardly be explained in any other way. Of these, the most notable is the question of the frozen mammoths and other animals of the Northern Hemisphere—Siberia, Canada, Alaska and the Arctic.

Buried in the permanently frozen soil and ice of Northern Siberia and the islands of the Arctic Ocean lie the bodies of vast numbers of mammoths, woolly rhinoceros, bison, wild horses and other animals in such perfect state of preservation that their flesh, when discovered, has for centuries been used for food by local inhabitants — and many of these species have been extinct for at least five thousand years. A great many scientific expeditions have investigated some of the "finds" during the past two centuries and there is unanimous agreement that Siberia and the Arctic was once a warm and fertile territory in which these beasts lived by the thousand, that a cataclysm of Nature occurred which changed the climate instantaneously to Arctic cold, and that a gigantic flood of water swept over the land, burying everything under many feet of water-borne silt and soil which froze the unfortunate animals to death where they stood. The sudden nature of the catastrophe is evidenced by some animals being found with freshly eaten food—grasses and herbage—still in their mouths. This vegetation has been analysed and found to be of types that will grow only in a temperate and warm climate and in one case to require daily sunlight to grow at all—this from a region where the sun is now below the horizon for several months in the year, and there is a long period of continuous night. (An ice crystal canopy of the kind above described would refract the sun's heat and light as it passed through so that a portion would be diverted from the tropics and a greater amount directed toward the Poles, thus accounting for the more equable and generally genial overall climate; reflection of sunlight from the canopy would lengthen twilight in the tropics and decrease total hours of winter darkness in Polar regions so that something much nearer the normal alternatives of day and night must have been the rule). Again, for the flesh to have been preserved for five thousand years and still be fit for food indicates very rapid freezing; modern food-preserving techniques must effect the process in a few minutes even for the small carcasses of poultry. Experts have decided that these edible mammoths were quick-frozen in a few moments at the fantastically low temperature of nearly 200 degrees (Fahrenheit) below freezing-point, a degree of cold which is quite unknown today anywhere on earth, but consistent with the rapid descent of these "canopy waters" from intensely cold outer space.

It is estimated that at least five million mammoths and a hundred million other animals lie thus frozen and buried in continental Siberia, and an unknown number in the fringing Arctic islands to the north, and in Alaska. The remains are not confined only to the animal world. Countless masses of frozen tree trunks, in some cases in piles up to two hundred feet high, line the Arctic coasts. Somewhere to the north of Siberia there must have been a thickly forested Arctic continent which now lies submerged beneath the icy waters.

The Chinese knew of these frozen mammoths five centuries before Christ and sent expeditions to collect the tusks for the sake of the ivory. They are mentioned in the National History of the first Manchu emperor, Kang-Si, about AD. 670. A Chinese work of the twelfth century spoke of the growing trade and European travellers in the 17th and 18th centuries indicate that exports were reaching London and the supply seemed inexhaustible. An emissary of the Russian Tsar Peter I, in an account of his official mission to an Emperor of China in 1704, said "*the Siberian Russians think the mammoth is like an elephant except that the tusks are more curved. They believe that elephants existed in these parts before the Flood, when the atmosphere must have been warmer, and that in the Deluge their drowned carcasses were washed under the earth. After the Flood the air became cold instead of warm so that from that time the bodies lay frozen in the ground*".

In the late 19th century, Sir Henry Howorth, in "*The Mammoth and the Flood*" said "*A very great cataclysm overwhelmed a large part of the earth's surface. A vast flood buried great numbers of animals under beds of loam and gravel and there was a sudden change in the climate in regions like Siberia and Alaska*".

Various indications go to show that this great Flood from the north reached as far south as about Lat. 50N, roughly the latitude of the English Channel, and that in South-western Siberia, due perhaps to the low level of the land, at some points below present sea level, it extended still farther south and created a vast inland sea, some two thousand miles long by a thousand wide, from the Caucasus eastward. Today the Caspian and Aral Seas and Lakes Balkash and Baikal are the only remains of this "Sarmatian Ocean", as it has been called, but much of it was still in existence so late as the seventh century of the Christian era.

Considerable light was thrown on all this by the American geologist G. F. Wright who some seventy years ago carried out protracted on-the-spot investigations into glacial phenomena throughout Northern Europe, Siberia, and Northern China ("*Asiatic Russia*" 1902). Over much of this area he found evidence of a temporary

submergence of the land by water, especially in Siberia where, he says, the Arctic Ocean reached to the base of the Tibetan mountains, being between two and three thousand feet deep in places; this he attributed to a rapid sinking of the land due to the weight of the water, and that since the disappearance of this inland sea in modern times the land has returned to its former level.

A similar deluge must have cascaded over the South Pole and spread northward, but in this case the impact was different. Whereas the North Pole is surrounded by the Asiatic and American continents, over one seventh of their area being supposed to have been inundated by the northern Flood, there is nothing but open sea in every direction from the relatively small Antarctic continent. The nearest land, apart from the tip of South America, is more than three thousand miles from the Pole. The waters would have travelled northwards in a series of gigantic tidal waves, their force gradually lessening as they spread over the globe. Signs of such a flood do exist in South Africa and South America but the chief impact of the southern deluge was on the sea.

If the Valian deluge was in fact the true cause of the Flood, the waters of Noah came from the south. From the South Pole to the entrance of the Persian Gulf is about eight thousand miles and there is nothing but sea all the way. The eastern side of Arabia bordering the Gulf nowhere exceeds a few hundred feet above sea level. The speed of a tidal wave varies according to the depth of the sea bed, and the Arabian Sea is shallow compared with the open ocean so that the velocity of the north-bound waters would have been checked but their height correspondingly increased; such a flood could pass over eastern Arabia and the Gulf and finish its onward progress in the mountain-encircled Iraq plain with its force so much reduced that the waiting Ark could be caught up and floated without being damaged. A continuing inrush of water supplied by the still descending canopy far to the south would raise the water level until, with the absence of any outlet to the north, the depth of water could be several thousand feet. Iraq is surrounded north and east by mountain ranges 12,000 feet high and on the west by a desert rising to 3,000 feet. According to the Genesis story the Flood continued to increase for forty days, remained more or less static

for five months, and then took another seven months to drain away. The water would have been trapped in this land-locked plain and become virtually a quiet inland sea.

This then may have been the cause of the Flood. It is impossible to be dogmatic. Evidences from ancient times, conclusions to be drawn from ancient remains, from relics found in the earth and so on, are almost always capable of several interpretations. The most that can be said is that this explanation accords perhaps better than any other with Scripture. That there were "waters above the firmament" in ancient times we know from Gen. 1.7, and we also know it from the geological record. The Bible says those waters went up above the firmament in the second creative day and that also is confirmed by the geological record. The Bible states that those same waters were those of the Flood and whilst the geological record cannot confirm this it does at least admit the possibility. There are however two indications of interest. Attempts have been made to date the time when the frozen mammoths of Siberia met their end by means of the modern "carbon-14" test which is widely used, since its invention in 1950, to ascertain the age of ancient remains. There has been difficulty in achieving a definite date since the hair and skin submitted to test has not been altogether suitable, but a tentative figure has been secured of about 3,600 B.C. The close agreement of this figure with the Bible Flood date of around 3,300/3,400 B.C. is at least remarkable. The other point concerns the longevity of the antediluvians. The Bible indicates that they enjoyed immensely longer spans of life than have men at any time since. It is beginning to be thought nowadays that one factor affecting length of life is the incidence of cosmic rays reaching the earth's surface. If the Valian hypothesis is correct then the absorption of cosmic rays by the encircling canopy would have been much greater than is the case today and this would tend to longevity.

It might well be, therefore, that of all the suggestions that have been made regarding the natural basis behind the story of the Flood, this particular one best explains those two rather mysterious Bible expressions, "the waters above the firmament" and "the fountains of the great deep".

To be continued

"With the heart" says Paul in Rom. 10. 10 "man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation". Paradoxical as it may seem, it is the head as much as the heart that he is talking about here.

The "word of faith, which we preach" (vs. 8) must be received, not only in the heart (emotionally), but also in the head (intellectually), before the believer can say, intelligently, "Lord, I believe—and I repent".

"AND NOW ABIDETH . . ."

A series of studies
in I Cor. 13

6. The Soil and the Fragrance

In our consideration of the supreme Master-grace each one of its constituent elements has been passed in review, some briefly, others at greater length. It has already been stated that Love is not any of these elements alone, but a synthesised compound, in which each and every element is present in balanced equilibrium. It is this very synthesis that makes Love so hard a thing to define. It is composed of parts each of which has its own special characteristics, but because of its blended and interfused qualities it is not only a greater thing than any of its parts, it is also a different thing. It might be compared with a wheel, complete with all its constituent parts, hub, spokes, felloes and rim, and thus a different and more serviceable thing than any of its parts alone. It has been styled by some "the greatest thing in the world"—the "*summum bonum*" of all things. That is as though it were one of several things—all great, but of which the *Agape* is the greatest. Love is a greater thing than either faith or hope when these things are viewed as parts of our present heritage in Christ; inasmuch as faith and hope are also listed as constituents of the greater thing, it leaves the Master-grace to occupy the whole field alone, without any other of the great things to challenge comparison with it. It thus becomes the only moral good. It becomes not merely the greatest thing, but the altogether incomparable thing—a thing unique. But we must not forget that we are speaking of the perfect thing as seen in God and in our Lord, towards which the followers of our Lord have to grow and mature. It is that dynamic thing which alone of the moral forces of the world is competent and adequate to win an erring world from sin; to acquire that competence the pilgrim on the narrow way has to grow up in stature to full manhood in Christ—a persistent life-long development into a likeness to Christ. In this, the final section of our survey, it is that growth and development which will claim attention.

The quality of Love which must grow and develop in the saint is a sacred dowry from God, given to those who become "joined to" his Son by baptism unto death and resurrection into a new life. It is "shed abroad" by the Holy Spirit as a heavenly gift. It has previously been likened to a spark from the Divine Flame. Let us never forget that it is a gift from God, a sign-token that He has already called and justified us in Christ, and that in this gift He has commenced the process of "glorifying" us, of transforming us into

the image of his Son. In the depths of his intuition and foreknowledge He has adjudged us capable of taking on that image-likeness, which, in other words, means that He is fully satisfied that with his help we can grow up into the full stature of perfect Love, even here this side the veil, needing only our "house from heaven" to replace this present tenement (2 Cor. 5.1-5) to make us spiritually complete and entire.

At an early stage of this discussion Love was compared to a fragrant garden of floral gems. That same thing of beauty and delight will now be used again to illustrate our growth and development into full maturity in Christ. Another thought recalled from former pages is that our knowledge must abide, and constitute the soil out of which our love must grow. It was shown that knowledge, of the right kind, was the antecedent factor behind every motive and every act of our Christian life, and that it is by constant repetition of the gracious act that Love, in its elements, must grow. Tracing this chain of sequences back from the finished product—the matured Christ-like love—Love grows mature out of ten thousand kindly actions, and these from motives just as numerous, and all these motives from our knowledge of his Word and his purposes.

Our knowledge of the Divine Word and its revealed purposes as the antecedent to every motive and every act is as the soil out of which the graces grow. The motive may be likened to the root anchored and tethered to the ground. The act may be likened to the upper growth—the stem, the branch, the leaf and flower. Each floral gem will have its own distinctive shape, but all alike must exhibit form, texture, colour, and aroma. These are the things every horticulturist desires. Perfection in form, intensity of colour, delicacy in texture, and exquisiteness in fragrance is his goal. These qualities can only be achieved when adequate supplies of the right kinds of food, in right proportions, are present in the soil. Lack of these supplies can mar every feature of the plant. Form can grow faulty, colour pallid, texture coarse, and fragrance scant or lacking altogether. These same things are true in the Christian life. The Christian rooted and established in grace has a plenished storehouse of nutritional precepts and promises. From this God-provided source he absorbs and ingests such nutriment and food as he needs. But he must send his rootlets deep into the heavenly soil and take therefrom the moisture and the minerals he

requires. But every plant needs more than root supplies. There will be need for sun and air and rain and cosmic rays. These are of less density than soil, but quite as necessary for growth. Thus the Christian also needs things from heavenly sources, new and varied every day—supplies of *grace from spiritual sources suited to each day and hour*. To implement the succour from the promises and precepts of the Word he needs the sun, the air and rain and ray of Divine Providence to reach him every day. It is from the ingestion of this double store of nutriment that form and colour and texture and aroma must eventuate. Absorption of such nutriment means true development and growth; contrariwise, absorption of little nutriment means imperfect development and stunted growth.

Of course, no plant can provide its own stores of nutriment. That is the cultivator's responsibility. In the Christian life there is no lack on the Cultivator's part. God has promised ample nutriment in his Holy Word, while his daily oversight and Providence are in abundant evidence. But even with these rich supplies available, and with every circumstance overruled for good, a failure to develop may ensue. If our rootlets fail to go down into his precepts and promises, and our leaves to open up to his sun and air and ray, we shall starve, and wilt, and fade away. The Cultivator cannot do this thing for us. Absorption and ingestion dwell in the plant, and must constitute the plant's own contribution to the desired growth and development. It is just the same with us. There can be no growth in Love and Christlike character if there is scant assimilation of the precepts of the Word, or of the influences of the daily Providence. And sometimes, even after sound growth has begun, an alien factor may intrude and mar the development. A canker or a blight, an insect or a spore — intrusive deadly enemies—may appear on the plant, and the plant becomes spoiled thereby. Form, colour, texture and fragrance may all be lost and all its former growth be in vain. Something like this can happen in the Christian life, and lead to the undeveloped believer becoming a castaway.

The child of God, developing in Love, is not just as one single plant—he is as a whole plot of floral gems, amidst which, as we walk its winding path, we now draw nearer to the rose; then to the snow-white lily; next to the musk or the forget-me-not, and by reason of the close proximity inhale its fragrance more easily than all the rest, yet not so strongly as to obscure them altogether. So in the Christian life today it may be long-suffering that may stand out, tomorrow humility, another day courtesy—and perhaps a different element with each passing day. Yet there will always be

the background scent in addition to the outstanding odour. There will always be the remaining elements of Love to support the one under test. The long-suffering is never under strain alone. Nor is the generosity, nor yet the patience ever tested by itself. Actually it is the Love that is being tried and proved, and though the strain may lie more acutely upon this or that the remaining elements will lend support throughout the test. Kindness, humility, faith, hope, will be there to help long-suffering to suffer long.

It is this interfusing and interplay of love's elements that causes God's child to resemble a whole garden in bloom. Today he is as the lily in its stateliness, tomorrow as the honeysuckle in its daintiness, again as the rose in its appealing charm—these and a thousand more—all grown and thrown together into one delightful ensemble; plants for both sun and shade, plants for December and June, each in its season fading the air with its charm, and the whole, withal, as elusive as Love to define.

No illustration can go all the way in the growth and development of likeness to Christ. The plant has no knowledge or perception of its identity. Its existence springs from natural determinations and chemical affinities. But the child of God is aware of his identity. To him, this knowledge is a vital thing, to which everything that attends his growth is an added factor. He knows he was called of God and placed on probation for joint-heirship with Christ. He knows he will receive help from God, if he will take what is offered him. He knows that all those things which are as sun and air and rain and soil and husbandman care, are provided to meet his needs, but such knowledge is unavailing unless there is, in his heart, the determination to grow thereby. He must be determined to absorb and ingest all these things, and by keeping on in this way grow up into that "something" which is at once the sum and substance of them all.

The "Agape" as it is seen in God, is working to a Plan. That same "Agape", transplanted to our hearts, enables us also to work to that Plan. Without its restraining influence amidst this sad world's woes we may be unable to wait till the suffering sinner's lesson has been learned. The very sight of earth's sufferings could predispose us to plunge right in today to seek to ease and heal her many breaking hearts. But that would not be evidence of the "Agape"—it would only be philanthropy! God knows about the world's sufferings, yet, in him, the "Agape" waits its appointed hour. He has seen earth's woes for centuries, yet He has waited, knowing always what is best. We also must learn to bide our time through a whole lifetime's contact with sin and

suffering, though looking forward hopefully to the better day when Love will inaugurate its great campaign for restoring man to health and peace and life.

It is just this ability to wait that differentiates the *Agape* from philanthropy. God purposes to have the lesson of man's contact with sin learned once for all, and is thus prepared to wait until He "is inquired of" (Ezek. 36.37) to do the releasing and restoring work for them. Indeed, He "waits to be gracious" (Isa. 30.18) till the hearts of men have come to know their sense of need. It is when "at their wits end" they call upon him, that He comes to their relief and succour. (Psa. 107.27-30).

But the waiting days are not lost. The dynamic power of the *Agape* is building up a great Redemption potential. Out of the tiny episodes of saintly life a mighty current of love is being built up. Every saintly life, every kindly act, every courteous gesture, every long-suffering groan

uttered in his Name, adds to the voltage of that mighty surge that will sweep unrighteousness away and set men free from sin. Some better day God will throw the switch, and Love will come into its own. It will begin and consummate all that it has long purposed to do. That which is perfect will come, and Love's magnetic sway will draw all the wanderers home to God.

Beloved in the Lord, these are our apprentice days. We are learning the feel and use of the mighty tools that will reshape human hearts and remodel broken lives. We may call them minor graces if we will—we may think of their adorning charm if we will—but combined together into Christ-like wholeness, they constitute the great handiwork of God for time and eternity. Thereby He will make "The Universal Homestead" complete. It is our present privilege to try out our apprentice skill with these potent tools. May God guide our hands and hearts to his praise, both now and forevermore.

The end.

EVENTIDE

*"So he bringeth them
unto their desired haven"*

One facet of the Apostle Paul's many-sided character shows him, like the Man of Sorrows, one acquainted with grief. Beneath the stern and rugged exterior of the untiring zealot and intrepid evangelist lay a heart, tender as a woman's, patient as a nursing mother's. Without the ardent enthusiast's fire, the work entrusted to his care would have chilled and killed his very soul; without the ready tears and burning words, the work would have failed. The convert won at laborious cost must needs be watered and admonished day and night; hence, be the cost to himself what it may, the tender lamb must be guarded and guided to the protection of the heavenly fold.

Citing words descriptive of his sufferings, he nearly came to the laying down of life for some unruly members of the flock, "*.....we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of the affliction we experienced in Asia; for we were so utterly, unbearably crushed that we despaired of life itself... we felt that we had received the sentence of death*". (2 Cor. 1.8-9; New Revised Version—for "we" read "I" throughout this touching passage.)

Of what does Paul speak in this paragraph? Attention to the context discovers an excess of mental strain reacting upon an enfeebled body, producing a state of nervous and physical ill-health bordering on collapse. "We despaired of life itself"—so near had he come to passing out!

"But that", says he, "was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raised the dead; He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and He will deliver us..." The decline had been arrested; the turn for the better begun; now He who had so far intervened would supervise till recovery was complete!

But why had this occurred? What had brought him thus nigh to death? It was the state of the Corinthian Church, the multitude of evils in their midst which had so pressed heart and mind that anxiety on their behalf had led to excessive tension, and had made him ill—very ill indeed!

After Paul's unfruitful attempt to proclaim the truth to the Athenians (Acts. 17. 16-34), he had gone forward to the seaport metropolis of Corinth. The Lord "had many people in this city" and Paul was counselled by his Lord to be not silent, but speak out and be not afraid. (Acts. 18. 15-10). Here he laboured for a year and a half, and gathered together the nucleus of a much-diversified Church, consisting of both Gentile and Jew. Opposing Jews eventually drove him forth and left the infant Church open to attack from without and defection within. Subsequent to his departure an itinerant Jew, Apollos, an eloquent and learned man, mighty in the Scriptures, arrived in Corinth. Disputing with the Jews in public places, he powerfully confuted them

and showed by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. (Acts. 18. 24-28). Apollos thus ingratiated himself into the affections of a part of this Church, and unwittingly lent his name as a rival to that of Paul! Thus faction arose in the little company. Nor was that the only rupture in their midst. A more terrible thing also appeared among them, which was not only reprov'd, but actually tolerated by those in charge. (1 Cor. 5). Brethren were also seeking process of law against brethren, thus exposing to unbelievers' eyes the scandals in their midst. (1 Cor. 6). Drunkenness and other intemperance were vitiating their supposed "agape" (1 Cor. 11), and riotous disorderly scenes marked their public gatherings. (1 Cor. 12.).

On hearing of this state of things, Paul dispatched Timothy on a roundabout journey with Corinth as its final stage. *"I sent Timothy to you, my beloved and faithful child, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every Church"*. (1 Cor. 4. 17.) But before Timothy arrived, Paul learned through certain of the household of Chloe that things were worse than was at first reported to him. Additionally, he had received a letter of enquiry, covering many points of doctrine and practice, from those loyal to his name and person in Corinth (1 Cor. 7.1.), hence Paul wrote again—the first of the two epistles which we have—and sent it by the hand of Stephanas to the Corinthian Church, at the same time sending Titus to visit them, in order to report back to Paul concerning the response of the Church. He had intended following the letter, to complete in person the cleansing work which he hoped his letters and his messengers would initiate, but this he was unable, at any early date, to do.

Of the agony of mind which afflicted him he tells in 2 Cor. 2.12. *"My mind could not rest because I did not find my brother Titus there"*. Of the same intense strain we read again 2 Cor. 2.4. *"I wrote you out of much affliction and anguish*

of heart and with many tears . . ." Unable to rest, he plodded on to Macedonia—to Philippi, perhaps, and to Luke, his kind physician—and there, it seems the strain proved too much, and there for the name of Christ, and the welfare of ungrateful saints, the faithful under-shepherd of the flock collapsed and came nigh unto death.

Was all this anxious care necessary on his part? Could not God look after them without this anxiety unto death on the part of Paul? Ought not Paul to have bidden his restless heart to "rest in the Lord"? Queries of this kind misunderstand the spirit of an under-shepherd's care! Paul could not but be anxious concerning the wayward members of the flock. To have shown himself unconcerned about the state of things in the Corinthian Church would have been proof that the spirit of his Master did not dwell richly in his heart. The more grievous the extent of the suffering in his soul, the greater the measure of Christ-likeness there.

*"Lord, Thou hast here Thy ninety and nine;
Are they not enough for Thee?
But the Shepherd made answer: This sheep of mine
Has wandered away from Me;
And although the road be rough and steep,
I go to the desert to find my sheep"*.

Paul had many faithful sheep beneath his care elsewhere—at Ephesus, at Antioch, at Philippi—and these were resting in the fold; but some were astray at Corinth, and because circumstance claimed his willing feet, he must wait, and pray, and suffer for their sake!

And the consequence, *" . . . the God of all comfort comforted us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted of God"*. Blessed be God! Comforted, to become comforters!

" . . . always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus . . . for we . . . are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake . . . so then death worketh in us, but life in you" (2. Cor. 4. 1-12.). It was a case of Paul putting Paul to death, for his brethren's benefit, that life, and strength might be induced in them. It was the life's-blood of Paul that became the quickener, the energiser of these, his dear brethren in the Lord. When other men might be taking life leisurely,—yea, when many of his brethren were taking life easily, Paul was intensively seeking ways and means of putting himself at the service of these believers, hoping

thereby to produce spiritual energy in his brethren. Persecution might stop some men, but not this seasoned warrior—perplexities might daunt less determined men but not this unconquerable spirit—*"On every side pressed hard, but not hemmed in, without a way, but not without a bye-way; pursued, but not abandoned, thrown down, but not destroyed. At all times the putting to death of Jesus, in our body bearing about."* That is Rotherham's beautiful translation of Paul's intensive words, as he describes what it means for him to serve his Corinthian brethren.

THE VISION OF BALAAM

An early Old Testament prophecy

There is a modern ring about the story of Balak, king of Moab in the days of the Exodus, alarmed at the prospect of the Israelites conquering Canaan and perhaps absorbing his own land and people in the process. The Arab nations manifest a similar fear to-day; in a sense history is repeating itself on the very same territory. Balak tried to avert the threat by hiring Balaam the prophet of Baal-peor on the Euphrates to invoke Divine curses upon the invaders. Instead of concurring, Balaam, somewhat against his own will apparently, found himself obliged to declare the Divine blessing upon this people which had come out of Egyptian slavery, and after the manner of the prophets uttered this mystic saying which has had such an evident fulfilment through the ages. After declaring, from the hill-top and in public, God's intention to bless and prosper Israel and confound her enemies, the prophet of Aram described, in Num. 24. 15-24, his vision of Israel's victories and ultimate triumph. It is noteworthy that all the peoples mentioned in this prophecy are of Semitic race, of the sons of Shem, racially akin to Israel, whereas in Ezekiel 38-39 where the final gathering of nations against Israel which provokes Divine intervention takes place not one Semitic people is included in the list. The triumph of Israel in Balaam's foreview is therefore not quite the same thing as in that of Ezekiel although coming to its climax at much the same time.

The prophet describes himself as hearing the words of God, having knowledge of the Most High, and seeing the vision of the Almighty. The impression evidently intended to be conveyed is that he was in a rapt or ecstatic condition in which he saw a kind of panorama of the lands and peoples he mentioned and a symbolic representation of the emerging power of Israel progressively swallowing them up. There is a central Figure, one who stands as Conqueror and King, who will exalt Israel to its destined position of predominance. But that is to be a long time hence. *"I see him, but not now"* he says *"I behold him, but not nigh;"* (the future tense, in the A.V. is incorrect. It should be present tense; see RSV, NEB and virtually all modern translators. Moffatt has it *"I see them in the future far; I mark them in the days to come"*. Balaam declares that what he sees is not for fulfilment in his time but in the distant future). *"There shall come a Star out of Jacob and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth"* (more properly, sons of tumult—a poetic

name for the Moabites). The sceptre here is the tribal staff, symbol of leadership and kingship. Balaam saw a great king arise in Israel. The rest of the verse shows that it was King David to whom reference was made, for it was David who subdued the Moabites, although they did afterwards recover their independence for a while. The Moabite Stone, (now in the British Museum) states that they were again subdued by Omri of Israel, (circa 800 B.C.), oppressed forty years, and revolted successfully once more under Mesha of Moab. This is confirmed by 2 Kings 1.1 and 3.4-5. They were eventually conquered by John Hyrcanus in 129 B.C. and merged in the Jewish State.

Besides the Sceptre, he saw a Star come out of Jacob. This is something more than a king. Amongst the Semitic and Sumerian peoples of Balaam's native land a star was the symbol of a god and in fact in the written language the word "god" was a representation of a star. In perhaps no better manner could the vision depict Israel's Messiah, descending from heaven to be born as man, of the line of Jacob and David, ascending again into the heavens as Lord of all. So vs 19 *"out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city"* or more accurately, *"the survivors of the fortress"*, picturing the complete dispossession of the kingdoms of this world, despite their resistance, and their supersession by the kingdom of God. As says the Psalmist in the same connection *"he shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth"* (Psa. 72.3.)—world-wide.

"Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly." (vs.18).

The Edomites in their Mount Seir were subdued by David, revolted under Solomon (1. Ki. 11.14), again under Jehoram and made themselves a king (2 Ki. 8.20), defeated Amaziah (2 Ki. 14.7) and Uzziah (2. Ki. 14.22). After this they remained independent until subdued by Hyrcanus in 125 B.C. and merged with the Jewish State. True to the prophecy, they were not destroyed but became a "possession". After Israel's dispersion in A.D. 73 they merged into the general Arabic peoples, their distinctive language perishing.

"Amalek was the first of the nations, but his latter end shall be that he perish for ever" (vs.20).

The Amalekites occupied the "Negev", south of the Dead Sea, at the time of the Exodus. Beside the heavy losses inflicted on them at that time,

Saul, five hundred years later, is said to have "utterly destroyed" them (1 Sam. 15.2), this being confirmed by Josephus (Ant. 6; 7); but David twenty years later (1 Sam. 27) fought what was evidently a survival from that destruction, and the Simeonites in the days of Hezekiah, about 700 B.C., "smote" the remainder (1 Chron. 4.23). After this they drop out of history, thus literally "perishing for ever".

"The Kenite" (Kainite) "*shall be wasted until Asshur shall carry thee away captive*" (vs.22). The Kainites occupied territory to the south of the Promised Land and into Sinai; an offshoot of the nation was headed by Jethro the father-in-law of Moses and part of his tribe, referred to in the O.T. as "Kenites", remained with the Israelites, sharing their fortunes, until the time of the Captivities. The word rendered "wasted" Heb. (Heb. "*baar*") means to dwindle or be consumed. They gradually lessened in number, living with the Israelites, until they shared the latter's fate at the fall of Samaria and were carried away captive into Assyria (Asshur being the native name, Assyria the later Greek form). Racially they were Midianites who shared Israel's fortunes from the Exodus onward, (Jud. 4; 11, 1 Chron. 2; 55; Jer. 35; 2) and after the Captivity never reappeared as a distinct people. (The Kenites of Gen. 15.19 was an earlier and distinct tribe which had no connection.)

The Moabites descended from Lot, Abraham's nephew. Amalek and Edom both came from Esau the son of Jacob and the Kainites from Abraham by his wife Keturah, through Midian. They all therefore were of near kin to the people of Israel.

Up to this point Josephus notes the fulfilment of Balaam's words. He says (Ant. 6; 5) that Balaam "*foretold what calamities would befall the several kings of the nations, and the most eminent cities, some of which were of old not so much as inhabited; which events have come to pass among the several people concerned, both in the foregoing ages, and in this till my own memory, both by sea and by land. From which completion of all these predictions that he made one may easily guess that the rest will have their completion in time.*"

Josephus' comment is fair; every item of Balaam's foreview, spoken at the time of the Exodus, fifteen hundred years before Josephus wrote his history, had come to pass, with the exception of the final prediction expressed in verse 24. The records of history confirm this fact.

Verse 23 marks a change. Again comes the formula as at the beginning in verse 15; "*he took up his parable*", his discourse, as the RSV has it "*and said, Alas, who shall live when God doeth*

this?". Here is the dividing line between the events to be fulfilled during Israel's national existence between the Exodus and the First Advent, and those which have their place at the end of this world-age and the time of the Second Advent. These visions are so remote in time that he wonders "who shall be living when these things happen". "*And ships shall come from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber, and they*" (not "he" as in A.V.) "*also shall perish for ever.*" (vs.24). There is a wealth of significance in this verse. Chittim was the island of Cyprus, lying in the west in the Great Sea, the Mediterranean. The expression "ships of Chittim" meant in general ships of any remote seafaring nation. (Rotherham renders "the coast of the isles"). Ships were to come from the far west, only dimly known beyond Cyprus at that time. "Afflict" is *amah*, to be abased or brought low and the phrase "perish for ever" means to *be lost*, or to *pass away, at the appointed time*. This brings us back to the "latter days", the expression with which Balaam prefaced his foreview, so that the "abasement" of Asshur and Eber is a factor which has its place at the end of this Age, the time of Israel's final restoration and ultimate triumph.

Who or what, then, is meant by Asshur and Eber? Both names are identifiable in Scripture. Asshur was one son, and Eber a great-grandson through another son, of Shem, original progenitor of Israelites and Arabs (hence "Semitic" race). Their descendants formed the two principal divisions of the Semitic race. From Asshur came the Assyrians and other peoples who colonised the northern and eastern parts of the Mesopotamian plain, developing the Akkadian, Assyrian and Babylonian group of languages; these are known as the East Semites. From Eber came the Hebrews, Phoenicians, Syrians and the desert Arabs, colonising the lands bordering the Mediterranean and southward into Arabia; these developed the Hebrew, Arabic, Aramaic and Phoenician languages and are known as the West Semites. From Eber, according to Genesis, came Peleg and Joktan. Peleg is ancestor of Israel and those Arab peoples sprung from the families of Haran, Abraham and Nahor—Moab, Edom and Amalek among them, with the Syrians and the Arabs of northern Arabia, whilst Joktan's descendants colonised southern Arabia. In these few words, therefore, Balaam included virtually all the non-Israel Semitic peoples of this entire area; they are to experience the passing away of their power or kingships in consequence of the coming of ships from the west. The word here is *tsi*, war galleys as distinct from *oniyah*, denoting merchant vessels. The inference is that a hostile force from the western world will come to limit or

nullify the power of the nations represented by Asshur and Eber at the time of the end, thus leaving Israel unscathed in the midst of her Semitic neighbours. The enmity begun by Balak, by the peoples of Moab, Midian and Edom at the time of the Exodus and manifest from time to time in history to the present day is brought to an end by the intervention of the West. This lies in the future; the West is intervening in Middle East affairs now all right, but not with that intention. The West depends so heavily on Middle East oil that they are in no sense acting the role pictured here by Balaam. But conditions may change; that dependence may not endure forever, and before the coming of the final cataclysm which converts the kingdoms of this world to the kingdom of our Lord there may well be a reversal of the economic and therefore political fortunes of the modern successors of Asshur and Eber which may even tend to align them more definitely with their blood-brother Israel in the face of more serious threats from outside. That may explain why, among all the peoples depicted in Ezekiel 38/39 as joining in the final attack upon Israel which precipitates the Divine kingdom upon earth, not one Semitic nation is included.

Of this aspect of the matter and the part played by these Semitic nations—the Arabs—in the final end-of-the-age conflict Balaam says nothing. He is concerned only with the fact of the final triumph of Israel, an instrument in the Lord's hand for the evangelising of the world during the Messianic Age. Perhaps, who knows, Israel's first converts may be from among their fellow-brethren of the sons of Shem. Of one thing, and that thing alone, he is certain, the inviolability of the promise and purpose of God which, made known to him in those early days of the Exodus, was repeated through the lips of Isaiah the golden-tongued nearly a thousand years later; "*I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thee hand and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the nations, to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house . . . No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.*"

THE WAY OF HOLINESS

*A Vision of
long ago*

"And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called 'The way of holiness'; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: 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." (Isa. 35, 8-10).

Isaiah's first book of prophecy closes on this word. His second book, which starts at chapter 40 and continues to the last chapter of the prophecy, was written at a later period in his life and reflects the clear understanding of the Divine Plan which had come to him in consequence of a life-time spent in pondering the ways of God and submitting to the leading of the Holy Spirit. In between these two books, there is a little section (chaps. 36 to 39) of history dealing with the wonderful events of the reign of King Hezekiah—the shadow returning on the sundial, the destruction of Sennacherib's army outside Jerusalem, and so on. These few verses at the end of chapter 35 there-

fore are important; they stand as the climax and sequel to all the visions of judgment and of blessing that occupied the thoughts and the pen of the prophet during the first twenty years or so of his ministry.

It is for that reason we apply this 35th chapter to the Messianic Age and the conditions under which life will then be lived. It is that age to which the prophet has been looking all through his prophecy. Now and again, as in the 11th and 12th and 25th and 32nd chapters, Isaiah breaks out into short, glowing descriptions of the reign of blessing, but in the main his burden is that of the disaster to which human mis-rule will first bring the world, and the retributive judgment which will come upon it in consequence, culminating in the breakdown of this present world order in Armageddon and the swift action of God in setting up his Kingdom in its place that He might bring the blessings of life and happiness to "whomsoever will" of all men. It is not until Isaiah reaches the end of his prophecy here in this 35th chapter that he draws that eloquent pen-picture which because of its appealing beauty has become known as *the Millennial chapter*.

The "Highway of Holiness" is the term that is used to describe the course of mankind in the Age yet to come. It is contrasted with the "Broad Road to Destruction" which is being followed by men in general to-day, and the "Narrow Way" which symbolises the progress made toward the Heavenly Kingdom by the disciples of Christ in this present Gospel Age. The "Highway of Holiness" is the road of the future.

Isaiah, writing under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, evidently had in mind the idea of a straight, level road leading directly up to and into the Holy City, "*whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord*" (Psa. 122. 4). The word itself means a raised-up, built high road as distinct from country lanes or pathways. Our modern arterial roads, driven straight through hills and across valleys, are good illustrations of what Isaiah meant. Along such a high road, pressing forward with all haste, he saw a great company of people, the redeemed of the Lord, travelling towards the Holy City with songs of praise on their lips and everlasting gladness in their faces. Exactly the same picture is given us in the Book of Revelation (21. 17) where the ransomed multitudes of humanity have the opportunity of coming up to the gates of the city and passing inside, leaving behind them for ever all their uncleanness and defilement and sin. That is what Isaiah says: "*the unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those*". It is intended for the unclean, but they will no longer be unclean when they have traversed its length and arrived at the shining portals. The cleansing will be effected as they go forward. It is something like this that is meant by the reference in Rev. 22 to the River of Life proceeding out of the Throne in the City, and "in the midst of the street of it" the Trees of Life, the fruit of which was for food and the leaves "for the healing of the nations". The River comes out from the City to meet men; the Highway goes up into the city to take men there; and the Trees of Life line both Highway and River so that the ransomed peoples might receive healing and life as they progress more and more into the Divine likeness.

In later times, after Isaiah had been gathered to his fathers, there was a magnificent high road

in the great city of Babylon, a road that may even have existed in Isaiah's own time although it attained its greatest splendour under the famous King Nebuchadnezzar in the days of Daniel. It is possible that Isaiah, who seems to have seen much of the future glories of Babylon in prophetic vision, did see something of Nebuchadnezzar's great "Processional Way", the "*Aibur-shabu*" as it was called, as Daniel saw it in reality over a hundred years later. If in fact he did, one can imagine him contrasting that ornate pagan road with the pure holy way crowded with its throng of pilgrims progressing to Zion. Nebuchadnezzar's road, leading from his splendid palace to the mighty Temple of Bel, the god of Babylon, was level and straight, raised up above the streets of the city, a built up causeway just like Isaiah's Highway of Holiness. It was constructed of beautiful white limestone along its centre, with coloured stones on either side, flanked by walls adorned with the carved figures of lions throughout their length, white lions with yellow manes and yellow lions with red manes, on a background of vivid colour. Could that be one reason why Isaiah said of *his* Highway "No lion shall be there?" On the great feast days colourful processions passed along that road of Nebuchadnezzar's, coming out from the palace which Daniel knew so well, through the Gate of the goddess Ishtar, a structure something like our Marble Arch, but much bigger and adorned with six hundred sculptured lions, bulls and dragons, then right across the industrial quarter of the city where perhaps the sad Jewish captives looked on with feelings of revulsion and despair, past the great Tower, whose top seemed to reach unto heaven, one of the tallest of buildings ever erected by man, and so at last into the glittering Temple where Nebuchadnezzar had put the holy vessels from Jerusalem (Dan. 1, 2), where the eight huge bronze serpent-dragons guarded the entry. That was a highway symbolic of the pomp, the materialism and the sin of this world. Of all its pageantry and all its splendour not a vestige now remains—its very site is a ruined and weed-strewn waste, a habitation of jackals and owls. But Isaiah's Highway of Holiness is yet to come. Its glory is one that will endure for ever, and its travellers, pressing on with songs and gladness, will find that it leads them surely and safely home.

We would willingly have others perfect, and yet we amend not our own faults. We would have others severely corrected, and will not be corrected ourselves. The large liberty of others displeaseth us, and yet we will not have our own desires

denied us. We will have others kept under strict laws, but in no sort will ourselves be restrained. And thus it appeareth how seldom we weigh our neighbour in the same balance with ourselves.

Thomas A' Kempis.

THE LAST TRUMP

The Day of Judgment is to be announced to the world by the sound of "Gabriel's Trumpet", the Last Trump! That is still orthodox theology, for little has been done since mediæval times to rationalise this vivid symbol of the manner in which God will apprise the nations that their time of rule—or rather, perhaps, misrule—is ended and He is about to intervene in earth's affairs for the institution of the Age of blessing and of world conversion. It is not yet realised as widely as it should be that the New Testament "Day of Judgment" is not for the purpose solely of passing sentence upon the unregenerate but also, and more importantly, to bring men to a full knowledge of God's ways and purpose and of the salvation that inheres in Christ, and to afford a full and fair opportunity, in the light of full knowledge and ability, to accept or reject Christ and the life that only He can impart. All that is the work of a period, a long period measured against the scale of human history; "Gabriel's Trumpet" will continue sounding throughout its duration and not be silent until all of God's human creatures will have made their free and unfettered choice for good or evil, for life or death.

That the various allusions to the Last Trump in the New Testament are symbols is very generally accepted. This sophisticated Age is hardly likely to be either impressed or terrified by an audible sound from the sky, even if the heavenly messenger should be literally visible up amongst the clouds. The whole thing would be dismissed as a rather ingenious advertising stunt. The Scriptures have something important to tell us about the manner in which the imminence of Divine intervention in earth's affairs will be made known to mankind and this particular symbolic representation is one of the means that the Holy Spirit has chosen.

There are three allusions in the New Testament which are relevant. One, in Rev. 11. 15-19, is detailed and constitutes a clear picture of the entire process covered by the "Last Trump"; the others, in 1 Thess. 4. 16 and 1 Cor. 15. 52, are casual references intended to be understood in the light of the Revelation passage. The whole is based upon the use of the trumpet in Old Testament narratives as the summons to war, the alarm of approach of an enemy, and in a different sphere, to announce the accession of a king. Cases in point are Jud. 3.27, Zeph. 1.16, Joel 2.1 and Jer. 6.1 where the trumpet is both the signal of approach of the enemy and summons to prepare for battle.

Two instances where the accession of a king was made known by the blowing of trumpets are those of Solomon (1 Kings 1.34) and Jehu (2 Kings 9.13). A rather striking usage appears in Isa. 27.13 where the prophet says that in the day of Israel's regathering at the end of the Age "*the great trumpet shall be blown*", and Israel shall return from the countries of their dispersion to serve the Lord in a cleansed and sanctified Jerusalem. It is obvious that this "great trumpet" is synonymous with the "Last Trump" since this regathering is one of the processes that characterises the period with which that Trump deals.

Coming then to Rev. 11.15-19 we have the culmination of a series of historical events symbolised by the preceding six trumpets expressed in the words "*and the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever... and the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them that corrupt the earth... and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail*". All this is a vivid picture of a great commotion upon earth indicative of the final stages of human rule and the supersession of that rule by the incoming Divine government which in many other Scripture connections is associated with the Second Advent of Christ. The mind is inevitably taken back to the prophetic visions of the prophet Daniel. In one of the most striking (Daniel ch. 7) he sees a procession of ferocious wild animals symbolising the successive great empire powers of this world and their coming into judgment before the Most High; their condemnation and destruction is followed by the appearance of the "Son of Man" who, with his saints, establishes an everlasting kingdom upon earth which shall never pass away. Succeeding revelations (chaps. 11 & 12) indicate that the powers of this world do not submit without a struggle but eventually the powers of heaven are victorious and the result is the suppression of all that corrupts the earth and the commencement of the Messianic Age, the purpose of which is to complete the Divine plan for mankind.

All this is not the work of a moment. There is a period of time here envisaged during which the anger of the nations rises to a climax, the world

of man disintegrates, and the invading power of heaven becomes more and more evident in the sequence of events. There are "voices in heaven" which proclaim what is happening, voices of those who see what is coming and proclaim it abroad, unheeded at first but listened to at the end. Some of those voices were raised as much as a century ago; the seventh trumpet has been sounding since then and will go on sounding until what Paul calls "this present evil world" has utterly passed away and been replaced by the "world to come" in which dwelleth righteousness.

The next most significant allusion is that in 1 Thess. 4.16 descriptive of the Advent; "*the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise*". The trumpet here is associated with resurrection, the resurrection of the Church. This is confirmed by the association of the third allusion, that in 1 Cor. 15.51-52; "*we shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed*". In these references the trumpet becomes the symbol of the summons to the church, faithful Christians of all generations, past and present, to enter into full union with their Lord in the celestial world through the gate of resurrection. None would take this literally; no trumpet blast can wake the dead; the resurrection and the "change" of the church to celestial conditions is effected by Divine power exerted in the realm of the spirit and there can be no outward evidence of this event in the sight of men upon earth. Nevertheless the trumpet that has been sounding throughout this "End of the Age" period is also an indication that at some time during the sequence of events which comprise the period this great happening takes place; and before the end of that sounding. The same trumpet announces the revelation of the Lord from heaven accompanied by his saints in glorious manifestation (Matt. 13.43) and that must obviously follow the stage in this period that witnesses their resurrection to celestial conditions.

The general picture in all this symbolism is that the seventh trumpet announces and heralds the Advent of our Lord as earth's new king and draws attention to the various aspects of that Advent. This is no sudden single catastrophic event in which He appears instantaneously in all the glory of his regal authority and the powers of earth immediately submit to him. His coming is a pro-

gressive one, running parallel with the continuing disintegration of earthly power and marked by the emergence of those factors which are to constitute the salient features of his kingdom when it is established in power and universally accepted. These are the signs of his *parousia*, his presence, in whatever form that presence has reality—and we do not really know what that form is since it belongs to the world of the spirit and not that of the flesh. The worsening strife and tumult amongst the nations and the increasing inability of ordered government to arrest the forces making for disorder and disruption is one sign. The tottering financial and economic structure, threatening more and more an imminent collapse with all that means for world disaster, is another. The nuclear threat, the more menacing as its possession passes into the hands of younger and more irresponsible powers, is another. World pollution, ever approaching nearer to the point of no return, is another. On the other side of the canvas, the very evident realisation of the prophetic programme in the restoration of the earthly covenant people, Israel, to the land which is to be the focal point of Divine government upon earth, is another, as is the tremendous increase of knowledge and enlightenment both upon the purposes and laws and character of God which has come as a result of Christian Bible study and evangelical effort for more than a century past, and the equally remarkable progress in the understanding of Nature and Nature's processes over the same period which is laying the foundation for man's intelligent use of the earth's resources for his daily life in the Age to come. All this, and somewhere within this same period, the most momentous event of all, even though hidden from human perception, the resurrection of the "dead in Christ" and the change to celestial conditions of those who at this time are "alive and remain", preparatory to their joint union with Christ and association with him in the coming kingdom. This is why many thoughtful Christians, not confined to any one denomination, have seen and proclaimed, from the middle of last century onwards, that we are now living "in the days of the Son of Man", that, in a manner beyond our capacity to define or visualise in concrete terms, we have already entered into the initial stages of his Second Advent, stages that will become more and more influential in the earth until, as Isaiah predicted, "*he shall not fail or be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law*". All these things are elements in the sounding of the Last Trump.

WRITTEN IN THE BOOK

Comments on
Bible criticism

This page discusses points cited by modern scholarship apparently impugning the veracity of Bible history or miracle.

If the book of Genesis is to be taken as literal history how did Noah, when releasing his pairs of all animals after the Flood, prevent the carnivorous animals from eating up their natural prey and so vitiating the purpose of re-populating the earth with these species?

The short answer to this is that there is every reason to think that Noah did not take any carnivorous animals into the Ark. Popular belief has always pictured lions and tigers and so on as participating in the voyage but close examination of the Genesis text does not bear this out. There are distinct and separate Hebrew terms for predatory and non-predatory animals. Domestic cattle, sheep, etc. are almost invariably from *tson*, *migneh* or *behemah*, the latter word also applying to wild grazing animals, and in the A.V. these words are normally rendered "cattle" or "beast" the latter word without further qualification. Predatory animals are always referred to as "beast of the field", "beast of the earth", "beast of the forest", "wild beast" or "evil beast", in all but a few cases from "*chaiyah*" which means "living creature". In about a dozen instances "beast" appears without any qualification and in such cases refers to a grazing animal.

Seven times in the Flood narrative is reference made to the animals taken into the Ark and in no instance are the terms for predatory animals used. "Cattle" and "beast" from *behemah*, "beast" and "living thing" from *chaiyah*, "creeping things" from *remes*—this refers to small ground animals such as the rodents, lizards, tortoise, chameleon, etc.—and, of course, the birds; no predators.

As soon as Noah was out of the Ark (chapter 9) the predators appear. The fear of man is to be upon every "beast of the earth" (vs.2). God makes a covenant of peace with Noah, his sons, and all living creatures including the "beasts of the earth" (vs. 10). The covenant, says God, is "with every living creature that is with you" (i.e. in this new world into which Noah had now entered) "*FROM* all that go out of the Ark *TO* every beast of the earth". That indicates pretty plainly that the beasts of the earth were not included among those that came out of the Ark; the covenant was to extend over the whole animal creation, from those that were in the Ark to those that were outside it.

It is generally accepted nowadays that the Flood was not universal; only part of the earth's surface was submerged. So far as Noah was concerned all the evidence is that the extensive plain which is now Iraq was under deep water but the mountainous districts to the east and north—Persia and Armenia—remained above water, and here there would be plenty of predatory animals to survive the disaster. An incidental consequence would be that many years—perhaps centuries—must have elapsed before such animals spread into the plain—which is some five hundred miles long by three hundred wide—thus allowing ample time for the necessarily small collection saved in the Ark to multiply and populate this region before their enemies began to take their toll of them. And, of course, without flesh-eating animals on board, Father Noah's food storage problems would be considerably lessened.

* * * *

Doubt is sometimes expressed as to the reliability of the genealogical tables of our Lord's ancestry preserved by Matthew and Luke on the grounds that over certain periods the number of names is so great as to demand sons being born to their fathers at an unreasonably early age. During the period between Solomon and Josiah, for example, there were sixteen kings which averages 20 years per generation; over the same period Mary's descent from Nathan involved eighteen progenitors which averages 18 years per generation. For so many men to become fathers at such ages is said to be so unlikely as to be incredible and the account viewed with suspicion accordingly.

It is interesting therefore to note in a recent issue of "*Jerusalem Post*" (23rd April 1974) in an account of the plight of Jews resident in Syria, the following remark:

"Unbearable as their situation is, it might seem less tragic if the population were an aged remnant destined soon to die out. But they are young and prolific with the boys and girls marrying between 15 and 17 and producing 10 children by the time they reach 30."

That national characteristic was evidently the same in those distant days of the monarchy; Matthew and Luke are not so suspect after all. And neither is the still older story of the apparently unbelievable increase of the Israelites in Egypt prior to the Exodus.

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