

BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

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This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.
(Psalm 118. 24)

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BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

FOUNDED 1924

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

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

The Bible Study Monthly is sent free of charge on request to all who are genuinely interested. It should never be sold for money.
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THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

On 1 January 1519, 500 years ago, Zwingli gave the first in a series of sermons in Zurich, Switzerland. He was one of the most prominent reformers of his day. He was driven by his study of the Bible having by that stage a knowledge of the Greek. His sermons were not in the language of the established church but in the local language of German so that the Swiss populace could understand.

Huldrych Zwingli was born on 1 January 1484 the third child of probably ten born of a farming family in a Swiss village. It was soon clear he was by far more clever than his siblings so he was sent to his uncle, a local priest, to learn to read and write. At the age of 10 he was sent to Basle, a university city, to learn Latin grammar and then at the age of 13 to become a novice in a monastery. However his father removed him in order to prepare for a secular career so he was taken back to Basle for further study.

Erasmus (1466-1536) who had published the New Testament in Greek and Latin was a great influence on Zwingli. It was not surprising that Zwingli who knew no Greek decided to teach himself that language in 1510. He could then use the original text that Jerome had translated for the Latin Vulgate version of the Bible. He later decided to learn Hebrew.

Starting from the premise that the Bible is the divinely-inspired Word of God he believed that salvation was through Christ, in the importance of faith; the bread and the wine were symbols; the clergy could marry; that people should be free to eat whatever they chose; prayers were to God alone and not to Mary; or the saints of the established church and certain ceremonies were merely traditions and not requirements of the Bible.

The consequences were felt in Zurich and surrounding areas of the Swiss confederation. The monasteries and nunneries were closed. One abbess even returning her nunnery to the local council. The mass was no longer said from 1525. A simple Easter communion service was instituted to include a reading of the Last Supper. Having opened the floodgates and encouraging the people to read the Bible in their native tongue this led to questioning about whether other things, like infant baptism, were consistent with the Bible, or just adult baptism. Therefore a group labelled Anabaptists arose and one in Zurich was killed for his belief. There was great antagonism with the southern states which were Catholic.

On 11 October, 1531 Zwingli, who had taken up arms to fight the Catholic forces which were approaching, was wounded and died of his injuries. His body was burnt as a heretic and his ashes scattered without respect. Luther was said to remark “They that take the sword shall perish with the sword”.

After his death he was succeeded by Heinrich Bullinger in Zurich. He is not to be confused with the much later British theologian known for the Companion Bible.

What impact did this have in England? In the early days of the English Reformation few cases of heresy appear to be from a Zwinglian belief. Mainly they were cases of Lollard or Lutheran belief. Once the reformation had advanced, according to Bindoff, Zwingli much influenced Cranmer who was a great reader and so the second Prayer Book during the reign of Edward VI appears very close to Zwingli’s thoughts. For example “Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart by faith, with thanksgiving”. From 1548 over 400 Protestant clergy were to come here from that part of central Europe. John Hooper an English Bishop in 1550 had lived with Bullinger and was much

influenced by Zwingli. Zwingli was one of a group of Protestant reformers of that era who had varied influence over the religious viewpoints in England and also in Scotland.



Gaspard de Coligny (1519-1572)

Protestantism had its own story in France. One remarkable man was born on 16 February 1519 into a noble family and became a leader of the Huguenots. He called for religious compromise and tried to promote Huguenot colonies in the Americas.

He was shot in the street in 1572 following the wedding of protestant Henry of Navarre, later Henry IV and Margaret of Valois, the daughter of a king of France and the sister of the then king whose brothers all died without a male heir. He survived but this sparked the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre two days later in which he was killed. About 8,000 Huguenots were killed in eight weeks in France.

In his day Coligny endeavoured to encourage religious toleration for French protestants. At that time he was not successful but history has left the record that his religious beliefs ended his life prematurely.

"I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, ...that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God". (1 Tim. 2. 1-3 ESV)



Liberty. Liberty is a thing you cannot have unless you are willing to give it to others.



Encouragement. A great thing we can give is encouragement.

*Deep Waters and a Bubbling Brook
Harvest Activities*



Magazine content. What is published is believed to have a wide interest, but everything printed may not necessarily be the opinion of the editor and his colleagues.

ARISE AND SHINE

“The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.” (Isa. 9. 2)

As we enter another year it is painfully evident that people are still walking in darkness and dwelling in the land of the shadow of death. The great light which shined in the world when Christ came to earth with His message of hope has not yet penetrated all the recesses of terrestrial night. The world is a larger place than it was two thousand years ago and there is more darkness to be dispelled. The men and women of earlier centuries made more of the light that was shining because they realised their need more than does humanity today. Men are so clever now; so exultant at wresting from Nature her most cherished secrets. They can fly faster than sound, can descend into the depths of the seas; they can transmute (change) the elements and measure the distant stars. Now they hope that the secrets of genetics will enable them to do better than Nature herself in the growth and production of plant life and food. Like Lucifer, they aspire to sit upon the sides of the north and be like the Most High. Poor deluded ones; like the antediluvians in the days of Noah, they know not that they walk in darkness and that the end of their godless ambitions and dreams is at hand.

But are all men like this? By no means! Those who proclaim abroad so blatantly the might and power of man, and decry man's need of God, and deny Him any place in human life, are in the minority. They represent numerically but a tiny fraction of earth's population. The fact that they enjoy control of the world's means of publicity—the press, the radio, the ear of governments, and so on, gives their utterances and pronouncements a semblance of solidity out of all proportion to their true magnitude. The rest of the people are waiting for what they know not. They only know that they walk in darkness and in the shadow of death, and that the light is a long time in coming. It ought not to be so, for although that Great Light moves visibly among men no more, there are many lights, shining by reflection, and they should by now be making some impression, for they have been a long time in the world. Perhaps they do not shine brightly enough, for if the reflecting surface is not kept clean and polished it loses its capacity to reflect. Maybe some of the lights have been put under

bushels and cannot be seen. And some have turned away from the Light and so cannot reflect, for the Light is not reaching them at all.

There was a book published many years ago called “*Efficiency in Hades*”, in which an American production expert, visiting that mythical place of torment, and being conducted round by Lucifer, observed to his guide “It does seem uneconomic to burn all these sinners just to provide illumination for a few elect in Heaven!” whereupon Lucifer re-joined meditatively “Perhaps the elect wouldn’t give a good enough light themselves.” That is the world’s condemnation, not of Christianity but of the failure of Christians. The question ought to be asked: Is it being said of us, as individuals or as a fellowship? It is so fatally easy to become satisfied with our own position before God, our own acceptance of His plans for human well-being, and the prospect of the promised future “reign with Christ”. We forget that the validity of our belief in future things can only be attested by the degree to which we endeavour to practice them now. The very essentials of work in His Kingdom is service for one’s fellows and a constant pointing and leading them to Christ and His way of life. We are failing in our duty and privilege if we do not take good heed of those around us who are submerged in darkness and in the shadow of death and do all that lies within our present power to lift them out of it. Neither is it enough to content ourselves with a vigorous campaign of preaching the coming Kingdom as God’s panacea for all present human ills. True, we are called upon to herald that Kingdom consistently and persistently; but what is the practical use of saying to our starving brother “*Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled*” (James 2. 16) if we give him not those things whereby he may be warmed and filled? The words of James might very well be interpreted here to mean that we who have the knowledge and ability to show how the Kingdom is going to work should not content ourselves with just telling people what it is going to be like when it has come. We should show them what it is like, in our own fellowship and by our attitude toward them and our treatment of them. If we all make a sincere and honest-to-goodness attempt to regulate our own daily life and actions toward each other and toward all, by the principles which we profess to believe are the Divine will, and are to regulate life in the Millennial Age, then we shall do more to shine light into the darkness wherein people walk, and dispel the shadow of death, than has been accomplished by all the academic arguments and philosophical discourses that have been delivered from the time of Origen* until now.

Although that may not alter the Divine timetable for the inauguration of the Kingdom, it will assuredly represent a most substantial contribution to the work of the Kingdom and make the impact of that epoch of justice and righteousness something less of a shock to those who at present understand precious little of either. There is a parable about going out into the highways and byways; without interpreting that injunction too literally, we might do well to think about it a little.

AOH

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Matthew 6. 9-13

*Our Father which art in
heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done
in earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily
bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into
temptation,
but deliver us from evil:
*For thine is the kingdom,
and the power,
and the glory,
for ever.
Amen.*

Luke 11. 2-4

*Our Father which art in
heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done,
as in heaven, so in earth.
Give us day by day our
daily bread.
And forgive us our sins;
for we also forgive every one
that is indebted to us.
And lead us not into
temptation;
but deliver us from evil.*

* Sentence not found in earliest manuscripts



ZECHARIAH, PROPHET OF THE RESTORATION

7. Deputation from Bethel

Two years after the visions the word of the Lord came again to Zechariah, this time in the form of a message to his own generation. The Temple was approaching completion, only two more years and the edifice that had been commenced eighteen years earlier at the return from Babylon was finished and dedicated, and the worship of the God of Israel resumed in his own sanctuary. It was the imminent prospect of this long-looked for consummation which inspired the sending of the deputation from Bethel to Jerusalem and so gave occasion for the happenings that are recorded in chapters 7 and 8.

“Now the people of Bethel had sent Share’zer and Reg’em-mel’ech and their men, to entreat the favour of the LORD...” This is the R.S.V. rendering of ch. 7. 2 and it is the true one. The A.V. has mistaken the word and rendered Bethel “the house of God”, its meaning in Hebrew, without realising that it was the town of Bethel in Samaria that was intended. The import of verses 2 and 3 is that the Jews living in and around Bethel, for so long the centre of idolatrous worship in Israel before the Captivities and now in the Restoration the most important town in the north, had sent a deputation to Jerusalem with an important question. The leaders of the deputation were these two. Sharezer and Regem-melech, who despite their Babylonian names were certainly Jews. The question was whether the priests and prophets at Jerusalem considered it necessary still to observe the day of mourning associated with the burning and destruction of Solomon’s Temple by Nebuchadnezzar on the tenth day of the fifth month some seventy years earlier, now that the new Temple was almost complete. One would have expected the answer to be almost self-evident; why weep for the destruction of God’s sanctuary now that it was rebuilt? It almost seems the questioners were more concerned with ritual observance than realities; they had always observed this day as one of mourning and lamentation, *“these so many years”* they said, and if the ritual so demanded, were prepared to go on doing it even though the situation which called it into being no longer existed. At any rate, the Lord’s reply transmitted through the prophet showed that He was under no illusion. *“When ye fasted and mourned...those seventy years, did ye...fast...to me?”* He demanded. *“Should ye not hear the words which the LORD hath cried by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited*

and in prosperity...” (ch. 7. 5&7). In a few short, sharp words the Lord told them that their mourning was only ceremonial, that they were not really weeping for the desolated Sanctuary and the despite (disrespect) done to God’s glory. They had not listened to the warnings of the prophets in the days of their prosperity, neither were they sincere in their lamentations over the years of adversity, for there was no real remorse or repentance in their hearts. So the first answer from the Lord was a plain and uncompromising intimation that they were not honest in their profession and therefore He was not interested whether they mourned in the fifth month or not.

This was, however, only a first answer. The Lord does not leave his children, even grievously erring children, without guidance and encouragement, and He had a great deal yet to say to these messengers from Bethel. So He expanded his words. As though it might be claimed that the words of the prophets had been forgotten and lost in the troublous times that had for several generations afflicted Israel the Lord gave them a brief resume. *“Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions... oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother”* (ch. 7. 9-10). This was the spirit of the Law, the principles by which, if Israel lived in them, everlasting peace and prosperity would be their portion. But they did not so live, so that at the last there had to be penned the sad, regretful words of 2 Chron. 36. 15-16 *“The LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy”*. So the penalty of the broken Covenant came upon Israel and they were carried into captivity by their enemies. Therefore the words of the old Chronicler were repeated to the messengers from Bethel to Zechariah. *“They refused to hearken”* he said *“and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. They made their hearts as an adamant stone”* (diamond) *“lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent...by the former prophets...Therefore it is come to pass...I scattered them...among all the nations whom they knew not...for they laid the pleasant land desolate”* (ch. 7. 11-14).

Then the Lord turned, and spoke to those messengers in a very different

tone. Gone are the words of reproof for the shortcomings of their fathers and the broken covenant, gone the stern admonition as to their own insincerity and formalism, their own failure to mourn the destruction of the Temple in the spirit of remorse and repentance for the sins which led to that destruction. Chapter 8 strikes a different key, one of hope and confidence for the future, one in which blessing and not judgment is the predominant note. The message was primarily for the people of Zechariah's own day, outlining some of the glories which Israel was shortly to enjoy in her renewed national status, but going on into the far distant future when, in the Kingdom of God, Israel should attain her destiny. It is as though God had cast behind his back all thought of the failures and shortcomings and sins of his people, all the reproofs and the penalties and the rejections, and begun to tell them of his plans for their future in the time of their conversion and reformation.

"I am returned unto Zion" He said "and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth" (ch. 8. 3). This theme has of course recurred from time to time from the very beginning of Zechariah's prophecy and it refers very definitely to the restoration of Israel in her own land in his day and the flowering of national sovereignty which followed. "Let your hands be strong, ye that hear in these days these words by the mouth of the prophets, which were in the day that the foundation of the house of the LORD of hosts was laid, that the temple might be built" (ch. 8. 9). Those prophets were Haggai and Zechariah, the two spiritual leaders of the nation at this critical point in their history. But the Lord is nothing if not up to date. "Before these days" He says "there was no hire for man, nor...beast; neither...peace to him that went out or came in...for I set...every one against his neighbour" (ch. 8. 10). This is a little picture of the dark days before the Restoration, when the people went into captivity and the land lay desolate, and war and tumult was the order of the day. Now those days were past; they had been ordered of the Lord but now He had turned his face toward his people again. "But now I will not be unto the residue of this people as in the former days, saith the LORD of hosts. For the seed shall be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things...so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing...So again have I thought in these days to do well unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah: fear ye not" (ch. 8. 11-15). A crowning description of the peace

and prosperity that was in store for Israel appears in vv. 4-5 *“There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof”*.

All this was fulfilled in the resurgence of the Jewish State during the centuries intervening between Zechariah and Christ. These words were uttered in the fourth year of Darius of Persia, 518 B.C. The Temple was completed and dedicated two years later. A considerable Jewish population had returned from Babylon during the preceding twenty years and much of Judea and Samaria was being re-colonised by Jews. During the times of Zechariah and Zerubbabel, and later on of Ezra and Nehemiah, and finally the prophet Malachi, a period of nearly a century, the people were relatively prosperous and enjoyed peace and safety. There were times of backsliding from their allegiance to God but they always returned. Another century of relative peace under Persian rule passed, and then came Alexander the Greek and the end of the Persian empire. But Alexander favoured the Jews and for more than yet another century Judea remained untroubled. Only when the development of the Syrian and Egyptian powers brought upon Judea the terrible oppression of Antiochus Epiphanes was the bright picture shadowed, and although after that there was a short lived period of less than a century during which Judea became completely independent, there began a sad series of wars and tumults which culminated in the annexation of Judea by Rome and the end of all national aspirations and all their glory. For some four hundred years they had enjoyed, in measure, the fulfilment of the promises of chapter 8 but it all came to an end because they did not continue to fulfil the conditions upon which that blessedness depended. The terms were clearly laid down. *“These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates: and let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the LORD”* (ch. 8. 16-17). They did observe these injunctions at first, in the days of Zechariah, when the Temple was new, and the promises began to be fulfilled accordingly; but they slowly abandoned those high standards as time went on, and the promises progressively failed in consequence. The traditional days of national mourning, the fast of the fourth month, remembering the day that Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem; of the fifth, when the Temple was burnt; of the seventh when Gedaliah, the

governor left behind by Nebuchadnezzar, was slain; and of the tenth, when the siege of the city began, all of these, said the Lord in ch. 8. 19 were now to be “*joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts; therefore love the truth and peace*”. So it was, for a time, but they did not continue in the love of truth and peace, so that once again the land and the city knew siege and battle and murder, and the joy and gladness vanished, and the people of the Lord failed to receive the promises, because they would not believe. Once more the fulfilment of the Divine promise had to be postponed because of continued unfitness on the part of those who were destined to be the Divine agents in the final outworking of that promise. Babylon had not been sufficient after all; Antiochus, the Herods, the Romans, all the oppressors of future days must yet come upon the scene to chasten this people that would not learn, and the full import of the promise be deferred.

The Lord knew that. The last four verses of this chapter enshrine his assurance that the time will surely come when this stiff-necked and hard hearted people will have profited aright by their experiences and been forged in the crucible of trouble into a vessel fitted for his use. “*It shall yet come to pass*” He says “*that there shall come people...saying, Let us go speedily...to seek (the favour of) the LORD of hosts...yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem...In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men...out of all languages of the nations...shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you*” (ch. 8. 20-23). The numeral ten is used in the Bible for an indefinite number and too much emphasis should not be read into its use here. Thus we have the ten virgins and the ten talents in the parables of Jesus; ten women shall bake in the oven as a symbol of scarcity (Lev. 26. 26); Israel proved the Lord “ten times” (Num. 14. 22) and Elkanah considered that he meant more to Hannah as a husband than ten sons could mean (1 Sam. 1. 8). So here we have an indication that people of all nations will come to the Jew for their blessing, “*in that day*”, and this is precisely what Isaiah meant when he said that the mountain of the Lord’s house would be established in the top of the mountains and “*all nations shall flow unto it*” (Isa. 2. 2). These few verses, from 19 to 23, lay down the order in which men will turn to the Lord “at his appearing and his kingdom”. First comes Israel in the land, next Israel from the Dispersion, finally the Gentiles, the nations at large. Perhaps the Douay version gives the most intelligible rendering here.

After saying that the various days of mourning, lamenting the destruction of the Jewish polity (government) by Babylon, shall become “*joy, and gladness, and great solemnities*” the Lord continues “*only love ye truth and peace...until people come, and dwell in many cities, and the inhabitants go one to another, saying: Let us go, and entreat the face of the Lord*” (ch. 8. 19-21). Here surely is depicted the growth of the Holy Nation in the territory of Israel, building the old wastes, raising up the former desolations, repairing the waste cities, the “desolations of many generations” (Isa. 61. 4) coming to realise as they do these things that the hand of the Lord is with them, and in the wonder of that discovery progressively casting off their former unbelief and coming to God in faith and trust. The “many peoples and strong nations” will come next and add their quota to the restoration of the ancient land and nation, until at last the whole world of men begins to take notice of this thing that is happening and to a constantly increasing degree begin to ally themselves with Israel and pay allegiance to Israel’s God. “*It shall be said in that day*” says Isaiah again “*Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and He will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation*” (Isa. 25. 9).

But that wonderful climax will be after the scourge of “Jacob’s Trouble” has come upon the Holy nation and purified it leaving it fine gold. The story of Ezekiel 38 and 39, when the host of “Gog and the land of Magog” descend upon the Holy Land and are met by the powers of Heaven, has first to be enacted. That is not mentioned here in Zech. 8. A vivid and detailed picture of that momentous happening came later to the prophet in his old age and is recorded in Zech. Chapter 14. The Lord’s message here in chapter 8 has to do entirely with the final outcome. At the end of time, when all the captains and the kings have departed, the Lord will find humble and contrite hearts waiting for the inspiring and life-giving touch of his Holy Spirit. In the power and wonder of that great moment the new world will be born, and the old one irrevocably pass away. “*And the Gentiles (nations) shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising*” cried Isaiah (60. 3), the man who saw more of that blessed day than any other prophet. “*Saviours shall come up on mount Zion*” said his successor Obadiah (v.21) “*and the kingdom shall be the LORD’s*”. Not one of us can add anything to that.

(To be continued)

AOH

PRAYER AND THE BIBLE

Part 13

The Adversary of God and His Anointed

Writing to the Corinthians Paul advises them to forgive and comfort an erring brother, that overmuch sorrow should not swallow him up, adding: “Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.” (2 Cor. 2. 6-11) The wiles of the Devil are not unknown to us who give heed to the Lord’s Word, for since the beginning our adversary has not changed his methods of attack. These devices are outlined in the account of the temptation and fall of Adam and Eve (Gen. 3); and a summary of them will be of advantage to all who desire to gain the victory with Christ.

1. Satan hides himself, the better to deceive the unwary. (2 Cor. 11. 14) He did not appear openly when tempting Eve, but hid behind the serpent. (Gen. 3. 1) Very many are not aware of Satan’s existence; but thinking people know that there can be no power apart from personality. The person may be invisible, but his existence is manifested by the influence he exerts. Evil energy is everywhere prevalent; therefore sane philosophical reasoning agrees that there is somewhere an unholy, baleful being of keen mental powers, with whom this iniquity originates. (1 John 3. 8) Unfortunately, because of the inherent weaknesses due to the fall, and the lack of enlightenment, the generality of men are unconscious of the predominance of sin in the world; and they are prone to turn things upside down, and call evil good, and good evil, often not knowing the difference. (Isaiah 5. 20) In the present Age it is only the people of God who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.—Heb. 5. 14

The Word of God speaks plainly of an evil one. Many texts directly name him; and we find passages which indicate him under cover of other names. Ezek. 28. 1-19 tells us of the characteristics of the ruler of Tyrus; verses 1 to 10 speak of him as a prince, and verses 11 to 19 as a king. We perceive in this change of title a hidden reference to Satan as the real ruler, or spiritual king of Tyrus. (See also Isa. 14. 12-15.) If we take the Bible as our guide we will not doubt that the arch enemy of God and His people is an individual, a powerful spirit of great malevolence.

Those who yield to their temptations are not fighting as good soldiers of Christ; and any who play with their temptations leave the way open for a fall. Satan does not flee from such; he takes them captive at his will. (2 Tim. 2. 26; James 4. 7) Some there are who fight their temptations, and overcome them effectually with the wonderful power supplied by God in response to earnest prayer. (Rom. 6. 14; 1 Cor. 9. 27; Col. 3. 5-10) These know by experience that the Bible speaks truth when it declares that our “adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”—1 Pet. 5. 8,9

Though Satan will “roar” at us when, according to the will of God, we *keep our body under and develop acceptable faith and love*, the Scriptures assure us that “he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.” (1 John 5. 18) We are now in the “city of refuge,” and our life is hid with Christ in God. (Col. 3. 1-3; Heb. 6. 18) Satan’s purpose is, if possible, to take out of our heart and mind the peace of God which we have inherited as the reward of our obedient love and faith; and the Lord permits these testings to prove that this peace is real and lasting. (1 Pet. 4. 12-19) The Prophet Isaiah said: “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.” (Isa. 26. 3) It is a peace which passes all understanding; which the world can neither give, nor uproot.—John 14. 27; Phil 4. 6,7

The inspired Apostle declares: “the God of peace shall tread Satan under your feet shortly.” (Rom. 16. 20 margin) If we did know of the existence of Satan as the “god of this world,” how could we overcome him in the name of Jesus? (Rev. 12. 7-11) Therefore the worldly-minded, and the disobedient doubters, have no part or lot in this holy war which is being waged against the evil spiritual rulers in high places by the Holy Nation in Christ’s Name.—1 Pet. 2. 9

2. Satan tries to corrupt our pure minds by suggesting causes for doubt as to the Lord’s love and care for us. This device was successful in Eden, and terrible are the results. The subtle enemy begat doubt in Eve’s mind regarding the love of her Creator in withholding permission to eat of the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” If God loved her, why did he forbid what was so desirable?

Now, doubt of the love of another leads to doubt of the person himself.

And when we doubt we become suspicious. Suspicion naturally gives rise to misunderstanding of motives, although these may be of the best. Because we misapprehend the motives we turn to criticize; and hatred follows criticism without fail unless checked. The sure outcome of unbridled hatred is violence, murder—if not literal then mental. (1 John 3. 15) The tried Christian is apprized of this device of the devil, the antithesis of faith and trust. Experience has taught him the bitterness of doubt; but the remembrance of how the heavenly Father restored his confidence immediately in answer to earnest prayer is a sweet and precious spiritual possession, which he will not relinquish.—Isa. 40. 28-31

3. The Devil is the “father” of lies. (John 8. 44) His greatest lie is that it was unnecessary for Jesus Christ to die as the world’s Saviour. Why? Because he denied the Word of God when he said to Eve: “Ye shall not surely die!” (Contrast Gen. 2. 17 with Gen. 3. 4.) All who fail to comprehend the meaning of the Apostle when he says: “The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6. 23), are easily deceived by this lying device. To maintain that the dead are not dead, but only passed into some continued state or condition of life, is to render meaningless the Scriptural declaration that Christ came in the flesh, and as a perfect man died for all men, that all might have a *resurrection* from the dead. (John 1. 14; Heb. 2. 9,14; 2 John 7) To say that the dead live is a contradiction. This is the “strong delusion” which God permits to come upon those who receive not the truth in the love of it.—2 Thess. 2. 7-12

4. Wrong ambition and pride is another device of the adversary, evidenced at the beginning when he dazzled Eve’s senses with the reward of disobedience: “Ye shall be as gods!” (Gen. 3. 5) Self-exaltation was the cause of Satan’s own overthrow; and it is instructive to note those Scriptures which trace the fall of this great being from the high position of honour he once enjoyed, to his future destruction. In Ezekiel 28. 13-17 we read that Satan, the “anointed cherub that covereth;” was perfect in his ways from the day he was created, till iniquity was found in him. His heart was lifted up when he contemplated his personal beauty; and in his pride he even sought to be like the most High. (Isa. 14. 13,14) Therefore God said he would be cast down; and Jesus exclaimed: “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.” (Luke 10. 18) It appears that this fall was, first, from the freedom of the heavens beyond into the atmosphere of our

earth, there to become the “prince of the power of the air.” (Eph. 2. 2) In Rev. 12. 7-9 he is said to have been “cast...into the earth,” evidently symbolical of a still lower stage in his downward career. He is then bound and “cast into the bottomless pit,” where he is to lie sealed up during the thousand years of Christ’s glorious reign of righteousness (Rev. 20. 1-3); after which, at the termination of a “little season” of liberty, he will be finally “cast into the lake of fire and brimstone,” which is the “second death,” and thus be forever destroyed. (Rev. 20. 7-10; 21. 8) “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.” (1 Pet. 5. 6) In this our supreme example is Jesus.—Phil. 2. 3-11

5. Disobedience to God’s commands is a common device of our enemy. At his instigation Adam and Eve ate that which Jehovah had forbidden. (Gen. 3. 6) Jesus has given us a commandment that we should love one another. (John 15. 12) This is not a recommendation; nor does our Master entreat us; it is a command. Satan suggests very good reasons why, in special cases at all events, we should not render heart obedience.

6. The Apostle says that he knew and was persuaded “that there is nothing unclean of itself”; and that: “To the pure all things are pure.” (Rom. 14. 14; Titus 1. 15) The insinuation of impurity is undoubtedly one of the devil’s devices. He made our first parents wrongly imagine that their unclothed state was shameful. (Gen. 3. 7) God said: “Who told thee that thou wast naked?” There was no occasion for shame if they remained as God had created them. It was Satan’s impure suggestion, successful because the real clothing, that of the pure innocent mind, had been stripped away through the sin of disobeying the Lord’s command. The sin of disobedience had weakened the will, and resistance being now broken Satan’s suggestion gained footing.

The Apostle condemns some of the household of faith for forbidding Church members to marry. (1 Tim. 4. 1-3) Marriage is honourable; but as a matter of judgment he advises the unmarried to remain so if possible, and the married to be as if unmarried. (1 Cor. 7. 26-29, 38) The Lord allows individual judgment; and those who take it upon themselves to forbid marriage do not have his approval, for they evidently imply that, in their opinion, such union between Christians is impure. Suggestions of impurity come from those who have not successfully overcome this device of the evil one; but we who hope to be united with the heavenly

Bridegroom have power to purify ourselves as He is pure.—1 John 3. 2,3

7. “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” (2 Tim. 1. 7) One of the adversary’s devices, and most successful of weapons against the spirit begotten child of God, is fear. The realization of their disobedience made Adam and Eve fear to meet their loving Creator; and they hid themselves.—Gen. 3. 10

Fear may attack us in many ways. Fear of want prevents our hands from doing the Lord’s service. We overcome this by reposing implicit trust in the Lord’s promise that all necessities will be provided when we seek first the Kingdom. (Luke 12. 27-32; Matt. 6. 33) The fear of man brings a snare; but we observe that the fearlessness of Jesus defeated this snare of the evil one. (Prov. 29. 25; Matt. 22. 16) “The righteous are bold as a lion.”—Prov. 28. 1; John 7. 25,26; Acts 4. 13

There are many Scriptures urging all to have godly fear; but we must distinguish between the fear (reverence) which has the approval of God, and the unreasoning fear (terror) which Satan seeks to instil into our hearts. We read that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and wisdom is knowledge applied with judgment. (James 3. 13) The fear instigated by Satan causes panic, which but for the Lord’s grace would overthrow our judgment altogether. Satan will sometimes seize the opportunity, when we are overtaken in a fault, to strike terror into our hearts. His object is to make us imagine we need no longer go to our heavenly Father in prayer, by suggesting that we have committed an unpardonable sin. But while we sorrow greatly over our fault we should not allow it to prey upon our minds, but remember the words of the Apostle: “For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of.” (2 Cor. 7. 9-11) Acknowledging our shortcoming we shall repent and gain the Lord’s forgiveness. We read: “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”—Prov. 28. 13; 1 John 1. 9

The inspired prophet Isaiah says: “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” (Isa. 55. 7; 2 Cor. 8. 9,10) To forsake our thoughts, which are naturally evil, we must substitute for them the thoughts of the Lord; and to

make sure we gain the *Lord's* thoughts, we must "do works meet for repentance." (Acts 26. 20) We know that faith without works is dead. When God perceives our evident sincerity of heart to think and do the right things, he gives us a responsible position in his favour, with grace to hold it. On no account should we give up praying to our heavenly Father in his Son's name, for the more we pray the stronger we become. If we break off communication we cannot get the power; and we require the power supplied by God to enable us to make headway, because the Christian's battle is real. (2 Cor. 4. 7) Ours is a strange warfare; we fight not with guns but with a name—Jesus, our Leader—and by prayer to God. (Eph. 6. 18; Rev. 12. 11) We need not dread our enemies, for the Scriptures promise that: "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength"; and: "The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." (Isa. 30. 15; Psa. 34. 7) "Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread."—Isa. 8. 13

Should we see a fellow-servant labour under fear of the consequences of some shortcoming which, however, we know to be pardonable, we may on request pray to our heavenly Father to relieve our erring and apprehensive brother. (1 John 5. 14-16) This privilege of praying for others, which is the right of the Lord's special representatives, should not be disregarded. (See Gen. 20. 7,17; Num. 21. 7; 1 Sam. 12. 20-25; Job 42. 7-10; Jer. 42; Luke 22. 32; 2 Thess. 3. 1) To be overtaken in a fault is quite different from the kind of sin which merits the second death, and for which, the Scriptures tell us, it is useless to pray. (Heb. 6. 4-8; Heb. 10. 26-31; 2 John 9-11) For such unforgivable wickedness could not be of sudden growth, but must be the outcome of wilful persistence in an evil course which at the first would be intelligently recognized as wrong; and none in close communion with the Lord could fail to discern it.—2 Pet. 2. 10-22; Jude 11-16

The Lord through the inspired Apostle, however, states that he is persuaded better things of us, and things that accompany salvation. (Prov. 24. 15,16; Heb. 6. 9) We are not of those who draw back into perdition, but of those that believe to the saving of the soul. (Heb. 10. 39) Faults are for the most part due to the weaknesses of the flesh, or lack of experience, and are not counted wilful by the heavenly Father. (Psa. 103. 8-14; James 5. 11) Failings are often seized upon by the adversary who, it may be through the mouths of slanderers (Isa. 66. 5), exaggerates their offensive-

ness, and thus leads the child of God into affliction. Satan's object is to discourage us into giving up the warfare by which we overcome him, and serve the Lord; while the Lord permits these trials to come upon his children, not to destroy them, but to burn away the fleshly impediments to their healthy growth as New Creatures. They are blessings in disguise.—Heb. 12. 5-14

To gain the victory we must first put ourselves right with God by prayerful confession and repentance from the heart, after which we may call upon Him to stand by us while, in His Name, we boldly maintain our ground in the presence of our adversaries, knowing that He will put them to confusion who desire our hurt. The substance of our heavenward pleadings is expressed by David: (Psa. 64) "Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer: preserve my (spiritual) life from...the insurrection of the workers of iniquity: who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words: that they may shoot in secret at the perfect...They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search," to see if they can find in their victim's life some justification for their evil and unreasonable surmisings. They are mistaken, for while the Lord's consecrated people were formerly "children of wrath, even as others," (Eph. 2. 3) their sins are blotted out through faith in the atoning blood of Christ; and in accusing them these zealous enemies are really condemning God who justifies the saints. (Isa. 43. 25; 1 Cor. 6. 9-11) Therefore David continues: "God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly they shall be wounded. So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away."—Psalm 64

We submit all such outward contentions to Him who judges righteously (Rom. 12. 19; 1 Pet. 2. 19-23); for as New Creatures in Christ Jesus who hope to bless the poor straitened world in the future, we must prove ourselves worthy of this honour, and hence our present fights are chiefly inward. (1 Cor. 4. 12-14; 9. 26,27; 1 Tim. 6. 11,12; 2 Tim. 4. 7,8) We are instructed to pray for those who persecute us, that we may be called children of the Father in heaven. (Matt. 5. 43-48) Jesus rebuked James and John because they wished for fire to descend and consume the ungracious Samaritans. They then failed to realize that the Son of man came to earth to save men's lives, and not to destroy. (Luke 9. 54-56) But we now understand what is expected of us, and shall earnestly endeavour, with the aid of the Lord, to maintain a loving, kindly disposition of heart even in

the face of the merciless imaginings of our detractors.—1 Pet. 3. 8-18

It is to be noted that the wilful transgressor is not subject to that reverential fear which, like the warning pain in the physical body, acts as a signal to the spiritually-minded when in danger of a grave fault. (Psa. 34. 6-19; 36. 1-4) The habitually unrighteous are latterly given over to dread of a different sort. (Heb. 10. 26-36) It has been well remarked that “Fear is a good watch dog, but a bad master.” Any form of fear taught by deluded men (such as the eternal torment doctrine, one of the “doctrines of devils”—1 Tim. 4. 1; Jer. 7. 31), and which is in violation of Jehovah’s perfect attributes of justice, power, love and wisdom, must be repudiated by all who begin to see the beautiful character of the Almighty. (Isa 29. 13) For the God to whom we pray is not fiendish like the gods of the heathen; and those who preach the “eternal torment” heresy cast dishonour on that Holy Name.

We read that there is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear. (1 John 4. 18) “He that feareth is not made perfect in love”; for effective love is aggressive. In spite of every prejudice against him owing to Satan’s misrepresentations, Jesus when in the flesh steadily pursued his way until he had planted the seeds of truth into this sin-cursed world, and then finally permitted himself to be planted into death in order to lay the foundation (the only possible one) for the great work of winning the world back from Satan’s domination. Nothing can withstand pure love; it is more powerful, more aggressive than any other moral force, because it is fearless.

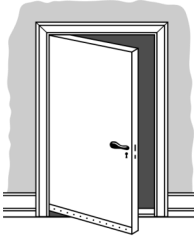
Next time—The Revelation of Contests in the Spirit Realm

ME

JESUS is the VICTORY. He has triumphed over Satan and all his evil forces. In Him we can exult, for the enemy is under our feet. JESUS says... If you do not see the victory in your situation or in history, it is because you do not yet see from My perspective. Enter into My realm with thanksgiving and into My courts with praise, even if through tears. There you will see...

*At the Name of Jesus,
Sarah Hornsby*

“The sting of death is sin, and sin gains its power from the law; but, God be praised, he gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brothers, stand firm and immovable, and work for the Lord always, work without limit, since you know that in the Lord your labour cannot be lost.” (1 Cor. 15. 56-58 NEB)

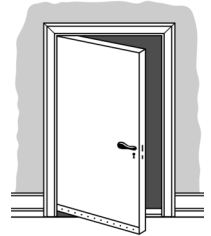
STANDING AT THE PORTAL OF THE OPENING YEAR—A HYMN

STANDING at the portal of the opening year
 Words of comfort meet us, hushing every fear;
 Spoken through the silence by our Father's voice,
 Tender, strong and faithful, making us rejoice.
 Onward, then, and fear not, children of the day;
 For His Word shall never, never pass away.

“I, the Lord, am with thee, be thou not afraid;
 I will help and strengthen, be thou not dismayed.
 Yea, I will uphold thee with Mine own right hand;
 Thou art called and chosen in My sight to stand.”
 Onward, then, and fear not, children of the day;
 For His Word shall never, never pass away.

For the year before us, oh, what rich supplies!
 For the poor and needy, living streams shall rise;
 For the sad and mournful, shall His grace abound;
 For the faint and feeble, perfect strength be found.
 Onward, then, and fear not, children of the day;
 For His Word shall never, never pass away.

He will never fail us, He will not forsake:
 His eternal covenant He will never break;
 Resting on His promise, what have we to fear?
 God is all-sufficient for the coming year.
 Onward, then, and fear not, children of the day;
 For His Word shall never, never pass away.



Frances Ridley Havergal (1836-1879) is one of Victorian Britain's most well-known and prolific hymn writers. This poem was composed on 4th January 1873 in Hastings and was printed in 'Under The Surface' in 1874. She was born in Astley, Worcestershire to an Anglican minister. Other hymns include 'Take my life and let it be' also written in 1874 and 'Like a river glorious is God's perfect peace' written in 1878. She died in the Gower in South Wales.

Here are some scriptures which are reckoned to have inspired her.

Deuteronomy 31. 6-8 Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.

Psalms 41. 10 But thou, O LORD, be merciful unto me, and raise me up.

Isaiah 41. 10 Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

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

Mark 13. 31 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

John 7. 37-38 (NKJV) On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

Hebrews 13. 5-6 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

2 Cor. 1. 20 For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

Hebrews 13. 20-21 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Matthew 6. 34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Common tunes for this hymn are Hermas, St. Alban, St. Gertrude

LOVE—THE BOND OF PERFECTNESS

Love...Such a little word, yet into it is compressed all that God is. The glories that compose His Name, the motivating Spirit of His Mind, the very atmosphere of heaven itself, love is the sum of all that He is. We speak of divine love, and recognize at once the problem of having to share this term with the world where the word means something very different. Divine love is abounding love, and thus defies definition, for to define a thing means to set and describe its bounds, whereas the love of God, the love that God is, is boundless, overflows all human concept.

To walk with God is to walk with divine love. Indeed, as brother John pointed out, our knowing of God, our walking with God, is reliably indexed by the manifestation of the love of God in our life. The fullness of that love is token of the closeness of our walk. The Lord's people are children of His love. He it was who in love previously marked out His family, sowed the seed in your heart and mine, and husbanded and tended it, then patiently, oh so patiently waiting for its full development. This fruitage is so very precious to the Lord, and even now He watches for that full ripening process to reward His patient care. These are they with whom He plans to spend eternity in closest union, with whom He is at home and at rest forever. Before their course is done their preparation must be complete, their love made perfect. Because we delight in Him, we desire that His wondrous design for us be fulfilled, and it is our earnest plea that He will by all means make us the vessels of His love. The index of our progress, the sign of the closeness of our walk with God, is the manifestation of that love abundantly in our lives.

This calls for frequent examination of our own hearts, our attitudes, and our responses to the varied circumstances of life. None of us are there yet. We count not ourselves to have apprehended. We each know there is more to overcome, and we each long for that full mature ripeness of character, the completion of that wondrous work of His Spirit within, the moment when He will look upon His work in me, and say, "It is done. Come up higher." The glory will be His, the Master Craftsman, the Divine Potter, yet there is an important difference between the materials in the hands of craftsman, the work, metal, or clay, or jewel, and the material in our Father's hands. Wood, and all these other things, are inert, incapable of any contribution of its own. Clay does not need to be told to lie still and

let Him mould thee, for it is unable to do otherwise. With us it is so different. What the Lord is making is a character like His own... “after the image of Him that creates us.” Free-wills are involved, and hearts and minds full of living active thought and feeling. He works upon our ways, and brings them into line with His ways, not by outward coercion, but by His spirit within, by the compelling of heavenly love. The work is His. No glory shall we ever claim. But by its very nature it demands that full response of our hearts. Our goal cannot, must not be any lower than that of our Father for us. He wants, He will have, each one of His own made perfect in love.

So this moment as we look within our own hearts, how much of His likeness do we see therein? How ready am I for the perfect day? Do I find it easy to love that dear sweet soul over there, whose ways are so appealing, and who is warm towards me. Of course I do, yet regretfully I must dismiss this as any index of the closeness of my walk with God. Of course He loves the lovable, but He loves the unlovable too. He loves me...loved me even sinner like the rest. The cross stands symbol to the love that is of God. This is a love that counts as precious even the unlovable...Precious! Precious enough to give much for? We will give little or give much according to the preciousness of something to us. Someone has recently paid one million pounds for a Bible. He got it cheap! How much is that Word worth to me? Can I regard as precious someone who is unlovable, ugly, unpleasant to be with? Can I see such a one as a child of God, be he a Christian brother or in the world? Can I see him as he will be when God has finished with him, completed His design? Can I feel now towards him that he is worth much to me, that I would be willing to give much for him...even give my life for him? The cross stands there for me to lift up to its light the love now dwelling in my heart and ask, is this the same? That love of God in Christ, does it now dwell in me?

Sometimes when learning a subject by means of a text-book we may happen to glance at some future page and find a test set at the end of a later lesson. We shake our heads and know we yet must slowly persevere and work our way through many pages yet before we can with any hope attempt that exam, or we would fail the test. Each time we check our progress with that cross maybe we feel the same. Yet that is the goal. That is what Paul meant by being found in Him. It is to that end He has laid hold on us, and to that end have we laid hold on Him. There will be no

getting by with something less than the love of God in Christ...in me. If we have problems with our love, it is no use, no purpose would be served by forcing feeling, putting on a show, politely hiding our true inward thought, to feign to some a love we do not have. It is no easy test. Where human love asks much this love of God asks all. It gives, and gives again, and what it gives bears no relation to the lovableness or otherwise of its object. If it is there, the glory now is His whose work bear such sweet fruitage to His praise. If not, the answer lies in closer walk with God who is the source, the only source of such a love.

Whatever eloquence we lack in speaking of so glorious a theme as heavenly love, it matters not, for this love is not 'talk', but 'walk'. This is that eternal life. To what degree we have the Lord before our eyes, that all enabling grace, the sacrifice of love divine, and love's compelling claim upon our all, so much do we with purpose now lay hold on life eternal. This is that eternal life, which is (1 John 1. 2) "with the Father..." the word is "pro", "towards the face of the Father..." Our angels are always beholding the Father's face, and so does every saint who knows that closer walk. The mind is centred there, the heart's desire to please, delight to share those sacred things so dear to our Father, now made dear to us... As dear children do we wish to walk, and know a Father's smile on all we think and do? For this is holiness, a realm of beauty, in which all those glorious hues of love combine and with each thought, each wish, and every act entwine. It sounds a bit like poetry, brethren! The word 'poem' means a work, and to our minds conveys the thought of aptness of expression to oft describe in so few words so much. It does this, as does the Word of God, by use of imagery, the colour of figure, picture language. Poetic minds have been at work upon our theme of love and we feel help the mind retain in easily remembered lines inspiring thought. "Love is the filling from one's own another's cup." How true those words, and how much they convey of love distinguished from the world's by total selflessness. "Love is a daily laying down and taking up." It is indeed, the constant attitude of heart and mind, not just reserved for meeting time or place. Its living lies in giving. At day's close it counts its gains in terms of what was spent. And in abundant giving, like the Lord's, reveals its source, and finds abounding joy. We speak not of man's silver or his gold. As brother Peter said to that lame man, we have more precious things to give than ought that money could acquire. The Lord's people are so rich. Their wealth, their treasure house above, will not grow less however much

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they give away, but gains with interest every time the talent changes hands. “A choosing of the stony path through each new day, that other feet may tread with ease a smoother way.” That bears a moment’s thought! We see something advantageous to us, a situation...can be anything! At the checkout in the queue with patience waiting while the payment so far ahead is written out and all the bits and pieces cards and notes are signed. Another checkout opens at the side. We rush for it! Or do we say to that dear older soul behind. “You take it dear, no hurry,” though our basket weighs a ton. So many situations are assessed by love divine, and other souls catch something of the light of our dear Father’s smile, Who notes and says “There goes a child of mine.”

“Love is not blind, but looks abroad through other eyes; and asks not ‘Must I give?’ but ‘May I sacrifice?’ Love hides its grief, that other hearts and lips may sing; and burdened walks, that other lives may buoyant wing. Brother/sister, hast thou a love like this within thy soul? `Twill change thy name to saint when thou dost reach thy goal.”

DH

WHY DON'T YOU KNOW?

John 3. 12

Like Nicodemus, in the dark,
Not like Noah—in the ark;
Some cannot see the healing beams
Righteous sunlight—golden streams.

His “shining forth,” do you comprehend?
Do you feel the “bursts” that he does send?
To let us know his rule has come!
Jesus Christ—that precious one.

Where Eagles Gather

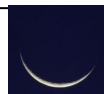


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DAYS, WEEKS, MONTHS AND YEARS



Days

From the start the Bible has given us both a way to describe a day and the terms of it. “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, ‘Let there be light’, and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.” (Gen. 1.1-5 English Standard Version)

The terms are given for the seasons or cycles of a year. “God said, ‘Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.’ And it was so. And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars.” (Gen. 1. 14-16 ESV).

Months

The account of the flood or story of the deluge uses days and months in a year to describe when it began and when it ended. “In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the **second month, on the seventeenth day** of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. And rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights.... The fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained, and the waters receded from the earth continually. At the end of **150 days** the waters had abated, and in the **seventh month, on the seventeenth day** of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat.” (Gen. 7. 11-12, Gen. 8. 2-4 ESV). This shows five months and therefore that each month was 30 days long. This was consistent with the Sumerian Calendar of the years prior to 1500 B.C.

Years

The Julian Calendar introduced by Julius Caesar fixed a year to be 365¼ days. However this was not entirely correct which led to the Gregorian

Calendar of 1582, which showed a solar year was 365 days, 5 hours, 49 minutes and 12 seconds. A solar month is 30 days, 10 hours, 29 minutes and 4.1 seconds.

Lunar Calendar

However the Bible uses the moon to calculate the first month and length of a month. A lunar month is 29 days, 12 hours, 44 minutes and 2.87 seconds. It therefore follows that 12 lunar months are only 354 days, 8 hours, 48 minutes and 34 seconds.

For Israel the phases of the moon were used to set the time of the festivals starting with the Passover and the exact days that certain things had to be done. The Heavenly Father used signs that they could readily use to set the months of the year, such as the Spring Equinox. Therefore the first month of the spiritual year starts with the first new moon. The direction for this was given in Exod. 12. 2 (ESV) when Nisan was allocated the first month of the year “This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you.”

The Spring Equinox is when in springtime in the northern hemisphere night and day are the same length. Pears Encyclopaedia describes the Equinox as when “the sun crosses the plane of earth’s equator”. It occurred with the ripening of the barley and the flax but before the wheat was ripe. Therefore it provided Israel with a clear sign at which to begin the year with the cycle of the moon for the first month. In this way unlike a British calendar with 12 months there would sometimes be thirteen months in a Jewish year which was called an “Intercalary Month”. Just as the Passover on the 14th Nisan, Easter and Greek Easter are calculated using the Lunar Calendar. Knowing this it is easier to understand why these dates vary from year to year. Whereas the Spring Equinox is either the 20th or 21st March each year in the Gregorian Calendar.

Israel was not alone in using this Lunar Calendar. At this time the Babylonians used this type of calendar starting with their month named Nisanu for the first month Nisan. They also called the Jewish month of Tishri, Tashritu and Adar, Addaru and so on.

Day-Year Principle

The book of Daniel used weeks to prophesy when certain events would

take place. It describes the significant Seventy Weeks in Daniel 9. 24-27. “Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a (the) most holy place. Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and (re)build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time. And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed. And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.” (ESV)

It states when the Messiah, the prince, the Anointed one would come and that he would be cut off in the middle of the week. The Hebrew word *shabua* translated week, which is Strong’s word 7620 and literally means ‘sevens’. Counting would begin from the command to restore and build Jerusalem in 454 B.C. and therefore would end in 37 A.D. One thought was that the initial 7 weeks or 49 years represent the time it took to rebuild the city. This uses the day for a year calculation, sometimes described the “Day-Year Principle” described in Numbers 14. 34 and Ezekiel 4. 6.

The same formula is often applied to the 3½ years that are mentioned in the Bible. This occurs in 3 main forms, as follows;

- 1,260 days – Rev. 11. 3; Rev. 12. 6.
- 42 months – Rev. 11. 2; Rev. 13. 5.
- Time, times and a half – Dan 7. 25; Dan. 12. 7; Rev. 12. 14.

Prophetic Year

This works with the idea that a month is 30 days and as 42 multiplied by 30 is 1,260 then a year must be reckoned as 360 days long, a so-called prophetic year of 360 days.

If a 360 day calendar was used, a bridge was needed to account for the

solar year being 365 days long. This was done at the end of the year by adding 5 non-days and presumably 6 non-days for a leap year.

If one takes a glance at a lunar year of about 354 days and a solar year about 365 days then it also seems reasonable to work with a year of 360 days. Our Lord Jesus' ministry was 3½ literal years or half a week which places the start of his ministry around the time of the Day of Atonement or Feast of Tabernacles which takes place on 15th Tishri, the seventh month of the Hebrew Calendar.

What is the point of all this? God is working to a pattern and there is a code that can be used. The Day-Year Principle that works accurately for the prophecy in Daniel has been used by a number of students of the Bible for the probable date of the Second Advent or the end of this world-age as have other methods. This helps to understand what the Bible states about calculating time when the calendar is quite different from the one we use here in the U.K.

Readers may wish to know that 14th Nisan in 2019 starts at 6 p.m. on Thursday 18th April.

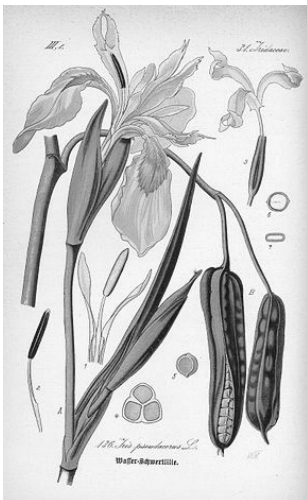
N.B. ESV = English Standard Version

Nazareth iris



YELLOW FLAG

Iris pseudacorus (Iridaceae)



“...and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink” (Exod. 2. 3).

“Can the rush grow up without mire? Can the flag grow without water?” asked Job rhetorically (Job 8. 11). The yellow flag iris certainly flourishes on wet marshy ground. It grows in shallow water on the edges of ponds and streams. The flowers are a deep yellow. It is not a Palestinian plant. Other types of iris, however, such as *Iris nazarena* (Nazareth iris) and *Iris costeti* (Costet's iris), provide some of the loveliest sights of Galilee in the early spring.

The Flowers and Fruits of the Bible
John Chancellor

Yellow flag iris

ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA

Examination of the facts

The story of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts chapter 5 has been seized upon by critics of the Christian ethic in order to disparage Christianity. What kind of a man was Peter, they ask, that he should strike this man and woman dead for what appears on the surface to be a minor case of deceit? Ananias and his wife had sold a piece of land with the avowed purpose of giving the entire proceeds to the Cause but in reality keeping back part of those proceeds for themselves. Deceit, hypocrisy, yes, but not a crime justifying so extreme a punishment as death. In this modern day of ours it would not even be considered a crime, just an instance of “being smart”. In the hurry thus to condemn the Apostle Peter the story itself is not considered with the attention it deserves.

First of all, the background. The Christian church had just commenced its development. The incident occurred not long after Pentecost, when, by means of the fervent preaching of the Apostles, a nucleus of three thousand people accepted the faith on the first day and came together in spontaneous fellowship. A few days later another five thousand were added. Repeated references to the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the multitude implies that the general atmosphere was highly charged with emotion and excitement. Conviction that Jesus Christ had indeed risen from the dead and ascended to his Father in heaven, and would speedily come again to establish his Kingdom upon earth, was general, and the assemblies of the believers were characterised by intense enthusiasm and zeal for further evangelism. The Lord had commissioned them to preach the Gospel in all the world for a witness unto all nations before his return and the end of the Age, and they were setting about that commission in no uncertain fashion. To that end there was a wholesale selling of land, houses, and any other kind of valuable property, and presentation of the proceeds to the Apostles both for the prosecution (pursuit) of this evangelism and to meet the needs of the poor among their number. Loud were the hallelujahs and expressions of praise to God as each successive donor came forward to add his contribution to the total; in their sincerity and zeal no one thought of doing other than present the whole of the money received from the particular sale.

In such an atmosphere Ananias came forward. He had sold some land and

here was the price received. Secretly, and with the connivance of his wife Sapphira, he had retained part of the money for himself but the onlookers were not to know that; he allowed them to go on thinking that, like themselves, he had given the whole of the receipts to the cause. He stood before Peter, the money in his extended hand, basking in the approbation of the surrounding believers. Peter was not deceived. He knew the truth of the matter although how he knew it is not explained. It may be an example of knowledge imparted by reason of his attunement with the Holy Spirit—as we would say, inspiration—or it might have been his shrewd knowledge of human nature and something in Ananias' attitude which did not ring true. At any rate, he knew.

It is important to notice that Peter did not condemn or pass sentence on Ananias. His words define a clear statement of the offence, nothing more. *“Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God”* (vv. 3-4) The printed record cannot reproduce the tone of the words or the demeanour of the speaker. They may have been spoken in indignation and anger; they may have been uttered in accents of infinite sadness. We just do not know. The consequences we do know. Ananias, smitten either by remorse or terror, fell to the ground and died immediately, to the consternation of the onlookers. Heart failure, obviously, but what caused it? There is no indication or evidence that Peter was responsible, no statement that he called upon miraculous power to strike the offender dead there and then. Neither is there any suggestion that Deity intervened in any way to bring about this unhappy man's death. There is no clue whatever to the cause, only the bald fact that upon hearing the Apostle's measured reproof Ananias fell down and breathed his last.

Here we should recall the highly emotional and excitable atmosphere prevailing at the moment. Ananias' mind must already have been in a state of strain, what with that and also the inward knowledge of his own deception. To that might well have been added one further factor. A believer in Christ and a son of Israel, he would have known the history of his people well. As he listened to Peter's declaration that he had attempted to deceive, not man, but God, did there flash into his mind, from his

knowledge of the past, the story of Achan? Achan, in the days of Israel's entry into the Land of Promise under Joshua, was guilty of exactly the same crime. Israel had been instructed that the spoil of the conquest was to be consecrated to God and offered to him; no man might keep any for himself. Achan coveted a wedge of gold, some silver, and a goodly Babylonian garment, and he kept back these items from the spoil he brought to the general offering, and hid them in his tent. The element of deceit rendered the offering unacceptable to God; disaster came upon Israel and men lost their lives in consequence. The sin of Achan came to light and he was put to death with all his family, and his possessions destroyed, in accordance with the custom of those days. Is it possible that Ananias, in one self-revealing moment, realised that he had defiled this present offering to God in the same fashion, and saw himself as worthy only of the same fate that befell Achan? He had tried to cheat God! That sudden realisation coming on top of the tenseness of the moment might well have been sufficient to induce the heart failure which caused his death.

Three hours later his wife came in. By then the dead man had been buried; the Judean summer forbade delay in such matters. There is a different element in Peter's words to Sapphira. They imply a knowledge of what was to come. *"How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt (test) the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out."* (v. 9) It seems a cruel, almost savage, statement, but here again much depends upon the tone in which it was spoken. The same words uttered sadly, regretfully, slowly, could be those of a man sorely troubled and distressed over the whole matter and conscious only that this woman must in any case now be apprised of her husband's untimely death. It seems certain that Peter was given a foreglimpse of the coming event; the same faculty of prevision which is evident in so many instances in Scriptural narrative was Peter's at this moment and he must have seen in his mind's eye what was going to happen in a few minutes. It need not be thought that he exercised miraculous power to cause Sapphira's death, only that he knew she was going to die—as die she did. The extent to which Peter's words accentuated the shock she would have experienced anyway on hearing of her husband's death is not possible to estimate; she might well have realised that her own share in the plot had helped to cause the tragedy and that had she dissuaded him from the scheme he might yet be alive. The shock

which killed her might not have been altogether, or even in great part, due to Peter's words but to the realisation of her own guilt in the matter and its tragic outcome.

In line with the general level of understanding of the times the spectators would ascribe the happening to Divine intervention. The judgment of God had come upon this guilty pair. The whole thing created a profound impression and without doubt everyone connected with the infant Church took a little more care with their own personal life in the community. To what extent, if any, there was specific Divine judgment in the matter may be open to debate; one has to remember that Judas Iscariot likewise misappropriated funds entrusted to him without any immediate retribution. The narrative states the facts but does not attribute them to any kind of Divine intervention.

Did this lapse affect the eternal destiny of Ananias and Sapphira? There have always been some to insist that the couple are eternally lost; it is possible that the prominence given to their story in the Book of Acts highlights their case more than those of many others who have lapsed from their high standards in this or other ways. There is no reason for thinking that these two were other than perfectly sincere converts to the faith, overtaken by the temptation to win full plaudits from their fellows without meeting the corresponding obligation. The fault was one of greed; it was not flagrant immorality or deep-rooted hostility to righteousness or love of evil. They wanted God to have part of what they had but not all. Many Christians are like that today in things much more important than money. "*Some of self and some of thee*" runs the old hymn, and in a spiritual sense that is much the same thing as the withholding of the portion which led to the premature deaths of Ananias and Sapphira. It does not seem very reasonable to think that the tremendous potentialities inherent in two intelligent creatures to whom God had given life should be vitiated and extinguished by what was, after all, not a very terrible crime, when there is no evidence at all that those two beings were already irrevocably committed to evil. And God has "*no pleasure in the death of him that dieth*" but would rather by far that he turn from his evil ways, and live. Perhaps the right view of this question is that stated by Canon R. H. Charles in his "*A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life*" when he says "*the idea that forgiveness is impossible in the next life has only to be stated in order to be rejected; for till absolute fixity of*"

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character is reached, repentance and forgiveness, being moral acts, must be possible under a perfectly moral Being.”

AOH

It is by God’s permitted trials that he works into our character his divine design.

*Deep Waters and a Bubbling Brook
Harvest Activities*

MAN IN THE IMAGE OF GOD—A BOOKLET

Newly printed this year with colour images this booklet was written by Albert Hudson 50 years ago.

It shows how man is supremely, even marvellously, adapted to this our planet. It shows by scripture how man was created with mental qualities above the animals with an ability to communicate and appreciate a creator outside of this earthly plane.



It reminds the reader that people were made of the dust of the ground primarily from four elements—oxygen, carbon, hydrogen and nitrogen—to become living beings. However because of the fall each dies like the animals and returns to the dust of the ground because “the wages of sin is death”. (Rom. 6. 23)

Demonstrated is the intelligence and power of God whose plan includes the resurrection which today gives great hope now and in the future through the death and resurrection of Jesus. This resurrection can be separated into two—an earthly and a celestial one. Then in the fullness of time at a day to come, at last, the world will live in absolute happiness and contentment.

This booklet is available free on request. Please write to the address on the back page or email: mailing@biblefellowshipunion.co.uk

NOTE ON PSALM 32. 8

“I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye” (Psa. 32. 8).

There comes a happening in the life which disrupts the orderly course of events and nothing is ever the same again. And the immediate reaction is “Why has God permitted this?” It seemed so unnecessary, perhaps bringing grief and pain. Things may not have been perfect, but how much better if God had left them alone! And in all such reasoning we are forgetting that God is fashioning and directing all our lives for His purpose, controlling and ruling our affairs and circumstances to create in each one of us just that heart and character which will fit us for the place in His creation which we are due to occupy at the end of our earthly pilgrimage. He knows, so much better than do we, the extent to which we, each one, has become transformed into His likeness and so be ready for the call to higher service. He knows, so much better than do we, what in the way of our experiences and of other influences are necessary to us that we might be fully transformed. And all the time He is the guide and instructor. He knows what we need and He knows the way. It is for us to watch diligently and perceive His leading and follow His guidance. He is a true teacher and a sure guide; as He led Israel through the wilderness and brought them safely at last to the Promised Land, so will He surely do with us. If He ushers us outside the door and closes it for the last time, He will open another door into which He would have us enter. If He closes one book because it is complete He will open another that we may begin afresh. And all the time He leads, like the guiding cloud in the daytime and the pillar of fire by night, His eye always upon us that we stumble not or miss the way, until at the last we cross the final boundary and are safely home.

There is so much we do not know, about ourselves and each other, so many reasons why what seems to be utter disaster is after all a manifestation of God’s love and care for His children. *“The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.”* (Deut. 33. 27) If He takes one of His own into those everlasting arms it is because He loves that one and knows what is best. And for we who remain there is the consciousness that He leads, that we might follow; He instructs, that we might learn; His eye is upon us, that we might realise His watch-care over

all our ways and is with us in all the circumstances of life, giving guidance in our perplexity, and strength for our weakness, and that peace of mind which comes from knowing that His hand is in control of all our affairs and will bring them forth for good, all the time that we rest them in Him.

AOH

“Who carried up our sins himself in his own word body to the tree, that we, having died to sins, may live to righteousness; by whose scars you were healed. You were like Sheep going astray, but have now turned back to the Shepherd and Guardian of your lives.” (1 Peter 2. 24-25 Diaglott)

NOTICES

BIBLE STUDENTS SEMINAR DAY SATURDAY 26 JANUARY 2019

CRICK VILLAGE HALL

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Ruth Lightfoot (West Wickham)

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Please note the dates, which differ from those previously advertised!

ANOTHER YEAR, CLEAN AND NEW

The day was done and in the west
 The sun was settling down to rest.
 The saddened earth midst toil and strife,
 Bereft of Nature's garb of life,
 Her bosom stained with sin and blight,
 Was glad to hide beneath the night.

The darkness passed; a glittering day
 Breaks forth beneath the sun's glad ray.
 O perfect day! O glorious sight!
 God's hand hath clothed the earth in white!
 All Nature sings, while Heaven above
 Floods a spotless earth with love.

The year has passed and fades from view;
 God gives another, clean and new.
 Our sad mistakes are covered quite
 Beneath His blessed Robe of White.
 Lord, may we profit by the past
 And in the coming year hold fast.



Poems of Dawn



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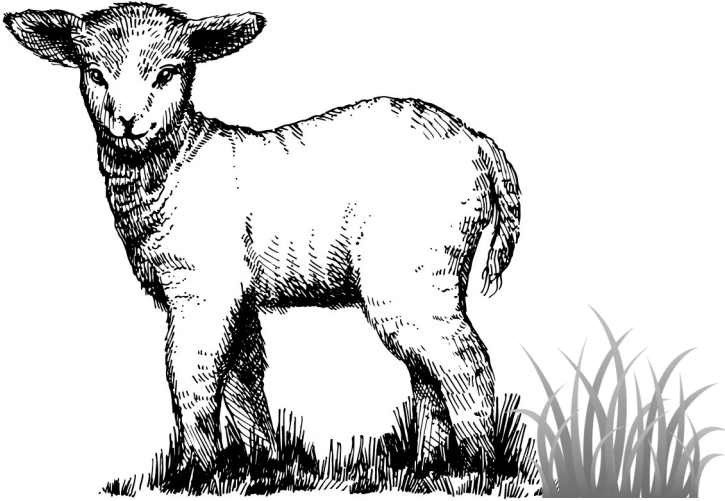
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BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

Volume 96 Issue 2

March / April 2019



Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!
(John 1. 29 RSV)

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BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

FOUNDED 1924

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

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

The Bible Study Monthly is sent free of charge on request to all who are genuinely interested. It should never be sold for money.

Secretary & Treasurer: Nicholas Charcharos



THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

"Behold the Lamb of God" (John 1. 36)



Springtime evokes many pictures from spring bulbs full of vibrant blues, yellows, oranges and reds. The fields and woods start to appear to produce baby animals and we start to point out lambs in the fresh, green fields. It's a great time to raise livestock as the spring grass is rich with nutrition unlike the autumn grass which may keep growing but does not have the same goodness in it.

Sheep, lambs and shepherds appear often in the Bible despite the climate in the middle east being much different from these islands on the eastern side of the Atlantic ocean. Nevertheless sheep and goats do exist in that region which from a distance would look arid.

The first reference to a lamb being offered to God comes soon after the garden of Eden as Gen. 4. 4 (GNT) says "Abel brought the first lamb born to one of his sheep, killed it, and gave the best parts of it as an offering. The LORD was pleased with Abel and his offering," So, early on the offering of the first lamb was pleasing to God.

Many generations after the days of Noah and the deluge we meet Abraham and his miracle son Isaac. Now a young man Isaac and Abraham set off for Moriah to make an offering. They collected wood and went to where the heavenly Father had told them. Isaac asks the question, "Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" His father replied "My son, God will

provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering". We all know what happened next and Isaac who is a type or picture of Christ finds himself ready to be offered in the place of the lamb before God provides a suitable animal in replacement.

Over 400 years later we find Moses and the children of Israel in subjection to Egypt under harsh conditions. At this time it is a Passover lamb that features. This lamb was perfect and it was taken from the sheep or the goats. It is killed and the blood placed over the doors to each home so that when the angel passed over as long as the firstborn were under the blood of that home then he lives, leaving the firstborn of Egypt dead. This is full of meaning to the Christian.

After this the Passover was instituted as a feast to be observed annually and this command was left for Israel to follow during the rest of Moses' life through the time of the Judges and Kings. The priests and Levites offered the lambs at the appropriate date and time according to their calendar as they did during the time Jehoiada was active. However because of idol worship and disobedience the nation spent seventy years in captivity.

After the captivity they returned to the land as recorded in Ezra and Zechariah when the Temple was rebuilt. All Israel was looking for the Messiah, "the prophet like unto me" that Moses had prophesied. We meet him in Zechariah's prophecy lowly and riding upon an ass.

John the Baptist met the Messiah, at Jordan and declared "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" This was the start of his ministry. Three and a half years later we see him riding in to Jerusalem as described by Zechariah. John 12 records Jesus' statement "If I be lifted up I will draw all men unto me."

So it was. He was crucified at 9 o'clock at the time of the morning sacrifice and died at 3 o'clock in the afternoon at the time of the evening sacrifice which was also the time that the Passover lamb was slain.

But it's not just about death but life. Jesus was raised on the third day and began the process of drawing all people to him. He began with the "little flock" and will end with the whole world in due time.

Magazine content. What is published is believed to have a wide interest, but everything printed may not necessarily be the opinion of the editor and his colleagues.

MEANING IN MOSES AND THE EXODUS

To most people the account of the exodus of the Israelites from the land of Egypt appears fantastic and without any significance at all. Even among ecclesiastics the account is held very lightly for they see no special value in it, it has no charm for any such people, except only as an historical event in some quarters and nothing more than that. To others it means nothing at all, for they doubt Bible history so much that they don't want to be troubled with myths as they are pleased to call anything and everything which passes their understanding.

But to the man of God, to the Christian, the narrative of God's dealings with the children of Israel and Pharaoh is full of meaning. God patiently brings the events to come to pass according to plan, and then causing the same to be put on record by the direction of His Spirit through holy righteous men.

There is meaning and there is reason for all the enactments of God. In Exodus we meet Moses. There we find:

- the lamb of the Passover
- the blood
- the unleavened bread
- the eating of the Passover
- the exodus itself
- the crossing of the Red Sea
- Pharaoh and his armies
- the land of Egypt with its plagues

all these, being the workings of God are of great importance to His people.

Moses was born at a time of unusual trouble and his life was saved from death when only a babe through the faith of his parents and by the kind providence of the Almighty. This man, Moses, despised the riches and comforts of palaces in the house of the Pharaohs, because he believed God.

At that time Egypt was a very great nation with a civilization, if one might say so, with organised societies and, certainly a government, not unlike present day governments. Moses, who was brought up as a prince, rose to the right hand of Pharaoh with all the due honours and the pomp of the court and undoubtedly, he was treated as the grandson of Pharaoh. If he wished for anything, the almost illimitable wealth of the treasures of

Egypt was within his reach. This we have from a good authority that Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was mighty in words and in deeds. (Acts 7. 22)

Yet he preferred to share the sufferings of his people in their affliction, rather than be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and he esteemed it gain to be numbered with the slaves who were the people of God than to be called a prince of the court of Egypt while his brethren were gasping for breath under the heavy yoke of their taskmasters. Moses could not forget that his parents were slaves. He could not forget that the bondmen who were groaning in brickfields beneath the lash of the task-masters were his brethren, and when it came to make a choice, he chose to suffer affliction with the people of God.

What a noble character Moses was! Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth. He willingly gave up the high and mighty office he held that he may join the slaves and be like one of them, and we are not surprised at that, because in God's providence Moses was serving much higher ideals than the mere service to a people.

A prophetic scripture that cannot be overlooked speaks of one coming like unto Moses. Deut. 18. 15 says that a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me (Moses). The mighty Moses became a slave, yet "A prophet...like unto me" God will raise, and how true! For He that was rich, says the apostle, became poor for your sakes, that through his poverty ye might become rich. (2 Cor. 8. 9) And again, He "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, (the form of a slave) and...humbled himself...even unto death". (Phil. 2. 7-8) Thus it is written of Christ of whom Moses wrote so much in advance of the due time.

The writer to the Hebrews (3. 1-2) places the faithfulness of Jesus side by side with the faithfulness of Moses, saying that "Jesus...was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was", with one exception and that is the difference between a master and a servant of a house. Moses the servant, Jesus Christ the Son and heir therefore was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath built the house hath more honour than the house. This argument of the apostle has brought us now into a closer relationship with Exodus for it is evident that this house where Moses served as a servant and over which Christ is as a Son over his Father's house, "whose house are we" (Heb. 3. 6) is none other than the church of the Gospel Age. Exodus and the church are interlocked.

Suffice to say now that those things were the forerunners and heralds of some greater things to come.

Now a word about Pharaoh from whose hands God demanded the freedom of his people, that they might be free to serve and to worship Him in the place where He had chosen. This Pharaoh was a new ruler in Egypt who would not follow the traditions of his fathers toward the brethren of Joseph and be kind to them, but instead the hard and cruel king had appointed task-masters to oppress the Israelites with their burdens and made them serve with harshness.

With whom shall we compare this king? And what character does he represent with such tyrannical schemes of oppression and murder? Satan is the being whom Pharaoh represented in this act, for truly Satan is the archenemy of God and man.

Mankind to this day is labouring under this cruel king and the nations are completely under the control of the prince of darkness, whom Jesus called a liar and a murderer. What a tyrant! What an adversary the nations are serving! A deceiver, a murderer! What a cruel ruler has Satan been with his lieutenant, sin—another mighty taskmaster who knows no pity and has no regard for small or great, for the rich or the poor and all bear marks from the lash of this tyrant. Even the man of God who delights in the law of God, sees another law in his members making war against the law of his mind, and brings him into captivity to the law of sin. What a torture, how painful is this thorn of sin to the flesh! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me? Thanks be to God who by the hand of one “like unto Moses” demands the freedom of the race, He demands their liberty that they might go out into the place He has chosen, and as surely as Israel went forth, so shall mankind go forth and be free from all bondage, from sin and death with the final destruction of the anti-typical Pharaoh—that evil one being destroyed in the eternal death, the second death. (Rom. 7. 23-25)

There is then Moses who foreshadowed Christ, there is Pharaoh representing Satan, Israel representing mankind, and Egypt typifying the evil forces, the powers of darkness under whose spell the poor groaning creation is held in bondage. The happenings in Egypt, as far as the account shows, were highly pictorial, and were true types and shadows of things then future.

Continuing, one is impressed with the particularity of the instructions

Moses received concerning the selection of the lamb which brought them their first deliverance. “Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year”. (Exod. 12. 5) How careful the householders must have been in the selection of their lamb out of the flocks. Any lamb wouldn’t do, for upon the carrying out of the instructions of Moses depended the safety and ultimately the deliverance of their firstborn as well as that of the whole congregation, i.e. the nation. Not the blind, oh no, not the broken or the maimed. Not the bruised or the crushed. No such an offering but one without blemish could be acceptable to God, for there was a very good reason why that should be so.

To the Jews it was just a commandment which they must observe, but God was revealing decisions which dated from the foundation of the world, yet not unto them, but unto us did God minister through them. Affecting not only the earth but the universe also.

It should be noted that the first to receive protection and deliverance from death were the firstborn of Israel, for “I will pass through the land of Egypt...and will smite all the firstborn...and when I see the blood, I will pass over you”. (Exod. 12. 12-13) I hope you can appreciate the antitype, or the substance of this shadow when we say that in Israel and the firstborn of that nation, the members of the Church of God and the rest of the world of mankind are represented respectively and comprehensively.

John the Baptist first pointed at Jesus saying: “Behold the lamb of God, which taketh (beareth) away the sin of the world”. (John 1. 29) He, John, speaks of the Lamb and the world. But their forerunners were the lamb of Exodus and the nation of Israel yet people who like to be called by the name of the Lord dare to say that Exodus is a mythical fantasy which one may or may not believe.

And now listen to Peter who later reminded the brethren with these words saying: “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things...But with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot”. (1 Pet. 1. 18-19) Surely the apostle draws his lesson from the firstborn in Egypt and their redemption from the destroyer through the blood, to which he likens the redemption of the firstborn of the gospel age, “the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven.” (Heb. 12. 23 NIV)

The early Christians understood the bond which united their lives with the ancient history of the people of God because they had been led into the

secret of God that salvation is of the Jews, “to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom...Christ came”. (Romans 9. 4-5) Everything the apostle names is based on Exodus which the modernists are wont to discredit and ridicule.

Indeed, this part cannot be brought to a finish without quoting the very pivot of the wonderful experiences of the people of God and which the apostle takes from Exodus, when he said “Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us”. (1 Cor. 5. 7)

And the firstborn of Exodus, the firstborn of Israel, holy unto the Lord, no one can fail to identify in them the believer in Jesus, the faithful disciples, brethren, beloved of God, holy unto the Lord.

God having claimed the firstborn, the remainder of the nation typified the residue of the world which the apostle says: “Itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now...waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God”. (Rom. 8. 21-22, 19) Furthermore the scripture declares that at first “God... did visit the nations (Gentiles) to take out of them a people for His name...After this He saith, I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David” etc... that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the nations upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord who doeth all these things. (Acts 15. 14-17)

Year after year the Jew was commanded to repeat the performance of rituals and to tell his children what it all meant, and how God brought about their deliverance with an out-stretched arm in the land of Egypt. As the Jew was thus to remember his deliverance from bondage so the Christian is likewise commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ to “this do in remembrance of me”, for the apostle says, “as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup (of the Lord’s supper), ye do show the Lord’s death till he come”. (1 Cor. 11. 25-26)

The crossing of the Red Sea. The Israelites pursued by the hosts of Egypt came to the shores of the Red Sea. It was an awful plight! In front of them the waters of the Red Sea stretched as far as the eye could see, and from behind the pursuing Egyptian armies were almost on top of them. They lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid. They couldn’t see a way of escape, it was

as if they had already perished in the wilderness.

It is suggested that the Red Sea represents in this instance death itself, the death out of which God will deliver not only the church of the firstborn, but all mankind at the due time by the hand of the greater Moses, Jesus Christ, who has the keys of hell and of death. The time is coming when Jesus will use these keys which symbolise authority and power and will use them both to open the doors of the prison houses of death and of the grave and command the prisoners to come forth and live.

Believeth thou this? The friend of Jesus did! Under His leadership humanity will live no longer in Egypt under Pharaoh, no longer the slaves of Satan, no longer the prisoners of sin and death, but the redeemed of the Lord of the new earth under the new heaven, for the first heaven and earth, represented in Egypt and her rulers, were passed away.

“Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD...for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more for ever.” There is a great lesson to be learned from this, and that is that there are times when we must do nothing at all, but just stand still and see the work of the Lord. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. For the Lord is good unto them that wait for Him. The Israelites stood still and waited. The waters of the Red Sea divided, and the great multitude moved on between two walls of water upon dry land in the midst of the sea. The crossing went on through the night, and the morning dawn revealed one of the most memorable spectacles of history. A nation of slaves, fleeing from their masters, had suddenly become a nation of freemen and stood emancipated upon the shores of a new continent.

Then they sang a song to Jehovah, a song of deliverance and of praise. Does the account of Exodus thrill your heart? What message does the narrative convey? Is it one of hope and trust? And how many songs do you hear the multitude singing?

The song of Moses, yes! But can you hear the song of the Lamb? That sweeter song of a much greater deliverance which is yet to come unto all? Israel sung a song of triumph as led by Moses, but Jesus will have his own choir, not only in heaven but on earth also, to sing songs of praises and glory unto the Lord. “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will among men” will soon be sung. For “the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall

be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away” (Isa. 35. 10 RSV)

What a deliverance is awaiting the poor groaning creation! What untold joys shall be to this sin-stricken world in the resurrection morning, when all families reunited once again, will cherish their own under the protection, control and leadership of the Prince of peace who shall then lead them into fountains of living waters that they might live forever.

But for good or for ill one cannot hope to achieve these things at this time, because the prince of this age, like Pharaoh, is holding the nations back in subjection by his cunning devices, thus blinding their eyes, and misrepresenting God, so that few are they which have faith in the Almighty.

Finally, a word about the fears which the children of Israel entertained as to their supplies after the Exodus. Their fears remind me, beside other things, the questions people ask concerning future supplies for the every day needs of the race, if all are going to live for ever! How will the earth support so many millions of souls for ever? How will they be fed, clothed and be cared for? Why, they say people will be eating each other? Well, the language of the scripture says such “do err not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God”. They are like the murmurers in Israel who said Moses had brought them out of the house of bondage to starve them, and instead of life to give them death. O that God might open their eyes to behold his mighty deeds recorded in his word and revealed in Jesus for their salvation.

Pharaoh is furious, but the plagues will soon put an end to all that he stands for, and the peoples of the earth shall be freed. Then the Lord shall speak peace to the nations, for He is the Prince of peace whose reign shall be without end.

To finish, “Fear not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD”.

NDC



When to the cross I turn mine eyes,
And rest on Calvary,
O Lamb of God, my Sacrifice,
I must remember Thee.

J. Montgomery

JEHOIADA—PRIEST AND PATRIOT

The story of Jehoiada is that of a man upright and resolute, fearless in his loyalty to God and ruthless in his hatred of idolatry. To the piety of a priest he added the sagacity of a statesman; by his courage and faith he saved the royal line of David from becoming extinct little more than a century after David's death, and in that became an instrument in the hand of God. His sterling worth shines out from the dramatic narratives in 2 Kings 11. 4 to 13. 9 and 2 Chron. 22. 11 to 24. 25, and the manner in which prosperity or adversity respectively followed the nation's adherence to, or apostasy from, the terms of the Mosaic Covenant forms a colourful background to the story.

Jehoiada was High Priest of the Temple at Jerusalem in the time of Ahaziah and Joash, kings of Judah. He died a few years before the death of Joash at the unusually advanced age of a hundred and thirty years, according to the narrative, and although the credibility of this fact has been questioned, all known sources including Josephus, are unanimous and consistent on the point and there seems no ground on which the statement can be rejected. In such case he must have been born some ten years after the death of Solomon and lived through the reigns of nine monarchs, from Rehoboam to Joash.

The first eighty years of the life of Jehoiada were years of prosperity and peace in Judah. Four successive kings, Rehoboam, Abijah, Asa and Jehoshaphat, were noted for their allegiance, in the main, to the Lord God of Israel and the exaltation of the Covenant. Idolatry was not allowed to flourish, the Temple services continued and the Aaronic priesthood discharged the duties of its office with the support and endorsement of the people. Apart from one lapse into idolatry on the part of Rehoboam, which resulted in Shishak the king of Egypt waging successful warfare against Judah, various attacks by Philistines, Ethiopians, Arabians and even their brethren of the northern ten-tribe kingdom were all easily repulsed, in some cases with signal demonstrations of Divine power. Twice is the statement made that the land "had no more war", once in the reign of Asa and once in that of Jehoshaphat. This was the golden age of Judah's tranquillity when the law of the Lord was observed in the land and the blessings of the covenant came upon the people in consequence—and then good king Jehoshaphat died and his son Jehoram took the throne.

At once the situation changed. Jehoram had married Athaliah the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, of the ten-tribe kingdom. Athaliah, like her mother,

was a fervent worshipper of Baal, and so, too, was Jehoram. The royal pair immediately began to institute Baal worship in the Kingdom and seduce the people from allegiance to the God of Israel. Jehoram murdered his six brothers, the remaining sons of Jehoshaphat, to eliminate possible rivalry. Whether Jehoiada was High Priest at this time is not known; the records are fragmentary—one Amariah held the office during the reign of Jehoshaphat and may have continued into that of Jehoram, but the time of Jehoiada's entry upon the stage was in any case imminent. In the meantime, Jehoram's reign of twenty-five years, during which the Covenant was repudiated, cost Judah the loss of her Edomite possessions, and various successful invasions of peoples from the east and south, all of whom took considerable spoil culminating in the slaying of all Jehoram's sons except one, Ahaziah. Finally the king himself died a lingering death of a malignant disease and, says the narrator scornfully, "*departed without being desired*". He was denied burial in the tombs of the kings, which showed pretty clearly that the nation had had enough of him and refused him the customary honours at death.

The surviving son, Ahaziah, a young man of twenty-two, already married and the father of several young sons, reigned only one year but managed to crowd into it a considerable amount of villainy. Urged on by his mother Athaliah, "*that wicked woman*" as the Chronicler calls her in 2 Chron. 24. 7, he continued the policy of his father and got himself involved with the ten-tribe kingdom in that nation's wars with Syria, in consequence of which he was first seriously wounded in battle and then finally despatched by Jehu the avenging Israelite who was engaged in the elimination of all royal idolaters with particular emphasis upon the ruling house of the ten-tribe kingdom. Thus Judah was left without a king and the royal heirs were children of only a few years old.

At this point Athaliah, the widow of Jehoram, stepped in. She was a bold, ambitious woman like her mother Jezebel and she had no intention of retiring into obscurity. She had a powerful court party on her side; it seems evident that Baal worship and idolatry was rampant among the nobility and aristocratic circles of the nation although the bulk of the populace were still loyal to God. Athaliah had just lost in death her brother Joram, king of the ten tribes, as well as her husband. Jehu was increasingly victorious in the north and had vowed to destroy idolatry in Israel; by a bold counterstroke Athaliah determined to consolidate idolatry in Judah, by wiping out the Davidic line through whom the Divine promises were to be fulfilled. She had her forces seek out and put to death all the sons of Ahaziah, her own grandchildren, and herself assumed the

title of queen of Judah, reigning supreme over a land which she intended should never again honour the name of the God of Israel.

But she reckoned without Jehoiada.

Jehoiada had married Jehosheba, a daughter of Jehoram, not by Athaliah but one of his other wives, so that Athaliah was her stepmother. She evidently shared her husband's sterling faith, and by a quick-witted stroke whilst the slaughter of Ahaziah's sons was proceeding she rescued the youngest, a baby not more than a few months old, and hid him in an adjunct to the Temple where his presence would not be suspected. There, in concealment, the child lived for six years, and grew, while Athaliah reigned over the land and Jehoiada waited and planned. How many devout souls in Judah at that time must have mourned the calamity that had fallen upon their land and wondered if God had "*forgotten to be gracious*", little dreaming that the means of deliverance was present, unseen, in their own midst and would be revealed in due time.

It is here that the astute statesmanship of Jehoiada becomes evident. Biding his time during those six years, allowing no suspicion of the existence of the lad to arise in any mind, he evidently decided that at seven years of age Joash could be presented to the people as their lawful king. The account in 2 Chron. 23 has all the drama of a typical Eastern palace plot. Five leading officers in the armed forces whom Jehoiada knew to be trustworthy were let into the secret; they in turn went throughout the length and breadth of Judah selecting equally trustworthy Levites and heads of families and brought them to Jerusalem. Weapons which had been stored in the Temple since the days of King David were brought out and with these an armed force was created, posted to guard the approaches to the Temple. That venerable building must have speedily taken on the semblance of a fortress.

When all was ready, the seven-year old Joash was brought from his seclusion into the Temple, closely guarded by a determined body of priests and Levites who alone might enter the sacred precincts. In the outer court were massed a crowd of spectators who had evidently been told what to expect, flanked on either side by serried (tight) ranks of stalwart armed men eager to defend their king. It is evident that a substantial opposition to Athaliah and her paganism existed in Judah and the news that a king possessing right of lineal descent from David still lived and was now to be crowned met with very general approbation among the people in general. So well had Jehoiada laid and executed his

plans that it seems no one of the Baal party knew anything of what was afoot until it was too late. With all solemnity the High Priest placed the crown upon the head of Joash, anointed him and put into his hand a copy of the Law of Moses. The trumpets sounded and the cry went up “God save the King”. It is an interesting point to notice that this expression, so familiar to us as a tribute of loyalty and respect to the British monarchy should have had its origin at this dramatic moment in the history of the “People of the Book”.

Athaliah heard the shouting and the music from the royal palace, which occupied a position almost adjacent to the Temple, and came out immediately to investigate. According to 2 Chron. 23. 13 there were trumpets and musical instruments and choral singing so that she could hardly have failed to realise that something very unusual was transpiring in the usually quiet and deserted Temple. She only had time to see the boy-king standing arrayed in all the regalia of his office before being seized, together with apparently a small body of her compatriots in idolatry, and hurried to the valley of the Kidron below the Temple walls, where without further ceremony she was put to death. They were savage days and passions ran high, and the followers of the Everliving had suffered a great deal at the hands of the idolaters; their patriotism too had been affronted by the manner in which their nation had been made almost a subservient province of Phoenicia—for Jezebel was a daughter of the famous King Ethbaal of Tyre and for generations Tyre had exercised a strong influence in Israel’s affairs. Now that the opportunity was theirs the people of Judah vented their pent-up resentment on all that had to do with the hated foreigners and their alien religion. The great Temple of Baal at Jerusalem, which stood alongside Solomon’s Temple, was completely destroyed, Mattan, its high priest, slain in front of his own altar, and all the images and instruments of Baal worship in the land broken into pieces and dispersed. In a solemn ceremony, presided over by Jehoiada, the people and the king pledged themselves to each other “*that they should be the Lord’s people*”, implying a formal avowal of loyalty to the Mosaic Covenant and renunciation of all that was not in accord therewith.

So Joash began his reign and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. For the first twenty years or so of that period Jehoiada was undoubtedly the power behind the throne, in effect the uncrowned king of the land, guiding and instructing the young lad until he was mature enough to assume the duties of kingship himself. It is rather puzzling to note that during this twenty year period, when Jehoiada was the acknowledged

director of the nation's destinies, there seems to have been singularly little progress made in restoring the Temple, rescuing it from the neglect of the past three reigns, and making it again the centre of national worship. The impulse to restore the Temple seems to have come, not from the High Priest, but from the king, and this could hardly have been before he was a young man in his late teens. In fact, so late as the twenty-third year of his reign the work had not been completed and it was the king who called Jehoiada to account over this and instructed him to expedite and finish the work. It might be charitable to conclude that the advancing age of the High Priest, now more than a century old, is the explanation of this apparent shortcoming, although he seems to have been vigorous enough in affairs of state. It might on the other hand have been that, after all, he was a better statesman than priest, that the secular cares which had devolved upon him for so many years left insufficient time and energy for his sacred duties. If so, Jehoiada would not be the only one in history to whom that has happened, and it is a lesson to all of us. "*Seek ye first the Kingdom of God*" is always a sound injunction, and all other things must take second place.

The saddest commentary on the story is that immediately following Jehoiada's death the whole of his work was undone. The king's new youthful advisers had scant sympathy for the old priest's piety and reforms. The rising generation neglected the Temple and forgot the Covenant. Idolatry came back and the idol shrines once more desecrated the land. Prophets of the Lord raised their voices in protest and were unheeded; Zechariah the son and successor of Jehoiada in the priesthood publicly rebuked the offenders, and by the king's command was stoned to death in the court of the Temple. At once the Divine protection that had been over Judah was withdrawn; the penalty of the covenant came into effect. The armies of Syria invaded the land, slew all the leaders—those same leaders who had advised the king to his idolatrous course—laid the land under tribute and took great spoil back to Damascus. The disasters coming upon the nation led to a palace plot which resulted in the murder of the king. As with his father and grandfather, he was not buried in the tombs of the kings of Judah, being deemed unworthy of that honour; it is worthy of notice that Jehoiada, although not of royal lineage, was in fact buried in the tombs of the kings "*because he had done good in Israel, both toward God, and toward his house*" (2 Chron. 24. 16). Throughout those troubled times, this venerable old High Priest was the true king of Israel; under the hand of God he preserved the Davidic line from extinction and he struck idolatry in Judah a blow from which it never really recovered. In after years there were periods of idolatry under Ahaz

and Manasseh, but not to the extent of former times. The contribution which Jehoiada made to the outworking purpose of God was a valid and a lasting contribution, even although his personal work may seem to have been nullified at his death. It takes more than a temporary resurgence of evil to cancel good that has already been done, for good is enduring; it may be temporarily overlaid with evil but cannot be destroyed by it. A lesson for those of us who may be faced with similar situations in our own lives and in our own days is that the faithfulness and untiring service of Jehoiada bore its real fruitage, not in his own day and lifetime, but eight centuries later when the Lord of glory came to a people, a “remnant”, who were the heirs and successors of all that he had done and for which he stood. Something of the faith and hope he instilled into men’s hearts in those dark days was passed on through the generations until it emerged in the lives of those at the First Advent who “looked for deliverance” in Jerusalem, and, seeing Jesus, recognised him indeed as “He that should come”.

AOH



If a sheep should stray and be found by another shepherd, the owner has to redeem it within three days and pay for its full value, otherwise it becomes the property of the other shepherd. “He restoreth (or redeemeth) my soul.”

Customs and Costumes in Bible Days
I E D Gollmick

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

ZECHARIAH, PROPHET OF THE RESTORATION

8. Foreview of History

The six final chapters of Zechariah's prophecy are so markedly different in style and contents from the earlier ones that it is evident they constitute a separate book, or at least a separate part. The difference in style is accounted for by concluding that Zechariah composed these chapters in his old age, some fifty years later than the earlier visions, in the days of Nehemiah when it was becoming evident that a long span of history must run its course before the long-looked for day should dawn. Hence these chapters, nine to fourteen, comprise a vivid—and so far as they have already become history, a remarkably accurate—foreview of the outworking of God's purposes with Israel and with all men, from a time following the close of Zechariah's ministry to the establishment of the Kingdom of God upon earth. In these six chapters there is a contrast drawn between the political power of the great kings of this world and the overriding power of the Lord Christ: the one is pictured in all the pomp and panoply of human greed and brute force, the other in the selflessness, the devotion and moral power of the Good Shepherd. The conflict between the two continues and accelerates to the final clash and, as in so many of the prophetic Scriptures, in the stress of the conflict many lose faith and apostasise, but a remnant are steadfast and win through at the end. The doctrine of the "Remnant" is very prominent in this second part of Zechariah's prophecy.

The first eight verses of chapter 9 picture the events surrounding the transfer of dominion from Persia to Greece, the silver of Daniel's image to the copper (A.V. brass). The remarkable correspondence between the details in these verses and the incidents attendant on Alexander the Great's invasion of Asia in 332 B.C. has been realised by practically every commentator of note and the application is reasonably conclusive. Hadrach (the Hatarika of Assyrian inscriptions), Damascus and Hamath (modern Hama) were leading districts and cities of Syria: Alexander's first move was to subdue Syria and capture Damascus, which he did without difficulty. Hence verse 1 "*The word of the LORD is against the land of Hadrach and will rest upon Damascus*" (RSV) and "*Hamath also, which borders thereon*". (v. 2) His next move was against Tyre and Sidon, twin commercial cities of Phoenicia; Tyre held out for seven months but fell in 332. Verses 2 and 3 speak of this and add the information that Tyre had built herself a "*strong hold*" but the Lord would smite her power "*in the sea*" (v. 4) and she would be consumed by fire. This is a remarkable statement, for at the time of Alexander the Tyrians had abandoned their seaside city and built a new one on a small island just off the coast which

they had fortified and surrounded with a wall a hundred and fifty feet high. They considered themselves impregnable. Alexander built a causeway across the intervening water and so captured the city. Having thus secured his position he drove southward towards Egypt through the land of the Philistines, capturing Gaza and executing its king, destroying Ashkelon completely, and making Ashdod and Ekron tributary. All of this is stated plainly in verses 5-6 *“Ashkelon shall see it, and be afraid; Gaza too, and shall writhe in anguish; Ekron also, because its hopes are confounded. The king shall perish from Gaza; Ashkelon shall be uninhabited; a mongrel people shall dwell in Ashdod; and I will make an end of the pride of Philistia”* (RSV). Up to this point the Scriptural narrative corresponds in every detail with the progress of Alexander and his Greeks in that momentous year 332. Now in verse 7 the Lord says that there shall no longer be a Philistine nation; it will be absorbed into Judah. The expression *“he that remaineth”* refers to the remnant of the Philistines who survived Alexander’s invasion; that remnant shall *“be for our God”*; the word rendered “governor” means a family chief or tribal leader; *“Ekron shall be as Jebus”* (not “as a Jebusite”). All these expressions indicate the complete coalescence of the Philistines into the Jewish nation, just as the Jebusites were coalesced in the time of David. This is what happened. The Philistines as a national entity drop out of history after the time of Alexander; what was left of them became indistinguishable from Jews and their land became part of Judea.

This was not the end. Verse 8 declares the Divine intention *“I will encamp about mine house because of the army, because of him...that returneth: and no oppressor shall pass through them any more”*. The army here referred to is the Greek army. Alexander had sent a message to Jerusalem demanding the submission of the Jews. Jaddua, the High Priest, principal citizen of the nation, had refused on the ground that he had sworn allegiance to Persia. Immediately after the fall of Gaza therefore, Alexander marched to Jerusalem to take vengeance. The outcome is recorded by the historian Flavius Josephus. Unable to offer armed resistance, the High Priest, instructed by Heaven, arrayed himself in the splendid robes of his office as Head of the Levitical priesthood and went out to meet the conqueror, followed by the priests and citizens in white. To the astonishment of his own officers, Alexander, instead of giving orders to attack, went forward alone, made obeisance to the sacred Name emblazoned on the High Priest’s mitre, and then saluted Jaddua with every appearance of respect and friendliness. His principal general, Parmenio, ventured to ask the reason for this unexpected behaviour, whereupon Alexander explained that when originally contemplating the

invasion of Asia he had seen in a dream a person attired in this same regalia who had assured him that he should embark upon his project and that it would be crowned with success by the defeat of Persia. Never having seen or heard of such a man before, he was convinced that this was the one who had appeared to him in his dream of years past. So saying, he walked with the High Priest into the city and was conducted to the Temple, where Jaddua showed him the prophecies of Daniel which declared that a Greek would overthrow Persia. Thus was Judea saved from the fate that had overtaken Syria, Phoenicia and Philistia, even as verse 8 states in a few telling words.

It has, of course, been suggested by some authorities that Josephus was romancing a little when he recounted this story but there is really reasonable circumstantial evidence for its truth. It is a fact that after Alexander's visit to Jerusalem he conferred favours upon the Jews that were not conferred upon any other of his conquered nations. Something must have happened to avert the horrors of massacre and pillage which had been the invader's intention for Judea as for the other lands he subdued, and to change him into a beneficent patron instead. In any case, the terms of verse 8 were met; God had averted the threat of the army. With that the picture in Zechariah comes to an end. In history Alexander went on his way, besieged and took Babylon, overthrew the Persian dominion, continued in India, and finally met his death, but of all that no notice is taken here. Zechariah recorded sufficient to indicate the first outstanding event to concern Judea in times yet to come—the transfer of dominion from Persia to Greece, another step in the progress of the Divine Plan, eventually to culminate in the Kingdom of God.

The prophet now skips some three centuries and lights upon the days of the First Advent. He sees another King presenting himself to Israel for acceptance, not coming as did Alexander with all the pomp and pageantry of military power to establish his rule by force, but in peace to establish a rule founded upon love and persuasion. "*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion*" he cries in verse 9 "*Thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, upon a colt the foal of an ass*". It may be as is sometimes stated, that the traditional manner in which the kings of Israel entered upon their office was to ride into Jerusalem upon a white ass, although there is no specific instance of such a custom in the Old Testament. Asses were more common than horses in the earlier years of Israel's national existence, but by the time of David and onward horses were used for ceremonial purposes. Riding upon an ass might well be intended more as a symbol of humility—"lowly, riding

upon an ass". The remarkable correspondence between this verse and the action of Jesus just before his arrest justifies its application and therefore the ensuing passage to the First Advent and the reactions of Israel at that time. Verse 10 defines the peacefulness of his reign and its ultimate conquest—the war-chariot, the warhorse, the battle-bow shall be cut off; *"he shall speak peace to the heathen (nations): and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth"*—universal. This was the promise brought to the men of that day when He presented himself to them. *"By the blood of thy covenant"* said the Lord *"I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water"* (verse 11). This is addressed to that generation and the first impulse perhaps is to apply these words to the Mosaic Covenant, sealed at Mount Sinai fourteen centuries previously with the blood of sacrificed animals and now due to come to an end with the institution of something better on the basis of the death of Jesus Christ. But the Mosaic Covenant effected no release of prisoners, either at the First Advent or at any other time. It was in fact the failure of that Covenant to effect any real deliverance for Israel which paved the way for God's promise of a New Covenant that would achieve success where the old one had failed. Now although the real work of that New Covenant, the writing of God's laws in the hearts of men and their wholesale turning to him in repentance and dedication, is the work of the coming Millennial Age, it is true that Jesus referred to his coming death as the *"blood of the new covenant, ...shed for many for the remission of sins"* (Matt. 26. 28) and that by virtue of this same sacrificial death there is deliverance here and now, and has been since Pentecost, for all, whether Jew or Gentile, who believe. It may well be therefore that verse 11 is a reference to this fact, and that the "blood of the Covenant" there mentioned is a symbol of the death of Christ, the "Ransom for all". Those who did accept him at his First Advent are the prisoners who were delivered from the empty well or reservoir (this is the meaning of "pit" here) of the old system of Judaism.

"Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even to day do I declare that I will render double unto thee; when I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man" (Zech. 9. 12-13). This is the only instance in the Old Testament where the word "hope" has the definite article: the expression is properly "prisoners of the hope". St. Paul was a "prisoner of the hope". *"For the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain"* said he to the Jews of Rome (Acts 28. 20); *"Now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise"* when before Agrippa (Acts 26. 6). These "prisoners of the hope" were the men of Israel at the

First Advent, subject to alien powers but in their bondage directed to the stronghold of God's promise and the hope that one day their servitude would end and their mission as God's ambassadors to the nations be realised. Hence the promise that God would render to them "double"—not "*shenayim*" which means a double portion, but "*mishneh*" which means the second part, the complement of what has gone before. In the past they had endured sorrow and adversity, but in the future they would experience joy and prosperity. Isaiah voiced the same principle when he said "*For your shame ye shall have double...in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them*" (Isa. 61. 7). And with this stirring exhortation the prophecy leaves the First Advent behind and passes unrestrained into the mighty deeds of the Kingdom in power, the days of the Second Advent and the Millennial reign. Verse 13 marks the transition. "*When I have bent Judah for me...*" and so on. The time of the promised "double" is governed by that "when". A day is to come when God takes Israel—a restored and purified Israel—as his instrument. Using a military metaphor, He likens Judah to his bow, Ephraim the arrows, the sons of Greece to the armed might of this world, and the sons of Zion to the Holy Nation. But the Lord himself is the leader and his power is irresistible. Verses 14-17 declare that the Lord shall be seen among his people, implying full acceptance in faith and loyalty; His arrows go as lightning, his whirlwinds devastate the enemy. He defends his people, and the victory is so overwhelming that their rejoicing is as that of a feast of wine and their praises to God as though they had brought so many sacrifices to his altar that the bowls were brimming over with blood and flooding the horns (A.V. "corners") of the altar—a vivid metaphor taken from the ancient Levitical ritual. So the Lord their God will save them and Israel will be as the precious stones ornamenting the diadem upon his head or an ensign, a display lifted up for all to see. "*For how great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty!*" cries the prophet. "*corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids*" (v. 17).

(To be continued)

AOH



Ride on, ride on in majesty!
Hark, all the tribes, 'Hosanna!' cry,
O Saviour meek, pursue Your road
with palms and scattered garments strowed.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
in lowly pomp ride on to die:
O Christ, Your triumphs now begin
o'er captive death and conquered sin.

Henry Hart Milman

COME, LET US JOIN OUR CHEERFUL SONGS

With angels round the throne;
 Ten thousand thousand are their tongues,
 But all their joys are one.



Worthy the Lamb that died, they cry,
 To be exalted thus:
 Worthy the Lamb, our hearts reply
 For He was slain for us.



Jesus is worthy to receive
 Honour and power divine;
 And blessings, more than we can give,
 Be, Lord, for ever Thine.



Let all creation join in one
 To bless the sacred Name
 Of Him that sits upon the throne,
 And to adore the Lamb.

This hymn first appeared in ‘Hymns and Sacred Songs’ as long ago as 1707 by an Englishman named Isaac Watts. He was born in 1674 in Southampton into a non-conformist family and his father was twice imprisoned for his religious viewpoints. As early as 1698 Watts was a minister in an Independent church. His work was first published in 1705 and he left a huge body of work when he died in the London area in 1748. Hymns such as ‘When I survey the wondrous cross’ and ‘O God, our help in ages past’ have left a memorial as do more obvious memorials such as the one in Westminster Abbey.

The following verses in the Bible could have been in the mind of the writer:

Psalms 95. 1-2 O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.

Daniel 7. 10 Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.

John 1. 29 (NKJV) John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

Hebrews 1. 1-4 God...hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son,

whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

Hebrews 2. 7-10 Thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet...But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

Rev. 5. 8-14 Four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, ...And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; ...And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

Rev. 7. 9-12 Lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

Rev. 15. 3-4 They sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee.

A common tune for this hymn is Nativity which was written by Henry Lahee, born Chelsea 1826, died Croydon 1912.

WONDERFUL HANDS



A jockey commenting upon the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem said what wonderful hands Jesus must have had. From long experience he knew what it takes to control a sensitive animal amid a shouting crowd. The hands of Jesus laid upon the neck of the donkey which carried Him were able to control the animal amid deafening noise, waving branches and the continuous movement of people around Him. And this colt was ‘unbroken’. How did He do it? Those hands had developed in the carpenter’s shop of Nazareth, cutting roof beams and shaping yokes. Those sensitive fingers had touched sightless eyes of the blind and the burning hand of Peter’s mother-in-law. Those strong but tender hands had lifted a child for blessing. With those hands He had broken bread at the Supper with the disciples. The disciples had seen those hands, which had done so much for so many, torn by cruel nails on the cross, so that we might be healed from our sin. It was for us that “He hung and suffered there.”

Then on that resurrection day, the unbelieving disciples saw those hands again. In various ways He had made Himself known to His followers; in a familiar voice that called one by name, in the breaking of bread and in a miracle by Galilee Lake; but none could have been so charged with meaningful emotion as when in that upper room unbelieving eyes looked upon the nail pierced hands. “*Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.*” (John 20. 20) What joy thrilled their hearts as they saw those wonderful hands once more, lifted up in blessing His disciples at His departure on Olivet. Should we not greet each other as brothers and sisters did of old, “Hallelujah—the Lord is risen”—“The Lord is risen indeed”?

DN

*God is so interested in us that he
takes us one by one and arranges
for every detail of our life.
To him there are no little things.
The God of the infinite is the God of
the infinitesimal.
He cannot forget the saints whom
he has engraven on the palms of
his hands.*

songs of the nightingale

IF I BE LIFTED UP

“If I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” (John 12. 32)

The triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem (Matt. 21. 1-9) came not long after the raising of Lazarus at Bethany. It was no wonder a great crowd followed him especially as the Passover was just 5 days away thus swelling the crowds. Without fail year after year this ordinance of Jehovah was to be kept as a reminder of deliverance and salvation under the protection of the blood. How the people acknowledged Jesus as he rode upon the colt of an ass, an incident unusual in itself by our Lord's authority over nature, unbroken and still with its mother. It was perhaps no surprise to the disciples, hadn't the Lord stilled the angry sea and wind, and commanded the first fish that was caught to have a coin (tribute money) in its mouth? (Matt. 17. 24-27)

Old Testament Prophecy

One wonders how many if any would have been aware of the Zechariah prophecy (Zech. 9. 9) as the crowd spread their garments and palm branches before Jesus as he rode by:-

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy king cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass.” The inhabitants of Jerusalem (“Zion's Daughter”) indeed all of Israel were promised a king and the people lived in expectation. But was their King the kind that Zechariah and Isaiah sees? Behold “Thy king”, who comes to her—to Zion, for the good of the people of Jerusalem, to Israel he is just, and righteous, without sin and not only so, but as Isaiah (32. 1) describes “Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness”. He comes having “salvation”—a Saviour King—Deliverer and Redeemer.

Rejoicing

Therefore, there was real cause for rejoicing “Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest” (Matt. 21. 9). Hosanna meaning ‘save us, bestow blessing’. Had the people not acknowledged him, and had they listened to the Pharisees who complained and not done so the very stones would have shouted out in celebration so that the prophecy be fulfilled, in every jot and tittle.

Coming from the Mount of Olives approaching the city from the East, our Lord it is said entered by way of the ‘sheep gate’, that which sheep and goats came in for sacrifice and market. How fitting this seems. However,

as the people rejoiced and spread palm fronds the Prince of Peace knew his triumph would be short-lived.

Shutting up the Kingdom

Indeed, Jesus wept for the glorious city, and for the people misled by those who should have taught them in the ways of God, the Scribes and Pharisees. There were seven woes indicted upon the Pharisees (Matt. 23) by our Lord. They had been so quick to criticize him for sitting down with publicans and sinners, and felt they had no need of a spiritual physician themselves. All too often the words of Jesus are treated as just historical, the first of the woes is a case in question *“woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in”* (v. 13)

John (12. 42-43) also comments on the adverse influence of the Pharisees. *“among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God”*.

Gospel message

Which phase of the kingdom is this? And can some still enter in? Jesus says, *“The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.”* (Luke 16. 16) And we can see the connection with the apostle John’s testimony of our Saviour *“as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name”*. (John 1. 12) *“He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”* (John 5. 24)

Recent shutting up

In recent times there has been a doctrine which has closed the door i.e. *“shut up the Kingdom of heaven against (to) men (many)”* (Matt. 23. 13) howbeit perhaps not in the harsh manner of the Pharisees. Nevertheless, we are assured that it is impossible to *“shut up the kingdom of heaven”*, but like the Pharisees it is possible to hinder some who would believe and press to enter the kingdom. No outside agency would have prevented the apostle Paul from *“pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”*

There is only one hope of the Gospel and even if an angel from heaven

preach any other gospel let him be anathema. (Gal. 1. 8) Strong words. However, the Adversary may here have tried to prevent the ‘promised seed’, the Lord Jesus Christ and God’s purpose to separate to Himself a people for His name. It shall not fail for they are the very inheritance of God Himself.

Acts and residue of men

Acts 15. 17 uses the phrase the “residue of men”. This was the occasion that a Christian council was convened at Jerusalem to discuss certain important matters, that at first it seemed would split the church, but was wonderfully and harmoniously resolved and with good spirit.

It is to this occasion that the apostle Paul refers to in Galatians 2: when he says he went with Barnabas and Titus, and says “I went up by revelation” (v. 2) i.e. The Lord sent him with special revelations to communicate His will concerning Jew and Gentile. The Holy Spirit speaking through Paul and Barnabas so convinces the assembly that James was compelled to respond and makes one think that all these things were already there in scripture, ready to be brought out in the Lord’s due time (Amos 9. 11-15; Acts 15. 14-18)

What a powerful statement this is and for the first time a body of people are enlightened to the purpose of God respecting the nations. And the key expression “after this” (v. 16) i.e. after the work and the purpose of the Gospel age is completed and the fulness of the Gentiles come in, then and only then Israel returns to favour again.

It’s not only Israel’s ‘residue’ who have missed the call of this age, but all the Gentiles will have opportunity to call and seek after the Lord, and so receive of His wondrous grace. (Isa. 2. 3) Acts 3. 19-21 talks of a time of “refreshing” from the presence 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.”*

Restitution for all

Restitution is not a new message; it is one that runs through from Genesis to Revelation as does the efficacy of the Red thread, both of which have their glorious fulfilment in Christ Jesus our Lord. Our risen Lord alone was worthy to receive the Revelation from God. The only one worthy to open the book and to break the seven seals. i.e. within which was hid the mystery of the will of God. That in the dispensation of the fulness of

times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are in earth, even in him. (Eph. 1. 10)

When might this be? It is hidden but it will be as is preordained of God. So much of the unsearchable riches of Christ our Lord has been made known to those obedient to him. Our Lord's epistle is his Epistle to you and to me; his service to the things which must shortly come to pass, because it is only in recent times things pertaining to the end times have been revealed. Having received it from the Lord Jesus the angel revealed the things therein to John.

Revelation 7

From the great crowd prophesied, rejoicing at the coming of Messiah and spreading palms before the Lord Jesus, one is drawn to another wonderful prophecy, and occasion, similar in that this great crowd also have palms in their hands. (Rev. 7. 9-17) These things are an enlargement of those things revealed by the Holy Spirit at the council at Jerusalem. The apostle John after describing the sealed ones, the true 'Israel of God' and the specific number of 144,000 also mentioned in Rev. 14. 3 that he seals and is thus able to record the 'seed of the promise' since Pentecost. "Redeemed from among men, firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb." (v. 4) The work for the sealing of God's servants is finished and another work follows it. After this John says he sees a great crowd of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues which no man could number! The multitude are clothed in white robes and carry palm branches in their hands; tokens of triumph for they have every cause for thanksgiving and rejoicing.

First fruits & after fruits

The same James the brother of Jesus who spoke for the assembly at the council in his epistle (1. 18) when speaking of God, the Father "of His own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures." If there are first fruits, there must be as it were 'after-fruits'. Indeed, these after fruits are dependent upon the first fruits being harvested not forgetting the ancient and faithful worthies of Hebrews 11. Those "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." (v. 40)

Feast of Tabernacles

The scene reminds one of the Feast of Tabernacles, commemorating God's care and the gratitude of God's people for the harvest each year. For seven days the feast lasted, during which time the people took to

living in booths (tents), which were made of palm branches and olive and myrtle. All these natural things were for all; whether high born or not, as a reminder how they were dependent on the Lord when he brought them out of Egypt, when they lived in tents.

The 8th day was very special, a 'holy convocation'. 19 times we see this word in the Pentateuch, and it is always called 'holy'—a holy assembly or holy calling together—because it was the feast of the Lord. The feast appears so typical of the millennium when all enter into full blessing and that great 8th day a communion of the earth and heaven itself! Zech. 14. 16 reads *“And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.”* One can hardly imagine so many billions actually there, but every nation represented, restored to harmony which was broken in Eden. The human race is a Residue.

John in his vision sees the new Jerusalem—and hears also a great voice out of heaven. *“Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.”* (Rev. 21. 3)

In Rev. 20. 12 it says, *“I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”* Also, with the same thought in mind in Matt. 25. 31-32 and similar language *“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.”*

Vision in Isaiah

This vision is beautifully expressed by Isa. 49. 9-12: *“They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places. They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them. And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted. Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim.”* The remotest part perhaps China.

From the earliest it was God's wish and design to create man and that His tabernacle might be with them. In the garden God communed with Adam until such time as sin separated that ultimate relationship. But God had a way and a purpose to bring up his creation out of the miry pit, by the intervention and sacrifice of His only begotten Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

Work committed to the Lord Jesus Christ

The work of Restoration is committed to the Lord Jesus Christ because God has ordained it in that *“he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”* (Acts 17. 31) Especially at this time we are reminded of the authority vested in the Lord Jesus. The apostle Paul said, *“This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; (no more purification for sin) from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.”* (Heb. 10. 12-13)

2,000 years ago, this work began at our Lord's resurrection. Since that time, he has been winning the hearts and minds of people indeed who look upon Jesus as Saviour, friend and brother, having sat down because of the one offering for sin, the work of subduing his enemies began. All were enemies and under sentence because there were “none righteous, no, not one”! (Rom. 3. 10) “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly” (Rom. 5. 6) Yes, at one time we were without Christ aliens with no hope and without God in the world. (Eph. 2. 12)

Even the Jews who were never without Christ, Messiah of whom all the prophets spoke, they had all the oracles of God. They became enemies by their disloyalty as constant law breakers and even put to death their king, the Prince of Peace. “Yet now hath he reconciled”! (Col. 1. 21) Both Jew and Gentile. And “the time is come that judgement must begin at the house of God” (1 Pet. 4. 17). While our Lord remains seated on the right hand of the Father “waiting” for his enemies to be his footstool, the work for his people, his church, has been going on—that silent chiselling of each member; as advocate and Great Shepherd leading his brethren and helping them to “finish their course and keep the faith” that they might also gain the victory.

There is yet more work to do, in blessing the nations. Remember his promise “If I be lifted up I will draw all men unto me”. This is the work of a victorious and faithful Lamb of God, who came to save even those who spitefully used him. John 3.16 tells us that this was the great and

marvellous love of God for His creation. So that the lifting up of the Son on the cross for all, made possible the fulfilment of the promise concerning the blessing of every nation.

Similarly the apostle Peter, teaching in the name of Jesus of the resurrection, said “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted (i.e. lifted up – same word) with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” Acts 5. 30-31

Many still gaze upon the ‘lifted up’ Saviour and see the way of life, and are cured of the guilt of sin and its sting, and endeavour to “run the race that is set before them.” So then all who accept the message of the Gospel of grace, are and should be very eager to enter the kingdom.

ANC



OUR HUMBLE KING ISA. 53. 3

Not in a coach of gold and glass
The Master—he came riding past;
But he chose a humble beast,
Our reigning King—the Prince of
Peace.

They spread their cloaks upon the
ground,
And there was gladness all around;
They waved a palm branch—every
one,
All in homage—to God’s Son.

As to Jerus’lem he drew near
All the people—they did cheer;
They little knew, what they would do,
Before this special week was through.

For on that sad and bitter day,
They all did turn their face away;
They all deserted—left alone—
The Great Messiah—for God’s throne.

He came with love—he came to give,
He gave his life—that we might live;
Yet—multitudes, they knew him not,
So very few—a little flock.

Yes, carriages of gold and glass,
Belong to quite a different class;
For like the Master—we must be,
And follow in humility.

*Where Eagles Gather
Rosemary Page*



ONE LAMB IN THE MORNING & ONE AT EVEN

At this time of the year the thoughts of the Christian are often on the death of our Lord Jesus and one attempts for some moments at least to reflect upon the hours on the cross, the pain and getting to the point of death. Mark, the first of the gospels to be written records (15. 25) “it was the third hour, and they crucified him”. This is a plain statement from someone who it seems likely lived around Jerusalem and watched the events in real time. From verse 33 of the same chapter its clear there was darkness from the sixth hour to the ninth hour and at the ninth hour Jesus cried out uttering the words “my God, why hast thou forsaken me” was given a sponge of vinegar to drink and shouted once more and expired.

This account provides the most detailed account of the time of the crucifixion and the time he died. Is there any parallel in the Old Testament?

Exodus 29. 38-39 records when two lambs were to be sacrificed every day, it says “Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year day by day continually. The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even.”

This pair of sacrifices are mentioned later on in the Bible such as in Num. 28. 3-4. In the days of King David before Solomon’s Temple the morning and evening sacrifices are recorded as taking place while Zadok the priest officiated where the ark of the covenant was (1 Chron. 16 39-40). 2 Chron. 13. 11 establishes it was still being respected in the days of King Jeroboam and King Abijah. However it was necessary for King Hezekiah to appoint priests for the morning and evening sacrifices which indicates that it was not respected all the days of the kings. (2 Chron. 31. 3) The destruction of Solomon’s Temple and the 70 years of captivity would have removed this pair of sacrifices. This was not to last and Ezra (3. 3) records the restoration of the altar and the burnt offerings of the morning and evening sacrifices.

What time of day were these made? In Biblical times in places much closer to the equator each day remains about the same length of daylight. The first hour then would have begun at 6 o’clock in the morning. Unlike time in Britain where sunrise in London can be as late as 8.06 a.m. (G.M.T.) in winter to 3.42 a.m. (G.M.T.) and sunset can be as late as 9.21 p.m. when the sun sinks slowly during British Summer or Daylight Saving Time.

Josephus says, it was about the ninth hour, or three o'clock in the afternoon, that the daily sacrifice was offered. Others record that the evening lamb was slain at about 2.30 p.m. and placed on the altar at 3 p.m. as Mark records. This matches the time that Jesus died on the cross. Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.

The paschal lamb according to Exodus 12. 5-6 (RSV) was a lamb without blemish, a male a year old from the sheep or from the goats and it was kept until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel would kill their lambs in the evening. Josephus says they slew the Passover lamb from the ninth to the eleventh hour. The RSV footnote says that means in the Hebrew "*between the two evenings*". Gill states this as between when the sun begins to decline and when it sets. The sun begins to decline at noon and sets at 6 p.m. Therefore this means at about 3 p.m.

But what time was the morning sacrifice? Adam Clarke in his notes in his Bible in 1832 states the morning sacrifice was at 9 o'clock in the morning. This corresponds with the time stated by Mark that Jesus was lifted up on the cross.

Therefore this suggests a symmetry between the times the morning and evening sacrifice were placed on the altar with the time Jesus was placed on the cross and when he died on the cross as a sacrifice.



SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS. An Act of worship expressing submission to the deity and seeking his favour; in the biblical context the sacrifice was also atoning for his sins. The Hebrew word for sacrifice comes from the root meaning "to approach" and signified that which is brought near, or offered, to God. The nations surrounding the Israelites made human sacrifices but the story of Isaac was to show God's displeasure with such practice. Sacrifice is first mentioned in the story of Cain and Abel while for Noah and the patriarchs, it was an accepted form of worship. In those times, every religious cult included sacrifice and until the time of the Deuteronomic code, the only animals slaughtered by the Israelites were for that purpose. Once in their own land, the Israelites concentrated sacrifice in the Jerusalem Temple.

The Illustrated Dictionary & Concordance of the Bible
Wigoder

EASTER AND PASSOVER

The Greek word *pascha* “mistranslated “Easter” in Acts 12. 4 (AV) denotes the Passover (RV). The phrase “after the Passover” signifies after the whole festival was at an end. The term “Easter” is not of Christian origin. It is another form of *Astarte*, one of the titles of the Chaldean goddess, the queen of heaven. The festival of Pasch held by Christians in post-apostolic times was a continuation of the Jewish feast, but was not instituted by Christ. From this Pasch the pagan festival of “Easter” was quite distinct and was introduced into the apostate Western religion, as part of the attempt to adapt Pagan festivals to Christianity.” *Pascha* is “the Greek spelling of the Aramaic word for the Passover from the Hebrew *pasach*, “to pass over, to spare,” a feast instituted by God in commemoration of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, and anticipatory of the expiatory sacrifice of Christ”. (W. E. Vine)

Passover is used in various senses in the New Testament: of (1) the whole festival (John 2. 13; Heb. 11. 28); (2) the Paschal “Supper” (Matt. 26. 18-19); (3) the Paschal lamb (Mark 14. 12; compare Exod. 12. 21) and (4) Christ Himself (1 Cor. 5. 7). But it is that which stemmed from the Passover supper which particularly concerns us as Christians. While Luke’s gospel records Jesus having a special desire to keep what He knew would be His last Passover supper celebration as a Jew, He afterwards gave the elements which were then used a new significance. (Luke 22. 19-20.) The unleavened bread, He said, represented His body which was being given for them, and asked them to partake in future with this new meaning in mind—in remembrance of Him. The cup of wine, He said, represented the new covenant in His Blood, about to be shed for them—for the remission of sins (Matt. 26. 28).

Meeting annually at the season when the Jews are still celebrating their Passover, is not to remember the deliverance of Israel from Egypt but to remember Christ *our* passover, whom the Passover lamb typified. His sacrifice will in due time have accomplished a far greater deliverance for all mankind than the deliverance of the one nation from Egypt. Memorialising Him who in yielding up His life unto death did so that we might be delivered from sin and death unto eternal life.

In following the Jewish calendar many will meet in the evening after 6 p.m. for a commemoration of our Lord’s death. This date precedes Good Friday and Easter Sunday which also provides special reminders of Him who not only died but rose again. We by no means limit the significance

of Easter Sunday as on every other day, the Lord is risen and ever lives as our great High Priest to make intercession for us. And, as believers, we are risen with Christ and because of this are exhorted to set our affections on things above. May we enter more fully into our resurrection-life in Christ as we—

*“Extol the Lamb of God
The all-atoning Lamb”.*

By proclaiming the glorious fact that Jesus died for us and that it is our great and continual privilege to do this “until He come” when—

*“.....near thy heart upon the throne
Thy ransomed bride shall see
What grace was in the spotless Lamb
Who died to make her free.”*

Forest Gate Bible Monthly

*JESUS is the LAMB of GOD. He, the only perfect innocent One, allowed Himself to be helpless, to be taken...and cruelly killed so that through receiving the sacrifice of His life's blood we could be cleansed before God. JESUS says...
Freely My blood poured out for you. Cover yourself with it so that the trusting, innocent nature of the Lamb of God will replace your old, rotten nature. As you stand in the stream of forgiveness, you will find it a joy to forgive others...*



*“...conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth; knowing that you were...redeemed...with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished...the blood of Christ.”
(1 Peter 1. 17-19 NASB)*

*At the Name of Jesus
Sarah Hornsby*

FROM EMMAUS TO PAUL

On the road to Emmaus those two disciples when they realised that their master had been raised from the dead and especially when they realised his death was a necessary part of the Divine Plan for the salvation of man declared “Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures,” (Luke 24. 13-32). All these things the prophets of old had spoken. So also today hearts burn for learning the real significance of Jesus’ death.

“A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me...ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy...I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you” (John 16. 19-22) “Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.” (John 14. 19) Never man spake like this man! (John 7. 46)

His shed blood was necessary that from the fallen condition we might be restored to life, those that see who is the author of salvation by the giving of the Passover Lamb. In partaking of broken-bread the Christian memorializes the purity of the sinlessness of one who gave himself a ransom price for all mankind.

There is a blessing from this sacrifice offered to us during this Gospel age (Christian era) to all who have a hearing ear and an appreciative heart. And yet further favour to all who turn from sin and accept by faith the grace of God in Christ to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, and become over-comers to be associated with him in his millennial kingdom. In partaking of the bread, the merit from our Lord, the Christian appropriates to themselves the perfection of Jesus, which covers their imperfections. By faith then the new natures are justified by faith in His Son. We are given the privilege of partaking of our Lord’s cup for such is the grace of God who has called us up to a fellowship with the Lord Jesus. The same spirit which Jesus had to do the Father’s will must be in each one if they would be joint heirs with him. As Jesus said all who would sit with him must drink of his cup, deny self and be immersed into his death.

Jesus (John 6) clearly stated that he was the true Bread, which came down from heaven and extended the invitation to be part of that Loaf. In breaking the bread those symbolize the Lord’s broken body, so as to remember that the Church is too. The Loaf which we break is referred to in 1 Cor. 10. 16-17 which says “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the

communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.”

The cup of the vine is the life of our Lord laid down for us, and in becoming His disciples we accept the invitation to drink of His cup, to remain faithful unto death. For it was the Father’s Plan that the Lord Jesus should have many brethren and that they were known from before the foundation of the world. Do we really appreciate this? And all these would present themselves as living sacrifices to God. (Rom. 12. 1)

May we even more appreciate the memorial that it expresses the Divine love of God all love excelling which God had in His heart from the beginning, which is beyond understanding.

ANC

HIS WAY IS BEST

JUST why I suffer loss
I cannot know;
I only know my Father
Wills it so.

He leads in paths I cannot understand:
But all the way, I know, is wisely planned.

My life is only mine
That I may use
The gifts He lendeth me
As He may choose.
And, if in love some boon He doth recall,
I know that unto Him belongeth all.

I am his child, and I
Can safely trust;
He loves me, and I know
That He is just;
Within His love I can securely rest,
Assured that what He does for me is best.

Poems of Dawn

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

The first to experience resurrection to eternal life will be the Church, that assembly of dedicated Christians to the formation of which this Age has been devoted. These are to be the associates of Christ in the evangelical work of the next Age and on this account they must be with Him in the celestial world when that Age commences. Hence the first work of the Lord at the Second Advent, before the Messianic Age is inaugurated, is the raising to conscious life all Christian believers who have been laid aside in death in the past. *“The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout”* says the Apostle *“and the dead in Christ shall rise first”* (1 Thess. 4. 16). Lest there should be any misunderstanding as to the nature of this momentous event the same Apostle explains in 1 Cor. 15 and in 2 Cor. 5 that we must not expect this resurrection to be to human nature upon the earth. The hope of those who aspire to membership of the Church is that they shall be with their Lord in the celestial realm and this implies resurrection in celestial bodies adapted to that realm. John stresses this when he says *“It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is”*. (1 John 3. 2). The resurrection of the “dead in Christ”, therefore, takes place in heaven and not upon earth: the first conscious perception of those risen ones is of celestial surroundings and not earthly ones and the bodies through which they find expression are celestial and not terrestrial.

The resurrection of the Church thus accomplished, and the work of the Second Advent having progressed to the point where the “kingdoms of this world” have become the kingdom of Christ (Rev. 11. 15), the Lord Christ having asserted His power and taken control of earth’s affairs, and the Messianic Age initiated, nothing hinders the commencement of the general resurrection of mankind. In the more metaphorical of the Scriptural passages describing the resurrection this is pictured as the raising of the dead to stand before the “great white Throne” and be judged worthy either of everlasting life or irremediable condemnation; what must be realised is that this judgment is a process. Before the final decision is made, the irrevocable judicial decree enunciated, there must first be the bringing of each individual to a clear perception of the issues involved, and an opportunity to choose, untrammelled by the ignorance and misunderstanding which is the lot of virtually all in this present life. That there is definitely such a resurrection is abundantly clear from several sayings of Jesus. *“Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago...I say unto you, it shall be*

NOTICES

For the benefit of those who wish to keep the memorial of our Lord's death at the time nearest the anniversary, it is suggested that Thursday 18 April after 6 p.m. is the appropriate date and time.

**BIBLE STUDENTS SEMINAR DAY
SATURDAY 6 APRIL 2019**

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THEME: SALVATION (PHIL. 2. 12)

Please note the dates, which differ from those previously advertised!

Thanks to the anonymous donor.

more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you...it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee" (Matt. 11. 21-24). The Day of Judgment is consistently allied with the time that the Son of Man takes his seat upon the throne of His glory and gathers all nations before Him (Matt. 25; Rev. 20) but Jesus calls this same era the regeneration ("*in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory*" Matt. 19. 28 RV) and this word regeneration means the giving of new life. Thus the resurrection is the giving of new life to men with the opportunity to have it merge into everlasting life and this is why Jesus said that of all those who will hear His voice and come forth from the grave in that day, some will rise to a resurrection to life and some to a resurrection to judgment. There are those who make use of this day of judgment to become sons of God by faith in Jesus Christ and those who never do depart from their sin; this is shown in the respective destinies of the "sheep" and "goats" in the picture of the Last Judgment outlined in Matt. 25. Similarly in the vision of the Throne in Rev. 20 the dead, small and great, stand before God and are judged from the things written in the books; only those found worthy are permitted eventually to enter the Holy City.

Extract from '*The Resurrection of the Dead*' available free and on request from B.F.U.

In a flock with a good shepherd it is a strange fact that every sheep seems to feel the need every day of a few minutes' contact and fellowship with the shepherd. First one and then another will come out from the flock and stand beside the shepherd, sometimes rubbing its head against his knee while the shepherd fondles him, and this is repeated by every sheep in the flock. If sheep feel this need of fellowship with their master, how much more should we feel the need of daily contact with our Good Shepherd, who longs to pour out His love to us and to give us all the riches of His abundant grace.

Customs and Costumes in Bible Days
I E D Gollmick



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BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

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You...children of God...shine as lights in the world. (Phil. 2. 15 RSV)



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BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

FOUNDED 1924

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

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

The Bible Study Monthly is sent free of charge on request to all who are genuinely interested. It should never be sold for money.
Secretary & Treasurer: Nicholas Charcharos

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

The word "light" in English carries differing definitions. It can be an object such as an electric light or a street light. It can also be described as the opposite of darkness as well as the opposite of heavy. In other analogies it can be used to represent truth as opposed to error.

In creation, the first reference to light comes as early as the third verse of the Bible when God said "Let there be light: and there was light". And so it was and he "called the light Day". We are later informed He provided the sun for a light by day and the moon and stars for a light by night. (Jer. 31. 35)

God is light. Jesus is light. The revelator, John, tells us that God is light. (1 John 1. 5) The very same disciple recorded the words of our Lord Jesus who said "I am the light of the world". Even John the Baptist is described as a light, a burning and shining light although in this case it properly means "lamp" rather than light as is clearly stated in the Diaglott. (John 5. 35)



The Bible is a light as the psalmist says, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path". (Psalm 119. 105) This lamp has been luminating the world for thousands of years now and the books will be opened for many years to come if not forever.

Light as truth. Someone who has been falsely accused of a crime may say "let light be shone into the case" meaning when all the

full facts are made clear it will be obvious to all that he or she is innocent. Similarly the lies, deceit and treachery of Ziba were brought to light in the end in 2 Samuel for King David and Mephibosheth. It is in this form that light is recorded to bring out truth and dispel error. It is in such a form that Paul writes to the brethren in Corinth, Greece, that God who commanded light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts. (2 Cor. 4. 6) In a similar way it seems Nicodemus who came by night saw the light, when understanding that Jesus was the Messiah by the time he took care of Jesus' dead body with Joseph of Arimathea.

We as lights. Matthew (5. 14) records what was told on the mount that the disciples were the light of the world. Also Paul describes the children of God in Philippi, Northern Greece, as lights in the world. (Phil. 2. 15)

Therefore if we are lights what is our responsibility as lights? There are many things one could say but one action is to let our light shine that others may see our good works and glorify the heavenly Father. Another action is as we have opportunity do good unto all men especially the household of faith. (Matt. 5. 16; Gal. 6. 10) Other actions are to sing praises to him that hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light. But this just scratches the surface.

This all leads us to realms of light when the faithful in Christ Jesus will be with him in heavenly realms when all the saints will be gathered home.

LIGHTS ALONG THE SHORE

A LIGHT shone out in the cold and dim.
 And a hope rose high where despair had been.
 And the danger passed in that trying hour,
 Though they never knew in the lighthouse tower.

Poems of Dawn

Light enters the smallest opening accessible to it. It searches out the recesses that would otherwise remain dismal and dark, thus penetrating the gloom. It is a fact disclosed by science that it lays hold of the lurking germs of disease whether in the home or in the human system. Of Him it could not even stand in his presence.

Magazine content. What is published is believed to have a wide interest, but everything printed may not necessarily be the opinion of the editor and his colleagues.

NICODEMUS

He came by night, a most unusual proceeding for any man in that day, least of all a public figure and a Pharisee. There was no night life in those times, not even in metropolitan Jerusalem. As soon as the sun disappeared below the horizon and the swift darkness descended, never much later than six o'clock, work ceased and all good men retired into their houses, barred their doors, and remained there until the morning. Only thieves and robbers and a few homeless beggars were to be found in the open after that; in walking through the silent streets in the dark, Nicodemus was taking a decided risk and his motives might well be questioned should he fall in with one of the city watchmen. And it was quite unnecessary; Jesus was always accessible and Nicodemus would have had no difficulty in effecting a meeting and conversation with him during daylight hours. But he came by night.

There would seem little doubt that Nicodemus did not want his contact with the prophet from Nazareth to come under the notice of his colleagues on the Sanhedrin, the highest ecclesiastical court in the land. He was not only a Pharisee but also a member of that august body and apparently held high office therein. For that very reason his movements and contacts would attract more notice than those of lesser men; much as he wanted to talk with Jesus he did not wish his interest to be generally known. The risks and inconvenience of a nocturnal visit did not weigh so heavily with him as the possible consequences of a day-time call. So he came by night.

It is not said of Nicodemus, as it was said of Joseph of Arimathea, that he was "*a disciple...but secretly for fear of the Jews,*" (John 19. 38). At this particular time he was not a disciple at all—still an enquirer. But his attitude was probably much the same as that of Joseph. Both were highly respected members of the ruling class and both had much to lose if their interest in or connection with the Galilean prophet became known—the High Priest, President of the Sanhedrin, would see to that. It might be felt, to the detriment of these two, that other prominent and influential men had openly shown their leaning to Jesus or espousal of his mission without taking any such precautions. Simon the Pharisee, Jairus the ruler of the synagogue, the centurion whose servant was healed, Joanna the wife of Chuza the steward of King Herod's court; all these made no secret of their association with Jesus. It is true, however, that all these were in Galilee or elsewhere, remote from Jerusalem, whereas Nicodemus and Joseph were in Jerusalem where the situation was markedly

different from that in the north. Perhaps we should not be too uncharitable towards Nicodemus in his caution and lack of faith.

Even so, the brief glimpses we have of him in the Gospels do seem to picture a man timid rather than confident, not at all sure about the prophet who had taken his interest, not inclined to risk his reputation and his position by an open avowal of discipleship, and yet conscious that there was something in the message which found a responsive chord in the thoughts of his own heart and bid fair (seems probably) to satisfy some of his own unanswered questions. In short, Nicodemus might well have been very much like so many of us, not favoured with the courage and persistence of a Paul nor yet the outspoken aggressiveness of a Peter, nevertheless desiring in our hearts that in all things we might be more like Christ and serve him all our days.

Two and a half years later Nicodemus was still not ready for an open avowal. When, at the Feast of Tabernacles six months before the Crucifixion, the Sanhedrin had sent the Temple guard in an ineffectual attempt to arrest Jesus, and sat debating their failure, his voice was raised in Jesus' defence but only in a mild and half-hearted manner. "*Doth our law judge any man*" he queried "*before it hear him, and know what he doeth?*" (John. 7. 51). Even that was too much for the arch-plotters. "*Art thou also of Galilee?*" they enquired sarcastically; "*Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet!*" In their arrogance they betrayed their ignorance of their own Scriptures, for at least one prophet, Jonah, did come from Gath-hepher in Galilee, and some of Israel's greatest heroes, like Barak and Gideon, arose from that part of the country. It was not until the final tragedy that Nicodemus roused himself sufficiently to pay belated honours to the Lord whom he undoubtedly revered, when he joined with Joseph of Arimathea in effecting the entombment of Jesus, so saving his body from the unceremonious treatment usually accorded to executed criminals. He took his stand then, regardless of consequences, for the priestly fraternity were not likely to overlook this deliberate act of honour to the man they sought by every possible means to vilify and discredit and eventually encompass his death. From that time and forward it is virtually certain that Nicodemus was numbered among the avowed believers in Christ now formed into a definite community under the leadership of the Twelve.

Despite this apparent early luke-warmness, there must have been something in Nicodemus which Jesus recognised as pure gold, something which, although overlaid with Pharisaic prejudices and inhibited by

reluctance to risk loss of standing in his own circle, was capable of responding to the Gospel, for to him Jesus imparted some of his most profound themes. Here in the record of the conversation between these two on that quiet night lie embedded some of the basic principles of the Divine call of this Age—what St. Paul was later to term the “High Calling of God in Christ Jesus”. It is probable that at first he saw Jesus only as a prophet, somewhat in the line of the Hebrew prophets of old, able like some of them to perform miracles of healing and the like, and imbued with a burning message of reproof and encouragement as were they. It is not likely that at first he connected Jesus with the Messiah for whose coming he, with all Jews, looked. But Jesus must have seen in him the seeds of what could afterwards flower into definite understanding and acceptance of his Messiahship and on this account told him things he admittedly could not understand at the time but assuredly did later on.

First of all came the Lord’s quiet insistence “*Ye must be born again*”. (John 3. 7) This theme has been taken up and made into a cardinal tenet by some sections of the Church and the expression “a born-again Christian” is by no means unknown today. Some renderings suggest that the meaning is really “born from above” and it is said that the Greek can bear either meaning. But really it means to be born afresh, anew, from a new beginning, in the same sense in which Paul (2 Cor. 5. 17) declares that if any man be in Christ he is a new creation; old things are passed away and all things are become new. The idea behind the expression is that when one comes into Christ, by dedication or consecration of life to him, life commences anew by virtue of the power of the Holy Spirit; this in Scripture is spoken of as being begotten or born of the Spirit to a new life in Christ, which comes to full birth, or maturity, at the resurrection into the heavenly realm to be with Christ. Nicodemus, of course, could make nothing of this; trained as he was in the legalistic formulae of the Mosaic Law he could visualise the consummation of the Divine purpose only in terms of a reformed and righteous Israel maintaining that Law in its entirety and so claiming the right to rule the nations as predicted by the prophets. The idea of a rebirth into a new kind of life and another world, the spiritual, was quite foreign to him and he could make nothing of it.

By way of leading his thinking into right paths Jesus then indicated that something more than the Mosaic Law was necessary for entrance into eternal life. Nicodemus was familiar with the baptism by water—John the Baptist’s call to repentance and ceremonial cleansing, with its attendant immersion in water as symbol of that cleansing, was well known to him and he might even himself have submitted to baptism at the hands of John

and counted himself in full accord with God's purposes thereby. But Jesus had to tell him this was not enough, he must go on from repentance and sincerity to a full yielding of self to Christ, association with him in all that He stood for, full consecration of life and talents and all to his service, in expectation of eternal union with him in the life to come. So, said Jesus, he must be baptized, not only by water, but also by the Spirit, to come into that relationship with God. *"Except a man be born of water AND of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God"*. (John 3. 5) It is possible that Nicodemus could not make much of this either, at least at that time in his experience; it is certainly true that many who have sincerely accepted Christ in times since have never come to that understanding, and their Christian lives have been lived on the level of acceptance of his teaching and ethics, but not on that of unity and association with him.

The third important principle followed naturally from the first two but it had to be defined. There are two natures, fleshly and spiritual, and two worlds, terrestrial and celestial. Nicodemus knew only of one, and until he could be made aware of the other he would never enter into a real understanding of Jesus' mission and the call of the Gospel. *"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."* (John 3. 8). The wind as an illustration of the power of the invisible Spirit is apt enough, but in fact Jesus does not seem to have been talking about the wind. This is the only occasion out of three hundred and seventy occurrences in the New Testament where *"pneuma"* is translated "wind". In all other cases it is "spirit". In fact the Greek word for "wind" is *"anemos"* and so occurs thirty-one times. "Bloweth" is better "breatheth" and "sound" is "voice" (*phone*). What Jesus really said to Nicodemus was "the Spirit breatheth where it desires and thou hearest its voice, but canst not tell..." etc. Nicodemus was accustomed to trusting in the mechanical righteousness conferred by observance and sacrifice, the vision of God seen in the miracles and outward works and material evidences of Divine power. Jesus had to tell him that none of these things had any place in the world of the spirit, that good as they were in their own sphere, there was another in which the power of the Spirit was the motive force, the voice of the Spirit the channel of instruction, the world of the Spirit the ultimate goal, and only the spiritual senses could be receptive to these things. Just as his earthly mind and body was attuned and adapted to this terrestrial sphere, so by the power of the Spirit manifested in a new birth and new life must he expect a new mind and, eventually, a new body attuned and adapted to the celestial. *"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is*

spirit.” (v. 6)

And, of course, Nicodemus comprehended nothing of all this. “*How can these things be?*” (v. 9) he asked helplessly. Came the grave and mildly reproachful reply “*Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?*” (v. 10) Far less learned and educated men than he, fishermen and peasants and tax collectors, were already in a fair way to understanding, but that was because these had given themselves to Jesus and devoted their lives to him. Nicodemus knew too much of the Mosaic Law, too much of the traditions of the Talmud, too much of the wisdom of this world, easily to comprehend and accept what Jesus was saying. His superior position and knowledge became a handicap when he came into contact with the world of the Spirit.

So Jesus shifted his vantage ground and talked of other things, of faith, of belief, and the love of God which led to the sending of his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth should not perish but have everlasting life because God sent him not to condemn the world but to save it. And he who believes has life already. Far removed was all this from the old theology of Judaism, but perhaps it was in all this that Nicodemus saw the light. We do not know, we are not told, what was the immediate outcome, or in what state of mind Nicodemus wended his way home through the streets that eventful night. But the fact that Jesus took so much trouble with him and talked with him on such profound themes, and perhaps not least that the story is recorded in such detail for the benefit of future generations, maybe justifies the inference that Jesus saw in this man’s mind something which He knew would one day blossom into full discipleship. Perhaps, after all, it did need the miracle of the Resurrection to clarify all the doubts and perplexities and make Nicodemus God’s man for ever, as it did with James and others. Then, if not before, came full illumination on the quiet words spoken by Jesus to the questing man who came to him by night.

AOH



In service that his love appoints
 There are no bonds for me,
 For my inner heart is taught the truth
 That makes his children free;
 And a life of self-renouncing love
 Is a life of liberty.

songs of the nightingale
Harvest Activities

REPENTANCE, CONSECRATION, BAPTISM

“Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.” (Matthew 3. 15)

For some months John the Baptist had been engaged in his mission as the forerunner of Jesus, preaching: “Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Many in Israel had come to Jordan to be baptized of him, thereby giving a witness of their repentance of the sins which they, as members of God’s covenanted people, had committed under the Law Covenant made at Sinai. Then Jesus came requesting water immersion at John’s hands. (Matt. 3. 13-17).

The Baptist was amazed at the desire of the holy Jesus to be baptized by him, and expressed his reluctance to comply with the request of the Saviour. We read: “John forbad Him, saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?” The reply of our Lord to John’s expostulation (kindly protest) is contained in our text. Jesus revealed in these words to John that it was God’s will that He should be immersed. “Then he (John) suffered Him.”

The baptism of Jesus was not for remission of sin, for He had no sin. He was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners” (Heb. 7. 26) and was the One “Who knew no sin”. As He had committed no sin of which He had to repent, no witness by water immersion was necessary; yet He knew that for Him to do the Father’s will He must be immersed by John.

Why was Jesus baptized? It was the witness to His consecration to do the will of God which ultimately meant His death on the Cross. The will of God for Him, as was subsequently revealed, was that He should take the sinner’s place and die as an offering for sin, thereby redeeming the condemned race of Adam.

As John immersed Jesus in the Jordan, it symbolized His entire submission to the will of God which finally resulted in His death. This was of His own volition, the giving Himself as a ransom for all, to be testified in due time (Matt. 20. 28; 1 Tim. 2. 3-6).

Our Lord’s earthly experience from Jordan to Calvary culminated on the Cross when He cried: “It is finished”. After being in the tomb for parts of three days the Lord Jesus Christ was raised from the dead by the mighty power of God. The resurrection of our Lord was shown in the symbol of His baptism, when John raised Him from under the water of the Jordan.

The followers of the Lord Jesus Christ cannot give themselves as a ransom for the sinner race; this mighty work was completed by the Saviour. Nevertheless we are called by God to follow in the steps of the Master; and as He fulfilled all the will of His Father, so must we conform to God's will as He reveals it to us.

We believe, therefore, that the Saviour left us an example, and by following in His steps, we should give the witness of our consecration to God in precisely the same way as He did.

Water baptism was taught and practised by Jesus during His ministry on earth. (John 4. 1-2). It was also observed by the Apostles and the early Church; the record of the Acts of the Apostles shows this.

The Pentecostal sermon preached by the Apostle Peter concluded with an appeal to his hearers: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2. 38).

The result of Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God in the city of Samaria, was that many "were baptized, both men and women." (Acts 8. 12). When Philip, by the aid of the Holy Spirit had joined himself to the Ethiopian eunuch and had preached Jesus to him by expounding the prophecy of Isaiah 53, we read that the eunuch desired to be baptized, and Philip replied to his request: "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." The eunuch responded: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Then Philip immersed him in water, and Philip being caught away by the Spirit, the eunuch went on his way rejoicing. (Acts 8. 35-39).

Saul of Tarsus, when converted into the Apostle Paul, was baptized. When Peter had obeyed the Divine command and had witnessed concerning Jesus to Cornelius and his household, they were all baptized in the name of the Lord. (Acts 9. 17-18; 10. 44-48). The Apostle Paul also practised water immersion of Christian converts (Acts 18. 8; 1 Cor. 1. 16).

The Gospel proclaimed by Jesus Christ and the Apostles announced God's command to all men to repent. (Matt. 4. 17; Acts 17. 30). No creature has a right to sin; it is rebellion against God; and since the first advent of Christ, the command has gone forth to the sinner to repent. This command of God must be obeyed by all who would gain everlasting life through the sacrifice of the Saviour. Some hear the injunction of God to

repent of sin in the preaching of the Gospel during this present life, and being drawn of God (John 6. 37,44) respond to the Divine command. Such give their heart to the Lord in consecration, and receiving the Holy Spirit are begotten to the hope of the resurrection from the dead, and if they are faithful to their Lord they will experience the first resurrection and share the Lord's glory in the realms of light.

The residue of mankind will have to obey the command of the Creator to repent, if they desire to enjoy the blessings of restitution, which will be offered to each member of the human race, during the reign of Christ with His Church over the earth during the Millennial Age.

Repentance of sin implies deep sorrow for sins of the past and a complete turning from sin to serve righteousness. All who do this during the present age are drawn by God to Jesus as the Saviour and in Him, all such have revealed God's great love for mankind (John 3. 16-17).

It is the revelation of the love of God in Christ that draws the heart to Him, and we are constrained to reciprocate the Divine love by giving ourselves in consecration to God. (2 Cor. 4. 6; 5. 14-17). He loved us first and we respond to this love by devoting ourselves to Him. (1 John 4. 9,10,19).

The covenant of consecration, or giving our hearts to the Lord, is between ourselves and God alone, and the Bible reveals that having taken this step, we are begotten of the Holy Spirit. Jesus taught this when conversing with Nicodemus (John 3. 1-15). "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." This is the Christian's earnest of eternal life.

The Apostle Paul in the sixth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans expounds the significance of consecration to God as baptism into Christ. This is the real baptism of which water immersion is the symbol and witness. (Romans 6. 1-5). The teaching here is that those who have given their hearts to the Lord in consecration have died to sin; and that like as Christ was raised by the glory of the Father, so the Christian should walk in newness of life. He here refers to the Christian having died to sin and from henceforth experiencing the newness of life, the resurrection power in the life.

The resurrection power in the Christian life is the result of the rich indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and this will produce the fruit of righteous-

ness unto holiness, for without holiness shall no man see the Lord. (Hebrews 12. 14).

God has made full provision for our holiness in the Cross of Christ; the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; our union with Christ; our Lord's present ministry for His people; the Bible, the Word of God; the creation of the new man; the discipline of our Father, and the second coming of Christ when the Church will be glorified and enter into the glorious work of blessing of all mankind. Thus the Lord Jesus Christ through His cross, our union with Him, His present ministry for us and His glorious return, provides all needed grace for our living for Him.

Our Christian life will be seen by all with whom we come in contact. We shall, "as we have...opportunity, ...do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith," (Gal. 6. 10) and keeping the Divine commandments will follow the Lamb whithersoer He goeth.

The Forest Gate Church Bible Monthly

TAKE MY LIFE AND LET IT BE—A HYMN

*Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;*

*Take my silver and my gold—
Not a mite would I withhold;*

*Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.*

*Take my intellect and use
Ev'ry power as Thou shalt choose.*

*Take my hands, and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love;*

*Take my will, and make it Thine—
It shall be no longer mine:*

*Take my feet, and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee.*

*Take my heart—it is Thine own;
It shall be Thy royal throne.*

*Take my voice, and let me sing
Always, only, for my King;*

*Take my love; my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure-store;*

*Take my lips, and let them be
Fill'd with messages from Thee.*

*Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, ALL for Thee.*

Alexander's Hymns No. 3.

This is one of the most treasured hymns of Frances Ridley Havergal (1836-1879) that has stayed the test of time since her death about 140 years ago. She wrote it in 1873 in 11 stanzas of two lines to which a twelfth was added.

The following verses could have inspired the writer;

2 Chron. 29. 31 Hezekiah...said, Now ye have consecrated yourselves unto the LORD, come near and bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of the LORD...the congregation brought in sacrifices and thank offerings; and as many as were of a free heart burnt offerings.

Isaiah 6. 8 I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

Philippians 1. 20-21 According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Romans 12. 1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.

Luke 21. 2-3 He saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all.

Philippians 3. 14-16 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

1 Peter 4. 1-2 As Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

Psa. 40. 8 I delight to do thy will, O my God:...thy law is within my heart.

Matt. 6. 20 Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.

John 21. 17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

Common tunes for it are Hendon and Nottingham (Mozart). Hymnary.org reckons that the writer could have selected her father's tune Patmos.

CHOSEN IN HIM

These words appear in the Ephesians 1. 4. The first question to ask is “To whom was the Apostle Paul writing”?

When you hear the postman knock followed by the sound of several letters dropping on the floor do you immediately pick them up and open them or do you look at the address on the envelopes? I must confess that I usually look at the address but nevertheless have not always done so which on one occasion led to an embarrassing situation. Fortunately the intended recipient was most understanding and my apologies quickly waived aside.

Here the Epistle was addressed to the “saints” and “faithful in Christ Jesus”. Other Epistles were not so addressed. But just as a letter addressed to us can contain information of interest and maybe of importance to someone else so also can a letter addressed to someone else contain information for now. Peter, for instance, addresses his first epistle to “the Sojourners of the Dispersion” (Diaglott) referring to believers amongst the scattered Israelites, but here are some of the statements which are so important, so meaningful and so comforting. James similarly addresses “the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad”. Even Paul on occasions addresses the “Ecclesias” (Diaglott) as for instance at Corinth and Galatia.

But here there is none of that. Just “saints and faithful” and the question is “Does this expression refer to us?” Some may say something like ‘I think it refers to a class, but whether I am in that class I cannot say’.

There are some believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who are not unduly interested in Paul’s later Epistles, which were written whilst in prison especially this one so-called to the Ephesians. Some of these would even say that they prefer the Corinthian epistles with their emphasis upon the gifts of the Spirit. This Epistle is loved because it speaks to us of such high and holy things, such deep and wonderful things which the heart of man could never conceive.

It is a pity that the understanding of the word “saint” still suffers from the errors of Catholic Theology. Depicted as one dressed in a long flowing robe, usually with a holier than thou facial expression and a halo around the head, usually given this title for the works done and often for allegiance to the doctrine of Rome. The “saints” addressed here are such because of what **God** has done and are made such by the call of God,

although there is a manner of life that “becometh” saints. (Eph. 1. 4; Eph. 5. 3-5).

It is also said of these “saints” that they were “faithful” or “full of faith” and the word is sometimes translated “believing” so that in John 20. 27 it says “Be not faithless, but believing”. It is said in 1 Cor. 4. 2 that “It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful”, that is not only believing what God says but faithful in proclaiming it, holding it as a stewardship before God, and such were the saints addressed here.

Again “Does this expression refer to us?” Most have faced up to the truth of Rom. 6. Reckoning ourselves dead unto sin but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord, having been baptized into his death. There is no outward change in the flesh, but just believe it is a fact because the Holy Spirit of God has brought conviction into our souls. God has transferred us out of Adam (from whom we all received our natural life in this world) into Christ from whom is derived that spiritual life of the Ages.

So here is the answer to the question. As long as we believe we...are... some of the saints and the faithful in Christ Jesus, to whom Paul addresses this Epistle. Nevertheless, alas, it is undoubtedly true that many very dear Christians, perhaps unconsciously turned their backs or closed their eyes to the truths of Romans 6 etc... think it a kind of presumption to take those words in verse 1 to themselves. Maybe through excessive introspection or prolonged bodily weakness and affliction or through presenting a listening ear to the subtle attacks of the Adversary and saying in effect, that having begun in the Spirit they are to be made perfect in the flesh, such are putting themselves back under law and are therefore not free to enjoy the wonderful truths of this Epistle.

As believing, then, that we are some of the saints and faithful IN Christ Jesus let us just take a look at this expression “In Christ Jesus”. In verse 4 we are “chosen in Him” (vv. 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13). It is all “IN HIM” and outside this chapter or even this Epistle there are many more examples.

So in verse 4 we are told that God has chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world. What a tremendous statement this is. Let us notice first of all that this expression “before the foundation of the world” differs considerably from another expression often used in Scripture “from the foundation of the world”. Things which took place or decisions which were made before a new Government in this country was formed could be quite different from those after it was formed. The former term

although used elsewhere being particularly applicable to this Epistle it is certainly significant and, a study of the two terms is most rewarding.

But before going any further let us just take a look at this word “foundation” as used in the A.V. The usual Greek word translated “foundation” is *themelio* as in Eph. 2. 20 “the foundation of the apostles and prophets” and also 1 Cor. 3. 10 and 2 Tim. 2. 19 and in Heb. 1. 10 “Thou...hast laid the foundation of the earth”.

But the word used here in verse 4 and all the other passages where the words “before” or “from” the foundation of the world occur a totally different word—“*kataboles*”—is used, which carries the meaning of “casting down”, “overthrow” or “disruption”. Therefore some time after the world was created it was subjected to a tremendous catastrophe, a theory which more and more scientists are coming around to believe, because of geological finds etc... and which was maybe of Satanic origin. It was, then, even before this overthrow of the world that we were chosen in Christ.

Christ was with the Father and was daily His delight before the world was. (Prov. 8. 30) In that High Priestly prayer our Lord Jesus says to His Father “Thou lovedst me before the foundation (or overthrow for it is the same word “*kataboles*”) of the world”. (John 17. 24) Now, in this epistle was revealed for the first time by the Apostle Paul that great secret previously hid in God of a joint body, the Head in heaven and the members of His body chosen from the Adamic race here on earth for a time whilst “in spirit” seated together with Him in the “heavenlies” until such time as they shall be with Him in reality, their bodies of humiliation transformed and made like unto His body of glory.

How wonderful all this is. And how otherwise could it be so than by being IN CHRIST, for later in this verse 4 it is in order that “we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.” The truth is this takes us back to a time before Adam was created, let alone the temptation and the fall. In 2 Timothy 1. 9 Paul tells us it was before *aionian* times. (Diaglott)

Consequently upon God having chosen us in Christ He has also blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places as we are told in verse 3. This expression “in heavenly places” which is a translation of the Greek “*en tois epouranios*” occurs five times in Ephesians as the Diaglott shows but nowhere else in the whole of Scripture.

It is true that the word “heavenly” (Greek *epouranios*) occurs quite often, for we read of “Heavenly Father”, “heavenly gift” etc... but here and elsewhere it is used of the place of origin or of character. Even in the case of the “Heavenly Jerusalem” as it says of it coming down from God out of heaven but we do not read of it ever going back. With the fuller expression, however whatever is spoken of is “IN heaven”.

The five references of “*en tois epouraniois*” are:-

1. Our spiritual blessings are in heaven (1. 3)
2. Christ is seated at the right hand of God in Heavenly places (1. 20)
3. We are (in spirit) seated with Him in Heavenly places (2. 6)
4. We are a spectacle unto principalities and powers in heavenly places (3. 10)
5. Therefore our conflict is with these principalities and powers which are in these heavenly places (6 .12 margin)

So we are called upon to believe (as the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus) that God has chosen us, in Christ, before the overthrow of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love and (only “in Christ” could we possibly be that) and only “in Christ” all spiritual blessings—where?—in the heavenlies.

All have a sense of unworthiness especially when considering the holiness of our great God. We wouldn't love the Lord if that were not true? And as we try to “comprehend...what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ” (Eph. 3. 18-19) as Paul says, the mind boggles and we are lost in wonder, love and praise. The purpose of it all is “that we should be to the praise of His glory” (Eph. 1. 12,14). We have merited nothing, for all is by grace and not of works. Surely it must call forth our praise.

*Sing of the wonderful story,
sing of the word of His grace,
Unto the praise of His glory,
He giveth poor sinners a place.
Now bless'd with all blessings
in Christ who is seated above
Accepted in the Beloved, holy
and blameless in love.*

*Sing of God's wonderful purpose
which in His Word is made known,
Chosen in Christ unto sonship,
before the world was o'erthrown
Oh! Wonderful glory, angels
might envy the place
Given to us Gentile sinners,
saved and made meet by His grace.*

It is not of works because all is by grace. Nevertheless that we are “created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them”.

There is really no difficulty and certainly no contradiction here—"not of works"—"unto good works." Good works done in order to earn salvation are quite different from works done after we have salvation. The former are works of the law the latter works of grace, and the law was brought in by Israel's defection, their presumption and self-conceit.

The story of the Pharisee and the Publican illustrates this very well. Saul was a learned, clever and resourceful man, but he was also a firebrand. "Give me another law to keep and I will keep it" was his attitude of mind. Arraigned by God on the Damascus Road blinded and made helpless he was made to see that he could do nothing, and it needed a long period of training before God could use him and manifest through him the good works which He had ordained he should do.

Then again how different were his works before conversion to those after. Before conversion they were more akin to the mandate given to Jeremiah "to pluck up and destroy" but after conversion to "plant and to build" Jeremiah's other mandate. In the latter Paul became gentle, as a nurse with her children, enduring afflictions, exercising patience and long-suffering and could even tell his beloved brethren to be "followers of me, even as I...am of Christ" and "those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, DO." All because he knew that "God" was working in him "to will and to do of His good pleasure", which was, to perform the good works which God had before ordained he should do. (1 Cor. 11. 1; Phil. 4. 9; Phil. 2. 13)

Let's rest in our allotment as seated together with Christ in the heavenlies and the sting is taken out of any taunts which the Adversary may make. Look at things from God's point of view, remembering that His thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are our ways His ways (Isa. 55. 8). Remembering that God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; the weak things to confound the things that are mighty; the base things and things that are despised. (1 Cor. 1. 27-28) It is by choosing such that He can make known through them to the principalities and powers in the heavenlies His "manifold wisdom" (Eph. 3. 10).

There is a story in the O.T. which gives a lovely picture of this unmerited and unearned favour shown to one for another's sake. It is found in 2 Samuel 9. In verse 1 King David asks if there is anyone left of the house of Saul that he may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake. "Yes" said Ziba, Saul's servant "He has a son, Mephibosheth". This young man was dropped by his nurse when he was five as she fled on hearing of the death

of Saul and Jonathan. (2 Sam. 4. 4) So he was certainly limited in what he could do. Moreover he was born of the rebellious house of Saul, and called himself a “dead dog” and when David sent and fetched him they found him at Lodebar which means “no bread” or “no pasture”. As such he is typical of us far-off Gentiles “having no hope, and without God in the world”. (Eph. 2. 11-13)

But, behold the miracle. The king calls for him. “Mephibosheth—Fear not”. The first thing Jesus does is to take away our fear. “Fear not”, (v. 7) David says “for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father’s sake...and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually” and it means “continually” for verse 11 adds “as one of the king’s sons”. So Paul tells us that God has adopted us as His own sons, so God found us and sent His spirit into our hearts, just as this young man was sent for and fetched, accepted in the Beloved, forgiven for Christ’s sake so we have been seated together with His only begotten Son in the Heavenlies.

We are, in ourselves, quite unworthy, just like that poor young man. “What is thy servant” he asks “that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?” (v. 8) But he didn’t turn away. He didn’t reject the proffered blessing and return to his own home of “no-bread”. He gazed with love upon the king and then bowed in reverence and no doubt with his heart full of joy accepted the position and honour that was freely given to him, and we are called upon to do the same. Because the soul of David had been knit to the soul of Jonathan, and they were as one, so in his death. David showed kindness to another of his family. Thus does our Father, for Christ’s sake and since His death look upon us and accepts us as “in Him”. All this then was the joy of Mephibosheth as he sat at the king’s table, day after day, gazing upon the king who we are told was “ruddy, and...of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to”, (1 Sam. 16. 12) and a man after God’s own heart. (Acts 13. 22) No doubt Mephibosheth took a pride in his appearance then.

But there came a time when Mephibosheth’s loyalty was to be tested as inevitably ours is likewise. The story is told when subsequently Absalom, David’s son, rebelled against him and stole the hearts of the men of Israel causing David to flee into exile with his faithful followers. David’s sufferings at this time were probably the worst he ever had to endure. But where is Mephibosheth? This is what David wants to know and asks the question of Mephibosheth’s servant, Ziba whom he met as he was fleeing and who had brought David presents of two asses and ample provisions. Why wasn’t he beware of such gifts and exercise better judgment? For in

the heart of Ziba was black deceit. “A wicked man taketh a gift out of the bosom to pervert the ways of judgment” (Prov. 17. 23) Perhaps, after all there were reasons and in any case David was in great extremity.

However, he told David that Mephibosheth remained in Jerusalem and added he had said “Today shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father”. (2 Sam. 16. 3) What a slander. Far from it being true, whilst the city of Jerusalem rejoiced at David’s flight Mephibosheth would have none of it. He kept himself separate and mourned for the king who had come to mean so much to him. Yet David gave to his deceiving and slanderous servant all his property to such an extent his true judgment had been warped.

But behold the sequel to it all, which carries such a beautiful lesson. The day came when David was received as king in Jerusalem and all the lies, all the treachery and all the deceit was brought to light. 2 Samuel 19. 24-30 records how throughout the time of the king’s absence Mephibosheth remained loyal to him. If he was denied the presence and gazing upon that lovely countenance then he cared not to seek the approval of any who had rejected him and caused him to flee. He couldn’t forget what he was by birth and what the king had done for him. Neither should it be forgotten what we are in Adam and what God has made us to be in Christ. What a devoted person Mephibosheth was. Property and a claim to possession in the land? What is that to me? The king has returned. In this does my heart rejoice. I am satisfied.

We too have been chosen—chosen in Christ because we have been and are loved by the Father, chosen to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Why should we mind then if we have not been allotted an inheritance in a restored earth, nor yet it maybe in the Heavenly Jerusalem for we can rejoice in the knowledge that we shall be to the praise of His glory and when Christ shall appear then shall we also appear with Him in the highest reality of glory—and be satisfied then.

JS

E’en sorrow, touched by heaven, grows bright
 With more than rapture’s ray,
 As darkness shows us worlds of light
 We never saw by day.

Poems of Dawn

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (Matt. 5. 16).

A sermon of an old-time famous preacher, Charles Simeon, has this passage: *“If your life be not as becometh the Gospel of Christ, the world will despise religion as a worthless unproductive thing, and those who profess godliness will be apt to catch the infection and to sink into lukewarmness.”* Is this one reason for the loss of faith and zeal which many bemoan in these trying days? Is it that the world’s unbelief and scorn as regards our message, reflected back to us, of itself induces a growing loss of zeal and even of conviction, resulting in a lack of enterprise and a resultant settling down in the social comfort of our fellowship and a waiting for the Lord to set up His Kingdom and take His Church to heavenly glory without being concerned any longer with the manifesting of the outward characteristics of the salt of the earth, lights in the world, and a city set on a hill?

It would seem so in some cases at least. Advancing age can justify some cessation of active service; the more strenuous and trying conditions of this distressful period involve a certain restriction of opportunity; the fact of decreasing numbers within the fellowship renders effective co-operation increasingly difficult. None of these things would be seriously argued by any of us if our Master plainly appeared before us to exhort us, as He did His own disciples, that we go on in life, in whatever circumstances and under whatever disadvantages we may be placed, *just showing how a Christian can live!* In so many connections we fail to manifest that in our day-to-day dealings with our fellows. We fail often enough with our own brethren, and how much more with the world. And it brings leanness into the soul.

We tend to view our Christian life from too intellectual a viewpoint. Even our entrance thereinto is carefully prescribed for us in technical terms; repentance, justification, consecration, sanctification, glorification; and too often the whole matter is presented to the immature believer as though he is invited to enter into a commercial agreement with God. Cold as ice, and about as inviting! And all the time we are conscious—or ought to be conscious—of the warm, vibrant words *“Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not...a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”* (Heb. 10. 5; Psalm 51. 17)

This is the source from which we must get the oil for the light, the virtue for the salt, the power to raise that city to its elevation on the hill; here, at the foot of the Cross, where repentance and determination, contrition and hope, renunciation and consecration, go hand in hand. Not in the emotionless formalism of the detached acceptance of a cold invitation “if ye do *this*...I will give you *that*” but in the spontaneous, eager realisation of tender, compassionate tones “My son, give me thine heart...who will go for us?”, lies the power that will make us to “shine forth as the sun” here and now in the sight of all men. In that experience, and that alone, shall we realise what was in the mind of the “beloved physician”, Luke, when he beheld the fellowship of the Early Church and wrote of them, “*Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*” (Acts 2. 47) Is it any accident that those two phrases are associated so intimately together?

AOH



No need of the sun in the city to come,
The light of the world is Jesus;
All nations shall walk in the light of the Lamb:
The light of the world is Jesus.

John's Gospel begins with the announcement that the life of Jesus is the true light in the darkness to enlighten every man who receives Him. JESUS says...How bold and attractive is a candle shining in a dark room. I shine in you. I burn in you so that those who still walk in darkness can see Me and be drawn to Me. Do not quench or cover the flame.

Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”

John 8. 12 NKJV

*At the Name of Jesus
Sarah Hornsby*

PRAYER AND THE BIBLE

Part 14

The Revealmnt of Contests in the Spirit Realm

There is an influence connected with, or emanating from, prayer, which overcomes the resistance exerted by evil spirit beings. The disciples rejoiced when they perceived that the demons were subject to them through Jesus' name. (Luke 9. 1; 10. 17,20) There is record of one prominent instance, however, where an evil spirit defied their authority; and it is important to consider what Jesus replied when asked to explain the cause of this failure.

We remind ourselves of the origin and history of the demons. These invisible beings are the angels, the "sons of God," who sinned in the days that were before the deluge. They kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation; and materializing co-mingled with mankind. Therefore God, when bringing in the flood upon the old world of the ungodly, cast them into "Tartarus," that is, the earth's super incumbent atmosphere, there delivering them into "chains of darkness" to be reserved unto judgment. (See 1 Pet. 3. 18-20; 2 Pet. 2. 4; Jude 6; Gen. 6. 2) These fallen angels or demons (misnamed "devils" in the Authorized Version) are frequently referred to in the Scriptures. They "possess" men; and through spiritualistic mediums they impersonate the dead, thus bolstering up Satan's lie that the dead live, and denying the truth of God's Holy Word. (Psa. 6. 5; 115. 17; 146. 4; Eccl. 9. 5,10; Job 14. 21) Under the law of Moses the act of communing with such as had "familiar spirits" (mediums) was punishable with death.—Lev. 19. 31; 20. 6,27; Deut. 18. 9-14; 1 Chron. 10. 13,14; Isa. 8. 19

As our Lord Jesus had authority to exorcise the demons, and as he delegated the like power to his disciples, it is clear that they have, and do still, hinder the establishment of God's will among men. The host of unclean spirits must be driven forth from their illicit control, before the world can have freedom to experience the blessings of Christ's reign. For this reason we take cognizance of Jesus' reply to the anxious question of his disciples regarding their inability to cast out a certain demon—"He said unto them, 'This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer.'" (Mark 9. 17-29) It was of a particularly malignant and tenacious order, defiant of those who, weak in faith, lacked the requisite authority from God. Hence the necessity for prayer, that the unseen power of the Almighty should enforce the word of command, and compel the evil spirit to obey.

Jesus had just descended from the mount of transfiguration, where he had

been in communion with God by prayer, when he performed this miracle. The Scriptures inform us that it was “as he prayed” that his wonderful transfiguration came. (Luke 9. 29) “The fashion of his countenance was altered,” we read; and when afterwards he drew near to the multitude at the foot of the mountain the people were greatly amazed, and running up could not forbear saluting him. (Mark 9. 15) The dumb and deaf spirit was powerless to resist the behest of Jesus, on whom the might and majesty of God had come in response to his fervent prayer of faith in the mount. (2 Pet. 1. 16-18) The fallen angels knew Jesus, as also they know his followers; and the spiritual potency of the sacrificing spirit begotten sons of God causes them distress.—Matt. 8. 29; Luke 8. 31; Acts 16. 16-18; 19. 13-17

The individual energies of the “firstborn,” whose names are written in heaven, are not now to be directed so much against those demons in close intimacy with humanity (the “foul spirits,” and “familiar spirits,” are in all probability of the lower order of the adversary’s invisible minions), but against the keener, directing intelligences in Satan’s kingdom of darkness. These higher spiritual “governments, authorities, and powers” of the evil one are intent upon disarranging the orderly working of Jehovah’s Plan of Salvation, and with seeking by “crafty ways” to divert from the main purpose the unique spiritual power of God’s people. (Eph. 6. 10-12) The Apostle therefore urges us to put on the whole “armour” of God, and then to *pray with all prayer*. (Eph. 6. 18) It is evident from Paul’s words that we who are new creatures in Christ Jesus, embryo spirit beings, must have that special spiritual protection likened to armour, that we may be impervious to the attacks of the enemy. Thus equipped we stand in security while, by prayer, we establish every feature of our heavenly Father’s will, and thus undermine and in due time cause the complete ruin of the stronghold of the god of this world.

The organized efforts of Satan to thwart God’s great Plan by openly destroying the Bible, counteracting its holy influence through misrepresentations, or boldly raising obstacles to its study among those who desire its direct instruction and guidance, have proved futile in face of the vigilant prayers of the faithful children of God. The Scriptures have therefore been preserved throughout the centuries; and the details of the Plan when revealed and noted have been fulfilled in answer to prayer according to the Divine arrangement. (Matt. 9. 36-38) When his subtle machinations fail, the adversary often seeks by violence to prevent the effectual prayer of faith from ascending to God. He will even intercept the Divinely appointed spirit messengers, in an endeavour to disorder the Plan of the Almighty.—Jude 9

The tenth chapter of Daniel furnishes us with an indication of how our continuous petitioning to the heavenly throne may ensure the victory. If we ponder the things recorded in this portion of the Word of God, we shall perceive here the slight raising of the veil, momentarily showing the nature of those contentions for and against Jehovah which obtain in the spirit realm.

We read that Daniel, in order to acquire understanding of his important vision, prayed to God, and persisted therein three full weeks until the desired revelation was granted. The angel (Gabriel) who was sent from the heavenly courts in response to Daniel's pleadings, explained to him that; "From the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But 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. Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days."*(vv. 12-14 AV & RSV) Then, after giving Daniel the elucidation of the vision, the angel continued: "Knowest thou wherefore I am come unto thee? And now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come. But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince."*(vv. 20-21)

Michael is our Lord Jesus Christ in his pre-human existence, the Archangel or chief of all God's spirit agencies, the prince whom Jehovah appointed when dealing with His covenanted people Israel. The prince of the heathen nation of Persia, who so boldly hindered the angel Gabriel for twenty-one days until Michael intervened and engaged him in battle, can have been none other than Satan. For the evil one was aware that the explanatory message entrusted by God to Gabriel, and which was to be unfolded to the beloved Daniel in answer to his earnest prayer, was in reality a prophetic history of the outstanding features of the future Gentile

*NOTE: The word "remained" in verse 13 of the tenth chapter of Daniel, as given in the Authorized Version, is not the correct reading of the Hebrew original—see Rotherham's translation which has the rendering: "left him"; that is, Gabriel left Michael to fight the prince of Persia, while he continued on his journey to the praying Daniel to whom he delivered his message. This message is detailed in the eleventh and twelfth chapters of Daniel. The division of the narrative into chapters in the Authorized Version tends to obscure its continuity. The entire record from chapter 10 to the end of the book is more clearly followed in the modern English translations by Rotherham, and by Fenton. For a satisfactory exposition of Daniel's prophetic visions, as well as of the general Biblical Plan of God, we especially direct attention to Studies in the Scriptures by Charles Russell.

dominion, wherein was revealed the uprising of the Antichrist, Satan's masterpiece. The Devil undoubtedly "sensed" danger in this far-reaching revelation, even if he was unable to comprehend its exact meaning, and hence his efforts to hold it back in the hope that Daniel might through faintness cease his petitioning, and thus break the necessary prayerful attitude.

Because of the steadfastness of this servant of God, we of the Gospel Age are enabled to discern in the angel's explanation the successive steps by which Satan brought into active operation his lying counterfeit of Christ's glorious Millennial reign of righteousness. By the carefully arranged details of this revelation, also, we can follow the appointed times and seasons, and perceive that the fall of Satan's empire is sure, and was foreknown by the great Jehovah. For it was not so much for his own immediate benefit that Daniel was granted the answer to his prayer (he was told he must wait till the end of the days), but rather for the Lord's spiritual children who live at the close of the long period of the Gentile lease of power, that these might intelligently cooperate with Him in the establishment of the promised fifth universal empire, or Kingdom of Christ.

We perceive the truth of the Apostle's declaration that our fight is not truly against "flesh and blood"; for men are at present under the control of the evil spirit powers, and are not the primary enemies. (2 Cor. 4. 4) Our mission is to undeceive the world, and through the Divine instruction confer upon it the blessings of everlasting life and freedom. This the saints of God shall do in the power of the coming spiritual Kingdom, for the establishment of which they are now in conflict with the Satanic rulers in the heavenlies. This Holy War still proceeds, but the triumph of the "little flock" of spirit begotten "children of the Kingdom" is promised. (Luke 12. 32) By God's wonderful provision our prayers of faith can be enlisted to gain the cause of the Lord in this invisible contest.

Let not the reproach of our loving Master fall upon us: "O ye of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" On the contrary, even when everything is dark, and the accomplishment of our heavenly Father's gracious and beneficent purposes seems improbable to the doubting world, let *us* continually remember these trustful words in the beautiful prayers of the Levites, and of David and Solomon: "Blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise. Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein,

and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.” “There is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart.” “Thine, O LORD is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name.”—Neh. 9. 5-6; 1 Kings 8. 23; 1 Chron. 29. 11-13

We all desire our prayers to be vitally effective; and if we pay heed to the instructions of God’s Holy Word we know they shall be. There is one closing instruction added by our Lord, which is of deep significance: “And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.” *Amen.*

ME

God’s Safe Holding

(Psa. 119. 117)

Hold Thou me up, in Christ in heavenly places,
To view my life from that triumphant height,
So shall my soul grow strong with patient
 courage
To run the race and wage the daily fight.
How light and brief the present conflict seemeth,
And short the way to that eternal rest,
When eyes of faith gaze smiling from the shelter
Of Love’s safe holding to my Saviour’s breast.

Hold Thou me up, in Christ with full dominion
O’er my weak flesh and subtle self-desire,
Spurning each snare, sweet-baited by the
 Tempter,
Guarding my robe from spot of earthly mire.
Held by Thy power, no darkness can confound
 me,
Not haunting fears my trusting heart alarm,
Thy grace and strength are perfected in
 weakness,
And none can pluck me from Thy `circling arm.

Hold Thou me up in Christ, my righteous
 cov’ring,
Till crowned immortal I in glory shine;
For now I live through His life pulsing in me,
As lives the branch by dwelling in the vine.
Father, I yield in grateful heart-submission
To Thy keen blade of purging pain and woe;
Prune as Thou wilt, and perfect love’s fruition:
From luscious grapes sweet wine of joy will
 flow.

Hold Thou me up, in Christ a living member,
Swift to obey the promptings of His will,
My words and deeds His mind alone expressing
As I with joy my task of love fulfill.
If I would reign with Him, a king in glory,
Here I must share His sacrifice and shame,
So, Father, help me bear the cross with Jesus
Till life will end in praise to Thy dear name.

Minna Edgar

ZECHARIAH, PROPHET OF THE RESTORATION

9. The Hope of Israel

Chapter 10 is a continuation of the latter part of chapter 9 in that the vision of Christ who comes to conquer the world by love and persuasion in contrast to his predecessor Alexander the Greek who attempted to do so by force, and failed, goes into its culmination in the era of our Lord's reign over the earth still yet to come. "*Corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids*" is the conclusion to chapter 9 and that is followed immediately by the promise in chap. 10 of the Lord giving showers of rain and grass in the field; this is a vivid picture of the Millennial Age at work. "*Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the latter rain; so the LORD shall...give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field*". (v. 1) This is still in the future tense: the day has not yet come but this is the prospect and it will surely be, and the standpoint of the prophet is as though he stands at the very threshold of that day and announces what he sees.

But the Lord has another word to speak, one that looks back to the past. "*The teraphim have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie, and have told false dreams; they comfort in vain*" (v. 2 Margin). The teraphim were miniature images of the pagan gods, standing on shelves or in niches in the house to protect its inmates from harm; but they could not protect. "*Therefore*" says the Lord, the people "*were troubled, because there was no shepherd*". He has more to say about the unfaithful shepherds in the next chapter, but for the moment he contents himself by saying "*Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I punished the goats: for the LORD of hosts hath visited...the house of Judah, and made them as his goodly (war) horse*" (v. 3) The Lord is here taking his stand as it were in the dawn of the Millennial Age when the apostate leaders and unfaithful pastors have been deprived of their positions and the Lord himself has come out of his place to feed and exalt Israel. The past times had known the power of idol worship, of false prophets and soothsayers, of rapacious shepherds and ambitious leaders, the "he-goats" of verse 3 (RV). "*Be as the he-goats before the flocks*" was his admonition in the days of the Captivity (Jer. 50. 8 RV) when he called upon Israel and Judah to assert themselves and take the lead among the nations; but more often the leaders were themselves apostate as in this case and merited condemnation. "Shepherds" was the term for rulers whether civil or ecclesiastical; the priests were shepherds and so were the kings. "*The priests said not, Where is the LORD? and they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by*

Baal, and walked after things that do not profit" (Jer. 2. 8). But now those dark days are past, and the Lord is taking action.

"The LORD of hosts hath visited his flock the house of Judah, and hath made them as his...(war)horse in the battle. Out of him came forth the corner, out of him the nail, out of him the battle bow, out of him every oppressor together" (vv. 3-4). The time indicated is that at which the Lord of hosts has made the house of Judah his war-horse in the battle; that fixes it at the inauguration of the Messianic Age. From God comes the "corner" (*pinnah* - chief man, or as we would say "the key man") which harks back to Psa. 118. 22. *"The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner"* and Isa. 28. 16. *"I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious (chosen) corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall (never be confounded) not make haste"*. (The RSV puts verse 4 in the future tense "out of him shall come" which is logical.) So too, is the "nail" in this same 4th verse, alluding to Isa. 22. 23, the nail "in a sure place", the Messiah upon whom all things will depend. So also, is the battle bow, which symbolises the triumphal progress of Messiah against the forces of evil as in Psa. 45, *"thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies"*. Logically, then, the restored and purified people of the Lord shall indeed, as verse 5 declares *"be as mighty men, which tread down their enemies....because the LORD is with them...And I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph...and they shall be as though I had not cast them off... And they of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man,their children shall see it, and be glad; their heart shall rejoice in the LORD."* (vv. 5-7).

With this stirring and somewhat martial picture of the victory which righteousness gains in the "Last Day" comes the Lord's promise to Israel regarding their future destiny and the downfall of their opponents. He will *"strengthen the house of Judah"* and *"save the house of Joseph"* and they will be restored to their land (v. 6). Ephraim shall be regathered following the Divine call. The mention of these three, Judah, Joseph, Ephraim, denotes that the centuries-old rift between the two halves of the nation has been healed; there is now only one people of Israel and that people is a united one rejoicing in the Lord.

"I will hiss for them, and gather them; for I have redeemed them: and they shall increase as they have increased. And I will sow them among the people: and they shall remember me in far countries; and they shall live with their children, and turn again" (vv. 8-9). The word "hiss" in v. 8 has the meaning of calling by means of a pipe or wind instrument. This is not

a call to war, as of a trumpet. The pipe or flute is an instrument of peace and the call is to come to a land where peace reigns and the peaceable arts of life can be followed without hindrance.

This picture of Judah, Joseph, and Ephraim being united in the arts of peace and godliness is a remarkable one when the implications are realised. Joseph was the favourite son of Jacob and his father conferred upon him the birthright, as Isaac had done with Jacob a generation earlier. From Joseph that birthright passed to Ephraim, one of Joseph's twin sons, but in later times the tribe of Ephraim became the most apostate of the tribes. Sadly did the Lord speak through Hosea the prophet "*When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died*" (Hos. 13. 1). So Ephraim became the leader of the Ten-Tribe kingdom with all its apostasy, and Judah of the Two-Tribe kingdom became the one through whom the purposes of God with the nation were eventually to be worked out; so Christ came of Judah and will one day be the greater David to rule all men everywhere, "*with justice and with judgment...even for ever*". (Isa. 9. 7) So there was enmity between Ephraim and Judah from that time and forward. Now in this vision Zechariah sees that enmity replaced by unity. Judah and Joseph / Ephraim, two tribes and ten tribes, are no longer divided into two peoples; they are one, blood-brothers as they were at the first. The prophet Ezekiel described this in his picturesque symbol of the two sticks, inscribed with the two names, which became the one stick in his hand. "*Son of man*" said the Lord to Ezekiel, "*take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah....then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim....and join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand...Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen (nations), whither they be gone, and will...bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation in the land...and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all.*" (Ezek. 37. 15-22). The whereabouts of the "Lost Ten Tribes" has been a subject of speculation, a great deal of claimed history and not a little fanciful speculation for centuries. The Lord knows where they are and his word will be fulfilled in his own time and way.

So "*I will sow them among the people: and they shall remember me in far countries;*" (v. 9) this is the Dispersion among all nations subsisting throughout this present Age between the First and Second Advents. But, "*they shall live with their children, and turn again*"; this is the Restoration at the end of the Age. "*I will bring them...out...of Egypt,...and out of*

Assyria; and I will bring them into...Gilead and Lebanon; and place shall not be found for them". Verse 11 defines the manner in which God will do this great thing. He will "*pass through the sea with straightness*" (the A.V. "affliction" in v. 11 means straightness or tightness) and in this context pictures a deliverance analogous to the Red Sea crossing where God led the hosts while "*the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left*" (Exod. 14. 22). He shall "*smite the waves in the sea, and all the deeps of the river shall dry up*" continues v. 11, a manifest allusion both to the Red Sea passage and the later crossing of Jordan into the Promised Land. "*And the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart (pass) away*".

Egypt and Assyria, traditional enemies and oppressors of Israel throughout the nation's history, well symbolise the world powers which have continued that oppression since the days of the Romans. In such fashion will the powers of evil of this world give place when God rises up for that purpose, as surely and inexorably as that of Egypt failed in the days of Moses. So the people of God will be given strength (v. 12) "*and they shall walk up and down in his name*", an affirmation of confidence that at that time, the time of the Messianic reign, peace and prosperity shall come, and the dark shadow of evil flee away.

In these two picturesque chapters, 9 and 10, the prophet conducts his readers through a rapid survey of history, outlining the careers of two great personages, both of whom set out to achieve world domination, the one by fear and force, the other by love and persuasion. The first was the Greek, Alexander the Great, conqueror of the world three centuries before the First Advent, a man of whom it was said that after subduing all known countries he sat down and wept because there were no worlds left for him to conquer. Three years later he died and the empire he had built fell to pieces. Verses 1-8 of chapter 9 tell of his progress and his conquests so far as they affected or concerned Israel. The second is Christ the Lord, Prince of Peace, who came, not with fanfare of trumpet and show of force as did Alexander, but in lowliness and love. Verses 9-12 picture his coming and his invitation to men to accept him. Then the rest of chapter 9 and the whole of chapter 10 foresee the day yet to come when He takes to himself his great power and reigns, King of the nations. And under that reign there will, at last be peace.

(To be continued)

AOH

. THE GATHERING HOME OF SAINTS

Devotional glimpses of our hope.
Chapter 1

Close your eyes for a moment to that present awareness of imperfection within to those hideous faults of these earthen vessels that so frequently humiliate those high aspirations of the new mind and picture before your mental vision the glory of the perfect day of

AWAKENING IN HIS LIKENESS.

No sense of sin disturbs the holy perfect thought of a mind completely tuned to that of the Lord Himself, responsive like the aeolian harp to each breath of the Spirit of God that plays as a gentle breeze upon it a mind and heart enlarged to share the very thoughts of God's Own heart, and capable of those most high and blessed emotions of the joy of the Lord Himself, as moment by moment, age upon age, the blessings of eternal oneness with the Lord drench us with delights, wave upon wave, forever...

Our spiritual life is made up of awakenings, rousing of the senses, from our first awakening to the light of Truth and Love and the realms of things eternal.

Perhaps in moments of holy contemplation the Lord awakens our mind to depths of truth we had not before suspected. Perhaps at times of great pressure, when the foes of the soul are too strong for us at such a moment He opens our eyes, like the eyes of Elisha's servant, to those great forces working together for us—the *Hosts of the LORD*, the limitless supply of all the divine resources. Perhaps, like Jacob, our hours of weariness have become times of vision and great reassurance of divine promise so that we feel we have just awakened to the personal watchcare of our God and His never-failing faithfulness, so that we are constrained to say, "*SURELY THE LORD IS IN THIS PLACE, and I knew it not.*"

Our spiritual life is made up of such awakenings. THIS is the *ultimate* of all our awakenings, and each awakening of our present course makes it nearer.

Here is that moment of sweet release from all limitation of human frame, the moment of *VICTORY*. This is the awakening "where sin and sense molest no more", and the mind soars like the eagle to the sun, to gaze upon and to comprehend all the glorious fullness of truth's ultimate reality. In Scripture it is compared with the full light of noonday.

Doubly precious not only will that moment of blessed truth introduce us

into the closest, fullest, relationship and awareness of the glories of eternity, it also will mark the completion, the bringing to perfection, of Our Heavenly Father's most wondrous purpose for us.

The moment of reaching the goal, the reaching out and grasping of the prize of the high calling, the moment too, that will be, that *He* reaches His goal for *me*—His work in me *finished*, and the great seal of divine approval pronounced, “It is very good,” and, as in a dream, I will realise that *He speaks of His work in me!* And His “well done,” shall be, through all eternity, *enough for me.*

Only in the peaks of our present spiritual experience can we remotely sense that height of the Father's triumph in His achievement, the bringing of His child to glory, the setting of the jewel in His crown. “*They shall be Mine.*”

That moment of awakening to see what He has wrought! Will it not surpass our brightest hopes and sweetest dreams? The years of pilgrimage all lead to this. That delight in the Lord, deepening with time, will be answered in the granting of the heart's desires, to be experienced in ten thousand joys, all compressed into that moment of change.

How wonderful! It takes a whole pilgrim walk to change our mind, but just the twinkling of an eye to change our body. What body will be this? While that veil intervenes, we can grow no nearer in our comprehension than our Brother Paul and Brother John.

When Paul wrote 1 Corinthians 15, he did not know. Now he knows! He knew enough, that it would be a body pleasing, yes pleasing to the Lord. He knew that it would bear no resemblance to this body of humiliation. He knew that it would bear great resemblance unto the glorious body of His Lord in heaven. Even John, lost in spiritual depths of thought and vision, could only say, “It doth not yet appear what we shall be,” and yet that dear brother (1 John 3. 2) whose faith perceived each vision as a revealing of the glory of his Lord, and each truth for its solid rocklike certainty, could add, with no hiding of emotion, “we know that, when it is apparent what we shall be, we shall be like Him.” What manner of love is this?

Years of contemplation of the glory of God, that excellence of the qualities of the divine Mind, and the wonders of His mighty attributes, the absorption, in that holy state of heart, of the beauty of the Lord, all leaves

its mark, like the light exposed through the lenses of spiritual understanding upon the deeply sensitive heart.

The Spirit, the very disposition of the One we come to so dearly love, enters the heart, as the perception of His holiness penetrates the mind, and by the sharing of His very nature of light and love the glory is reflected, and the evidence begins to show, Whose child we are.

Thus does He lead His child to glory, from one blessed stage of His likeness to another. The faint glimpses of His glory, endearing in our spiritual infancy, imperceptibly grow through each maturing year and experience. How we would rejoice in heart to hear the remark of the effect of His Spirit in our being, and His nature in our whole demeanour, "Isn't he like his Father?"

The moment of awakening reveals that final blessed state, and I shall have my Father's eyes, eyes full of compassion, of deep perception, and of holy love, eyes that will reflect, within my own depths of being, those same beauties of character I have come to know and so dearly love in Him.

The Bride of Christ, the jewels that form that heavenly Jerusalem, each part is found to have the glory of God. And even in those scenes of breathtaking wonder of which the half has not yet been told, the King's daughter is at once at home, a child of that Light, before Whom she appears, all glorious within. In that beautiful description in the 45th Psalm, in which the Spirit-filled mind of the singer bubbles over with delight at the blessed scene envisioned, we find the queen clothed in most precious garments of gold. All the richest qualities of the divine nature now are hers. She is radiant in her robes of fine needlework. Each single stitch an expression of love for that One it has become her all-consuming desire to please. And yet, in the midst of glory.

"The Bride eyes not her garments, but her dear Bridegroom's face. I will not gaze at glory, but on my King of Grace. Not at the crown He giveth, but on His outstretched hand. The Lamb is all the glory of Immanuel's land."

DH

E'en through harsh noises of our day,
A low, sweet prelude finds its way;
Through clouds of doubt and creeds of fear,
A light is breaking calm and clear.

Poems of Dawn

AS YE HAVE THEREFORE OPPORTUNITY

We are called upon by God to dispense acts of charity and kindness to others as and when opportunity permits. *“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith”* (Gal. 6. 10) . The ways in which we can do good are very numerous, but perhaps the most valuable of them all is the instruction we can give to those who have an ear to hear respecting God’s will, purpose and plan. We should be careful not to let a chance of talking about the Truth go by us, for as we ourselves grow in the Spirit of God and become more and more in harmony with His plan, we realise that no other work is so grand as to make known to others God’s character, and the wideness of His mercy and love. Our constant desire should be to *“shew forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light”* (1 Peter 2. 9).

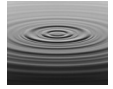
Paul especially states that we are to do this as we have opportunity. We are to be *“instant in season, out of season”* (2 Tim. 4. 2). We are to consider the interests and convenience of others before our own, and be instant in the Lord’s service whether seasonable or unseasonable to ourselves. *“...A word spoken in due season, how good is it!”* *“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.”* (Prov. 15. 23; Prov. 25. 11) Our love for the Lord and our eagerness to serve Him to the best of our ability, is to be our chief concern in life, before which everything else must give way.

Important as this work is, we derive perhaps greater pleasure and satisfaction whilst fulfilling the latter part of the verse quoted—*“especially unto them who are of the household of faith”*. It is not our privilege to come into personal contact with our Lord on this side of the veil, but it is a great pleasure and privilege for us to help our brethren in Him, and to build them up with our love, kindness, sympathy, hope and faith. The more we deny ourselves in the service of our brethren, the more acceptable and precious will our sacrifice be in the sight of our Lord, who said as we do, or do not, unto His brethren, so we do, or do not, unto Him (Matt. 25. 40), for *“If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us”* (1 John 4. 12).

*“Blest are the sons of peace,
Whose hearts and hopes are one,
Whose kind designs to serve and please
Through all their actions run.”*

TO FULFIL ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS

Three Aspects of Baptism



The priest before being inducted into office was first washed in the great “Laver” in the Court of the Tabernacle. In that simple act and the consecration ceremony which succeeded it we have the principles upon which acceptance with God is achieved. *Cleansing—Anointing—Sacrifice*; that was the order of things in the duty of priests in Israel and the same order prevails among Christians now.

First aspect

Repentance and belief in Christ brings justification by faith. That is the first step. That is cleansing. That is the truth lying behind Paul’s word to the Ephesians when he declares that Christ gave himself for his followers, the Church, *“That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word”* (Eph. 5. 26) and his declaration to Titus that Jesus saves us *“by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit”* (Tit. 3. 5). The washing must come before the renewing. That is only one aspect of the true baptism that lies behind the symbol, the ceremonial.

Second aspect

The second aspect is that which follows the initial justification, and is best expressed in the words of Paul to the Romans (Rom. 6. 4-5) *“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. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death...”* Here is a theme that has nothing to do with cleansing but everything to do with the dedication of life to death that out of death there might come eternal life. It has to do with the going into death of the few, following the One Who first went into death alone, that out of that death all might be received into life. And that in turn harks back to a truth that was first enunciated in New Testament days by Peter on the Day of Pentecost itself, that this coming of man into eternal life is really a restoration of that which existed at the first. “Times of Restitution of all things” he calls the day when this new life is to be extended to all men, for there was a day at the very beginning when man, newly created by the hand of God, had eternal life within his grasp.

It is because the surviving records of those far-off days are so scanty that we are not able completely to trace this aspect of the doctrine of baptism back to its probable origin in the days of the promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head (Gen. 3. 15). The Apostle Paul,

whose knowledge of ancient lore was almost certainly far more profound than we today can easily realise, referred to something of this when he wrote in 1 Cor. 10. 2 of Israel, passing through the Red Sea, being “*baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea*”. That was not a baptism of cleansing; it was a baptism of separation, of dedication to the purposes of God that they might be a chosen people, a Royal Priesthood, ultimately to become an instrument in God’s hand for the reconciliation of fallen man to Himself and the accomplishment of His purposes with them. To accomplish that end they must of necessity pass through the waters that separate between fallen man in a sinful world and the eternal life that can only be achieved in God’s world.

Peter must have seen something of that when he likened Christian baptism to the historical incident of the Flood. In the days of the Ark, he says, a few were saved by water—were carried through the water and saved when all others perished—“*The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us...by the resurrection of Jesus Christ*”. (1 Peter 3. 21). He meant something very much akin to Paul’s words about Israel’s baptism in the Red Sea. Noah and his family were forever separated from an evil world, where sin reigned, by the waters of the Deluge, and they came forth into a new world which to them was a world of new and Divine life, a world where the Spirit of God could have full scope for the exercise of beneficent power and the righteous live according to the dictates of their own pious hearts with none to make them afraid. The fact that in after days the world relapsed again into evil does not spoil the picture of the new, renovated world into which Noah and his family entered when they emerged from the Ark, nor of the fact that we who by baptism are separated just as surely from a doomed and dying world come forth to a new order of things which is ultimately to become the “*desire of all nations*”. (It is interesting again to note that the great Laver in Solomon’s Temple is called in the Old Testament by this very name of “*sea*”). (1 Kings 7. 23-44; 2 Chron. 4. 2-15)).

There we have what may be the foundation of this second and so much more important aspect of baptism. We who are buried *with* Christ by baptism into his death are forever separated from the world and its aims and interests; we have elected to follow Christ whithersoever He may lead—and He leads into those symbolic waters and beneath those waters and then out of those waters into a new life. Like as Christ was raised from the dead, so we also rise to walk in newness of life. That new life is lived in this world, here and now, but because of that new life we are no longer of this world. We have become citizens of the perfect world, the

Paradise of righteousness which lies beyond the waters, the Paradise to which all men will attain when at last the waters are done away—they in the earthly phase of that Paradise, and those who went through the waters in the spiritual, heavenly phase.

That then is the vision before us as we go down into the symbolic baptismal waters, when by the One Spirit we, individually, are baptized into the One Body (1 Cor. 12. 13). We, here, are still in the world of death and suffering and all manner of evil. Over there, on the other side of the water, there is the glorious world of the future, Eden restored, the River of Life and the Trees of Life, and the Holy City, New Jerusalem, waiting to come down from God to man. But Eden cannot be restored to man, much as man needs it and, maybe, longs for it, until Christ's consecrated followers have followed Him into those waters and been planted together in the likeness of His death. Only then can they emerge also in the likeness of His resurrection (Rom. 6. 5). The world must wait until that has become an accomplished fact and the consecration of earthly life which is the real baptism has been consummated in actual death of the human frame and a glorious resurrection to spiritual being. "*We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*" (1 John 3. 2). Until then "the earnest expectation of the creature (creation) *waiteth* for the manifestation of the sons of God" (Rom. 8. 19).

Third aspect

It is after consecration has become an established thing with us that we enter into the third aspect of baptism. The true baptism is not only cleansing; it is not only separation to holy things; it is also an entry into suffering. Suffering is an essential factor in the Divine Plan. We may not know—we do not know—just why that is so and just what redemptive or reformatory power is inherent in suffering, but the Scriptures show clearly that it is so. Our Lord's death on the Cross provided the Ransom for man, but his life of suffering was the offering for sin by means of which man will ultimately be reconciled to God. Both are necessary in the Divine Plan. And with those who are Christ's consecrated followers, seeking to become joint-heirs with him of the Kingdom and associated with him as his "Bride" in the glory of all future ages, the fact that they are dead to the world and are ready to lay down life itself for the Lord and the Truth is not the only fruit of their lives that God can use for the salvation of mankind. He can, and will, also use the fruit of every act of sacrifice and every pang of suffering that there has been throughout those consecrated lives. We realise, and say, at times, that suffering and sacrifice plays an important part in the development of character. Perhaps we could never

NOTICES

**BIBLE STUDENTS SEMINAR DAY
SATURDAY 8 JUNE 2019**

STUDHAM VILLAGE HALL
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11 a.m.—5 p.m.

All Welcome

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FRIDAY 16—TUESDAY 20 AUGUST 2019

**FELDEN LODGE CONFERENCE CENTRE, FELDEN,
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THEME: SALVATION (PHIL. 2. 12)

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Thank you to the anonymous donor.

Gone from us
Joan Green (Hartlepool)

JONAH AND THE WHALE, TAKE 2?

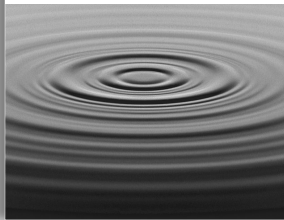
Many readers no doubt read the account or saw a picture of a man off the coast of South Africa who found himself in the mouth of a Bride's whale for two seconds early in March 2019. The man is reported to have taken a deep breath and was released without harm, for whales can dive down deep for many minutes. The mammal seems to have been surprised by this as was the man who was filmed saying it was "surely nothing I would want to do again." This aquatic occurrence reminds many students of the Bible, as well as those who read the record of Jonah and the whale to children, that Jonah was in the whale for 3 days. (Jonah 1. 17; Matt. 12. 40.)

approach conformity to the Divine likeness without it. We do know that our Lord was made perfect through suffering, and the disciple is not greater than his Lord.

Therefore our baptism is, beside a baptism of cleansing and a baptism of separation, a baptism of suffering. It was so with Jesus. *“I have a baptism to be baptized with”* He said *“and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!”* (Luke 12. 50). When the mother of Zebedee’s children, John and James, asked that her sons be given the chief places of honour in the Kingdom, Jesus asked them if they were able to be baptized with the baptism that He was baptized with. They assured Him that they were able. What innocent confidence they had, knowing not what the future held for them of suffering and persecution and death! Jesus knew. *“Ye shall indeed be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with.”* Perhaps he knew also that they would be faithful and come through triumphant at the end.

Extract from ‘The Christian Doctrine of Baptism’

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM



Available free and on request from
Bible Fellowship Union
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This booklet includes 2 articles,
‘Baptism in the New Testament’
and the above article in full
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The Light Within

PEOPLE are like stained glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out. But in the darkness, beauty is seen only if there is a light within. Let us today start looking for that light. But more so, let us learn to let our own light shine brightly.

“Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.” 1 Peter 3. 3-4

*Deep Waters and a Bubbling Brook
Harvest Activities*

If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another. 1 John 1. 7

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