

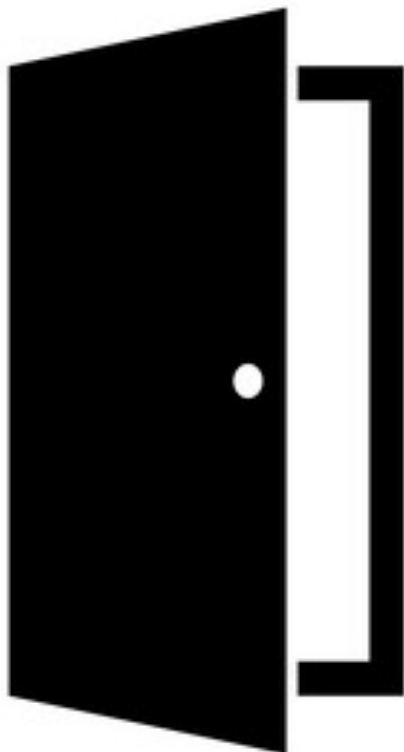
# BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

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Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.  
(Rev. 3:20  
ESV)

# 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

Overseas Renewal Notices with this issue.

## THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

*"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me."* (Rev. 3:20 ESV)

When there is a knock on the door or the ringing of the doorbell one immediately stops what one is doing to see who is at the door and why. Sometimes it is someone or something we were expecting, or can deduce from the day and time who it must be. Other times it leaves us wondering.

These are the words given to John the revelator toward the end of his life about the end of the first century to the church at Laodicea. This is special to the church at the end of this age. We have heard Jesus knocking at our door, the door to our hearts and minds and let him in. A door of new opportunities has opened up to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, a place of safety and rest that leads to our forever home in due time.

The door of our heart has been opened to the divine influence where God can work with us, teach us and renew our minds. It also leads to possibilities of service.

But it's not only at this time God has been working. The prophets of the Old Testament like Daniel and Isaiah had visions of things that were going to happen either in the short term or the long term. Isaiah had a vision of the Kingdom of God of a worldwide kingdom of Gentile and

Jew. That is a vision we have in front of us. It is important because “*when there’s no vision, the people get out of control*” (Prov. 29:18 CEB) in the sense of being aimless but this is not the case for the Christian.

Our Lord Jesus was not aimless without a vision. He knew that he came to die as a ransom for all. He fulfilled his mission. Later in the New Testament Paul had the opportunity to preach the gospel over the Roman empire getting as far west as Rome and maybe even Spain.

Now the church have their time to fulfil their mission in the time remaining till the last member of the church is taken. So then can the next part of the vision, a vision with plan for all really take effect.

### The Golden Door

On the base of the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbour is chiselled these lines from the “*New Colossus,*” a sonnet by Emma Lazarus, who saw this monument as the “mother of exiles” speaking to ancient lands.



*“Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”*

That was the welcome America set out to give to the oppressed and down-trodden of the Old World. What an apt symbol is that of the welcome that will be extended to all mankind when the gates of the Millennial Age are opened to them, and the voice of the King is heard saying “Whosoever will may come.” “*Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation*” shouts Isaiah triumphantly. (Isa. 12:3) And we who in these last days of the old world of sin and death are trying to maintain a witness to that new Kingdom, surely we can stand and say, as does that symbolic figure over there in the waters of New York harbour, “*I lift my lamp beside the golden door.*” That might be a very good watchword for our continuing witness; though men may take little heed of what we say, though faith and hope in the Kingdom seems to be confined to only a few—yet—day in, day out, as year succeeds to year and decade to decade, we who see the glories of that coming Day and know that it must surely come can well proclaim without ever growing weary “*I lift my lamp beside the golden door.*”

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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.

## A DOOR OF OPPORTUNITY

or “Redeeming the Time”

Doors are very useful parts of a house and have been so for a very long time. They keep in the warmth to a building and they keep out unwanted people and animals. They can have quite exciting things behind them and in a sense offer a temptation to be opened. The first reference to a door in the Bible was to Cain allowing sin to be “crouching at the door.” (Gen. 4:7 RSV) It was an opportunity to do wrong. The next door to be shut and opened was that in the side of the ark which was operated at God’s command. Again it was like an opportunity; first to be saved from drowning and secondly as Noah and family with the animals stepped through it again, it was stepping out into a new world.

There is possibly much similarity between doors and gates and they serve similar purposes in many ways. The words door and gate could be interchangeable in some circumstances. When Peter was brought out of prison by an angel he went to a house where disciples were praying and stood knocking at “the door of the gate” (Acts 12:13) or as more recently translated “outer door.” Peter got involved with several doors. The two words may have changed their meaning a little over the centuries. A gate into a walled garden is like a door and has been referred to as such in stories. Exciting opportunities and possibilities lie behind such a door.

There were “doors of opportunities” in Paul’s life. On his second great missionary journey Paul passed through Asia Minor (modern Turkey) visiting the churches he had earlier established. He, with Silas and Timothy sought to expand the work in the region but were prevented by the Holy Spirit. It was as if they were pushing at doors which were shut and at that time not to be opened. God had another door, a door which led to the Gentiles and this was ready to be opened.

Later he was to be at Ephesus, writing to the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 16:9 NRSV) he told them of a great or wide door that was opening for them to do “*effective work.*” In his second letter the apostle again speaks of a door opened at Troas which at that moment he could not enter because of his concern for Titus. Then when he was in prison Paul wrote to the Colossians requesting their prayers on his behalf so that God would open a door of opportunity to preach the Gospel. (Col. 4:3)

Life is full of opportunities wherever we are and whatever our lifestyle. Prayer itself is a wonderful opportunity even when we are housebound or unable to move alone. It opens for us a door or window upon the world

and all that God is doing in it. Our prayers can support and sustain our brothers and sisters in the multitude of activities in which they are engaged for the Lord.

In his book “The Parables and Metaphors of Our Lord,” G. Campbell Morgan, when discussing the parable of the “Pounds” (Luke 19:11-27) refers to Paul’s words to the churches at Ephesus (5:16) and Colossae (4:5) about “*redeeming the time*” (KJV). He points out that the apostle is really writing about “buying up the opportunity” and several translations support this (Weymouth, the Amplified, New Living Bible, Williams, and NEB/REB). “Our business” writes Dr. Morgan is “to prosecute the commerce of the Kingdom of God with such diligence as characterizes the success of the merchant-men in the market places of the world.”

God provides us with a multitude of opportunities to speak of Jesus and His love to all mankind, to express that love in all kinds of ways to all sorts of people. We tend to be choosy. We are governed by our feelings. Is it really true that we do what we like? Is it really true that we are being disobedient to the Master? If we love Him we will do what he wants irrespective of our feelings or personal desires. Is it so hard? So was going to Calvary, but He did it for you and me.

Perhaps our problem lies in seeing and seizing the opportunity when it comes. We think too slowly. We act even slower. There is a solution to the problem. It has already been mentioned. It’s called prayer. Paul needed help in this respect. If that giant of an ambassador for Christ needed help, surely we do. We need to pray that God will show us clearly the opportunity as it’s coming and then give us the strength, the courage, and the wisdom to act. We need to pray for one another. God will answer those prayers.

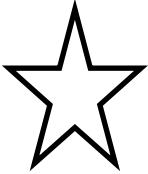
There are one or two references to doors in “The Revelation.” The most well-known of these, was captured in a wonderful picture by Holman Hunt. Jesus is standing outside the door of our heart waiting to share every opportunity in life with us. Have we really let Him in? Or are there some rooms within our heart where the door is still kept locked and where we would rather not allow our Lord to enter?

So the Lord gives us a pound or opportunities today to trade within the marketplace of life. It may not be worth so much as a pound was worth ten or one hundred years ago. But its full value is “what it’s worth to the Lord today.” We can make ten pounds with it. We may make five. We

have a choice. There is no compulsion. Will that little coin still reside alone at the end of the day—one little pound in a napkin? We don't all have the same pound's worth. James died early as a martyr while brother John lived on till the days of Patmos. The other James, Jesus' natural brother spent his life in Jerusalem while brother Paul went nearly to the end of the Empire. Some are like Ananias who opened the eyes of the great apostle. Some are like Tabitha who made garments for the poor. (Acts 9:39) We probably shall not be burned at the stake like Thomas Cranmer (1556) nor stand before thousands like a well-known evangelist. He had his pound, and we have ours. My brother and my sister will have different opportunities. It is just as the Lord sees that we can manage.

We stand on the edge of great opportunities—every morning. Our Father in Heaven is not trying to sort out yesterday's failures or tomorrow's possibilities. He is with us to make the greatest possible use of today's opportunities. He can do it, if we will let Him.

*DN*



## A LITTLE LIGHT

'T WAS but a little light she bore,  
While standing at the open door;  
A little light, a feeble spark,  
And yet it shone out through the dark  
With cheerful ray, and gleamed afar  
As brightly as the polar star.

A little light, a gentle hint,  
That falls upon the page of print,  
May clear the vision, and reveal  
The precious treasures doubts conceal,  
And guide men to an open door,  
Where they new regions may explore.

A little light dispels the gloom  
That gathers in the shadowed room,  
Where want and sickness find their prey,  
And night seems longer than the day,  
And hearts with many troubles cope  
And feebler glows the spark of hope.

Oh, sore the need that some must know  
While journeying through this vale of woe!  
Dismayed, disheartened, gone astray,  
Caught in the thickets by the way,  
For lack of just a little light  
To guide their wandering steps aright.

It may be little we can do  
To help another, it is true;  
But better is a little spark  
Of kindness, when the way is dark,  
Than one should walk in paths forbidden  
For lack of light we might have given.

*Poems of Dawn*

## DANIEL IN BABYLON

### 7. Historical Interlude

Three years after Nebuchadnezzar's recovery from his seven years' insanity, his long reign of forty-three years reached its end. He died at probably about seventy-five years of age, and with his death came the change in Daniel's circumstances which marks the division in the narrative. Up to Chapter 4 the story is set entirely in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, during which time Daniel was Chief man in the kingdom. Now, at about sixty-three years of age, Daniel stood by while his royal master's son, Avil-Marduk, ascended the throne, and from that point until the accession of Belshazzar, the last king of Babylon, the Book of Daniel is silent. When the narrative is resumed, in the first year of Belshazzar, with Daniel's dream of the four great beasts and the coming of the Ancient of Days in Judgment (Daniel Chap. 7) the prophet is no longer chief political Minister of State. He is a private citizen and, as evidenced by the story of Belshazzar's feast, practically unknown to the king and probably to the leading men of the realm. Daniel spent forty years in the limelight, ruling the affairs of the empire of Babylon; then he spent nearly forty years more in measurable obscurity, his good works for the nation forgotten, his wisdom and counsel ignored. But it was during that latter forty years that he had those wonderful revelations from on high which have given the book which bears his name the title of "the Revelation of the Old Testament." The second half of Daniel's life, spent in obscurity, has meant far more to succeeding generations than the first half, stirring though the events of those earlier days are to us as we read them.

In order to fill in this gap in the Biblical narrative we turn for a moment to the records of the tablets. So many thousands of these tablets have been unearthed, many of them dated, that the history of Daniel's Babylon is better known to scholars than that of England in the days of King Alfred. There are dated tablets in the British Museum for every year of the reigns of every king from Nebuchadnezzar to Belshazzar so that the chronology of the period is no longer a matter of dispute.

The great king's son, Avil-Marduk, by all accounts a weak-willed man of no principles, reigned only two years, his reign being characterised by lawlessness and impiety. Jeremiah mentions him once, when in Jer. 52:31-34 he says in the thirty-seventh year of King Jehoiachin's captivity, "Evil-Merodach (the Hebrew form of Avil-Marduk) king of Babylon in the first year of his reign" released him from prison and dealt kindly with him. But at the end of two years, one of Nebuchadnezzar's military

commanders, Neriglissar, husband of Nebuchadnezzar's eldest daughter, murdered Avil-Marduk and on the basis of his own royal marriage ascended the throne.

Neriglissar (a Greek form of the name) is mentioned in Jer. 39 under the native spelling, Nergal-Sharezer, (v.13) as having been present at the siege and destruction of Jerusalem in the days of Zedekiah. At that time, according to the Jeremiah account, he occupied the position of Rab-Mag, or master of the magicians, a title which the Book of Daniel indicates afterwards passed to Daniel. Neriglissar reigned three years only, was not particularly conspicuous, and died peacefully at Babylon. He left one daughter, Gigitum, whose marriage contract to a high Court official, Nabushum-ukin, now reposes at the British Museum, and a youthful son, Labashi-Marduk, who succeeded him on the throne and after nine months was killed in a palace insurrection.

By this time it is probable that Jehoiachin was dead, but somewhere in Babylon there must have lived his grandson Zerubbabel, the child who at the time of the Return from Exile, now only about twenty years distant, was destined to be the officially appointed Governor of the new Judean state. Zerubbabel figures prominently in the books of Ezra and Zechariah. He was the man who wielded civil power among the people re-gathered to Zion without a king. And somewhere in Babylon there played also another child, Joshua the son of Jehozadek, the legal High Priest of Israel during the captivity, a High Priest without sacrifices, for the sacrifices could be offered only at Jerusalem. Joshua became the first High Priest of regathered Israel, and he too figures prominently in the books of Ezra and Zechariah. So in the time of obscurity which lies between the early and the latter parts of the Captivity, between Daniel the Statesman and Daniel the Seer, we discern dim shadows of those who were to lead God's people after Daniel and all his generation had passed away. That of itself ought to be a sobering thought to us. We experience our own day of service for God and serve with our might while we have strength and opportunity, and then sometimes make frantic efforts to perpetuate the work we have commenced. All the time there is no need; God makes his own arrangements for the continuation of his work, and while our own generation is beginning to lower the torch He is already preparing, perhaps in another place that we wot not of, those who are to do his work in the next generation.

That of itself does not justify our relaxing our efforts in the vineyard we have tended maybe all our lives. Sometimes the new work and old work



must progress side by side for a space. “He must increase, but I must decrease” said John the Baptist, (John 3:30) speaking of Jesus and the new, greater work he was to do. A goodly company of God’s stalwarts have seen their sphere of activity diminish as life draws on, and happy are those who can continue in unabated certainty and confidence despite the decreasing response, all the time that they can find a hearing ear or reverent heart anywhere. Daniel stayed in Babylon and saw visions which have enlightened every generation of the Church, even whilst his younger compatriots, Zerubbabel and Joshua, were actively engaged, away in Jerusalem, laying the foundations of the restored Jewish state.

Returning to Babylon and its Palace intrigues, so like those of any court in any country, then or since; the death of Labashi-Marduk left the way to the throne open to Nabonidus the husband of Nebuchadnezzar’s younger daughter Nitocris. Nabonidus was a son of the High Priest of the Moon-god at Haran, the city in the north to which Terah emigrated with his family from Ur of the Chaldees, and from which Abraham set out “not knowing whither he went” (Heb. 11:8) to go to Canaan. Nabonidus as a youth had been brought to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar at about the same time as Daniel himself and was one of those with Daniel intended to be trained in the wisdom of the Chaldeans. As such he would be included in the young men mentioned in the first chapter of Daniel. The two must have been well acquainted at the start and must have been well known to each other throughout life. When one remembers the high favour in which Daniel had stood with the great king, the fact that his fellow-exile Nabonidus married into the king’s family evokes the surmise that Daniel himself might quite likely have had the opportunity, in earlier years, of becoming joined to the royal family by marriage and so eventually ascending the throne of Babylon. He would obviously have been the king’s first choice in preference to Nabonidus. If such a proposal ever was made in fact, another evidence of Daniel’s sterling allegiance to God is afforded. He would serve faithfully in the place where God had placed him but he would make no alliance with the “people of the land.” We can well imagine that to be his attitude.

Nabonidus was a better archaeologist than king; his devouring passion was the collecting of relics of the civilisations that were so much older than his own time as his time is older than ours. After reigning five years, the growing aggressiveness of the Persians under Cyrus demanded a younger man—Nabonidus, like Daniel, was about seventy-five years old by now—and that led him to associate with himself his son Belshazzar as joint king. This event marks what the Book of Daniel calls “first year of

Belshazzar the King.” Nabonidus retired to his museums and archaeologist studies, his daughter Bel-shaltinannar (Ennigaldi-Nanna) was appointed High Priestess of the Moon-god’s Temple at Ur of the Chaldees, Abraham’s birthplace, and Belshazzar, at probably little more than twenty years of age, became the real ruler of Babylon. At this point the Book of Daniel takes up the story again, after a silence of some twenty-five years.

No longer, though, do we see the stage set with the glory and pomp of the royal court, Daniel, the statesman, the king’s right-hand man, administering and ruling the kingdom. No longer do we hear of mighty acts of faith and noteworthy miracles attesting to all beholders the all-powerful sovereignty of God. There is a difference. We see a darkened stage, the serene light of the moon shining through a window on the form of an old man, head buried in prayer, eyes poring over books, a recumbent form in the quietude of sleep seeing visions of God. We hear messages from another world telling of great events yet to transpire. We glimpse angels coming and going, bearing revelations and mysteries which that same old man is to be the means of leaving on record for all those who in after days would know the things which God is planning to do in the world of men. So it came about that in the first year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, fifty-six years after Daniel first entered the city in which he was to spend his lifetime of exile, this faithful servant of God, who had walked step-by-step with God during all those fifty-six years, began to experience the series of revelations which crowned his life’s work. Like John on Patmos a half a millennium later, he saw and recorded “things which must shortly come to pass” to the abiding blessing of all who were to come after.

*AOH*

*(To be continued)*



**PATMOS**

Patmos was the island where John wrote Revelation, sometimes known as the Apocalypse. It is a small island and one of the Dodecanese Islands of Greece and not far from the island of Kos that’s also mentioned in the Bible. (Acts 21:1) It overlooks the Turkish mainland and is not far from the ancient city

of Bodrum. The small harbour is accessible by small ferries and hydrofoils. John wrote overlooking the harbour and with a good view of any visitors from Asia Minor (modern Turkey).

*Selected*

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## “WHERE THERE IS NO VISION”

Prov. 29:18

We live in a very material world. Concerned with the present, the here and now, we must earn our living, care for our families, perform our duties in the Church and to our brethren. It is right to give time and attention to these things. The apostle Paul gives a wonderful exposition on the fact that we are seated with Christ in the Heavenlies (Eph. 2:6) and then proceeds to show that as a result of that amazing fact we will be better husbands and wives and fathers and children, recognising our responsibilities as members of our family, Church, place of work and even of the secular State in which we live. But if we are too concerned with these material things we shall soon lose our vision and “perish,” or as one translation has it, “act wildly.” What an apt description of the world today!

God has given man a truly wonderful brain to cope with all the problems of everyday life. But this brain has also two other marvellous functions. It provides a memory to bring back to the consciousness the things of the past and an imagination which can envisage the things of the future. The memory and the imagination, like most of our abilities, can be used for good or evil. We are told of those living in the time of Noah whose imagination was “*only evil continually.*” (Gen. 6:5) We can dwell upon things of the past which would depress or worry, and we can look forward to real or fancied events which might have a similar effect.

For the Christian, the memory and the imagination will both be included in those things which are consecrated to the Lord and they can be of great importance in spiritual development. Imagination, as the word is here used, is not the practice of daydreaming, of vague desires and fancies which can never be realised, but that “*faith (which) is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*” (Heb. 11:1). These images of future events, far from being unrealistic, are more substantial than the ever changing and collapsing world around us, for “*the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*” (2 Cor. 4:18).

In quiet moments we can ponder on the memory of the Lord’s great goodness, as the Israelites were many times exhorted to “remember” how God had brought them out of Egypt and led them safely through the wilderness and had overcome their enemies in Canaan. So we can continually remember our great deliverance from the power of Satan and

the many providences in our lives ever since. How often we have told the Lord of our difficulties and always He has heard the petitions. As we recognise and give thanks for each answer to prayers we go forward in renewed strength and trust, learning by blessed experience that He never leaves nor forsakes us.

But what of imagination? Does faith rise as often or as high as it might, to consider the things hoped for but as yet unseen? Do we really have a vision?

Isaiah had a vision—a splendid vision of the Lord, high and lifted up. He saw the seraphim and heard them proclaiming “*Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.*” (Isa. 6:3). As always when men are confronted with the holiness of God, Isaiah was immediately conscious of his sin and of the sin of Israel. Nevertheless, in spite of this sense of utter unworthiness, he heard the cry “*Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?*” and because of that glorious vision he at once responded “*Here am I; send me.*” (Isa. 6:8). His name means “Yahweh is salvation” and this was to be the theme of that wonderful message to Israel, although as part of the message he would have many hard and critical things to say to them, many dire prophecies of the Lord’s disciplines. He would warn of invading armies, of the land laid waste, of years of captivity. He would also tell them truths which, in spite of their years of training in the law and the offerings, they would not really understand, and he would give foregleams of a salvation extended to Jew and to Gentile and of the earth restored as the Garden of Eden. Much of the message would be unpopular and the world has a cruel way with those whose prophecies are not acceptable. If tradition is to be believed Isaiah was among those faithful ones described in Heb. 11:37 as “*sawn asunder.*”

But he had had his lips touched with coals of fire and his sin forgiven and he was activated by a zeal to serve the Lord which always follows the true appreciation of forgiveness. He volunteered before he knew what was entailed, with a faith like that of Abraham who went out not knowing whither he went. His task was made doubly hard because he was told beforehand that much of it would be fruitless labour, that they would not understand, that they would not hear with their ears or see with their eyes. Yet Isaiah went forth and in the strength of that great vision. He was given the support of the knowledge that a remnant would be saved and that the stumbling of the nation would not be final.

What an amazingly important message was his! By his words, from time

to time, the dormant Messianic hopes of Israel were revived and the influence of these words can be traced in the writings of later prophets, Jeremiah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Surely, from the writings of Isaiah Jesus himself learned much of how the Lord God would lead him. He would read of the terrible sufferings to be endured for the transgressions of his people, but He would know also that eventually He would *“see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.”* (Isa. 53:11). From the same book He was strengthened with the promise of the Kingdom which should never end, of which He would be the King, so that Paul could say of this suffering Servant, *“for the joy that was set before him endured the cross.”* (Heb. 12:2).

In Isaiah (40:3) John the Baptist found that which defined his position as the *“voice of one crying in the wilderness,”* (John 1:23) preparing the way for the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world and with words from this book Jesus himself encouraged John when, imprisoned by Herod, he felt forsaken.

Many are the quotations in the New Testament which show how the apostles read and loved and by the power of the Holy Spirit understood this prophecy. It confirmed their identification of Jesus as the Messiah and encouraged them to look for that new heaven and earth wherein dwells righteousness. So too have faithful Christians throughout the Gospel age been encouraged by the precious promises recorded in Isaiah.

But it was the vision so graciously given by the Lord to Isaiah which enabled him to give forth his message so courageously. How many times when he tried to warn the people and found them so slow to understand would he remind himself *“I saw the Lord..., high and lifted up!”* (Isa. 6:1) and when the people continued in their faithlessness and the enemies swarmed over the land, he would rejoice in his heart at the memory of the words, *“The whole earth is full of his glory.”* (Isa. 6:3) Because of the vision he even endured martyrdom, surely remembering the words of Isaiah 25:8, *“He will swallow up death in victory.”*

The record of Hebrews 11 suggests that many of that list of faithful witnesses qualified for inclusion therein because they had a vision. Abraham looked for a *“city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”* (v.10) Through all his varied experiences Abraham could look beyond the present and see, in imagination, the day of Christ. Moses counted the sufferings of Christ of greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. (v.26) Surely he had a glimpse of the Messianic reign when he

said, “*The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet...like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.*” (Deut. 18:15) Without his vision on the Damascus road, would Saul of Tarsus ever have become the apostle Paul? Not only did he have this wonderful experience but he was able to say, “I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.” (Acts 26:19 RSV) Visions are not given simply for man’s joy and wonderment. They bring the power to do great things and also a tremendous responsibility. Those who are granted great visions are often called upon to suffer greatly.

We have seen the martyrdom of Isaiah. Moses suffered much from the rebellion of the Israelites. Abraham was called upon to show his willingness to sacrifice his only son and Paul was shown how great things he must suffer for Christ’s sake.

Great experiences come in the quiet times, not in those snatched moments of prayer and study which give the Spirit no time to breathe the air of heaven. Noah must have spent much time in communion with God to enable him to become a preacher of righteousness in the midst of that wicked generation. He was saved out of the world because he had proved that he did not belong to it. He and his family were the only ones who did not merit the terrible condemnation “It repented the LORD that He had made man.” (Gen. 6:6) Moses was alone in the wilderness when God revealed himself in the burning bush and gave him his great commission. As Noah kept himself apart from the evil world around him, so Moses had to come out of the court of Pharaoh. Abraham did not receive his vision until he left the heathen city of Ur. Then God gave him a promise of wonderful blessings for himself, his descendants and through one special Descendant, all the families of the earth. It was not until Paul was in the desert of Arabia that he was taken up to the third Heaven and shown things not lawful to be uttered. Our Lord himself found it necessary to leave the city and go alone into the hills to commune with his Father, spending all night in prayer. We can imagine this was a frequent occurrence. John was alone on Patmos when his great Revelation came, at the end of a long life of loving service.

In different ages and with different individuals God uses different methods. We do not, as a rule, have miraculous encounters with the Almighty, although there are moments when we feel He is so near we could almost say, “I saw the Lord.” But these times are rare, perhaps more rare than they should be. Of course we know we are on unsafe ground when we depend too much upon our emotions, but our faith always gains great impetus when we can form some mental conception of the power

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and love of God.

We do not have a wilderness, a desert, a Patmos, a Judean Hill. Perhaps we cannot often withdraw from physical contact with those around us, but if we take advantage of what opportunities we have for meditation, we can cultivate a quietness within ourselves which can lead to an ever-growing awareness of fellowship with our Father and the Lord Jesus.

How very much there is in God's word to teach of his power and love. See him as the Mighty One, revealed in thunder and lightning on Sinai, while Israel trembled. In all the minutiae of the Law, appreciate how He instructed the nation as to his holiness and their sinfulness. See how He provided for their every need in the wilderness and how, in many varied expressions, types and pictures, he gave them promises of the coming Saviour. He himself said, "*What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?*" (Isa. 5:4) Read of the mighty works He accomplished through Elijah. The faith of this prophet leaves us gasping, but we are glad that a record has been kept of his despondency under the juniper tree, for it shows the loving tenderness of God when He met his depression with comforting words and necessary food.

What scope there is for meditation in the Book of Revelation, as we ponder on the greatness of the One walking in the midst of the candlesticks. We have proved in our own experience that He is faithful and true as we remember that He is the Lamb Who died for us and also the One who encourages every true ecclesia and every individual member. He is the One Who will take the Church to himself as his Bride and to her will be granted all the special blessings referred to in this book. We too, like God's people of old, can have a vision which will enable us to do all things through Christ.

The poet was right when he said, "The world is too much with us." (Wordsworth) We can have, not only the memory of God's great love in the past and a bright hope of a glorious future, but a vision of that other world which surrounds us even now. Surely the Secret of the serenity of Jesus was that the spirit world was to him more real than the material one. He was always aware of his Father's presence; He knew He was surrounded by legions of angels.

Can we not give more thought to the eternal realities? God is on his throne; the great High Priest ever lives to make intercession for us; our angels always behold the face of the Father. (Matt. 18:10) God's word

declares all this to be true. Most thinking Christians are agreed that the time must be short before the kingdoms of this world become the Kingdom of our God and of his Christ, and as his children we are already translated into the Kingdom of God's dear Son. So by faith we can use our God-given imagination to bring into present experience the mercies of the past, the hope of the future and the unseen but eternal things of the Spirit which even now are ours if we but claim them. As these things become more and more part of daily life we shall be spurred on to greater faithfulness so that we shall be able to say, humbly and gratefully, "*Mine eyes have seen the King in his beauty and I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.*"

*"Turn your eyes upon Jesus,  
Look full in his wonderful face  
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,  
In the light of his glory and grace."* (Helen Howarth Lemmel)

FHG

## LOOKING FOR THE SUNRISE

I'm not looking for the sunset  
As the swift years come and go,  
I am looking for the sunrise  
And the golden morning glow,  
Where the light of heaven's glory  
Will break forth upon my sight  
In the land that knows no sunset  
Nor the darkness of the night.

I'm not going down the pathway  
Toward the setting of the sun,  
Where the shadows ever deepen,  
Where the day at last is done.  
I am walking up the hillside  
Where the sunshine lights the way  
To the glory of the sunrise  
Of God's never ending day.

I'm not going down, but upward,  
And the path is never dim,  
For the day grows ever brighter  
As I journey on with him.  
So my eyes are on the hilltops  
Waiting for the sun to rise,  
Waiting for his invitation  
To my home beyond the skies.

*Songs of the nightingale*



## THE RANSOM FOR ALL

*A Study Paper on Christian Doctrine*

The human race has been in bondage to sin and death since the Fall. No man has been able to escape. *“We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one...for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”* (Rom. 3:9-23) Our first parents were created perfect and capable of everlasting life so long as they remained in harmony with Divine law (Gen. 1:27-29; 2:15-17), but in consequence of their lapse into sin the processes of death commenced to work in them. *“In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground...for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”* *“In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”* (Gen. 3:19; 2:17). All human beings subsequently born were born in a dying condition of dying parents. *“By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned...therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation...for as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners.”* (Rom. 5:12-19). No man was or is able to redeem any of his fellows from this unhappy condition. *“None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: that he should still live for ever, and not see corruption.”* (Psa. 49:7,9). But God promised our first parents, at the very time of their fall, that a way of deliverance would be found eventually. Speaking to the instigator of man’s sin, He said, *“I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head...”* (Gen. 3:15). This theme, that the seed of the woman would become the means of recovering man from the power of sin and evil, runs right through the Scriptures. Abraham, several thousands of years later, was told *“I will make of thee a great nation...and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed”* (Gen. 12:2-3) and later *“In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.”* (Gen. 22:18). The Apostle Paul explained the meaning of this when he said *“Christ hath redeemed us...that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles (nations)...through faith...Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made...not...to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ.”* (Gal. 3:13-16).

It will be noted that in the text just quoted there are two things necessary before the blessing can be conferred. One is faith and the other is redemption—and redemption comes first. A Redeemer is necessary to recover mankind from condemnation to death on account of sin. So Elihu the friend of Job says, speaking of man’s plight. *“His soul draweth near*

*unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers. If there be a messenger (ambassador) with him,....to shew unto man his uprightness: then he (God) is gracious unto him, and saith, 'Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.' His flesh shall be fresher than a child's; he shall return to the days of his youth."* (Job 33:22-25). That is a Millennial promise; it is paralleled by the declaration of Peter on the day of Pentecost *"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ...whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things."* (Acts 3:19-21). That time was spoken of by Isaiah when he cried *"And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."* (Isa. 35:10). That this is to include the abolition of death and mankind's entry into everlasting life is indicated by the emphatic declaration *"I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction."* (Hos. 13:14).

Our Lord Jesus Christ gave the ransom price which achieves this grand purpose. *"The man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."* (1 Tim. 2:5-6) Jesus Himself said *"The Son of Man came...to give his life a ransom for many."* (Mark 10:45). This word "ransom" means "a corresponding price" or more properly "a price to set against" and used in this connection it alludes to the process known in New Testament times as "manumission," by means of which Greek and Roman slaves could obtain their freedom. Someone had to pay into one of the pagan temple treasuries the price of the slave's release. A friend of the slave, willing to make the financial sacrifice, could do this. Then the slave went to the temple and the price was paid over to his former master and the former slave became technically the property of the god. By virtue of that fact he became actually free, for whilst he continued the slave of the god no one could touch him. Adam had forfeited his life because of sin and had become the slave of sin. The price paid for his release was the perfect life which our Lord Jesus gave on the Cross, thereby providing the price which at one and the same time released man from the Adamic condemnation and at the same time made him the property of God. So Paul says, *"For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived (lived), that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living."* (Rom. 14:9). *"He that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men."* (1 Cor. 7:22-23). *"Ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in*

*your spirit, which are God's.*" (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

This fact of our having been "bought" by means of a "ransom-price" is therefore a very real thing, and we Christians are in consequence the servants, bond-slaves, of Christ; a servitude which is, paradoxically enough, perfect liberty. The price paid was the human life of Jesus, often referred to in the New Testament as the "blood" of Christ. The Jews had always been taught that the life is in the blood (Lev. 17:14) and it was a perfectly natural thing therefore to be told that they had been "*redeemed...with the precious blood of Christ.*" (1 Pet. 1:18-19). Drawing an analogy with the Tabernacle ceremonies of older times, the writer to the Hebrews says "*Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption (deliverance) for us.*" (Heb. 9:12). "*Thou wast slain*" rings the heavenly chorus in the "Throne Scene" of the Book of Revelation "*and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.*" (Rev. 5:9). John himself in his prologue to the same book declares of Christ that He "*washed us from our sins in his own blood.*" (Rev. 1:5). Paul adds his testimony when, writing to the Ephesians, he says of Christ "*In whom we have redemption (deliverance) through his blood*" (Eph. 1:7), and to the Colossians that he "*made peace through the blood of his cross*" (Col. 1:20) and would in consequence be the means of reconciling all things to God; finally to the Romans that "*being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*" (Rom. 5:9).

Justification by faith in Christ is granted by God on the basis of the ransom given by Christ and the faith of the believer in that ransom. But this is a different subject and will not be enlarged upon here. Suffice to notice that this justification constitutes a "redemption" or "deliverance" from the bondage of sin in this present time and results in actual deliverance from death when the due time has come for that deliverance. Hence the ransom given by Jesus is often referred to as the means of our redemption. (The words rendered "redemption" in the New Testament have the meaning of being set free, and are usually better translated by our English word "deliverance.") So Job was able to say with confidence "*I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth*" (Job 19:25), and the angel to Joseph "*Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*" (Matt. 1:21). The Apostles, preaching after Pentecost, made it plain that "*there is none other name under heaven given...whereby we must be saved.*" (Acts 4:12). Paul, writing to the Galatian Christians, emphasised that "*when the fulness of the times was come, God sent forth his Son...to redeem them that were*

*under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.”* (Gal. 4:4-5). The fact that Christ gave his own human life to effect this redemption is stressed in the preceding chapter: “*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse (cutting-off) of the law, being made a curse (being cut off) for us.*” (Gal. 3:13). He came deliberately for that purpose, as He himself testified “*the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost.*” (Matt. 18:11). “*I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.*” (John 12:47). “*The Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.*” (Luke 9:56). To that is added the emphatic words of His greatest Apostle, “*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*” (1 Tim. 1:15) and his reminder to Titus “*our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.*” (Titus 2:13-14).

So far we have spoken only of the death of Jesus on the Cross as providing the ransom, but nothing of the outcome. In his instructions to the Christians at home, Paul says “*if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*” (Rom. 5:10). Something more than the death of the Saviour is involved; there is also His resurrection. “*If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*” (Rom. 10:9). Had Jesus been nothing more than a man of Adam’s race, even though a perfect man, he must have remained in the grave, his life given for ever on behalf of mankind. But His was a life that came from above; before the world was created, He lived (John 6:38,51; 8:58; Prov. 8:22) and, on the third day after the human body had been taken down from the Cross and laid in the garden grave, he rose again in the power of an endless life and took again the glory that he had with the Father before the world was, the glory that he had laid aside for the suffering of death. By His Father’s “*mighty power*” says Paul “*which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand.*” (Eph. 1:19-20). The humanity of Jesus remains for ever given as the purchase price for the redeemed, Jesus Himself is forever in possession of His spiritual glory far above all things in heaven and earth.

Wherein lay the necessity of the death of Jesus? Could not His example, His teaching and His influence do for man what was necessary? He gave the answer to that question Himself. “*Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.*” (John 12:24). In God’s wisdom He saw that only by taking the sinner’s place even unto death would Christ be able to win men from the other side of death. “*I am the good shepherd*” said Jesus “*and I lay down*

*my life for the sheep...I lay down my life, that I might take it again...I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.”* (John 10:14-18) Perhaps Peter explains that cryptic utterance when he says “*Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened (made alive) by the spirit.*” (1 Pet. 3:18) That at any rate introduces us to one of the deepest themes in the Bible, the redemptive power of suffering. We may not know just how it is that suffering borne on behalf of others creates a power that saves, but the Bible is clear that it is so. The 53rd Chapter of Isaiah is well known for its description of the sufferings of Christ Jesus; “*He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief...he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows...he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities...he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter...he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken...he hath poured out his soul unto death:...and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*” (Isa. 53:3-12) Explaining this very passage to His disciples after His resurrection, Jesus told them “*Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day*” (Luke 24:46), and again “*O...slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory.*” (Luke 24:25,26) Later on Peter recalled those words when he spoke of the Spirit in the prophets testifying beforehand “*the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.*” (1 Pet. 1:11) The writer to the Hebrews had a clear vision of this matter; he says “*We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels (i.e. made man) for the suffering of death...that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man...forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil...for in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.*” (Heb. 2:9-18) “*In the days of his flesh...though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.*” (Heb. 5:7-9) Peter again re-joins with confirming testimony “*Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example...who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree (the Cross)...by whose stripes ye were healed.*” (1 Pet. 2:21-24) Paul, preaching to the Thessalonians, “*reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead.*” (Acts 17:2-3).

It is in consequence of this understanding, that the sufferings and death of



## THE ROD OF GOD'S ANGER

### A Study in Prophecy Part 1

*“Ah, Assyria, the rod of my anger, and the staff of my fury! Against a godless nation I send him, and against the people of my wrath I command him.”* (Isa. 10:5-6 RSV)

The 10th chapter of Isaiah commences one of the most important prophetic passages of the Old Testament. Its significance resides in the fact of its primary fulfilment during Isaiah's own day, in the Assyrian king Sennacherib's military campaigns in Judah during the period 710-701 BC, campaigns that ended with the destruction of his army by Divine intervention. It also constitutes a set of guidelines to interpret other O.T. foreshadowing of events that terminate this present world-age and usher in the Messianic era upon earth. There are a number of striking factors connected with the theme which serve to draw attention to its importance in prophetic study; these will be alluded to in order.

The first four verses of Isaiah 10 belong to the preceding chapter. Chapters 8:5 to 10:4 comprise the Lord's message to Israel's generation of Isaiah's day warning them that judgment for their apostasies must inevitably come upon them. However, the denunciation is combined with the consoling promise that after the judgment will come repentance and blessing and the coming of the Prince of Peace. Isaiah 10:5 starts a new theme; this continues to the end of chapter 12. First of all, in 10:5 to 10:11, the “Assyrian” is hailed as God's instrument of judgment upon Israel. In his arrogance he claims that what he is doing is by his own power and in his own strength. He does not know that in reality God is using his ambitious designs as the means of Israel's chastisement and when that purpose is achieved he himself will be destroyed. (10:12-19). Isaiah 10:20-23 leads on to a vision of the far-distant future when Israel will have learned the lesson of this judgment and returned to its own land in peace and prosperity. Verses 24-27 record God's appeal to Israel to have no fear of “the Assyrian” but to rest upon God in faith. As though to test this faith, the rest of the chapter, verses 28-34, is a vivid description of the manner in which the invading armies will advance upon and encompass Jerusalem, ending again with the assurance that they advance to their own destruction. As a literal account of Sennacherib's campaign back in Isaiah's day this is the end of the story. The greater fulfilment that Sennacherib prefigured does not end here; it goes on into chapter 11 with the next stage in the Divine programme following the destruction of world evil, the arising of Christ to establish his Millennial Kingdom, the

conditions of which are described up to verse 9. Verses 10-16 continue with the theme of the restoration of Israel to the Holy Land at that time; chapter 12 completes the story with the picture of converted and purified Israel, secure in its own land, ready for the part it is to play in the work of world conversion which is the purpose of the Messianic era.

In the O.T. “the Assyrian,” referred to in this way five times by Isaiah and several times elsewhere, is always a foreview or a memory of Sennacherib. Because of his boastful claims and arrogance against God he was regarded by every generation of Israelites as the great prototype of God’s greatest enemies. Certain “End-Time” prophecies of Daniel, Zechariah and Micah, in addition to Isaiah, are expressed in phraseology reminiscent of that momentous invasion of Judah by this ruthless conqueror.

The prophetic allusions to Sennacherib’s campaigns and their relation to the Divine judgment and, later, deliverance, which came to Israel, can only be understood in the light of some knowledge of the history of the period. The historical accounts of this king’s military activities in Judah and his disastrous end are found in 2 Kings 18:13 to the end of chap. 19; 2 Chron. 32:1-23, and Isaiah chapters 36 and 37. There is also Sennacherib’s own account. A century ago there were discovered at Nineveh two six-sided clay cylinders inscribed with the Assyrian king’s own account of the same campaigns. These inscriptions supplement and considerably amplify the Scripture narrative; it is true that Sennacherib says a great deal more than the Bible about the treasures he took away from Judah and is virtually silent about the details of his calamitous defeat at Jerusalem. That, perhaps, is only natural. But the accounts are valuable aids and do throw light upon many of the details which the Scriptures record only briefly. The cylinders, made by the order of Sennacherib fifteen years after the events they record, remain to this day, one in the British Museum and one in the University of Chicago, strong witnesses to the truth of the Bible.

The year was 711 B.C.; Hezekiah was king of Judah and the prophet Isaiah his faithful counsellor. Sargon, king of Assyria, was away fighting in the east. Taking advantage of the opportunity, the western tributary states of Palestine and Phoenicia had revolted under promise of help from Egypt, help that in the event was not forthcoming. Sargon’s son, the Crown Prince Sennacherib, invaded the west as Commander-in-Chief of the forces and suppressed the revolt. The Philistine stronghold of Ashdod was besieged and taken. In 710 the Assyrian turned his attention to Judah, which was on the defensive; this is when towers equipped with weapons



were erected on the walls and Hezekiah built his famous tunnel to carry water to the pool of Siloam (2 Chron. 32:1-8). Hezekiah made peace with the promise of tribute, and Sennacherib went on to subdue Lower Egypt and return to his own land.

This year, 710 BC, was the commencement of nine troublous years for Judah. Within four years Sargon was dead and again the Palestinians were in revolt, still under promise of help from Egypt. By 702 Sennacherib, now king, was on the spot again and this time prepared for a thorough settlement of the problem. He first took possession of the Lebanon district and conquered the commercial port of Sidon, so gaining control of the sea-going trade of the Phoenicians, which was one of his objectives. At this the coalition began to break up. The three States of Moab, Ammon and Edom sent messengers to the king with assurances of friendship and submission; they were spared the horrors of war. The Philistines were overrun, only the city of Lachish holding out. Hezekiah alone refused submission and prepared for another siege. (This is where 2 Chron. 32:7-23 and 2 Kings 18:13 to 19:37 apply). This time the Egyptians did come out to help but the Assyrian forces defeated them; with most of Judah in Assyrian hands and Egypt proved a broken reed, as Isaiah had warned would be the case, (Isa. 20:4-6; see also Isa. 36:6), Hezekiah submitted and paid heavy tribute. (2 Kings 18:14). Sennacherib says that he sent over two hundred thousand captives to Nineveh out of Judah; the Bible is silent as to this save a possible allusion in Isa. 22.

The Philistine city of Lachish was still holding out and this being the one remaining obstacle on the way to Egypt, Sennacherib's forces commenced a siege. For the second time Egyptian troops, aided this time by Ethiopians, advanced into Palestine. The Assyrian had to divide his forces, some to hold the Egyptians at Libnah in the south of Palestine, some to maintain the siege of Lachish, and another detachment detailed to surround Jerusalem, despite the agreement with Hezekiah, and demand its capitulation. This was the stage of which so much is said in Kings, Chronicles, and Isaiah. Conforming to the prophet's advice, Hezekiah put his trust in the Lord—and defied the Assyrian general. *“Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and four score and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed.”* (Isaiah 37:36-37). That was the end; Sennacherib never returned. And for many years afterwards the people of Israel had peace. These and many other details form the background to several Old Testament views of future events characterizing the destruction of evil at

the end of this present Age. The basis for this understanding seems to reside in what seems at first sight to be a most unlikely text, Isaiah 20:1 (RSV). *“In the year that the commander in chief, who was sent by Sargon the king of Assyria, came to Ashdod and fought against it and took it.”* Sennacherib was the “tartan” (tartanu) or commander-in-chief of the army when he captured Ashdod in 711 BC and then turned his attention to Jerusalem in 710. Now this year 710 seems to be a significant one in the timing of the Divine purpose. It forms the exact midpoint between the institution of Israel as the chosen nation of God at Sinai in 1452 BC and the final rejection (*“your house is left unto you desolate”* Matt. 23:38), at the Crucifixion in AD 33. It is also the mid-point between the birth of Ishmael in 2057 BC and the completion of the conquest of Palestine by the Arab descendants of Ishmael under Caliph Omar in 638 AD from which time Arabic claim to possession of the land subsists. It is also the mid-point, within a few years, between the commencement of the Hebrew prophetic ministry in David the king (accession 1017 BC) and its end with the death of Malachi about 403 BC during which time the Divine messages of warning and hope were constantly in their ears. There is fairly reasonable ground for thinking that, within a century or so at any rate, it also forms the mid-point of the entire history of this present world-age. This is from the warning period that immediately preceded the Flood to the similar warning period which constitutes the “signs of the times” of the approaching Messianic Age.

All this can hardly be accidental. At this time Isaiah, (20:2-4) was to conduct himself in a stipulated manner to make himself a “sign” to all observers, declaring that within a few more years the power of the existing great world-ruler, Egypt, was to be broken before the rising strength of a new tyrant, Assyria.

Elsewhere in Isaiah it is revealed that the new usurper was to be destroyed by Divine intervention before receiving the fruits of victory and that in all this, Israel would learn the futility of placing its trust in any earthly power, and eventually turn to God for deliverance. The likeness of all this to what is so often foreseen in Scripture as the manner in which the kingdoms of this world will eventually become the Kingdom of God is so marked that one might very reasonably conclude that here we have a kind of Divine marker, saying in effect; here in the events of this short period, commencing with Sennacherib’s first threat to Jerusalem in 710 BC and culminating in his final overthrow in 701, there is enshrined a picture in miniature of the more spectacular events staged on a greater scale, which are to mark the period of the ending of this present age and the overthrow of all

its forces of evil. At the very least, the details of this nine-year period, as recorded in both the Scriptures and Sennacherib's inscriptions (\*Taylor cylinder, so called after its discoverer), can throw some light upon the significance of various allusions in Daniel 11, Micah 5 and Zechariah 14. Of these three, Micah is the earliest in point of time, contemporary with Isaiah, and therefore himself involved in the events of Sennacherib's campaign. From some internal indications, his prophecy would appear to have been spoken or written before the fall of Samaria and the Ten-Tribe captivity. He foresaw the Babylonian captivity, still more than a century future, and he may well have foreseen the Assyrian invasion of Judah before it occurred on the basis of what he already knew of Assyrian oppression in Samaria. At any rate, in his 5th chapter, which is a Messianic preview, he brings together in masterly fashion the conflict between the evil forces of this world, symbolized by "the Assyrian," and the irresistible power of the Ruler who emanates from Bethlehem. Interwoven with this is the triumph of God's faithful ones who are delivered from the Assyrian and proceed then to evangelize the nations.

The second analogy enshrines the words of the revealing angel to Daniel in his 11th chapter. The passage describing the deeds of the "king of the north" who at the Time of the End invades and ravages and crushes all opposition until he meets his own end at the standing up of Michael, champion of Israel, is so reminiscent of Sennacherib's invasion in the days of Hezekiah that it might almost have been written with that story in mind. Were Daniel 11 the unaided work of man that might well be so, but we have to remember that this passage constitutes part of a message from above, revealed to Daniel by the power of the Holy Spirit. The choice of words and the descriptive background is of God. If it is manifestly analogous to Sennacherib's actions that can only be because the student is expected to follow the analogy for the detailed interpretation of the revelation.

The whole of Dan. 11 is a guarded and necessarily somewhat obscure foreview of world history as it affects God's people from the time of Daniel himself to the end of this Age and the inauguration of the Messianic Age. The relevant portion dealing with the "king of the north" and the close of the Age is contained within verses 36-45 and it is this portion which is capable of considerable illumination when compared with the Judean campaign of Sennacherib. The stage, of course, is immeasurably widened and the actors representative of world powers greater by far than those who in that past day wrangled over the possession of Judah. Sennacherib becomes the "king of the north," a great world

\*The Taylor Prism, The Sennacherib Prism, named after Col. R. Taylor

power emerging late in the Age, almost at its end; Egypt the older world power which has borne rule more or less from the beginning. Judah and Jerusalem picture the regathered and purified “Holy Nation” of the End Time, awaiting that spectacular deliverance from the enmity of the world which is symbolized by the “standing up” of Michael. On this basis a detailed examination of the passage repays the effort.

Finally, against a different background and covering a much shorter period of time, there is the brief but eloquent vision in Zechariah 14. This describes the gathering of all the nations of the world against Israel, regathered in faith, and the intervention of God from heaven to deliver His people and declare the establishment of the Messianic kingdom. Two or three allusions here are reminiscent of Sennacherib, and the analogy does facilitate the interpretation of what has often been felt to be a difficult metaphorical passage.

But the full examination of these three Scriptural prophecies in the light of the Sennacherib analogy must form the subject of further instalments.

Map of the kingdom of Judah



AOH  
(to be continued)

**ISAIAH**

In moving tones he sang of  
 One who bore  
 The world’s great weight of  
 grief and sorrow sore;  
 Then tuned his harp afresh,  
 and in a strain  
 Of triumph sang Messiah’s  
 coming reign.

**DANIEL**

Time opened wide its vista to his gaze,  
 In vision he beheld these latter days;  
 Saw mighty kings and empires rise and fall,  
 And God’s great kingdom superseding all.

*Poems of the Way*

## THE STORY OF JOHN BIDDLE

Father of English Unitarianism, 1615-1662

What is a Unitarian? There is one GOD, and GOD is Love and they Judge God to be one Essence, one person and one substance. Faithful to this belief, Unitarians reject all notion of a plurality within the divine Godhead. Indeed, they insist that this is contrary to the word of God.

In the Scriptures they find no mention of the Word Trinity. On the contrary, they read that the “Father is greater than the Son” and they believe that the holy spirit is not a separate person, but merely a power exercised by God, or a gift donated by him.

“In the sacred scriptures, Christ is more clearly distinguished from God. Since God is the Father who sends, gives, anoints, sanctifies and rewards, whereas Christ is the Son who is sent, receives, is anointed, sanctified and rewarded. They recognize, nevertheless, that Christ is at one with God on account of a mutual consensus of will and purpose. But at the same time, they agree that we also are at one with him and with God his father” (quoted from the Beliefs, History and present position of the Unitarians in England).

This belief was presented in the 1600s by John Biddle (born 1615 in Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire), for this stance he was imprisoned and so became known as the Father of English Unitarianism.

John Biddle’s father died when he was very young, and he was raised by his widowed mother. Fortunately for John there was a local Grammar School for him to attend and he was able to obtain a scholarship, which enabled him to receive the basics of a classical education. He was a very intelligent student. He is credited with the translation of Virgil’s *Bucolics* (Ancient Roman Poet 70-19 BC) as well as the first two *Satires* of Juvenal (Satirical Roman Poet 2nd Century AD) while he was still at school. This attracted the attention of Lord Berkeley who helped him with a £10 a year scholarship.

Biddle was sent to Oxford in the year 1634 and was a student at Magdalen Hall, where he graduated with a master’s degree in 1641. He was recommended by his University tutors for the position of master at the free Crypt School which was accepted by the Mayor and Council of Gloucester. In 1644 he drafted what he called the “*Twelve Arguments Drawn out of Scripture: Wherein the commonly-received Opinion*

*touching the Deity of the Holy Spirit, is clearly and fully refuted*” and, as stated in the Introduction to this article, these 12 articles can be summed up as a belief in one God, with the rejection of the Holy Spirit as a person (Spirit) coequal to God, and that Christ was a separate person (Spirit) and not coequal to God the Father (Supreme Being).

This was a bombshell! What was most remarkable was that John Biddle had gained this knowledge from no other source than God’s word. There were others before him that also had the same ideas, such as Laelius Socinus (1525-1562). At the time of his study into the Trinity John had not even heard of him. The advice he gave to those who wanted to find the truth was “That they should read God’s word and only God’s word for at least twelve months and that they, like him, would come to similar conclusions about the trinity and other doctrines.” He most certainly was guided by the Holy Spirit in his search for the truth.

At first Biddle only showed this tract to his friends, as he realized the danger he was exposing himself to if the Church and State found out and one of his close friends reported him to the Magistrates. His friends knew how brilliant a scholar he was, well versed in the Scriptures. He knew the New Testament by heart, except for the last few Chapters of Revelation (both in English and Greek). This did not help him in front of the Magistrates who viewed these ideas on the Trinity as heresy. Due to the fear of man at this time he rewrote these views and watered them down to please the Magistrates, who reluctantly accepted it and released him. He returned to his teaching duties as schoolmaster. But this did not last long as he could not keep silent about God’s word. So, on the 23 October 1645 he was again dismissed from his teaching post, as he had now overcome his fear of man, and with his faith strengthened he again had to defend it before the Magistrates.

This time he ended up in jail and he would have stayed there if it was not for a very influential friend who stood bond for him and he was released. Six months later after appearing before Parliament he was again imprisoned. This time his friends were unable to help him, he spent the next three years under the restraint of an officer of the house (Parliament).

On this instance his confinement was not severe, and after Parliament had King Charles I beheaded and Oliver Cromwell was in power as Lord Protector, Biddle was released and took up a post as a preacher in Staffordshire. But Biddle could not keep quiet about what the Bible taught. In 1654 he released more tracts in which he had this to say about

the established church, “Composed for their sakes that would fain to be mere Christians and not of this or that sect, inasmuch as all have more or less, departed from the simplicity and truth of the scriptures.” This caused Parliament to order these new tracts to be burnt, once again Biddle was back in prison.

In 1648 it was demanded that he be hanged, but Cromwell again intervened and exiled him to the Isles of Scilly. In 1651 he was allowed to return to England. After Cromwell died (1658) John Biddle was again persecuted; he was committed to Newgate Prison as a debtor, unable to pay a £200 fine levied on him for his preaching, this was in 1662. He died on 22 September 1662 at the age of only 47, from gaol (jail) fever.

Thus, he gave birth to a revolution whose reverberations are still being felt over 350 years later, he has no marked grave, no statue, no record of his life in Gloucester. John Biddle may justly be termed Gloucester’s forgotten son.

*People’s Paper, Australia*

## A HAPPY NEW YEAR

New mercies, new blessings,  
 new light on the way,  
 New courage, new hope,  
 and new strength for thy day,  
 New notes of thanksgiving,  
 new chords of delight,  
 New songs in the morning,  
 new songs in the night.  
 New wine in thy chalice,  
 new altars to raise,  
 New fruit for thy Master,  
 new garments of praise,  
 New gifts for his treasures,  
 new smiles from his face,  
 New stars for thy crown,  
 new tokens of love,  
 New streams of the glory  
 that waits thee above,  
 New light of his countenance,  
 radiant and clear.

All this be thy joy  
 in the happy new year!

*Songs of the nightingale*

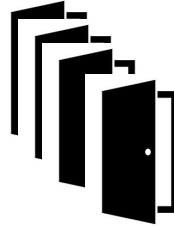
## I AM THE DOOR—A HYMN

“I AM the door,” come in, come in,  
And leave without all fear and sin;  
The night is dark, the storm is wild,  
O! come within, thou weary child.

“I am the door,” whose heavy lock  
Bars out all strangers from the flock,  
And guards my Father’s precious fold:  
Come in from darkness, and from cold.

“I am the door,” no longer roam;  
Here are thy treasures, here thy home;  
I purchased them for thee and thine,  
And paid the price in blood of Mine.

“I am the door,” My Father waits  
To make thee heir of rich estates;  
Come in with thankful hearts and praise,  
And walk in heaven’s appointed ways.



*Dwight Williams  
Bible Students Hymnal*

The writer, who lived from 1824 to 1898, was American.

John 10:7-9 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

John 10:2 He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

Matthew 11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

John 10:1 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

John 10:14-15 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father:



and I lay down my life for the sheep.

Acts 20:28 (RSV footnote) Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to feed the church of the Lord which he obtained with his own blood.

James 2:5 (YLT) Hearken, my brethren beloved, did not God choose the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the reign that He promised to those loving Him?

Romans 8:17 (YLT) And if children, also heirs, heirs, indeed, of God, and heirs together of Christ—if, indeed, we suffer together, that we may also be glorified together.

Psalms 100:4-5 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.

Luke 12:32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

1 Peter 2:9 Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

1 Corinthians 12:31 (NKJV) But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.

Hebrews 10:20 (NKJV) By a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh.

Luke 20:21 They asked him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God truly.



We see the marriage splendour  
Within the open door;  
We know that those who enter  
Are blest for evermore;

We see our King, more lovely  
Than all the sons of men;  
We haste because that door once shut,  
Will never ope again.

## THE BIBLE'S SONG OF LOVE

Verse by verse through the Song of Songs Part 5a Chapter 6:10-7:1

All references RV unless otherwise stated

**6:10** Part 4 closed with the daughters of Jerusalem praising the spiritual beauty of the Bride. Like them we also may recognise spiritual qualities more beautiful than our own but are we always ready to identify that superiority in particular individuals? Part 5 opens with the daughters being brought to a more definitive position. In the first verse of Chapter 6 they had recognized the spiritual quality of the Bride but had, as it were, classed themselves alongside her. “Whither hath thy beloved turned him?” they asked her *“that we may seek Him with thee.”* And again in verse 9 they praised her but in verse 10 they are made to realise her superiority. “WHO IS SHE THAT LOOKETH FORTH AS THE MORNING, FAIR AS THE MOON, PURE AS THE SUN, TERRIBLE AS AN ARMY WITH BANNERS?” (Mar.)

But this challenge is worded very significantly. It is not personal qualities that are to be admired but the reflection of heavenly influences in the life of the individual. The apostle John conveyed a similar thought when he gave us the assurance that “we know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren.” (1 John 3:14) In other words the evidence of the spirit of Christ in us is the recognition of it in Christ’s brethren. If “the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the holy spirit which was given unto us” (Rom. 5:5) then its glow will be seen by others of like precious faith. If we keep the reflecting surface of our hearts free from impurity then we too shall look forth “as the morning dawn” and reflect (like the moon) the brighter heavenly light “pure as the sun.”

We might also observe that in vv.4-7 the Maiden is likened to things terrestrial but in this verse she is compared with things celestial—the morning, moon, sun and stars (majestic as bannered hosts). “But we all,” says the Apostle “with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory.” (2 Cor. 3:18)

This is essentially a portrait of the Gospel Age. “The ‘dawn’ of the kingdom day is to be seen in the spouse. Peter speaks of the day dawning and the morning star arising in the hearts of believers. (2 Pet. 1:19)” (\*C.A.C.) We also remember that in the Kingdom parables of Matt. 13 those who were to make up the Bride were shown not in resurrection glory but “shining forth” (v.43) the kingdom to come.

The moon shines but not with its own light: it is never wholly free from spot or shade, nor does it always shine with equal light. Fit emblem of the child of God, as in himself a dark opaque body, shining only with the reflected beams of the Sun of Righteousness—he never reflects that light perfectly, nor does he need to be told how he shines more or less brightly as he comes nearer or recedes further from the sun from whom his light is borrowed...just as “the moon” was divinely constituted “to give light” by night. (Gen. 1:15-16). So does the Church of Christ shine forth as a light in the world, all through the present night of darkness, until the shadows flee away, and she shines forth “clear as the sun.” Another commentator has observed that “the moon...has only one-half illuminated, i.e. the side facing the sun.”

When the Bride is resplendent in Kingdom glory the words of our Lord will be fulfilled. “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun” (i.e. no longer with the paler light of the moon) “in the Kingdom of their Father.” (Matt. 13:43)

“The Bride...is to be seen of myriads, a luminous body, and this she is called to be morally now. Reflecting Christ, and shedding forth the effulgence of God...She appears publicly in the character of one who has power to overcome all that is hostile. Troops with banners flying have not sustained defeat; they are victorious.” (C.A.C.)

“Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth.” (Psa. 60:4) “But thanks be unto God, which always leadeth us in triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest through us the savour of His knowledge in every place.” (2 Cor. 2:14)

**6:11** In these closing days of the Age those who have Bridal love have a special charge from their Lord and a special desire also to look for the signs associated with His second coming and so the Bride says “I WENT DOWN INTO THE GARDEN OF NUTS, TO SEE THE GREEN PLANTS OF THE VALLEY, TO SEE WHETHER THE VINE BUDDED, AND THE POMEGRANATES WERE IN FLOWER.”

In all the prophecies concerning our Lord’s second coming those signs which refer to new growth and future fruitage are those associated with the Nation of Israel. The symbol used is that of the fig tree. This verse, however, does not refer to the putting forth of the leaves of the fig tree spoken of by our Lord as a sign of Israel’s revival. The Bride, we read, is looking for signs of the budding of the vine and the flowering of the

pomegranate.

We are so accustomed to associating the vine with our Lord and His church—spiritual Israel—that we sometimes overlook that the vine was a type of the Israel of God from the earliest days. The Psalmist writing of God’s deliverance of Israel from Egypt said “Thou broughtest a vine out of Egypt: thou didst drive out the nations, and plantedst it.” (Psa. 80:8) In the prophecies of Hosea Israel is spoken of as “a luxuriant vine.” (Hos. 10:1) Moreover the Messianic prophecy of the “shoot out of the stock of Jesse” and the “branch out of his roots” describes the growth and habit of the vine. (Isa. 11:1)

The scriptures only appear to use the fig tree as a symbol of Israel during the period of God’s disfavour. The Bride is looking for the first signs of the budding of the vine, for the vine of Israel in full fruit will represent the day when through Israel God will give “times of refreshing to all mankind.”

What of the pomegranates? In the furnishing and decoration of the Temple of Solomon pomegranates were the most prominent decoration associated with the Crowns (Chapiters) which surmounted the two great pillars named respectively ‘Jachin’ (He shall establish) and ‘Boaz’ (in it is strength). The Bride was looking, therefore, for the flowering of the pomegranates—the first signs of the future crowning beauty of the Kingdom of God in the days when it shall be established is strength upon the earth.

Those thoughts are further confirmed by the words “the green plants of *the valley*” for in Zech. 14:4 we read that the day of the Messiah’s second presence shall be marked by a great valley of blessing. That will be the day of the valleys for “Every valley shall be exalted...and the glory of the LORD shall be revealed.” (Isa. 40:4,5) Before leaving the verse we might also observe that the reference to the garden of nuts is incidental but it is a fitting picture of an Israel described by the Apostle Paul in the words “a hardening in part hath befallen Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.” (Rom. 11:25)

**6:12** These signs of the presence of the Lord set the heart of the Bride aglow and so in the next verse she continues “OR EVER I WAS AWARE, MY DESIRE SET ME AMONG THE CHARIOTS OF MY PRINCELY PEOPLE.” (Mar.)

All translators agree that this verse is expressive of surprise—"Before I was aware" or, more literally "I did not know" or "suddenly," "unwittingly."

Young (concordance) translates *Ammi-Nadib* as "My liberal people." The prime meaning of the word 'liberal' is "befitting a man (person) of free birth." (Webster) Thus the entire verse seems to express the sudden delighted surprise of the Bride as she finds herself carried away (as by chariots) in the spirit which animates the members of the body of Christ (the princely people). What is it that so transports her? Is it not the sudden realisation that she was in "the day of small things." (Zech. 4:10) Israel of old is showing signs of regeneration and this means that "the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (Rom. 11:25) and the marriage of the Lamb's wife is near at hand. Could any single thing do more to transport with joy those who wait earnestly to join their Lord than the sudden evidence that "He is nigh, even at the doors." (Matt. 24:33)

The Hebrew text ends the chapter at this verse thus helping us to distinguish a change of speaker.

**6:13** "RETURN, RETURN, O SHULAMMITE; RETURN, RETURN, THAT WE MAY LOOK UPON THEE."

These words come clearly from the daughters. In Chapter 6 verse 1 they asked to accompany the Bride "that we may seek Him with thee." But Bridal love is too strong to be restrained and so the daughters, like the foolish virgins, have been left behind.

At this point the R.V. translators assert there should be a space. This appears to mark another change in speaker. Once again there is the tone of mild reproof that we noted in verse 10. Then the daughters were asked to recognise the spiritual superiority of the Bride, now they are asked "WHY WILL YE LOOK UPON THE SHULAMMITE, AS UPON THE DANCE OF MAHANAIM?"

This is the first time that the Bride has been given a name and it is that of her beloved for "Shulammite" is a feminine form of "Solomon." As Solomon is the "peace-giver" so Shulammite is "peace-receiver." "My peace I give unto you"—"Justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5:1 KJV)

The word "Mahanaim" appears also in Gen. 32:2 where it is used as a title for that place where there were two hosts (1) Jacob and his host (the

earthly host). (2) God's host (the heavenly host).

The rebirth of the Nation of Israel tells us that now there are two hosts coming into view, the heavenly host, now complete in the Song, and the earthly host of Israel after the flesh, for the spiritual and earthly emancipation of Israel was to be a feature of the time when "the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." (Rom. 11:25)

**7:1** At last the daughters recognise the true qualities of the Bride. In these next few verses of praise the daughters give evidence of spiritual maturity. It is appropriate that the daughters should leave the pages of the Song revealing that under divine guidance their experiences have brought them to a full appreciation of the spiritual qualities of the Bride.

"HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THY STEPS IN SANDALS, O PRINCE'S DAUGHTER." (Mar.)

The Bride is now surveyed from head to foot. In chapters 4 and 6 only parts of her person were noticed; but she has now advanced to great maturity of Christian experience, even to perfection to "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." (Eph. 4:13) Like her description of the Bridegroom in Chapter 5 it is a clothed figure. The word translated "feet" in the A.V. is more correctly rendered "footsteps" referring rather to the ways and goings of the children of God. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD." (Psa. 37:23 KJV)

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him." (Col. 2:6 KJV)

It is interesting also to note that in chapter 5:11 the maiden commences her description of the Beloved with His head. Here in 7:1 it would seem that her *walk* has attracted attention—it is now consistent with her professed love for her Lord in contrast to chapter 5:2. "If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk." (Gal. 5:25) In 5:3 her shoes are removed, but here her feet are in shoes, suggesting obedience and therefore "beautiful."

Shoes presuppose her to be *fully* dressed: they are not worn inside the house in oriental lands, but put on as one goes outside. Slaves never wore shoes. In the parable of the Prodigal Son the father brought shoes for the son who returned. This illustrates that "every one that committeth sin is the bondservant (slave) of sin" (John 8:34) but "there is...now no

**NOTICES**

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**SATURDAY 7 JANUARY 2023**  
**Please note amended date and venue**

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 Saturday 29 April  
 Saturday 29 July  
 Saturday 28 October

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**Gone from us**

Jessie Parnham (Nottingham)

condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.” (Rom. 8:1 KJV)

“When the saints return to view as overcomers spiritual features appear in them, such as are described in a figurative way in the opening verses of this chapter...What the spouse is in her movements is brought before us in verse 1. Her ‘footsteps’ are beautiful. There is a royal dignity about them, and a peaceful character, for one would connect the ‘sandals’ with having feet shod with the preparation of the glad tidings of peace. (Eph. 6:15) ...The Lord said ‘into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house’ (Luke 10:5 KJV) Wherever His disciples went their feet were to be beautiful as announcing glad tidings of peace.” (C.A.C.)

“THY ROUNDED THIGHS ARE LIKE JEWELS, THE WORK OF THE HANDS OF A CUNNING WORKMAN.” (Mar.)

This part of the portrait has been well explained by Fausset:-

“Joints—rather ‘the rounding:’ the full graceful curve of the hips in a female figure like the rounding of a necklace (as the Hebrew for jewels means) or, applying it to the girdle, binding together the robe round the hips.”

Such is the beautiful symmetry of the Church of Christ—“the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth -.”

It would seem as though the Apostle Paul had this verse in mind when he exhorted us in Eph. 6:14,15 “Stand, therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace.”

*EEA/ LB*

*The door to the human heart can be opened only from the inside.*

*The door of Opportunity is marked “push.”*

*God never closes one door without opening another.*

*Deep Waters and a Bubbling Brook*

