

BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

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shall go up thereon, it shall not be found
there; but the redeemed shall walk there.*
Isaiah 35:9



BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

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

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

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THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

"No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there." (Isaiah 35:9)

The BBC recently reported an "escaped circus lion (Kimba) roams around an Italian town before capture." Residents were told to remain indoors or in their cars, such was the potential risk to the residents of Ladispoli, Italy. I am sure we would have heeded such a warning. It does reflect the danger lions pose to human beings.

Daniel faced such animals when an evil plot from his Persian opponents cast him into the lions' den. But God in his power was able to keep faithful Daniel safe in contrast to when Daniel's opponents were placed in the den by King Darius.

Such a prospect was applied to the prophet of God who travelled north to King Jeroboam to denounce the apostasy of the Northern kingdom in the days of that king. However he ignored the instruction to eat or drink nothing and to return to Judah immediately he had delivered his message. But he accepted the invite of a local prophet in the north. His punishment was to be killed by a lion. (1 Kings 13)

Lions are a symbol of power. The England football team have the three lions on their football shirts. The empire of Babylon was pictured as a lion to symbolise its power in the world.

In this present age Peter in his epistle gives us the warning of Satan as a

roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, to destroy the faith of the Christian. (1 Pet. 5:8) One thinks of the population in that Italian town staying inside to avoid a potentially dangerous lion. We ought to be aware of the subtle threat of our enemy which does not want us to make our calling and election sure.

On a more positive note our Lord Jesus is described as “the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David” (Rev. 5:5) to depict his authority, his majesty and kingly power. Like the animated film and musical the “Lion king” the lion is the supreme carnivore in the food chain hence the connection between being a king and a lion.

In the coming age the Messianic age, in the 1,000 year reign of Christ and the Church, there will not be the influence of Satan to prevent the redeemed being reconciled to God, after the general resurrection of the dead.



Animals Attack from the Rear

ANIMAL trainers say that the secret of safely handling all beasts of the cat species, such as lions, tigers and leopards, is to keep them constantly afraid of you. The instant they get over their fear, they will attack anyone who crosses their path. They are all treacherous too and often gather courage for an attack when the master’s eyes are turned away from them. One never knows when they will get over their fear and spring at the keeper if they have a chance to do it from behind. Our fight with the devil is like that. He is always seeking to attack us from the rear or in ambush. “The devil goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour,” but he is a great coward when faced with courage. “Resist the devil and he will flee from you” is as true in our time as it was when the Apostle James first declared it.

*A.C. Frey Collection
Deep Waters and a Bubbling Brook*

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.

THIS HOPE WE HAVE

“Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus Christ the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.”
(Heb. 4:14)

What is probably the most significant event of the First Advent occurred when the risen Lord ascended visibly in his disciples' presence on the Mount of Olives until a cloud received him out of their sight. On the cross Jesus was temporarily overcome by the powers of evil; He yielded up his spirit to God and died, the just for the unjust. His ascension forty days later was, on the contrary, an outward manifestation of his triumph over the powers of evil. Death now no more had dominion over him. (Rom. 6:9). Momentous as was the happening when at the first He emptied himself of his heavenly glory and took a bondman's form for the suffering of death (Phil. 2:7-8) of even greater moment was his return to that heavenly glory having all power in heaven and earth for the elimination of evil and the establishment of everlasting righteousness.

This is the vision which inspired the writer to the Hebrews when he spoke of the solid foundation upon which the Christian faith is established “*The hope set before us*” he calls it “*which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*” (Heb. 6:18-20) This reference to Melchisedec is full of meaning. It speaks, not of sacrifice and death, but of Divine blessing and life. Melchisedec was a priest and a king, combining both offices in his one person in those far-off-days when Abraham was a sojourner in Canaan. He comes on the scene only very briefly, at the time the invaders of Canaan had taken Abraham's brother-in-law Lot captive with all his possessions, and Abraham went after them with his followers to rescue the prisoners. It was as Abraham returned in triumph that as recounted in the narrative in Gen. 14, Melchisedec King of Salem brought forth bread and wine and blessed Abraham, and, says the chronicler, “*He was the priest of the Most High God.*” (v.18) No more is said about him or of the mysterious order of priesthood of which he was the then head or of the equally mysterious people over whom he ruled. It was left to the writer of Hebrews two millenniums later to take hold of this incident and weave it into the fabric of his argument. “*Consider how great this man was*” he invites “*unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.*” (Heb. 7:4) The great point about Melchisedec is that he “*abideth a priest continually.*” (v.3) The fact that neither his

birth nor his death, his predecessors or successors, are recorded in Scripture enabled the later writer to make him a type or illustration of the eternal priesthood of Christ after his ascension. There was no sacrifice, no making atonement for sin, associated with the priestly office of Melchisedec; only the dispensing of gifts and blessings, the exercise of a royal benevolence. In this it differed from the order of Aaron, which existed only for the making satisfaction for sin. In another respect it differed also. The Aaronic priesthood was a dying priesthood; the High Priest in any one generation must needs give place to another in the course of time. *“They truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: but this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.”* (Heb. 7:23-24) The High Priest Aaron, and his successors, each in his own day, in the execution of their duties, pictured Jesus in his earthly life, a life of sacrifice, making atonement for the sins of the world. The word atonement means to cover, to obliterate, and when the High Priest sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice on the Propitiatory in the Most Holy place of the Tabernacle or the Temple, he was in symbol blotting out the peoples’ sins in the sight of God. But there was a further element in the ritual before the people were free from the weight of their sins. After the offering of the blood the High Priest must emerge again and take his place in full view of all the people, raise his hands and invoke the Divine blessing upon them. Only when that point was reached could it be said that the offering had done its work. Only then could each man of Israel feel that he stood in a cleansed position before God.

So it is in the reality. Speaking of this very ritual of the high priest entering into the holy place every year with the blood of the offerings, he goes on to say *“and as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment”* (Heb. 9:27) (the “men” here are the successive High Priests who died symbolically in the ceremony, for the slain beast was a substitution and in symbol it was the Priest who offered himself to God, and it was after this offering that the judgment of God in the acceptance of the offering was manifested in the re-appearance of the Priest to bless the people) *“so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and to them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”* (Heb. 9:28) Here is an exact correspondence. Christ offered himself to death just as did the Priest in the old ritual; Christ must re-appear, this time without sin (the word means sin-offering, for Christ does not offer himself a second time for sin) but definitely for the blessing of those for whom the offering has been made—the whole world of man. This is where the order of Melchisedec comes in. The priesthood of Aaron pictures the work of Christ at his First Advent and until his resurrection;

that of Melchisedec pictures his position and work after his resurrection and ascension and at his Second Advent. “*Unto them that look for him.*” (v.28) That is the age-old hope of the Church, waiting for the promised return of the Lord Jesus Christ to complete the war against evil and fulfil the whole purpose of God.

This is why the Apostle Paul exhorted his pupil Titus to “*live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world (age); looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*” (Titus 2:12-13) The duty of the Christian is to administer the obligations of the Christian faith both in inward sanctification and outward witness during this intervening time between the First and Second Advents in continual expectation of the promised Return, not looking for that Return as the end of all things for humankind, but rather as an occasion for a new effusion of blessing upon mankind. If the Second Advent brought nothing but the catastrophic ending of all save the “elect” it could hardly be appropriately described as a “blessed hope” and a “glorious appearing.” In point of fact that aspect of the Lord’s return which has to do with judgment passed upon evil things is referred to a fewer number of times than that which depicts it as an occasion of blessing and rejoicing, of light and life. No philosophy of the work of the Second Advent is complete which does not include a place for the evangelisation of the world, for multitudes to come to the feet of the Saviour, for the opportunity of salvation to “whosoever will” (Rev. 22:17) untrammelled by the deceptions of Satan and the hampering effects of abounding evil. The Messianic kingdom must run its course, and the nations walk in its light—even those of old time like the men of Tyre and Sidon, and Sodom and Gomorrah, who are to find the retributive judgments of that Kingdom “more tolerable” than will the Pharisees of our Lord’s own day. (Matt. 11:22; Mark 6:11)—before the Last Assize (judgment) is held. Nothing less is demanded by the selection of Melchisedec as a type of Christ in his work of glory—a dispenser of Divine favour and a king ruling in righteousness.

This present world is but a stage in man’s progress, a stage in which sin and the results of sin mar the Divine image in man and hamper his attainment of the Divine purposes. But the image will be restored and the purpose served. It may well be that the exercise of the free will which God has implanted in man and without which he would not be man, may lead some at the end to refuse their intended place in God’s creation, to refuse the gift of life upon the only terms on which God can bestow it. It must be, nevertheless that at least the vast majority of earth’s millions will, as the Divine purpose works itself out through one age after another, attain at last

a heart appreciation of the goodness of God, and in wholehearted submission to the Lord Jesus Christ come, as Isaiah of old said the ransomed of the Lord would come, to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, while sorrow and sighing shall flee away. (Isa. 35:10)

Of course the story does not stop even there. Through all the infinite ages, ages without end, development and progress will go on. Heaven is not a static condition and there is no finality in the things said and done in that place. There will always be some new thing to learn, always some greater thing to do, always some higher pinnacle of achievement to surmount. *“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.”* (1. Cor. 2:9-10) Spiritually, by faith, we know that these things are so although we cannot visualise them and for the present with that we must be content.

So the angel's words to those few disciples standing on the Mount of Olives after their Lord had ascended before their very eyes were words of confidence and assurance. *“This same Jesus,...shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”* (Acts 1:11) The English expression “in like manner” fails by far to express the real force of the heavenly message. It was not that He was to return in similar clothing with similar appearance, descending in bodily form to stand on the solid earth just as He had ascended from it. The expression is derived from a word denoting the regular and consistent course of the sun round the earth within a fixed channel or pathway in which it must certainly appear at its due time. It is as though the angels had said “as surely as you have seen him go into heaven so surely will He follow his fixed course and come again.” “As surely as the sun sets in the west tonight, so surely will it rise in the east tomorrow.” It was that expression of certitude which sent the disciples back to Jerusalem with great joy and instilled into their minds and hearts a faith and fortitude which remained with them all their days. The Lord whom they served had finished with sacrifice and offering; He had passed into the heavens to receive a new and supremely exalted office, and one day He would certainly return to take his own to himself and bring the sons of men all those blessings which an infinitely wise and supremely loving God had prepared for them. Small wonder that the brightest hope of the Christian Church lies in the future, that discouragements and disappointments and failures of the present are as nothing compared to the glorious triumphs of the time when, at last, *“at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow...and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”* (Phil. 2:10-11)

DANIEL IN BABYLON

13. The Den of Lions

It was during the seven months' short reign of Darius the Mede that Daniel's enemies made one more—unavailing—attempt to get rid of him. The stalwart old man had survived many such plots in the course of his long life; perhaps by now he was getting used to them. At any rate there is no indication that his faith wavered in the slightest. As an example of the strength of character a firm faith in God can develop in a man's life the story of Daniel stands supreme. Never did he concede one jot or tittle to the forces of the enemy; at no time were his principles compromised. Fearless before kings, humble before God, his life reveals that combination of iron strength and dependent pliancy which made him so useful an instrument in the hand of God. We can look for no better instance among the records of faithful men upon which to model our own Christian lives. Some there were, following Jesus for a time, who turned back and "walked no more with him." The same sad sequel writes "*finis*" across the pages of many believers' lives when the discouragements of the way, the opposition of God's enemies, the attractions of other things, prove too strong for the faith and hope which alone will enable any disciple to "endure to the end." Like Israel of old, who "could not enter in because of unbelief," so do many Christians falter and fall in the wilderness instead of marching onward to enter the Promised Land. The example of Daniel's life shows what inflexible devotion to the things of God and unshakeable faith in his power and providence can do to a man who builds those things into his life's experience.

Nothing of this was in the minds of those presidents and princes who at this time were conspiring against Daniel. Unscrupulous men of the world, determined to dispose once and for all of the man who by his rectitude and uprightness was a constant threat to their nefarious ways, they hatched a plot which seemed certain of success. No ordinary methods would do; this was a man incorruptible, proof against either threats or bribes, influenced neither by fear nor greed. None of the ordinary methods of achieving their object would serve. They could not accuse him of disloyalty to the king or State, for he was manifestly the soul of integrity. They could not insinuate that he was guilty of personal enrichment from the public purse, or of taking bribes to pervert the course of justice; his private life was open for all to see. They could not impugn or malign his character, for all men knew him to be blameless and irreproachable. And in desperation at last these men said, "*We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him*

concerning the law of his God.” (Dan. 6:5). They could only hope to bring about the downfall of Daniel by making his loyalty to God a crime in itself.

So the plot was hatched. It was a simple enough scheme once the bare idea had crossed someone’s mind. From its very nature it could not fail to work. Daniel’s very firmness of character would be the sure guarantee of his undoing. As the details were unfolded and discussed there would be many nodding heads and covert smiles. The Jew was as good as dead already. Probably the principal contestants for Daniel’s soon-to-be vacant office began to eye one another speculatively and under the cover of a spurious heartiness in discussion, began to take each others’ measure for the further scramble for power which would follow immediately Daniel had been disposed of.

Agreement reached, the band of rogues sought audience with the king, and outlined their proposal. Briefly put, it provided that for a period of thirty days supplicatory prayer should be offered to no god or man save the king. The brief account in the sixth chapter of Daniel gives no supporting reasons for this apparently pointless piece of authoritarianism, no argument to justify what must have appeared to be a particularly foolish and vapid decree. Nevertheless the litigants may well have made out a case for their request, and that without revealing the true purpose behind the scheme. The Babylonians were worshippers of many gods, spirits, and demons, but the Persians were monotheists, worshippers of one god, Ahura-Mazda, the god of light. The argument may well have been that this thirty days’ decree would have the effect of suspending temporarily the native people’s customary worship and introducing them to the idea of monotheistic worship, the worship of one god. But since the god of the Persians was not well known in Babylon, why not let him be worshipped in the person of the king as his representative? Thus the vanity of Darius would be flattered and his ear lent more willingly to the proposal. The Roman emperors had Divine honours paid to them while yet living and the early Christians suffered for refusing to give homage to them as gods; here at a much earlier date it seems that the same situation was to face the saintly Daniel.

The manner in which the conspirators put the decree before the king and practically demanded his signature seems as though he was brow-beaten into signing. It might well have been that, faced with a united front of all his principal men except Daniel, he yielded against his own better judgment. It might not have occurred to him that Daniel would object to

the decree; after all. Daniel himself was a monotheist, worshipping one God, and might reasonably be expected to support the general idea. Darius probably saw little difference between the one god of the Persians and the one God of Daniel, and perhaps reasoned that at any rate Daniel could not seriously object. At any rate he signed.

Of course Daniel behaved in the manner expected by the plotters. The habit of over sixty years was not going to be abrogated on account of the king's decree. Three times a day, from his earliest youth in Babylon, he had prayed with his face towards Jerusalem, no wall or door intervening, giving open testimony to his faith that one day the House of God would be re-established in that present desolate city. He must have done that when a lad in the court of Nebuchadnezzar, in full view of his pagan companions. At first they would have mocked and derided him; later they perhaps came to respect him. There may have been an occasion when an imperious summons to the presence of his royal master came to him when thus engaged as happened once to a British Prime Minister, Mr. Gladstone, in the days of Queen Victoria. He would most surely have behaved as Mr. Gladstone did on that occasion, continuing with his prayers unhurriedly, and if then faced with an angry demand for an explanation, as was the case with that Christian statesman, returned the same answer: "I was engaged in audience with the King of kings." Daniel's enemies probably knew his history and judged rightly his behaviour. Assembling at the appropriate time, as expected, they found Daniel with his windows wide open, praying to his God, in flat defiance of the royal decree.

With what glee and triumph must the plotters have hastened to the royal palace and sought audience with King Darius. They were careful, however, to get the king irrevocably committed and to that end they first had him confirm his earlier concurrence. "*Hast thou not signed a decree...?*" (v.12) and so on. True enough, agreed the unsuspecting king; a decree which, once signed, cannot be revoked. That was the law of the Medes and Persians and the king confirmed his upholding of the law. Then the mask was thrown off. "*That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree which thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day.*" (v.13).

Too late, the king perceived the trap into which he had fallen. Verse 14 says that he was "*displeased with himself.*" He must have realised that the one man he could really trust was now, by his own stupid action, condemned to death. He might also have reflected that he himself, deprived of Daniel's loyalty and integrity, would be more at the mercy of

these scheming conspirators than ever before. So he “*laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him.*” (v.14)

The presidents and princes were ready for this. They knew it would come. Before long they were back again, reminding the king of his obligations under the State Constitution. The king realised that there was no way out; the sentence would have to be executed. It must have been with a heavy heart that he gave the necessary orders, and the Palace guards went off to arrest the nation’s Chief Minister and bring him to the place of execution.

Verse 16 is a little puzzling. It reads as though Darius assured Daniel that his God, whom he served continually, would certainly deliver him. Whether this was an expression of faith or merely a soothing last assurance to a man he regarded as good as dead, is not clear; when he came to the den next morning he was not half so sure about it. But it was now too late for further talk. The entire company came to the den, usually a large round pit in which the animals could roam freely but from which they could not escape, approached by means of a steeply sloping tunnel from the surface. The unresisting victim was pushed down the tunnel and slid helplessly to the floor of the pit where the lions awaited him. The iron grille at the entrance to the tunnel was shut and locked and sealed with the king’s seal and those of the conspirators so that there need be no suspicion next morning that any attempt to deliver the condemned man had been made. There would, of course, be guards posted at the gate, just in case any of Daniel’s own friends should attempt a rescue during the night. These precautions taken, the party dispersed; the king, to a miserable evening and a sleepless couch, the others, to a sound night’s sleep in the satisfaction of a job well done.

Next morning “*the king arose very early*” (v.19)—much earlier apparently, than the men whose scheming had created this situation. The account says that he “*went in haste unto the den of lions.*” He must at least have had some glimmer of hope that Daniel’s God had been able to deliver him, or he would not have made such an early morning expedition. His faith was only very rudimentary, however; we are told that he “*cried with a lamentable voice...O Daniel...is thy God...able to deliver thee?*” (v.20) He was by no means over sanguine, but he evidently thought that there was at least a chance.

Calm and unruffled came the familiar voice from the depths below. “*O king, live for ever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions’ mouths, that they have not hurt me...*” (vv.21,22)

Our God does not treat all his saints in the same fashion. Plenty of Christians were thrown to the lions in the days of pagan Rome, but God did not intervene to save them. He did intervene to save Daniel. That deliverance was for a definite purpose in the Divine Plan. Daniel yet had more work to do. The death of those many Christians in the Roman arena was for a definite purpose also, for “*the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.*” (Tertullian) Whether in life or in death, we are the Lord’s, and He will dispose of our earthly lives in the way that is good in his sight, and in the interests of his fulfilling purpose for all mankind. Only when we are all united together in the “General Assembly and Church of the Firstborn” (Heb. 12:23) beyond the Vail, will we fully understand just how our apparently dissimilar experiences and varied fortunes in this life have been wrought together by our all-wise Father to effect the great end He has in view.

As far as Darius was concerned, Daniel’s reassuring words brought about a swift revulsion of feeling. “*Then was the king exceeding glad.*” (v.23) Not only was he glad for Daniel’s sake, but also for his own. Here was a golden opportunity to rid himself of the men whom he now realised to be a menace to his own security. Probably some of them at least were Persians, and more disposed to favour Cyrus than Darius. This was the psychological moment, while the wonder of the miracle was fresh upon the minds of the king’s soldiers and servants. The king was not slow to take advantage of the chance. In the first place Daniel could legitimately be freed, since the decree merely stipulated that he should be cast into the den of lions without defining the consequences. The plotters had hardly thought that necessary. The law had been fulfilled and now Daniel could be released. The king saw to it that he was so freed without further delay. The same guards who cast him in now had the somewhat more ticklish task of getting him out. They doubtless hoped as they did so that the restored Chief Minister would not hold their action of the previous night against them when he resumed his administrative duties. With the same thought in mind they were probably only too pleased to show diligence in executing the king’s next order, to the effect that they should arrest the men who were responsible for the plot against Daniel and cast them without further ado to the lions from which Daniel had so recently escaped. The summary nature of this arbitrary command would support the idea that the men concerned were taken from their beds before they had the time to realise what had happened, were hurried to the pit and without further ceremony flung in. Their unhappy wives and families were treated in similar fashion—a piece of Oriental barbarity, which was quite the usual thing in those days, the idea being to ensure that no

descendant of the criminal should live or be born to perpetuate his name. This ferocious act is quite in keeping with what might be expected of Darius; his father Astyages was one of the most inhuman monsters of antiquity.

The story ends with another decree, this time without any prompting. Darius sent a command to all parts of the empire requiring that worship and reverence be paid to the God of Daniel. It need not be thought that this implied the conversion of Darius or the establishment of Judaism as the State religion. It need only mean that Darius was sufficiently impressed by the manifest power of the God of Daniel that he gave the seal of his royal approval upon the worship of that God, wheresoever and by whomsoever performed. It might well be that this incident provided the starting point for that tolerance with which the Medo-Persian rulers regarded the Jewish religion, leading only a year after this happening to the decree of Cyrus permitting the Jews to return and build their Temple, and later on for the favour they enjoyed, in the days Nehemiah, when the city of Jerusalem itself was rebuilt.

To Christians it is just one of the many examples in history where God shows us all his power to deliver, when deliverance is in accord with his will and his Plan. This story shows us that God *can* deliver; whether in any given case, or in our own case, He *will* deliver, rests again upon the needs of his Plan and his designs for us personally. Those of us whose lives are given over completely to serve him and be used by him would not have it otherwise; for He knoweth best.

(To be continued)

AOH



DANIEL

Daniel answered, (though unseen,)
 “May long live the King and Queen!
 God mine innocence hath seen—
 God’s own angel stands between—
 Twixt the lion’s mouth and me.
 King, I’ve done no hurt to thee.”
 Glad the king, rejoice to see
 Daniel whole, might be set free.

Have we the faith of such as he,
 To trust God whatever be,
 To trust Him where we cannot see,
 To rather die than disobey?
 For Daniel knew not whether he
 Would of the lions eaten be,
 Or yet perchance deliverance see.

*Poems of the Way
 Martin C. Mitchell*

THOUGHT ON ISAIAH 33:6

“Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times.” (Isa. 33:6)

Stability is an ingredient sadly lacking in world affairs today, one that is desperately sought by the world’s leaders but not found. The Hebrew word combines the factors of firmness and reliability, something which stands upon a sure foundation and can thereafter be relied upon to remain without failure. The policies of the nations are disintegrating and falling to pieces almost before they are put into practice and this because they lack stability. This in turn is because one of the vital factors is missing. Wisdom and knowledge are necessary to stability, said the prophet to his own generation. Men have the knowledge—plenty of it—today but they lack the wisdom. That is not God’s fault. He implanted wisdom in man at the beginning, the wisdom necessary to administer man’s environment, wisdom to order his own life aright and to live in peace and harmony with his fellows, but men have allowed greed and self-interest to dictate their actions and through the generations that innate wisdom has been obscured and become lost. The consequence is that this marvellous knowledge men have acquired is running amok and uncontrolled and the fruit of that knowledge is driving the world to destruction.

Isaiah preached his message at a time not unlike the recent past. His own nation, Israel, was the unwilling victim of the contending political interests of two super-powers. Assyria and Egypt, the two principal empires of the day, were at each other’s throats and the land of Israel lay between. The prevailing political opinion in Israel was to conclude treaties of mutual help with Egypt in the hope that safety from Assyrian aggression would thereby be assured. Isaiah told them in effect that they were leaning upon a broken reed and would certainly fall victim to Assyria if they persisted in their course of action. The sequel proved the accuracy of his diagnosis; Israel was eventually carried captive into Assyria. But Isaiah saw beyond the immediate prospect. He also told them that in a day yet future, when they would at last have learned the lesson of their reliance upon human knowledge without the heavenly wisdom which could have been theirs for the asking, the Lord himself will come into the picture and establish a social order in which wisdom and knowledge will indeed conspire together to bring about stability.

Therein lies our hope, the hope for all humankind. It is quite beyond the power of man, Christian or non-Christian, to extricate this world from the calamity it has brought upon itself. Only God can do it now, and God will.

The old proverb “Man’s extremity is God’s opportunity” will prove to be wonderfully true. It has been the Divine intention all along to allow men full reign to govern themselves in their own way by their own standards and only when they have lamentably failed, and can see for themselves that they have lamentably failed, will He step in to show men the right way. The Biblical presentation of the Divine purpose is crystal clear that the majority of men will hail the new order of things with relief and enthusiasm. Of the reign of Christ over the nations during that coming Age it is said they shall say “in that day, Lo! this is our God...and He will save us... We will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.” (Isa. 25:9)

AOH 1981



RESURRECTION

DEAR Lord, I pray for courage, strength and love,
 For that pure wisdom, promised from above,
 That I may faithful be and worthy found
 To stand “that day” beside the grass-grown mound
 Of my beloved dead, and say, “Arise!
 Come forth to light and life, lift up thine eyes!
 Awake and burst the prison bands of death!
 Stand up, the God of Heaven restores thy breath!
 Return unto the land that gave thee birth—
 No longer, as of old, a sin-cursed earth—
 The desert places blossom as the rose,

With fragrance laden, every breeze that blows!
 A Highway thou shalt find, a way of life,
 No pride, nor selfishness, no envy, strife,
 Shall prosper there; the ransomed of the Lord
 Shall walk thereon, obedient to His Word;
 No longer shall the ‘lion’ or ‘ravenous beast’
 Upon the poor, the weak, the innocent feast;
 There God shall wipe all tears from every eye,
 No grief shall touch thine heart, not e’en a sigh,
 And there shall be no death, nor any pain!
 Awake! Rejoice and join the glad refrain—
 ‘Hosanna, peace on earth, good will toward men,
 All honour to the Lamb. Amen! Amen!’”

Poems of Dawn

SINNERS IN ZION

“The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised (overtaken) the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” (Isa. 33:14).

There are indications in some parts of the prophetic Word which seem to foresee a time at the end of the Age when Israel is regathered awaiting its predicted final deliverance, and the hearts of some thus regathered will fail them, and they will abandon the Land of Promise and revert to the outer world from which they came for fear of the enemy threat. It is fundamental that the Lord can only deliver when there is faith; in Old Testament days when the people had apostatized it was always the position *“therefore (so) he brought down their heart(s) with labour...and there was none to help; THEN they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, (he heard,) and saved (delivered) them out of their distresses”* (Psa.107:12-13). So at the end; only those who manifest utter faith in the power of God to deliver, in the face of their enemies, will experience the spectacular deliverance which marks the outward and visible establishment of the Millennial kingdom upon earth. The remainder will take their place with mankind in general as those to whom the law of the Lord goes forth, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:3), at an immediately succeeding time.

Here in Isa. 33 the immediate threat was that of Sennacherib the Assyrian, threatening Jerusalem with his forces. The story is recounted in Isa. 36 and 37 as well as in 2 Kings 18. The Assyrian king boasted that the God of Israel was powerless to deliver his people. The besieged ones in the city, inspired by both Isaiah the prophet and Hezekiah the king, *“answered him not a word.”* (2 Kings 18:36) In full faith they waited quietly for the Lord to deliver, and He did deliver. *“And when they arose early in the morning,”* to look upon the besieging host, says the chronicler exultantly, *“behold, they were all dead corpses.”* (2 Kings 19:35) Faith had won its victory.

But some there were who did not participate in the deliverance. Sennacherib himself has left behind his own account of this same campaign, inscribed upon tablets which still exist and can be read. He records a feature of the affair which the Biblical writer omitted to mention, that some in the city, not so sure that the Lord was able or intended to deliver, endeavoured to escape from the city by night, hoping to evade the besieging army and get away, *“and”* says Sennacherib, *“all they that came*

out of the city by night I captured and sent to Nineveh.” They did not really escape after all, and they missed the glory of the deliverance.

Is this event in past history intended to foreshadow a similar position on a greater scale at the end of the Age when the forces of Gog and Magog come against the regathered nation? It would seem that Zechariah, the prophet of the Restoration two centuries later, thought so, for he cast his vision of that final conflict against the background of Sennacherib’s invasion. “*Behold...I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle*” he says in Zech. 14:1-3, “*and the city shall be taken*” (encompassed as a bird or an animal in a snare) “*and the houses (shall be) rifled, and the women ravished; and half*” (a portion, not meaning just one half) “*of the city shall go forth into captivity, and (but) the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. THEN shall the LORD go forth.*” This is just what happened in the days of Hezekiah. A brief account appears in 2 Kings 18:13-16 but a more detailed one in Sennacherib’s own description, in which he says that in his preliminary campaign he took from Hezekiah all the treasures of the palace and the Temple, and of the wealthy men, the king’s wives and daughters and women of the Court, and carried them away to Nineveh. This, with the defection of those who lost faith, is just what Zechariah describes in his chapter 14. It is noteworthy that it is only AFTER all this has happened that it is said “*THEN shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations.*” (v.3)

This perhaps is what the prophet Zephaniah saw in vision when he in his turn spoke of Israel’s coming deliverance. “*Wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, ...for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy (consumed with my fiery zeal)...then will I take away...them that rejoice in thy pride, and thou shalt no more haughty be...I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD.*” (Zeph. 3:8-12). The pride and arrogance of present-day Israel is proverbial, justifiably so from the point of view of this world’s standards, when one considers her strength and achievements, but these are values of this world and not the values of God. Suppose by some unexpected turn of events in the political world the strength and power of Israel proves inadequate against those elements hostile to her. Suppose that there is a reversal of the present situation so that those who trust in the arm of flesh depart in fear and are replaced by a directing power much more like those “*governors of Judah*” in Zech. 12:5 who say “*the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the LORD of Hosts their God*”? When such a

revolution of thought and action takes place in the Holy Land it might well be that the introduction of the Kingdom of Heaven is breaking forth upon the world.

Ezekiel also seems to have a word about this. Talking, in his 20th chapter about the Lord's intention to regather and establish his people in their own ancient land, he records the Lord's words "*I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: AND I WILL PURGE OUT FROM AMONG YOU THE REBELS, AND THEM THAT TRANSGRESS AGAINST ME: I WILL BRING THEM FORTH OUT OF THE COUNTRY WHERE THEY SOJOURN, AND THEY SHALL NOT ENTER INTO THE LAND OF ISRAEL: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.*" (Ezek. 20:37-38) This word "enter into" is quite significant. It has the meaning of entering into a close relationship, of a close connection; in this context it quite well indicates that these "rebels," though physically in the land, are not spiritually wedded to it. They are not really part of the new nation and the new land because on account of lack of faith they are alien from God, and so He describes them as "sojourners," not really citizens of the land, and He purges them from the land.

It has to be remembered that in the classic description of the great deliverance in Ezekiel 38 and 39 the nation of Israel is depicted as completely defenceless, dwelling in "the land of unwalled villages," (Ezek. 38:11) and yet in complete peace and confidence, which can only mean that the nation, as in the days of Hezekiah, reposes utter faith in the saving power of the Lord. And that confidence is not misplaced: in the outcome the Lord does deliver. That can only mean that all unbelievers and those who lack faith, together with all whose trust is in earthly weapons and the arm of flesh, will have departed for fear of Israel's apparently hopeless position.

THEN shall the Lord go forth!

AOH

EZEKIEL

Before his view mysterious visions rolled;
 Strange living creatures, wheels with flaming eyes;
 From him the grave could not its secrets hold,
 He saw the dry bones live, the dead arise.

Poems of the Way
W. H. Pepworth

THE GOLDEN FUTURE

Part 1 Does God Care?

The Author of all creation is actively planning for the happiness of humanity. People from their limited viewpoint see only the dark shadows of life, and even though they usually endeavour to make the best of an unsatisfactory situation, they cannot be happy while disease, disaster and death wait at every turn to claim the unsuspecting victim. Until God speaks, no one knows of the magnificent scope of his glorious destiny, reaching beyond the power of death and evil and stretching into the illimitable reaches of eternity.

But God cannot speak until man enquires. He who implanted free will and the power to choose in the human heart forever respects that liberty of choice. Even though the immutable laws of creation decree that willing and wilful continuance in evil can only end in eternal death, the wisdom of God waits while man learns for himself, and learning, makes voluntary choice of his destiny.

God's voice echoes along the corridors of time, sweeping through the long ages of history, passing over the rise and fall of great civilisations, traversing times of darkest ignorance and seasons of human enlightenment, until at last it reaches men in this century. What has God to say? What is there in the words of the Infinite to which man can listen, and listening, find at last a key to the riddle of existence.

The voice of God has two mediums of expression—the Bible on the one hand, supreme in the sphere of ethics, and on the other hand Nature, now rapidly yielding her secrets to the scientist and investigator. The history and prophecy, poetry and philosophy of the Bible presents a conception of the Divine purpose in creation which is today confirmed in ever increasing degree by the results of scientific research and discovery. The combined testimony of these two witnesses declares and reiterates one eternal truth. God *does* care, and the pages of the Book clearly reveal that salient fact.

To reconcile the existence of evil, and the chaotic condition of the world today with faith in the reality of God is sometimes very difficult. Some who cannot effect this reconciliation have turned to agnosticism or atheism, demanding a satisfactory explanation of the paradox before they can honestly acknowledge the sovereignty of an omnipotent Creator. But from whence shall such an explanation come? Traditional theology has in

its composition too many relics of paganism and insufficient insight into the nature of Divine Law to afford reliable guidance. A system of belief which grew up in the Dark Ages of human ignorance and superstition has too many accretions (developments) born of those ages fitly to reflect the Word of God in this more enlightened day. Hence it becomes necessary to look at the Divine revelation in the Bible from a new standpoint and to seek an exposition of the Creator's plans which will commend itself to men and women of this generation.

GOD DOES CARE. The evidence is to be seen in Nature all around; in the wonderful adaptability of natural resources for human life and happiness; in the immense possibilities which are within the grasp of man. It is written on the pages of history, telling of events which move irresistibly toward the marvellous climax which is the consummation of God's purpose. It is revealed in the words of God concerning that part of His Plan which, when it goes into effect, will cause sin to be no more and evil to flee away, and people to learn, and well learn, the lessons of the dark period of sin and death.

The story in Genesis reveals God's care. Man, a new creation, endowed with qualities of heart and mind which made him a mental and moral image and likeness of God, placed in a perfect environment and with every possibility within himself for continued progress in the control and use of earth's resources. A remarkable story indeed, but one that took a tragic turn when man fell into sin and so death passed upon all. *Yet God's care did not cease.* Throughout the long story of human frailty and wickedness His controlling hand has been manifest, diverting the course of events when evil appeared likely to sink men into irremediable degradation. Two outstanding events of this nature are recorded in the Old Testament, one being at the time of the Deluge when "every imagination of the thoughts of his (man's) heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5) and the other at the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah—two cities which had become sinks of iniquity. God's care for those people was manifest in that He took them away in mercy before they sank into hopeless and irrecoverable wickedness, knowing as He did that the provisions of His plan *would, in a future day, enable those same people to rise out of the depths and come into harmony with the righteousness with God.* That was why he said of the Sodomites "I took them away as I saw good." (Ezek. 16:50)

God's care is evidenced in the preservation of the Bible—a record which has been the inspiration of millions in all ages of the world's history. Men

have endeavoured by every means known to human ingenuity to exterminate it, but still the Book lives, in veritable truth a beacon in the darkness of this world's night.

God's care rings with the vibrant words of John 3:16, "*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*" Those words, echoing and re-echoing in the world for century after century never lose their sheer beauty and impassioned appeal. Jesus Christ, the Divine ambassador who came to earth two thousand years ago to proclaim abroad the message of salvation, is the greatest evidence of the love of God people have ever known.

The rest of the story has not yet been told. We are only too familiar with the sad tale of sin, suffering and death. The cry of those who are the victims of violence goes up to heaven, and throughout the earth crime and injustice remains unpunished. Nevertheless the plan of God is moving steadily on into that brighter day when righteousness will be enthroned and evil restrained, when multitudes of humanity will come with gladness and enthusiasm to the feet of the Saviour; and when the dead, returning from graves in which they have lain maybe for centuries, will find themselves upon an earth restored and made new and in which nothing that "defileth...or maketh a lie" (Rev. 21:27) will ever be again.

"Close your eyes for a moment to the scenes of misery and woe, degradation and sorrow that yet prevail on account of sin, and picture before your mental vision the glory of the perfect earth. Not a stain of sin mars the harmony and peace of a perfect society; not a bitter thought, not an unkind look or word; love, welling up from every heart, meets a kindred response in every other heart, and benevolence marks every act. There sickness shall be no more; not an ache nor a pain, nor any evidence of decay—not even the fear of such things. Think of all the pictures of comparative health and beauty of human form and feature that you have ever seen, and know that perfect humanity will be of still surpassing loveliness. The inward purity and mental and moral perfection will stamp and glorify every radiant countenance, and benevolence will mark every act. Such will earth's society be." (C.T. Russell)

Those words were written over 100 years ago. Today their fulfilment is rapidly approaching. Is it too good to be true? There is Divine authority for its certainty. For "as truly as I live," says God. "All the (whole) earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD." (Num. 14:21)

*“And it shall be said in that day,
 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)

Because, after all, *God does care.*

*The Golden Future
 Bible Fellowship Union*

A HAPPY NEW YEAR

New mercies, new blessings,
 new light on thy 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

FULL-GROWN—MATURE—PERFECT

“Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age.” (Heb. 5:14)

“Solid food is for full-grown men” (RV) or “...for the mature, for those who have their faculties trained by practice to distinguish good from evil” (RSV) or are of “adult” stature or in some contexts, “perfect.” All of these translate from the Greek “teleios.” It is derived from the word “telos” which means “end,” “consummation” or “conclusion.” “Full-grown” or “mature” are good words to stand over against the word “babes” in the context here and to indicate that the growing process has reached its climax and consummation as nature intended it. And to these “strong meat” or “solid food” is the appropriate nutriment. The A.V. frequently translates “meat”—which indicates the general usage of the Greek “trophe” as a term in former Elizabethan days—but most modern translations use the word “food.” “Trophe” denotes “nourishment–food,” akin to “tropho” to rear, nourish, feed says Vine in his “Expository Dictionary” so it does not necessarily mean animal flesh, though it would not be excluded if used in the wider general sense of food.

Strong meat or solid food *sterea*, is food that can make hard, firm, or solid, to make firm or establish. Strong meat or solid food stands for an advanced form of teaching or doctrine in contrast to elementary topics suitable for “babes in Christ.” Solid spiritual food is appropriate and necessary for the full-grown, adult, mature, spiritually perfect and these are they whose senses can be exercised to discern or discriminate between good and evil.

It is with that sense of being full-grown, mature, or perfect that this study is concerned. Some have stumbled, jealous for the Mosaic Law, claiming not to have sinned over a period of time. They imagine the Law of Christ (Gal. 6:2) to be identical with the Law of Sinai. They have come to think that because they have not openly dishonoured their parents or killed someone, committed adultery, or stolen, borne false witness or coveted their neighbours goods they are without sin and may claim to be perfect in God’s sight. There is a possible way in God’s sight for us to be perfect. It is easy to err by pressing our own definition into it, and making a standard of conduct that we may claim to attain and fulfil.

Christian perfection or maturity is often defined as a state of sinlessness in moral things—a state of abstinence from doing forbidden things. But Christian perfection is much more than that. It is much more than a mere

negative attitude to evil and to evil things! It is one thing to hate evil—but that in itself is not enough. Of our Lord Jesus it is said He loved righteousness as well (Heb. 1:9). The true nature of Christian perfection is in basic principles. And for this standard of perfection our Lord Jesus is the one and only pattern. A man may not have killed or robbed his fellow man, but if in his heart under intense provocation he may have felt that he could have done, in the sight of Heaven, the act has been performed. If at any time he has looked upon a woman in lust, the transgression is accounted to have been committed. Negative withholding from the deed is not sufficient to fulfil the Law of Christ; there must be a positive attitude to it, so that if the opportunity really came, the act would not take place.

Absolute perfection is not possible so long as we lack complete knowledge. As our knowledge grows we constantly discover evil in the things we formerly did or allowed without qualms or misgivings. As we continue to grow older and grow in grace, we come to see unchristian-likeness in things, which we still do, so that we can never say we have reached full and complete attainment in moral things. Paul knew well that he had not attained that for which Christ had arrested him and if he, giant that he was, had reason to say that for himself, surely we of lesser stature must say that for ourselves. Whether we confess them or not, our shortcomings in God's sight are none the less real.

Yet on the other hand, in spite of our shortcomings and defects there is a state of perfection accredited to us in Christ Jesus our Lord. In each person and each case, the term must be applied in accordance with its setting and with its context. "*The man of God may (must) be perfect*" wrote Paul to Timothy (2 Tim. 3:17) but here it is the perfection of the workman with his tools. It implies the full kit of tools and an efficiency and dexterity in using them. The toolkit here is Holy Scripture; the ability of the man of God is in using it for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and for instruction in righteousness. But the possession of the toolkit and the dexterity in the use of each tool does not imply absence of sin in the man of God himself. Again when Jesus bids us be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect, He bids us use the same impartiality in the distribution of our bounty and be like God who shows no distinction between the just and the unjust, but distributes rain upon everyone, everywhere. (Matt. 5:45-48)

When God called Abraham to walk before him and "be perfect" surely it did not mean that Abraham was to walk before God without sin. (Gen. 17:1) That was impossible for the patriarch to attempt, but to walk

before God with a whole-hearted devotion was something else and was definitely possible. That is what God seeks always, everywhere, according to ability. The standard is more a matter of “what we would if we could” than of actual deed, though it must be said the “what we would” of tomorrow must exceed the “what we would” of today. There must be growth to attain the “full-grown” estate.

If then God is graciously pleased to accept the “will” for the “deed” and it is our will to offer him the utmost devotion of our soul, that act of worship and surrender is the state of soul which God accounts as “perfection”—“perfection” at our present stage of growth. It indicates the attainment, assisted by the Holy Spirit of God, of the utmost of which our “new-man” is capable today. It will help us to become assured that God will not look for more from us, till we have had time and training to grow up more nearly to full maturity.

Paul tells us in Eph. 4:11-12 that God gave to the Church Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers for the purpose of the perfecting of the saints which was to be a continuing procedure until each believer had attained through unity with his fellow-brethren and a deepening knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect (*teleios*, mature) man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. All the service of this God-given ministry is intended to promote development and growth in each individual saint, as well as in all saints collectively till the “full-grown” Christ-like condition is attained.

This growth and development manifests itself along four principal lines—of faith, of knowledge, of holiness and of love. Each part, although separate, inter-links with each other part to produce the ideal perfection of Christ-likeness.

Paul wrote to his Thessalonian friends assuring them that night and day he was praying intensely to see their face in order that he might help to “*perfect that which is lacking in your faith*” (1 Thess. 3:10). They needed to be informed more fully concerning the purpose of God to enable them to grow up from the “milk” stage to that of “solid food.” In this acquisition of the necessary information their faith would attain perfection.

But any kind of information would not attain that end. Only that which set the love of God and the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord before them would be effective for their growth. To the Colossians Paul wrote

“We...do not cease to pray and make request for you, that ye may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.” (Col. 1:9 RV) Peter also adds his admonition to the saints, to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Knowledge that does not enhance our knowledge of our Lord Jesus is not likely to increase in us a likeness to Himself.

Increasing knowledge of the Son of God (Eph. 4:13) plus a maturing of faith, will then lead to the next step of perfecting holiness in the fear of God. *“Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”* (2 Cor. 7:1 RV) As the knowledge of the Lord Jesus is received by a deepening faith into a good and honest heart it will be to us as the reflecting mirror in which we behold the glory of the Lord. As we gaze therein, we shall be changed (another picture of our growth) into the same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord. It is only as we come to *“know him”* (Phil. 3:10) that this transforming work proceeds apace.

The crowning feature of this perfecting process is that of Christ-like love. John says, *“If we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.”* (1 John 4:12 RSV) *“Perfect love casts out fear”* (1 John 4:18 RSV) and this perfect love says Paul *“is the bond of perfection”* (Col. 3:14 NKJV)—the bond that binds and holds every grace together into a perfect Christ-like unity.

Grouping all these things together—faith, knowledge, holiness and love—John says *“And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect...”* (1 John 4:16-17).

Thus belief (faith) based on knowledge (of the right kind) leading us to dwell in God and to have God dwell in us (holiness) results in perfection of love, and this matured and full-grown love is the hallmark of perfection in the sight of God. Of all such, John says *“whoso keepeth His word”* (after learning it), *“verily is the love of God perfected.”* (1 John 2:5)

To this full-grown maturity, perfection, both the Word of God in precept, and the indwelling Spirit of God in practice, urges us on. It is no more thinkable that the Christian believer should desire to remain a babe, feeding only on “milk,” than that a lad should lack desire to grow up to be a man. The inward “urge” which turns bud into flower, child into adult, should prompt the desire, and promote the activity in every Christian’s

“inner man” to attain maturity, and be thus able to absorb and assimilate “strong meat.” Christian perfection is not a perfection of the flesh, but a maturing of the “New Creature” into the likeness of Christ Jesus the Lord. When believers come to understand that God’s great desire for them is their sanctification, and that “Christ should be formed in them” and that this perfecting is the work of God who will both “will” and “work” in them according to His good pleasure (if only they lie responsive in His hands) they will then realise that all that God asks of them is to present themselves a living sacrifice to Him that they may prove, in actual experience, what is *“that good and acceptable and perfect will of God”* concerning them. This will work perfection in them, and bring them up to the full stature in Christ Jesus. *“Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.”* (2 Cor. 5:5)

TH

LIFE’S OPPORTUNITIES

All the days come to us filled with opportunities. There are opportunities for gathering knowledge and for growing wise. There are opportunities for growing in character becoming stronger, truer, purer, nobler, more Christ-like. There are opportunities for doing heroic things for Christ. There are opportunities for performing gentle ministries and for rendering sweet services in Christ’s name to those who need loving sympathy and deeds of kindness. Opportunities come to all—come continually, on all the common days, and come oftentimes in the simplest common things. The trouble with too many of us is that we do not improve them, do not seize them as they pass.

*J. R. Miller
In Green Pastures*

CONTENTMENT

Charge not thy self with the weight of the year,
Child of the Master, faithful and dear;
Choose not the cross for the coming week,
For that is more than He bids thee seek;
Bend not thy arms for tomorrow’s load—
Thou mayest leave that to thy gracious God;
Daily only He sayest to thee,
“Take up thy cross and follow Me.”

Poems of the Way

GOD HAS PROMISED A GLORIOUS DAY—A HYMN

GOD has promised a glorious day,
 And by faith we now see it draw near;
 Our Redeemer has opened the way,
 And soon will its glory appear.

Chorus—

In the sweet by and by,
 We shall meet to be parted no more;
 In the sweet by and by
 We shall meet on eternity's shore.

There the dead shall arise from the tomb,
 And the living to health be restored;
 And away from all sorrow and gloom,
 They'll be led by the life-giving Lord.



A highway shall there be cast up,
 And the stones shall be all gathered out;
 And errors no weak ones shall trip,
 And no lion of vice stalk about.



There nothing shall hurt nor offend,
 In God's kingdom of glory and peace;
 The wicked their ways shall amend,
 And the righteous their joys shall increase.

Bible Students Hymnal

There God's hand shall all tears wipe away;
 He'll the joys of his favour restore;
 And the light of that glorious day,
 Will bring life, joy and peace evermore.

Final verse in 1890 original

These words were written by Charles Russell (1852-1916) the leading light of the Bible Student movement though some attribute the words to his wife Maria Russell. The pastor was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania into a Christian family and early in his life had connections to the Adventists movement of the 19th Century. The first of his major publications was "Food for Thinking Christians" in 1881. He travelled to Britain and Ireland a few times and notably preaching in the Royal Albert Hall, West London in 1910 following the death of the present king's great great grandfather, King Edward VII. His sermons were published in full in some British newspapers.

Please see some verses which may have been in the mind of the composer:

Mark 13:26 Then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.

Daniel 7:13-14 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

Hebrews 10:19-20 Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 NKJV He has put eternity in their hearts.

Isaiah 35:5-6 NKJV Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing.

1 Corinthians 15:45 NKJV It is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

Isa. 35:8 NKJV A highway shall be there, and a road, and it shall be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for others. Whoever walks the road, although a fool, shall not go astray.

Isa. 35:9 No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there.

Isa. 11:6-7 NKJV The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

Isa. 11:9 NKJV They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

LEARNING TO LIVE WITH THE GLORY OF GOD

*We stand today in a holy place.
A wall of gold encircles us.
It encloses us with the throne of God.
Only a veil intervenes.*



That veil is but a curtain that withholds from our eyes the sight of those glories that exist even this moment beyond the limits of natural vision. What lies beyond that curtain is not another material world, but another sphere of life. There lies a grander realm, more beautiful than anything of beauty on this earth. Here we mark out our lives by the dimension of time. The things that belong to that realm belong to eternity.

The holy tabernacle in which we dwell is called the tent of meeting. It is in this place we meet that God Who is the very centre of all existence. This is the gate of heaven. When we entered this place, we entered the sacred presence of One Whose Name is Holy, and Who inhabits Eternity. At any moment one who dwells in this holy place may be called to pass through that veil. Sown in weakness, that one is presented faultless before the presence of His glory, with exceeding joy. They shall see His face, and their eyes shall behold the King in His beauty. They will not be ashamed before Him, for there before His holy presence will be seen—a perfect creation of His own hands, made after the likeness of Him that created it. The daughter of the King is “all glorious within.” (Psa. 45:13)

We are awed and astonished at the wondrous descriptions of this state that appear in the Word of God. “Having the glory of God” as a precious jewel, reflecting that glory, which emanates from God Himself—like the face of Jesus. We stand indeed, at this hour, in a holy place. It is here, this side of the veil, that preparation takes place for all beyond. Here do we learn to be at home with God. Here do we learn to live with God, learn to live with the glory of God, learn to live with the mighty power of God. It is in this place we learn to live with the love of God, and with the peace of God.

One of our English hymns contains these words;

*Eternal Light! Eternal Light!
How pure the soul must be,
When placed within Thy searching sight,
It shrinks not, but, with calm delight,
Can live and look on Thee!*

*The spirits that surround the throne
May bear the burning bliss;
But that is surely theirs alone,
Since they have never, never known
A fallen world like this.*

*O, how shall I, whose native sphere
Is dark, whose mind is dim,
Before that wondrous Light appear,
And to His holy throne draw near
And humbly worship Him.*

Thomas Binney

This lovely hymn goes on to describe the wondrous provision the Lord has made for our complete preparation for that sight of holiness above. It is a process by which beggars from the dunghill are made to feel at home seated among princes.

Esther underwent a full course of preparation before presentation to the king. So must we. In her case this preparation consisted of many months of frequent immersion and washing in fragrant oils. She received full instruction in all the manners and ways of a royal court. They gave her attire appropriate for entry into the royal presence. In our case—well, we guess the same applies! Paul describes the Lord as sanctifying and cleansing us by the washing of the water by the Word, that He might present us to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that we should be holy and without blemish. (Eph. 5:26,27) The very apartments where this process took place for Esther were themselves places of glory and beauty. They were sumptuous apartments appropriate to the work entailed, the work of preparing a queen for the royal throne. So with this holy place prepared by the Lord. It is a heavenly place. It is designed to sanctify, to elevate the mind, to fully prepare us for the sight of holiness above.

The walls of the Holy are overlaid with gold. The occupants of the Holy are surrounded with all the glory of the Lord divine. As that glory cloud that enveloped the three disciples with their Lord on the Mount of transfiguration, the atmosphere of glory envelopes, embraces and compasses all who dwell in this secret place of the Most High. It is no natural light that illuminates the Holy, nor can natural sight enjoy its blessedness. The wall of gold is quite invisible to the natural eye. The occupants of the Holy know it is there. They sense the splendour of the light of the seven lamps from the gilded lampstand reflected in each

segment of the wall of gold. They are enclosed by the glory of God.

This sense was illustrated to me once by a blind physiotherapist, a member of my staff at hospital. One bright sunny morning she said to me, "Isn't the sunshine beautiful this morning." She was blind, yet she sensed the sunshine by the warmth on her face. We too have senses which enable us to perceive around us the warmth of a Father's love. We feel ourselves surrounded, compassed about, by the Lord of Glory.

The "Spirit" of God, the "Presence" or "breath" of God, are terms used interchangeably in Psalm 139:7. Wherever His Spirit is, His breath, there dwells the Lord. In Him, said Paul, we live, and move, and have our being. (Acts 17:28) But only the saints know this. Not by natural vision will they ever see God. Whatever the experience awaiting them beyond that veil, it will not be natural sight, for flesh and blood cannot inherit such glories. It is while they are this side of the veil, that they develop and exercise spiritual senses, that they may discern things that are excellent. Spiritual things are not limited to the natural material form. They are things belonging to a different realm of being. Spiritual discernment is a most blessed ability. It introduces us to a wondrous realm, beyond the limits of natural sense. By it we become aware of the ceaseless activity of the spirit realm on behalf of saints on earth. We perceive the reality behind the vision of that young servant of the prophet when he beheld the Chariots of the Lord round about His people. (2 Kings 6:17-20)

Oh could we hear that sound of many wings of angel's flight on wondrous mission bent. Could we but see each messenger speed forth to aid, to strengthen, comfort and support. Could we perceive the interest of a spirit world, some rising, some descending, all sent forth along the sunlight shafts of love divine, breaking through clouds, opening prison doors. With ease and grace their wonders they perform. Whispering words behind us beckoning on. Guarding, guiding, watching every step of every saint, to keep in all their ways. Beholding constantly a Father's face. Before we cry, they take our hand to bear us up, and lift us high above the stumbling stones of earth, beyond the things of time and sense to glory realms, eternity's domain, where dwells our Lord. See He prepares within our Father's House, a place reserved (Oh blessed thought) in heaven. Sweet are such messages of love. Beautiful the flight of those that bring them to my longing heart, and loan to me their wings...

It is here in the holy condition of mind that we gain a sense of the enormity of the energy of the Almighty God. That limitless source of

power is this moment harnessed to the achievement of His wondrous purpose in the preparation of the saints in light. Day after day, in grand celestial language, the heavens call the earth to witness to that power. For having created that vast expanse, He then filled it with a myriad stars, and giant nebulae that, even at the speed of light, take years to traverse. Each source of light in the starry sky is full of vibrant energy beyond our measure.

Yet, in that He is great in power, not one fails. We hear nothing from this great activity. Our ears are not tuned to detect the music of the spheres. Yet can any speech more eloquently speak the mightiness of the power that said, “Let there be...” and that brought out of nothing the vastness of the entire material universe. No human mind has approached the boundaries of the material realm. Ecclesiastes 3:11, speaks of the Lord setting eternity in the heart of man, the ability to explore beyond the limits of immediate sight. Yet, with the combined total of all human exploration, man has not approached the end of knowledge on even one of a myriad subjects. These are but “the edges of His ways.” (Job 26:14 NKJV)

While man discovers the enormity of the force compressed within each atom, the people of God are discovering the even greater exhibition of power and skill in the making of each jewel.

This is a New Creation. Something more awesome than the formation of all material things, is the creation of a saint. It takes a little time for us to more fully appreciate that word of assurance—“Kept by the power of God.” Because He is great in power not one of His promises fail, nor will His purpose according to which each saint is called. We are learning to live with the power of God. This wondrous New Creation, these are the New Heavens that throughout eternity will declare the glory of God. The making of each saint in the likeness of Jesus, thus will He show forth His handiwork, age after age.

DH

To be continued

There is a way for man to rise
To that sublime abode:
An offering and a sacrifice,
A Holy Spirit’s energies,
An advocate with God.

These shall prepare us for the sight
Of holiness above;
The sons of ignorance and night
May dwell in the eternal Light
Through the eternal Love!

*Thomas Binney
Bible Students Hymnal*

VERILY, VERILY

There are 25 Verily's in John alone and many more in the synoptic gospels. Indeed it was a surprise there were so many. The ones in John rarely appear in the other three gospels. But here we will look simply at the gospel of John as only John has "verily, verily," the 3 synoptic gospels have just the one "verily" at the beginning.

According to Barnes "Verily, verily"—An expression of strong affirmation, denoting the certainty and the importance of what he was about to say. Jesus proceeds to state one of the fundamental and indispensable doctrines of his religion."

The Greek word in Strongs, G281 is pronounced in the Greek language *Amen*. Sometimes it is translated truly and sometimes verily. It's also "Amen" as in the end of our Lord's prayer in Matt. 6:13, and in 2 Cor. 1:20 "All the promises of God...are yea and...*Amen*." It also means "so let it be" and certainly when used at the end of a sentence. At the start of a sentence these are translated "verily."

It came to mind that they might be placed into categories or some kind of order. This is subjective but these sayings must be for a special purpose. The first category is the identification of Messiah.

Messiah

"*Verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.*" (John 1:51) Jesus is replying to Nathaniel, an Israelite indeed, who recognised Jesus as the Son of God and king of Israel. This signifies the apostle understood he was the Messiah. The "Son of man" being another expression also for Messiah. He literally did see Jesus go to heaven on ascension day while two angels stood close to Nathaniel and the other disciples. (Acts 1:11) Angels being messengers, the eleven disciples would also be messengers of the gospel proclaiming to the Jews and then Peter, Paul and others "to the Gentiles." The ascending and descending may suggest communication between our heavenly Father, the Lord Jesus, the glorified church, and the world.

Pre-existence

Jesus said unto them, "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.*" (John 8:58) The Messiah was one who had a life before the life of his ministry that culminated in AD 33. The Old Testament promised the Messiah was the seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15), that he would come from

the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:9-10), to be of King David's line (Isa. 9:7) and be born in Bethlehem. (Mic. 5:2) So far in these texts no intimation that a personality already in existence would come to recover that which was lost by Adam. This was a subject John addressed at the very start of his gospel. "In the beginning was the word and the word was with the God." (Diaglott interlinear) Hence when Jesus said "verily" he meant, he, Jesus was in existence before Abraham was born. John 8:58 was consistent with John 1:1 but the former were the words of our Lord Jesus and the latter an inspired statement by John after the fact.

So we have established who Jesus was that said "verily, verily." How it would affect those Messiah came to who could be new creatures is the next category.

New creature, New life

John 3:3,5: says "*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*" These words were spoken to Nicodemus, a man of some standing among the Jews who came by night to Jesus. These two verses relate to new birth, the birth of the new creature, that which is invisible to any machine but can be perceived by those similarly born and more importantly by the heavenly Father.

Born is the Greek word 'gennethe' which is very close to the word, Genesis. It seems to cover the idea both of being conceived and being born whereas there is a distinction in British English of today, so we have to bear that in mind. It conveys an important point though, the necessity to begin a new life, to have a new life force on the spirit plane rather than on this earthly plane on which we sit and stand now. Like all births its essentially a miracle. It's not like we can go to a shop and pay for it using cash or debit or credit cards. Nevertheless its very real to the Christian to have this mental communication with God. It's something which is impossible in the animal kingdom and sets us in the image of God or "god-likeness" that's possible for humankind. Some of this is explained in the next verses in John 3 (ESV) "*That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.*" (vv.6-8)

The "I am" scriptures speak to the new creature for who only could be

cared for by the one good shepherd and in like manner they only have one bread to feed on that does lead to peace, happiness and everlasting life.

“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. 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. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.” (John 10:7-8, 1-2,11) Jesus said *“I am the way, the truth, and the life.”* (John 14:6) He certainly is the gateway and there is no other way. Jesus had been speaking to the Pharisees and had shown they weren’t the way. Israel had been given the law covenant but abandoned it for idolatry, hence firstly there was the Assyrian captivity for the Northern tribes and after the second, the Babylonian captivity for the Southern tribes including those in Jerusalem. After their return and the days of the first advent the law had been padded out to ensure none inadvertently transgressed the law, to the point that it was a barrier rather than a schoolmaster. The priestly class were distant from the people when they should have been teaching the promises of God and addressing the hearts rather than the shells of the people. Hence the need to state they were thieves, unable to be shepherds, especially then as the shepherd had come!

The same can be said of Jesus saying, *“I am the bread of life.”* (John 6:32-33,35) *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world... And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”* None had been able truly or in any way to have come from heaven. None too had been able to say they came bringing everlasting life.

There are other “verily, verily” verses which appear as a rebuke that there were of those who would not go on to be disciples and new creatures in Christ. Why would this be one of the verilies? One is in John 6:26 which says *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.”* These had gladly eaten in the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand from five loaves and two fishes but not feeding upon the bread of heaven. (John 6:32)

Everlasting Life

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting

life.” (John 6:47) What a promise! Ever since the fall of Adam humankind was unable to live forever (Gen. 3:19-22) although there may have been living beings like Methuselah the son of Enoch, who lived 969 years. Yet Jesus said believers on him had everlasting life. Daniel mentions a resurrection to everlasting life. (Dan. 12:2) Nevertheless this promise of everlasting life is significant. He follows this up by saying “I am the bread of life.” (No one can live without food albeit water and shelter are more necessary to keep the human body alive on this island.) Later our Lord Jesus died on the cross and was raised from the dead by his heavenly Father on the third day and ever lives to make intercession for us. (Heb. 7:25) In the purely physical sense our minds and bodies are still dying but there is still the hope, indeed expectation of everlasting life. If we were to look at that phrase in John 6:47 it did not state at that moment whether it is on the earthly plane or spirit plane. It did not state anything about having the divine nature which also includes living eternally. Even Satan from the spirit plane will go into the lake of fire confirming he does not have the divine nature which means immortality. (Rev. 20:10) But Jesus did promise everlasting or eternal life.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, 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) This statement earlier in John’s gospel tells us in what way we have *everlasting life*. It’s in the sense that we were in the dying state but now have the potential state of life. Like the phrase being seated in heavenly places. (Eph. 2:6) Not a simple concept to grasp for those without spiritual sight. But it’s not just a concept but a reality that in due time does become proven to the world at large. It comes only to those who believe in the existence of the one true God, the one who sent His Son and the architect for the universe and the architect of the wonderful Plan.

Another similar statement regarding the hope for everlasting life comes in John 8:51 *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.”* This verse sits happily in this group as it infers the promise of everlasting life from the understanding that each one will pick up their life from the sleep of death and be known in a way they are now known. It is conditional on keeping his sayings. What sayings? The Classic Amplified Version says, *“anyone observes My teaching [lives in accordance with My message.]”* In the flesh it is not achievable but in the spirit and intention it is.

Prayer

“Verily, verily, I say to you, as many things as ye may ask of the Father in my name, He will give you.” (John 16:23 YLT) What a statement to make! What a promise to give. This appears to be aimed at the church. One thinks of the early church. What they accomplished in their mission to preach the gospel and convert Jew and Gentile. As they consecrated their lives in their lifework they would naturally ask for the excellent things that pertain to everlasting life and things in harmony with the will of their heavenly Father.

Service & Sacrifice

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.” (John 13:16) This being the occasion of Jesus washing his disciples’ feet, the custom being the host would arrange to wash the feet of their guests as walking with sandals meant dirty feet. Jesus demonstrates he also came to serve. It’s possible that Jesus was reiterating he had been sent and by implication sent by his father, the heavenly Father the one true God. Believers in Jesus Christ with the promise of everlasting life too have a life of *service and sacrifice* that comes to them as new creatures. The disciples would spend their lives in service of their leader Jesus, as his apostles and in so doing be in God’s service.

But is there any true saying in what way they would serve or sacrifice. In John 6:53-54 Jesus said, *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”* In some circles this is taken to mean taking the symbols of the memorial of the bread and “fruit of the vine” but it appears to have a deeper message and application. When Jesus speaking to James and John said *“You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism that I am baptized with you will be baptized.”* (Mark 10:39 NKJV) From the four gospels we can read what Jesus’ baptism was: his 3½-year ministry, his teaching of the people mainly of Israel and his signs and wonders. The Pharisees and their allies tried to trap him, to demean with their questions. His sufferings, at the hands of the Chief priest and elders as well as the Romans which would end in crucifixion for a crime he did not commit, yet it was a necessary submission to his Father’s will as a ransom for the world. His was a truly sacrificial death.

Herod Agrippa killed James the brother of John about AD 42. (Acts 12:1-2) Church tradition reckons that Peter and Paul were killed by the

NOTICES

Bible Students Seminar Day
Saturday 3 February 2024
Crick Village Hall, Bucknills Lane, Crick, Nr. Rugby, NN6 7SX
Theme: 1 Cor. 15

For those who wish to keep the memorial of our Lord's death at the time nearest the anniversary, it is suggested that this year **Sunday 21 April 2024 (14 Nisan) after 6 p.m.** is the appropriate date and time.

Bible Students Fellowship Conference
 High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesdon
14-18 August 2024 DV

authorities and both had been in prison. (Acts 12:6; Eph. 3:1) John wrote the book of Revelation according to Scofield in AD96 on the Greek Isle of Patmos in sight of the Turkish coast where he writes as a "*companion in tribulation*" (Rev. 1:9) having left Judea before AD70 when Jerusalem was destroyed and escaped that tribulation to live outside of the promised land. All down the Gospel age there are those wanting to walk the walk of their Lord Jesus and whose testimony is not written in the New Testament. The key point is the Church would be developed under a covenant of sacrifice. (Psalm 50:5)

This work of service would be continued in this way. The work of spreading God's word "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.*" (John 13:20) This would take the message of God's Son in the time when His Son would not be on earth after the first advent. In so doing they would serve the Lord Jesus and the heavenly Father.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." (John 14:12) This verily is for the Christian believer. Can we imagine our Lord saying the church would do a greater work?

Indeed there is much to be done in the work of the gospel message even now however in the Messianic age there will be a great work in helping the world up the highway of holiness. (Isa. 35:8 NKJV) Even now the world population is almost 8 billion which guides us to the magnitude of the task that lies ahead. Then Jesus knew he was leaving Israel and the earth and his work here.

NAC
To be concluded

“And a little child shall lead them.”

Isa.11:1-9; Isa. 65:17-25

‘And a little child shall lead them,’—
 O blessed, blessed time,
 The song of peace will never cease,
 The joyful bells will chime,
 And angel choirs again will sing,
 Proclaiming Jesu’s reign—
 ‘Glory to God on high! Goodwill!
 And peace on earth again.’

‘And a little child shall lead them.’
 The fierce, the proud, the strong,
 Will learn to rule in heaven’s school,
 Their hearts away from wrong;
 And love shall be the leading theme
 The universe to sway,
 And perfect teachers will control
 And guide them in the way.



‘And a little child shall lead them,’
 The dread and pomp of war,
 The captive’s groan, the angry tone,
 The battle’s awful roar—
 No more disturbs the harmony
 Of earth’s desired repose;
 The wilderness and desert place
 Shalt blossom as a rose.

‘And a little child shall lead them,’
 The meek, the good, the kind,
 Will see the birth of gladsome earth,
 And sweet enjoyment find.
 Then age to age will pass along
 While praise will flow above
 To Him who came and died for all
 To prove His wondrous love.



The Call of the Bride

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