

# BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

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*“Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the LORD: this gate of the LORD, into which the righteous shall enter. I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.”*

Psalm 118:19-21

# 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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Secretary & Treasurer: Nicholas Charcharos

## THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

*"Your gates will remain open at all times; they will not be shut during the day or at night. You will name your walls, 'Deliverance,' and your gates, 'Praise.'" (Isaiah 60:11,18 NET)*

Iron gates and railings came down in British towns and cities at the start of the Second World War. The reason was the metal was needed for the war effort although far more was taken than was used and some was not suitable. It was not done willingly by some at least.

Psalm 24 talks of opening gates for the King of glory to come in. This was before the building of the first Temple by King Solomon, and it could be that God would enter the Temple and there dwell with the people of Jerusalem and all Israel. It could be an allusion to Jesus coming to Jerusalem to pay the ransom sacrifice for the sins of the world. Then from Jerusalem he would ascend to heaven after forty days

Gates were important in Old Testament times. They were the entry and exit points for residents and visitors. They were also places of business like it was for Boaz in the book of Ruth (Ruth 4:1-2,11) and when Abraham purchased the field and cave of Machpelah. (Gen. 23:10) They were constructed in such a way an enemy at the gate would be entering a trap where missiles could be poured down, to not be a weakness in their defensive walls; also they were places of judgment for the elders. (Deut. 16:18; Deut. 21:18-21)\*

\* They lived in Israel, Laurence H. Bunker

Jerusalem was one such city. At the three annual festivals the Israelites would come up to the Temple to offer sacrifices, worship and praise to Yahweh. Every righteous person would do so, [Jesus went up to Jerusalem with his parents at the age of twelve for the Passover, (Luke 2:41-42)] hence the many mentions in the Bible.

The gate to life was preached by Jesus in the Sermon on the mount. He stated “narrow is the gate and difficult the way that leads to life, and there are few who find it!” (Matt. 7:14 NET) Jesus’ life was difficult and the New Testament writers indicated it so after Jesus died. Today the Christian way through this Gospel age (Christian era) can be hard and difficult.

Death is a gate that people will find in life. (Matt. 7:13) But this is not the end. There is a gateway to the next age, the Messianic age. Some wonder if the end of the world is coming as if it means the end of human life on this planet. A look at the Greek gives the answer; it is the end of the age not of the world, a gateway to the next age or time period.

There are twelve gates in the New Jerusalem. (Rev. 21:9-21) This shows the new arrangement in Christ’s kingdom for the government of the next age. They are made of pearl which pictures the saints of this age who have been tried and tested in this imperfect world. In that day the gates of Jerusalem and New Jerusalem will be open all the time showing that everyone will have full opportunity to be educated in spiritual matters and in God’s plan that had not done so before. (Isa. 60:11; Rev. 21:25)

God will open the gates of eternity never to be closed...all people living peacefully and in harmony with our Lord Jesus and our heavenly Father.

Rejoicing are they now who have opened the gates of their hearts and minds to let the Gospel of Christ in.



*“Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise.” (Psalm 100:4)*

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.

## THE GATES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

*The spirit of worship*

*“Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the LORD: this gate of the LORD, into which the righteous shall enter. I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.” (Psa. 118:19-21)*

Upon many an occasion whilst the Temple at Jerusalem was standing those words were sung by the priests and worshippers at the great festivals. Israelitish worship was essentially a worship of praise, of song and of music, and this is but one of the many examples of the songs they sang and which have been preserved for us in the Book of Psalms. We do well to consider something of this aspect of the Psalms, for an understanding of Israelitish methods and outlook respecting Divine worship cannot fail to be of assistance to us in our own attempt to relate the outward forms and ceremonies of worship to the inwardly felt reverence and adoration of our hearts. We know that God seeketh the worship only of those that will worship Him in spirit and in truth, but it is also true that our very sincerity and fervour should lead us to worship God in a dignified manner and so far as possible in appropriate surroundings. Some consideration of the ways in which Israel of old waited on God with praise and prayer can help us to trace more clearly the effect of outward forms in promoting the spirit of true worship.

Since the Book of Psalms is really the record of Israel’s public worship and contains the songs, chants and prayers which were used in the Temple ceremonies this short study will not go outside the Psalms for its material. Within that Book there is contained a wealth of inspiration for sincerity and purity in worship.

One of the most characteristic praise-prayers is found in Psalm 95. *“O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise unto the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods,”* and so on. Notice that the worshippers have commenced their service on a note of praise; more than that, on a note of joyful praise. This is characteristic of Israel’s worship; their **first** impulse upon coming together was toward a lifting up of voices jointly in joy and gladness, and in gratitude of heart for all God’s mercies, a gratitude that was not only felt inwardly but expressed outwardly. *“This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.”* (Psa. 118:24) The very first element of their worship was a full, frank

acknowledgment of Divine supremacy over all things and of their gratitude because of that supremacy. The valleys and hills, the seas and land, were made by Him and are His by right, and those who are His children have the privilege of using for their own pleasure and joy the things that He has made, and the obligation of bringing to Him for His pleasure and joy the offerings of praise and thanksgiving which such beneficence has inspired.

This leads quite naturally to the **second** element in worship, a quiet and reverent acknowledgment of that moral responsibility to be conformed to God's laws and to live life in God's way which lies upon everyone. One can almost sense the change in tone in verses 6 and 7 of Psalm 95. The major key of loud praise has dropped to a minor key of quiet reverence and awe. "*O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD our maker. For He is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.*" It is now that the mind turns away from the outward things of the earth which God has created the appendages of life, of happiness, of enjoyment, for which praise has just been offered, and diverts its thoughts inward to the heart and soul. God did not only make the hills and valleys, the sea and land; He made *us*, and He made us His people, His flock. He is not only a Creator, He is also a Shepherd and a Father. The causes of worship, of reverence and of praise that lie within the human frame are greater by far than those that reside in the earth, which is itself but a minister to that same human frame, for God created the earth for man, and not man for the earth. Man is the glory and king of this material creation—or will be when the Divine purpose has been fully achieved. So, the joyful ebullient praise that is prompted by the material blessings surrounding man gives place to reverent adoration, a recognition of the spiritual blessings that find their place within a man's heart. Therefore, in Psalm 96:8-9 the exhortation is "*Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts. O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth*" and in Psalm 29:1-2 "*Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength. Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.*" In all of this there is the realisation that to worship God in holiness is a thing of beauty, that the yearning of the human heart for that which brings beauty into the life and drives out the drab and sordid can be met, and fully met, in joint worship before God.

Is not this worth considering in our fellowship and our worship? We have much that is drab and commonplace in our daily lives. The conditions

attendant upon earning a living and managing a home in this present day are oftentimes dull and monotonous to an extreme, and even we who have the knowledge of Divine truth to cheer our way feel the pressure of the times. It cannot possibly be otherwise. The world feels the same thing and rushes madly from one form of amusement to another in the endeavour to forget. Man was made to be happy and to enjoy the good gifts of God, and now that human selfishness and sin has taken away much of the possibility of happiness humanity is in danger of breaking down. Now the fact that in general we do not desire and could not be content with the amusements which do temporarily satisfy the majority of people does not dispose of this fact that the drabness and ugliness of life has its effect upon us as on them. We too need something that will counteract these things and show us visions of beauty in which we can rejoice and find satisfaction and rest of heart. That counteracting force is to be found in worship—sincere, selfless worship offered in joint communion with others of like mind in an atmosphere of beauty and peace. Worship that ascends in chariots of praise to the highest heaven, that bears up the worshipper himself as it were on eagles' wings and takes them in the spirit of their mind to the holy place where God is seated upon His Throne, guiding the destinies of the world that He has created.

We need then by all means possible to develop within our fellowship an increasing appreciation of the importance of worship and, too, of joint fellowship together in worship, of communal worship. That worship must be a joyful and happy worship—every gathering for worship a holy convocation unto the Lord where expressions of thankfulness and thanksgiving are predominant. Even although there must be other occasions where life is lived to the accompaniment of quieter and more subdued strains, where grief afflicts the heart and tears may not be far away, the time of worship will be a palliative to these things and call forth the happiness and joy that resides in the possession of the “deep things of God.” (1 Cor. 2:10) The Psalmist felt like this when he sang of his dark moments, of the contradiction of sinners against himself, of tears by day and by night, and yet “*I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.*” (Psa. 42:4) He found the comfort his soul desired in going up with his brethren, with praise and song, to worship the Lord in His holy temple.

This brings us to the **third** very important element in our worship—the place where worship is offered. In natural reaction against the formalism and ceremony of the great churches there is a tendency to go to the other

extreme and eschew all outward aids to beauty in worship. The Psalmist knew as well as do we that God may be worshipped in any place and does not require that the voice of praise ascend acceptably only from marble halls and prayers be offered to the accompaniment of swinging censers. David must have known better than any man how near God could be when alone on the mountain-tops at night, or lying in the field with the flocks in the heat of a summer day. But the Psalmist knew what inspiration could be given his soul by the mere *sight* of the Temple buildings on the summit of Mount Moriah, the thrill of heart as the multitudes moved slowly up the wide stairways and assembled in the great court, the awe and reverence that filled the soul as the music of harps and chanting of singers fell upon the ear. That was why he could say with feeling "*I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.*" (Psa. 122:1-2) The very suggestion of going up to worship the Lord in company with the brethren is one that should induce feelings of gladness and happiness.

After all, just as Jesus at twelve years of age was found in His Father's courts, because that was the natural place in which to be found, so should we always feel as if the place of worship is our rightful spiritual home. It should possess a magnetism and an attraction for us that is possessed by no other place on earth. We should be conscious of an intense, a longing desire to be there and to commune with our brethren of like faith, and to join with them in praise and prayer, and share with them the consciousness of the overspreading Spirit, come down to bless and fill each worshipper with the grace and truth of the Most High God. The Psalmist felt like that. "*How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts!*" he cried, "*My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.*" (Psa. 84:1-2) When he was away from the Temple he was an exile, a wanderer in strange lands. When he turned his steps towards the Temple he was coming home and as its familiar buildings came into sight he experienced the satisfaction of a spiritual hunger which could be met in no other way.

The word "amiable" in verse 1 really means "beloved." "*How beloved are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts!*" The thought of the word is shown very vividly in its other occurrences. "The *beloved* of the LORD shall dwell in safety by him" (Deut. 33:12); "*So He giveth His beloved sleep*" (Psa. 127:2); "Now will I sing to my *wellbeloved* a song of my *beloved* touching his vineyard." (Isa. 5:1) Thus is our worship made complete, when we can look toward the place of our meeting with our brethren, and call it "beloved." Thus may we combine the three-fold

aspect of worship; our own personal coming to God in reverence and adoration; our joining with our brethren in united praise and prayer; our love and esteem for the place which is the place of our gathering, the place of our meeting, the place of our fellowship and worship. *“THIS IS THE GATE OF THE LORD, INTO WHICH THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL ENTER.”* (Psa. 118:20 RSV/KJV) How fitting are the words of the Psalmist in Psa. 116:17-19, expressive of this three-fold cord. How the words come down to us in all their majesty and all their music, telling us of saints in olden time who trod this way before us, bidding us follow faithfully in the same way, that we, like them, may one day stand before God in Zion.

*“I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD.*

*“I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people!*

*“In the courts of the LORD’s house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem! PRAISE YE THE LORD.”* (Psa. 116:17-19)

AOH

**ENTER IN**

FELLOW-CHRISTIAN, enter in—  
 Into the work that calls for you,  
 Into the promises grand and true:  
 Into the joy of faith that waits:  
 Why stand idly without the gates,  
 When the fields are ripe?

You sadly say you cannot know  
 What God has here for you to do,  
 Or the way wherein your feet should go;  
 But if you enter in today,  
 He’ll show you, in His own sweet way,  
 Your privileged place.

And when the sheaves are gathered in,  
 We may be sure, in that blissful day,  
 To sowers and reapers Christ will say,—  
 “You who well toiled and laboured and bore,  
 And zealously sought for more and more  
 Of God’s blessed work,—

“Come in, beloved, come in, come in—  
 Into the rest prepared for you,  
 Into the glory now brought to view.”  
 Our heavenly Bridegroom will await  
 Our triumphant entrance within the gate  
 Of Immortality.



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## THROUGH GATES OF DEATH

*“His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.”* (Psa. 146:4)

As a concise definition of death that brief statement of the Psalmist is probably unequalled. Throughout the Bible the cessation of breathing, absence of movement, and apparent unconsciousness has been the accepted evidence of death; whatever the fate of the one thus affected he is no longer of this world. Thus, the expression so frequently met with “giving up the spirit,” the antithesis of the original bestowing of the spirit of life when the individual began to live. The breath has always been presented as synonymous with the spirit of life; when the one ceases the other has gone, as the Wise Man said, “to God who gave it.” (Eccl. 12:7)

Modern progress in the medical world has presented an apparent challenge to this position. With the advent of cardiac machines and ventilators, electrical pacemakers which take the place of the heart, external heart massage, and so on, cases arise every so often when a person who has ceased to breathe and whose heart has stopped, and is therefore dead by conventional standards, is “brought to life” again after a short period. It is inevitable that the question is then posed to orthodox Christian theology; where was the “dead” person in the meantime? Did the soul leave the body and come back? Was there a resurrection? Can it be said that, even to this limited degree, man can “raise the dead”?

To some extent an answer is being discerned in the progress that is being made in knowledge of the brain and its working. It is known, now, that all consciousness, all thought and perception and action, is dependent upon the continued activity of the cells of the brain—tens of thousand millions of them. These cells depend for their continued operation on supplies of oxygen, which come from the lungs, and of raw materials carried by the blood from the food we eat. This generates electrical energy in the brain cells and it is this electrical energy, transmitted throughout the nervous system and into the muscles, which enables us to see and hear and act as we do.

The electrical activity of the brain, brainwaves, can now be detected and recorded on a chart, appearing as undulating lines which vary in characteristics according to the nature of thought or activity subsisting at the time. When the line becomes flat and straight, death is not far off unless the electrical activity can be restored. If the condition is due to cessation of

heart and breathing, within a few minutes the brain cells will have suffered irreparable damage. If within this time heart and breathing can be restored by means of mechanical devices there is a chance that after a time, brain activity will recommence, and the patient “comes to life.” These are the cases that are reported.

From these and other related factors it is being concluded by the medical profession that the true definition of death must lie, not in the cessation of breathing and heart beat, but in that of the activity of the brain which under normal conditions ceases within a few minutes thereafter. It is noteworthy that this is exactly what the Psalmist says in the Scripture above quoted. But be it noted that all this has to do with the physical body. No one has yet solved the mystery of the mind and the life, those two imponderable factors which use the brain cells as a means of relating the individual to his environment. All that science with its knowledge of the physical world can do; all that doctors with their mechanical and electrical devices can do, is to certify that there is no mind and no life operating in the body. It has become the body of a dead man or woman and its constituent atoms will speedily separate and return to the earth from which they came. As the Lord said to Adam in the story of Eden: *“dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”* (Gen. 3:19) That which lies beyond that point requires not knowledge of physics, nor yet of electronics, but knowledge of God. The ability to discern material things is of no avail in this sphere, but the ability to discern spiritual things is essential. The evidence of “things not seen” is of a different order from that required in the study of the physical sciences, but it is evidence just as conclusive, nevertheless. Therefore, the testimony of men through the ages who were capable of understanding the unseen things is of supreme value. The patriarch Job, an Arabian philosopher of nearly four thousand years ago, for example, was in no doubt as to the sequel to death. *“I know that my Redeemer liveth”* he said *“and that he shall stand in the latter day upon the earth. And after I shall awake, though this body be destroyed, yet in my flesh shall I see God.”* (Job 19:25-26 Margin) That so clear a view of the doctrine of the resurrection should be possible at so early a date has been denied by some of the “advanced” critics, but there are the words and they cannot be ignored. Job knew that his body must turn again to the dust, but he also knew that in a day yet to come he would realise life and consciousness in a new flesh, and in that flesh he would behold God as he had never beheld him before. The body—dust; the mind and the life—safe in the keeping of God; until in the resurrection that mind and that life is “clothed upon” with an organism suited to the environment in which they must henceforth exist.

The Apostle Paul at the other end of the time scale says exactly the same thing, but whereas Job seems to imply that he expected to experience life again, in a terrestrial body suited to this earth, the Apostle is talking to Christian believers about a resurrection life in a celestial body suited to another order of being the celestial. “*There are...celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial*” he says, “*The glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another...so also is the resurrection of the dead...It is sown a natural (physical, terrestrial) body; it is raised a spiritual (celestial) body...If our earthly house...were dissolved, we have a building of God...eternal in the heavens.*” (1 Cor. 15:40-44; 2 Cor. 5:1-4) We earnestly desire, he goes on, to be “*clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.*” In no clearer terms could he have expressed the basic truth that the body of any living being is the means whereby the mind and the life can make contact with its environment, the world in which it lives, knows itself and expresses itself. The body is an essential part of a living being, which is why Genesis says of the first creation “*Man became a living soul*” (Gen. 2:7) but because mind and life is of God and in a manner we as humans cannot comprehend, is always held, so to speak, in the mind of God, the dissolution of the terrestrial body is not the end of all things to the individual. Though the cessation of terrestrial life for the time being, the Christian doctrine of the resurrection declares that in God’s own time life and thought and action will be resumed in another body whether it is terrestrial on this earth or celestial in a different sphere of being does not affect the principle and the fact.

The time element is involved here, for the teaching of the Old and the New Testaments, echoed by Christian theology through the centuries, is that the resurrection takes place at the “*Last Day*” i.e. the day that the Messianic Kingdom takes control of affairs on earth for the elimination of evil and the conversion of humanity to God and his ways. Martha put that understanding very succinctly at the tomb of Lazarus when our Lord said to her “*Thy brother shall rise again*” and she responded “*I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.*” (John 11:23-24) Many an endeavour has been made to postulate the position of the life or the spirit during that intervening time—as people know time—between death and resurrection, but none of the so-called “*intermediate states*” provide satisfactory definitions. The ancients, viewing the “*Last Day*” as almost inconceivably remote from their own times, likened the pre-resurrection state of the dead to a time of sleep in which the dead, quietly waiting their call, were oblivious to the passage of time. Thus, the many expressions of this nature describing the place of the dead. “*In death*” says the Psalmist “*there is no remembrance of thee.*” (Psa. 6:5) Again, he describes them as

being “*in the dark*” and “*in the land of forgetfulness.*” (Psa. 88:12) “*The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence.*” (Psa. 115:17) “*The dead know not any thing*” declares the Wise Man emphatically, “*for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave.*” (Eccl. 9:5,10) In uttering these sentiments, the writers were not denying the resurrection: they all held tenaciously to belief in a future life, but they did assert just as dogmatically as the experts of today assert, that when the heart is still and the breathing has stopped and the brain no longer responds, the being is dead and there is nothing left but that which resides in the incomprehensible power of God. One day at some unknown future time that power is to be exerted and that being will live again.

Canon R. H. Charles, one of the most knowledgeable theologians of the early 20th Century, put this position very logically in his book “*Eschatology*” (*A. & C. Black, 1913*). Commenting on the account of man’s creation as given in the second chapter of Genesis, he says that according to that account “*the material form when animated by the spirit became a living soul. The soul is the result of the indwelling of the spirit in the material body and has no independent existence of its own. It is really a function of the material when quickened in the spirit. So long as the spirit is present, so long is the soul a living soul, but when the spirit is withdrawn the vitality of the soul is destroyed and it becomes the soul of a dead man, i.e. a corpse.*”

The space between death and resurrection may seem long as one measures time—in the case of the ancients it can be truthfully said to be thousands of earth years—but from the Divine standpoint it might be nothing more than an instant of time. It is difficult for us with our human limitations, to realise that many of our everyday conceptions and standards are valid only in the world we know and may appear very different when viewed from the standpoint of eternity. The analogy of sleep so often used by Biblical writers may be more fitting than we realise; to the one who sleeps, his period of sleep is as a moment and he is unaware of the passage of time; the observers around him experience the lapse of maybe several hours, occupied by all the activities applicable to the affairs of this world. Many present day mathematicians and physicists believe that time as we know it only applies to our physical universe, and even within this sphere is capable of what seem to be some strange anomalies. Thus, one consequence of Einstein’s theory of Relativity is what is known as the “*clock paradox*” by which it is claimed that if astronauts in a spaceship found it possible to travel through space at nearly the speed of light they might be away from the earth for say two years according to their clocks

and calendars, and reach home to find that two hundred years had elapsed on earth and all their friends were dead. The arguments upon which this astounding conclusion is based are quite incomprehensible to the ordinary person and it is only fair to say that an equal volume of equally expert opinion declares that the whole idea is a mathematical abstraction which would not happen in the real world. But that such an apparently fantastic conclusion can be reached by responsible physicists does at least suggest the possibility that the passage of time may not mean just the same thing to those who have passed beyond the *gates of death* as it does to we who still remain. We do not know; all we can say, and say it on the authority of all that the Scripture has to tell us concerning the death state, is that the next event after death, in individual experience, is resurrection. From then life goes on, into what further revelations of the wonders of Divine creation we do not know. All we do know is that life is unending, leading into eternally widening spheres of experience and activity to those who use their resurrection life to overcome the failures and errors of the past and come fully into harmony with the Divine laws, and take their rightful place in Divine creation. It is for that purpose the Kingdom of Christ upon earth is ordained, that those who so choose may “*inherit the Kingdom prepared [for them] from the foundation of the world.*” (Matt. 25:34)

Therefore death, as the term must of necessity be defined and understood amongst men and women, is the cessation not only of bodily functions but also of the activity of the brain, and the consequent commencement of the return of the physical body to its dust. The fact that the body may be mummified and preserved from decomposition, as in the case of the ancient Egyptians, makes no difference; the preserved body is just as much a part of the “dust of the earth” despite the fact that decomposition has not taken place, for the spirit has gone, and when the spirit has gone the man is dead. Death is a phenomenon that, so far as man is concerned, is confined entirely to the physical body and to this planet. Even when the Apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 15 speaks of some in the end of the Age who do not “sleep” like those who died in earlier times but are “changed, in a moment” (vv.51,52) to their heavenly destiny, he does not invalidate this fact. Those who are thus “changed in a moment” die just as truly as the antediluvians who were swept away by the Flood, for the moment of their “change” is the moment the material brain ceases to function and the human body is discarded for ever. That is death—even though it be followed instantaneously by resurrection.

“*What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death?*” asked the Psalmist (89:48). “*Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?*” No;

humans cannot. But God can—and God will.

*Bible Study Monthly 1989*

## ANOTHER YEAR BEGINS

Often in the past we have said, and we now say it once again, “What will this year bring?” As we grow older the years seem to pass with increasing speed, and it might well be with dismay and even alarm that we view the rapid approach of old age. How necessary and how precious then becomes our hope for the future and our glorious anticipation of our coming King and his universal kingdom. Think what we should be without the vision of this glorious prospect, perhaps wistfully thinking of the past that has gone for ever, sadly recalling the faces of those we expect to see no more having no hope and without God in the world.

“We are saved by hope,” wrote Paul to the Romans. (8:24) Hope for the future is the very essence of the Christian’s life, and we must of necessity look forward and onward, lest like Lot’s wife we fall by the way. (Gen. 19:26; Luke 17:31,32) The things of the past have no value, they are gone for ever: we cannot recall nor alter them now. We must face the present in the light of the future with renewed faith, believing that God can and will compensate in the days to come for anything that requires adjustment from the days of the past; that as with Job, the Lord will bless our latter end more than our beginning. Let us follow on in faith to know the Lord, disregarding the cost, and we shall receive an hundredfold for our efforts, and shall inherit everlasting life. May we, like Paul, forget those things which are behind and reach forth unto those things which are before, pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 3:13,14)

We often hear it said that we should not wish our lives away, yet how many people there are who are doing just that. They are living for some will-o’-the-wisp of the future that most likely will never mature, or at the best will not bring the satisfaction that they expect from it. But our hopes are sure, for they are established in the counsels of the everlasting God.

The prisoner waits eagerly for the day of his release, counting the days as they pass, but he will have future problems to face when he does at last obtain his freedom. The patient in hospital looks forward in anticipation to the time when they can return again to their home and loved ones, but they have no guarantee that their health will be fully restored or that it will not

fail again. We also wait for the day of our emancipation, our restoration to health and freedom and our final attainment to everlasting life, knowing that, no problems of that future state shall trouble us when we have entered into the glorious presence of our beloved Lord to be with him for ever. The calendar may mark the beginning of another year, but to us it only registers nearer to the glorious fulfilment of all our hopes in the revelation of our Lord from heaven. Let us awake, lift up our heads, and arise from our apathy, as our salvation draws nearer and nearer, with the sudden and unexpected coming of the Lord. Not much longer shall we cry "How long, O Lord," for that day hastes greatly, and again ye say "Who knows what this year will bring?"

Watch and pray always.

*The Forest Gate Bible Monthly*

### THIS YEAR

I know not whether dark or bright  
 This year shall be.  
 I only know he giveth light,  
 And I can trust his love and might  
 Who leadeth me.

I know not what may be the way  
 That I must take.  
 But I can humbly trust and pray  
 That I may never from him stray,  
 Not him forsake.

I know not what the year may bring  
 To those I love.  
 But we can sweetly rest and sing  
 Beneath the shadow of his wing  
 Here and above.

I know not whether short or long  
 Our lives may be;  
 But naught he chooseth can be wrong,  
 And he shall be our strength and song,  
 Now and eternally.

*Songs of the nightingale*

**THOUGHT ON ISAIAH 62:10**

*“Go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people.”(Isa. 62:10)*

Isaiah’s vision showed him the gateway of the new Age, the Messianic, swinging open to reveal that fair land which lay beyond, and in his ecstasy he cried out to his own people to enter quickly and prepare the way for the millions of humankind that were to follow. Preparation had to be made and the newcomers encouraged. Isaiah knew that his own people Israel were destined to play an important part in that preparation and encouragement when the time should come. What he did not know was that nearly three millenniums were to measure out their spans and a new people, the Christian Church of this present Age, also be present on the scene when at length the shouting millions would surge through that gateway. Not only purified Israel, but also the glorified Church, are to gather out the stones and lift up the standard.

We are accustomed to blame First Advent Israel for knowing “not the time of their visitation” (Luke 19:44) and failing to measure up to their responsibility and duty when their Age was giving place to the Age of the Gospel. Are we so quick to realise that we in our turn, when this Gospel Age is giving place to the Messianic, have the same responsibility and duty? The gateway is swinging open: before long it will be time to call people to enter. What are we doing in the meantime, to gather out the stones and lift up the standard? There are many in the Christian world today who look upon the apathy and unbelief of the masses and cry out for revival, but the basis for revival is all too often seen as little more than a profession of belief in the Lord Christ and conversion to a more moral life thereafter.

One tends to forget that true revival is powered by the dynamic energy of the Holy Spirit, and that in the context of this end-of-the-age period in which we live the Holy Spirit is to be poured out upon all flesh (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17)—when the gates of the Messianic era are opened and the work of world conversion really becomes effective. Our mission now, and one that we can neglect only to our own loss, is to do what we can, while those gates are in the act of opening, to gather out the stones of ignorance and misunderstanding concerning the Faith, and lift up the standard of the Divine Plan for human salvation that some at least may hear, and heed, and believe, and be ready. After all, the commission to preach the Gospel to the whole creation has not yet been revoked. The popular idea of Christianity is a travesty of the real thing.

*AOH*

## SIMON PETER—FISHER OF MEN

### 1. The Call

He straightened up from his task as his brother approached. Andrew was looking more than usually thoughtful, he was always the more serious of the two and given to times of quiet reflection whilst Simon got on with the net-mending and other tasks demanded by the necessities of their fishing business. When there was vigorous action or hard work to be done it was to Simon that their father Jonah turned, but when it was a matter of quiet calm judgment as to where the fish shoals were likely to be found he always consulted his quieter son; Andrew was the more reliable in such things. Jonah was farther along the beach at the moment, cleaning the boat from the remains of the last catch, and Simon with his usual energy was repairing and adjusting the tackle. He had good-humouredly accepted the fact of his brother's absence and consequent failure to take his own share of the morning's work, knowing that he had gone to see their spiritual leader, John the Baptist. His instruction in the things of God they had both accepted and his company they sought during all the moments they could snatch from the arduous business of earning a living.

Simon noticed nothing unusual in his brother's demeanour at first. He was not observant of such things. He motioned Andrew to a pile of nets still requiring attention and bent anew to his own work. Conscious, suddenly, of the other's continued silence, he looked up again, and their eyes met. Andrew's glance was serious; there was also in it a look of wonder, of awe, and strangely, of exultation. Simon's eyebrows lifted in interrogation; he knew his brother and he realised that something out of the ordinary had occurred. "We have found the Messiah" (John 1:41) said Andrew simply. The half-mended net slipped through Simon's fingers and fell to the ground. He straightened up slowly as his mind took in the significance of his brother's words. He was not naturally quick at grasping ideas. His dexterity of mind lay more in the realm of physical things. He reacted quickly when the wind blew the boat off course or sensing the subtle changes in the weather which betokened the imminent onset of the sudden gales which so often swept across the Sea of Galilee from the opposite mountains. So, he stood still for a minute, slowly considering what he had just heard.

"The—Messiah?" he queried, half sceptically and half wonderingly. Andrew was looking across the calm sea. "We were with the Master" he said slowly "and there came by one of those whom he had baptised, a man from Nazareth, Jesus the son of Joseph." As he passed us by, the Master

lifted up his voice and cried “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29) We looked into the eyes of Jesus and from that moment we knew that we were his men forever. We went home with him and we spent the night with him and he told us things about the Kingdom of God that even the Master had never told us and we knew that he is indeed “He that should come.” (Matt. 11:3)

Simon stood, taking it in. “And what says the Master, that you are going to desert him?” he asked at last.

He said that his work is now finished, that he was sent to herald this Coming One and that we must now follow the true Light which is to enlighten every man that comes into the world. “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30) he said. Simon came to a rapid decision. “Take me to Him” he demanded, and began immediately to walk away from the beach, leaving Andrew to hurry after him and resign himself to the seven miles walk back to Capernaum. So, Simon met Jesus.

The serene eyes rested upon him, and Simon stood motionless. Then the quiet voice, speaking words which were never in all his life erased from his memory. “You are Simon the son of Jonah. You will win the name of Kephias—the Rock.” (John 1:42\*) That was all, but it was enough. Simon knew then that he had found his life’s destiny—to follow and serve this Man to the end.

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How much more was said at that meeting we do not know. The call to be of the Twelve and to give up his secular occupation to follow Jesus was not yet; that was six or eight months future. For the present he was to spend part of his time with Jesus as formerly he had spent it with John, but he still continued to earn his living as a fisherman. The two brothers were soon on their way back to Bethsaida and their father, full of the new thing that had come into their lives and doubtless extolling the praises of the Man of Nazareth in the ears of all their relatives, neighbours and friends. From time to time they were with Jesus, as at the wedding in Cana of Galilee where they witnessed the first miracle, the turning of water into wine. They saw the healing of the nobleman’s son at Capernaum. They may possibly have accompanied Jesus on his first visit to Jerusalem where he drove the moneychangers out of the Temple and had his historic conversation with Nicodemus. If so, they must certainly have been with him as He passed through Samaria on his way back to Galilee and had the memorable talk with the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well. But all this time they were like so many others, disciples of Jesus who

accompanied him when He was in their district and went back to their daily work when He was not.

A change was to come. King Herod had thrown John the Baptist into prison and John's work was finished. There was only Jesus to follow now. And Jesus, returning from his first Passover at Jerusalem to preach in the synagogue of his native Nazareth, had been unceremoniously rejected by the townsfolk and without much doubt excommunicated. Leaving Nazareth, He and his parents—for there is no evidence that Joseph was yet dead—and his brothers and sisters, came to live in Capernaum by the lakeside. This was to be Jesus' home and headquarters for the next eighteen months whilst He travelled throughout all Galilee preaching the gospel of the Kingdom. Quite naturally one of the first things He did was to seek out Andrew and Simon.

This time it was Jesus who walked the seven miles between Capernaum and Bethsaida and there, as He had expected, He found the men He sought. (Luke 5) Standing on the seashore with the customary crowd around him, He talked to them about the things of God and the coming Kingdom. Finding the crowd pressing upon him, He looked round for Simon, who was most certainly not very far away, and climbed into his fishing boat, asking him to put off from the land a little way. From that vantage point He finished his discourse.

It was many years before the fishermen of Bethsaida ceased to talk about the marvellous thing that happened next. Jesus had told Simon to put out into the lake and let down his nets. Simon had demurred; they had already toiled all night and caught nothing. It was evident the fish shoals were nowhere near their end of the lake and their knowledge of the habits of the fish told them that at the moment they would be wasting their time. But Jesus insisted and so Simon and Andrew complied, just to demonstrate to Jesus that no matter what He knew about the things of the Kingdom of God, He understood nothing about the technique of fishing. To their intense astonishment the net filled almost immediately with such superabundance of fishes that it threatened to give way and they had to make frantic gestures to their business partners, James and John the sons of Zebedee, to bring their own boat to the rescue. So, four very much impressed and subdued men got safe to land with the heaviest catch of fish they had ever landed.

This was the great turning-point in Simon's life. He had come up against a power greater than he had ever imagined and of a nature he could not

understand. In the face of what the Lord had done all his old self-esteem vanished. “*Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord*” (Luke 5:8) was his spontaneous exclamation. From self-assertiveness to humility, from arrogance to contrition, he became as in a moment a new man, Christ’s man, and Jesus, looking upon him, knew that the time had come to make him and his companions the spearhead of his mission. “*Follow me*” He said to them “*and I will make you...fishers of men. And immediately they left their nets and followed him.*” (Mark 1:17-18 RSV) This marked the end of the old life. During that first six months or so they had combined their discipleship with their fishing business, now the fishing business was finished, and they were to be with Jesus all the time. Simon, and his brother Andrew, and John with James the sons of Zebedee, as men with a single mind, turned their backs upon the old life and entered together upon the new. Although it was probably several weeks before He formally ordained the Twelve to be his apostles (Matt. 10:1-4; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16), there is not much doubt that this was the point of time at which there began that close identification of this band of men with Jesus which set the seal upon their apostleship. Philip and Bartholomew were certainly already in the company, and there were probably others.

It almost seems as if these still very immature believers were to be given incontrovertible proof of our Lord’s Divine authority in order soundly to establish their faith in him at the outset, for side by side with the daily preaching, in the open and in the synagogue, of which they were, at present, only silent witnesses, there followed miracle of healing after miracle of healing. Almost immediately they were spectators of the wonder that was wrought in the synagogue at Capernaum, where He cleansed the man afflicted with an unclean spirit, to the amazement of the beholders. From thence the little party entered the home of Simon and Andrew probably the family home of their father Jonah—to find that Simon’s wife’s mother had been stricken with a fever. Jesus restored her to health and she arose and ministered to their needs. Then at sunset, the news having got around, the door to the house was besieged by hopeful villagers bringing their sick and maimed for healing at the hands of this wonderful Man. Simon and his fellows must have had plenty to think about that night.

Incidentally, this little story about Simon’s wife’s mother will bear a second thought. It is upon this incident, recorded by three of the Gospel writers, that the knowledge that Simon was a married man is founded. Church tradition goes on to say that his wife accompanied him on his evangelistic journeys in later life and ultimately suffered martyrdom

before him. He is supposed to have had a daughter, Petronilla, and a son. Of all this there is no evidence, only various allusions in the works of early Christian writers. Perhaps the most that can be surmised with probability of truth is that Simon's wife shared his faith and became one of the band of women who are occasionally mentioned in the Gospels as endorsing and supporting the mission of Jesus and "*ministered to him of their substance.*" (Luke 8:2-3) There is however just the possibility that she had died young, before the time of this incident. One might ask how it was, if the daughter was in the house all the time, that the mother, newly risen from a sick bed, should be the one to minister to the men. On another point, the story militates against the idea so often met with, and inherited from medieval times, that Simon Peter was an old man at the time of his call. If his wife's mother was still alive—and few lived beyond the age of sixty or seventy at that time he himself was not likely to be much out of his twenties if at all. The fact that he survived the death of Jesus by at least thirty years and even then did not die a natural death is a pointer in the same direction.

In this manner, then, the Call came to Simon Peter. Like his illustrious predecessor Isaiah, he felt himself to be a "man of unclean lips" (Isa. 6:5) in the face of the glory of his Lord but he was accepted and commissioned to bear the message to all Israel and eventually to all people everywhere. Like Isaiah, too, he had no conception at the start of what was going to be involved in the life he had chosen. There were to be times of light and dark, times of achievement and of failure, times of exaltation to the heights and of despairing descent into the depths. But at the end he emerged "more than conqueror." (Rom. 8:37) This is the value of the story of Simon the Galilean fisherman, of Peter the Apostle and evangelist of Jesus Christ, to us as we in our time follow in the same way. So very human, so very prone to hasty and ill-considered judgments, so quick at coming to the wrong conclusion and so liable to panic at a time of crisis! Yet, on the other hand, so warmly devoted and passionately loyal, so certain that all his Lord had promised would assuredly come to pass. Then, at the end, so quietly convinced that the star he had followed all his life was no chimera (illusion), but a reality which would lead him without fail into the heavenly Kingdom. "*We did not follow cleverly devised myths...but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.*" (2 Pet. 1:16 RSV)

*To be continued*  
AOH

### **The Simple Faith**

Before me, even as behind,  
God is, and all is well.

*John Greenleaf Whittier, Poems of the Way*

## LESSONS FROM BABYLON AND DANIEL

### **Introduction: The Origin of Babylon**

The story of Babylon begins from the first book of the Bible in Genesis 11, where humanity, despite having learned lessons from the sin of the first world and experiencing God's grace through Noah, sought to build a tower for their own comfort, safety, and pride, aiming to use their growth and strength to do according to their mindset rather than God's will. So, as a consequence God scattered the people, and confused their language which they had as their strength. (Gen. 11:1-9)

The place where they had settled became known as the land of the Chaldeans, from which God later called Abraham. (Gen. 11:31; 12:1) Babylon, thus became a powerful symbol of human pride and opposition to God's kingdom. Babylon is not only literal but also symbolic of false systems opposing God's will.

In Revelation Babylon represents false Christendom and corrupt worldly influences. Jesus, during His Second Presence, calls His people to "come out of Babylon" (Revelation 18:4) urging them to reject false doctrines and worldly ties. The history of literal Babylon foreshadows spiritual Babylon; those who gain knowledge and blessing from God but misuse it for pride face His inevitable judgment.

The destruction of this system is foretold in Revelation chapter 19; God uses this name as a symbol, from Genesis to Revelation, for us to have faith in His justice, which will be done, and the obedience we need to have to demonstrate our faithfulness.

### **Daniel and Babylon: God's Providential Plan**

Daniel's book shows key insights into how God works through faithful servants even in pagan kingdoms. Initially the Babylonian Empire, under King Nebuchadnezzar, was given authority to execute God's will in His providential plan. Yet, Babylon failed to glorify God due to pride. (Daniel 1:2) This failure set the stage for the rise of the Medo-Persian Empire, which God used to accomplish His purposes. (Daniel 6; Jeremiah 51)

### **The Fall of Babylon**

History records that Babylon fell unexpectedly when the Medes and Persians diverted the Euphrates River. (Jer. 50:38; 51:36-37) This event foreshadows Rev. 16:12, where the drying of the Euphrates symbolizes preparation for God's final judgment against false systems.

*"In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius*

*the Median took the kingdom...*" (Dan. 5:30-31)

As prophesied "*Thus saith the LORD...I will dry up her sea, and make her springs dry.*" (Jer. 51:36)

*"That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: that saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd."* (Isaiah 44:27-28)

The gates were left open. (Isa. 45:1-2 prophecy) The city fell without resistance. God's providence ensures the deliverance of His people, just as the Israelites were freed from Babylon after 70 years of exile. (Jer. 25:11-12; 29:10-14)

### **Daniel Stayed in Babylon**

The question arises: why did Daniel remain in Babylon even after its fall to the Medo-Persian Empire? "*Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans, and be as the he goats before the flocks.*" (Jer. 50:8) "*Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the LORD's vengeance; he will render unto her a recompense.*" (Jer. 51:6)

Was he disobedient to God's command to "come out of Babylon"? Certainly not! The Scriptures show that Daniel's faithfulness continued throughout his lifetime, and that God fully approved of his course.

### **Daniel's Faithful Continuance**

From the Book of Daniel, we learn that he continued in service under both Babylonian and Medo-Persian rule. "*So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.*" (Dan. 6:28)

His long service was not an act of rebellion but of submission to the divine will. Even in his youth Daniel understood from Jeremiah's prophecy that the captivity in Babylon was God's plan and not merely the result of political defeat. "*This whole land shall be a desolation...these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.*" (Jer. 25:11)

*"For thus saith the LORD...after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you."* (Jer. 29:10) Therefore, Daniel did not resist the Babylonian authority nor show patriotic rebellion in favour of Jerusalem. He honoured the king, recognizing him as an instrument in God's hand—just as Jeremiah had instructed.

### **God's Final Approval of Daniel**

In Daniel 12 the angel of the Lord assures him: "*But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the*

*days.*” (Dan. 12:13) Here God confirms that Daniel’s life was complete and blessed. He would “stand in his lot”—that is, receive his portion and reward in the resurrection of the faithful. This closing benediction shows clearly that Daniel never disobeyed God but fulfilled his divinely appointed mission faithfully to the end.

To prove this, Daniel chapter 6 records that he continued his prayers openly before God, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, even though he knew about the plot against him and the royal decree. When the decree was made forbidding prayer to any but the king, Daniel remained steadfast. “*He kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed...as he did aforetime.*” (v.10) This act was not rebellion, but steadfast faith.

It is understood the first six chapters of Daniel record the sequence of his life experiences, while the last six chapters contain the visions revealed to him by God. The ninth chapter describes an event that occurred prior to the sixth chapter.

At the close of chapter 5, when Babylon was captured, Daniel was already engaged in prayer and study of Jeremiah’s prophecy, realizing that the seventy years of desolation were completed. This background helps us see that Daniel’s prayers in chapter 6 were not acts of fear or defiance, but of faith and understanding. He recognized God’s plan through Jeremiah’s words and therefore gave priority to God above all earthly decrees, proving his unwavering faithfulness throughout his life.

Again the question of why didn’t he follow this prophecy of Jeremiah to come out of Babylon? To understand this we have to see the importance of Daniel Chapter 6.

### **Prophecy of Cyrus**

The sixth chapter of Daniel is one of the most important sections in the entire book. It is already known the prophet Isaiah had foretold God would use Cyrus to rescue the Israelites from Babylonian captivity and to accomplish His divine purpose.

However, it is worth noting that the name “*Cyrus*” may have been an editorial addition in later scriptural compilations; Jeremiah never used the name of King Cyrus when he completely prophesied about Babylon’s rise and fall, and Daniel, when he prayed in the 9th chapter after the Medo-Persian captivity, did not record there King Cyrus’ prophecy as revealed in Isaiah, rather, he quoted *Jeremiah’s prophecy of the seventy years*. Also

in the fifth and sixth chapters Daniel uses only his title (King) as a name rather Cyrus.

Isaiah's prophecy naming Cyrus was given nearly 150 years before these events took place. (Isa. 44:28; 45:1) Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that later inspired scribes or prophets, after witnessing the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy through Cyrus, may have added his name to confirm the divine accuracy of the prediction.

Ezra chapter 1 records how King Cyrus issued the decree to release the Israelites and support the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem. This historical act clearly identified him as the ruler spoken of by Isaiah, fulfilling God's will.

Thus, the inclusion of Cyrus's name in some passages serves as a confirmation by later editors who recognized, after the event, that this was indeed the man foretold by Isaiah. The original manuscripts and prophetic sequence suggest that these references were likely an editorial clarification, preserving the record of God's faithfulness in fulfilling His word.

Now the prophecy was fulfilled—Cyrus captured Babylon, just as foretold. During this time Cyrus had God's spirit to witness the faithfulness of Daniel, being deeply impressed by his wisdom, integrity and devotion to God.

However, for Cyrus to become the instrument through whom God would deliver His people, a great change of heart had to occur within him. The narrative in Daniel chapter 6 reveals that, although King Cyrus recognized Daniel's noble character, he was initially bound by the laws of the kingdom. Even when he realized that Daniel's accusers were moved by envy and malice he was unable to reverse his own decree, because the law of the Medes and Persians could not be altered. *"Then the King commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions."*

Despite his limitations, the king's concern and respect for Daniel were evident. He fasted through the night and anxiously awaited the morning to see if Daniel's God had delivered him. When Daniel was found unharmed, Cyrus recognized the power of the true God and proclaimed His greatness throughout the empire. This remarkable experience marked the turning point in Cyrus's understanding—preparing his heart for the divine mission later recorded in Ezra 1:1-4, where he issued the decree to free the Israelites and rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem.

Thus, the deliverance of Daniel from the lions' den not only demonstrated God's protection of His faithful servant but also paved the way for the deliverance of Israel, fulfilling God's purpose through Cyrus.

### **Daniel's Divine Mission in His Later Years**

This reveals the true reason why God allowed Daniel to remain in Babylon until the end of his life; it was part of the divine plan for him to prepare the way for Israel's deliverance. Through Daniel's influence and position in the Medo-Persian government, the necessary laws and decrees were arranged to favour the Israelites, enabling them to return and rebuild their homeland.

All these arrangements can be clearly traced in the Book of Ezra, where the details of Israel's restoration are recorded. Daniel's elevated position, gained through the events of Daniel chapter 6, allowed him to serve as God's chosen instrument for the "post-work" of Israel's restoration after their period of chastisement in Babylon.

### **A Parallel with Joseph in Egypt**

This work of Daniel has a beautiful parallel in the life of Joseph in Egypt.

- Joseph was raised up by God to do the "pre-work"—to protect God's people from famine
- Daniel was raised up by God to do the "post-work"—to help the Israelites return and rebuild after their captivity
- Both were taken into exile at a young age, both faced severe tests and trials, and both endured jealousy and envy from others
- Their names were changed, and they were adorned with royal honours
- Through it all they remained faithful to God
- Scripture shows that Joseph became second in command over all Egypt (Gen. 41:40-43), and Daniel was made third ruler in the kingdom of Babylon. (Dan. 5:29)

These positions typify deeper spiritual lessons:

- Joseph represents a type of our Lord Jesus Christ, exalted to the right hand of power.
- Daniel represents a type of the Church class who will hold the third position in the divine order of the Kingdom—after Jehovah (the Father) and Jesus Christ (the Son), the faithful saints who live under the authority of this present evil world yet remain loyal to God.

## Spiritual Lessons for the Saints

Daniel's steadfastness teaches us how to remain faithful under pressure and loyal to God's Word, even while serving under earthly powers. His life was guided by the prophecies of Jeremiah, which he diligently studied and understood. As recorded in Daniel chapter 9, his prayerful meditation upon Jeremiah's seventy-year prophecy strengthened his faith and enabled him to act in harmony with God's will during the events of chapter 6.

This provides a powerful example for consecrated believers today to:

- Study the prophecies of God's Word carefully
- Understand the times and seasons in which we live
- Remain calm and faithful, acting with spiritual wisdom, and avoiding confusion or impatience

Through Daniel's example, we learn how God prepares and uses His servants, both in times of trial and times of restoration, to accomplish His grand purpose. In Daniel's life we see the perfect harmony between prophecy and obedience, faith and works, trial and triumph. His story reminds us that those who trust in God's Word and act in harmony with His prophecies will always find divine favour and ultimate victory. Daniel finished his course with divine approval. His faithfulness under trial stands as a timeless example for all who seek to understand and obey the will of God.

*"Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days."* (Dan. 12:12)

AS



HEAR what God the Lord hath spoken:  
 O my people, faint and few,  
 Comfortless, afflicted, broken,  
 Fair abodes I build for you.  
 Scenes of heartfelt tribulation  
 Shall no more perplex your ways;  
 You shall name your walls "Salvation,"  
 And your gates shall all be "Praise."

*William Cowper  
 Bible Students Hymnal*

## PARADISE ON EARTH

### 7. Teachers of all Nations

*“Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations...and they shall beat their swords into plowshares (ploughshares), and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” (Isa. 2:3-4)*

This is only one of the foreviews of the Millennium to be found in the Bible. A time of universal peace, ensured by the administration of the Kingdom of God upon earth. The laws of that Kingdom will not be oppressive; they will be beneficent, just, considerate, devised for the well-being of all people, conducive to a contented and prosperous life. In this same passage Isaiah speaks of the people coming willingly to God, saying, *“he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths,”* an indication of the readiness with which the majority of humanity will align themselves with the principles of righteousness and set themselves to know the way of the Lord more perfectly.

In several Scriptures (Psa. 2:9; Rev. 2:27; Ezek. 20:37) there is a statement, referring to the rulership of the Millennial Age, to the effect that *“he shall rule them with a rod of iron,”* from which the impression has arisen that the rulership of Christ will be hard, ruthless and oppressive. Nothing can be farther from the truth. The true nature of his rule is best expressed in Isa. 40:11 *“He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.”* The allusion is taken from the everyday life of the shepherd. The “rod of iron” (Heb. “*shebet*”) is the club which the shepherd used both to defend his flock from the attacks of marauding wild beasts and to beat down the undergrowth or force a way through the jungle in the process of finding fresh pasture for the sheep. Thus the expression is indicative of the shepherd’s care for his flock. In the New Testament the word “rule” in Rev. 2:27 (*poimanei*) has the significance of shepherding in the sense of feeding and the expression is perhaps better understood “he shall shepherd them with the shepherding rod.” Where Jesus said *“Feed my sheep”* (John 21:16) and Peter *“feed the flock of God”* (1 Pet. 5:2) and in other instances, this same word “*poimaino*” is used. Again, in Micah 7:14 the expression *“feed thy people with thy rod”* is this same iron club, the *shebet*.

The new administration, then, will be a benevolent autocracy, in which

the King is sovereign and all people his loyal followers. Overt acts of evil, violence, injustice, will be restrained. “They shall not hurt nor destroy.” (Isa. 11:9) Men may or may not accept Christ as King and Saviour in their minds but they will be unable actively to rebel against him. The time for democracy and self-government is not yet; that will come at the end of the Millennium when people will have had personal experience of the practical out-working of a righteous world with universal observance of Divine law, and have liberty to make their own choice, for right or wrong, for good or evil, for Christ or Satan—and for life or death accordingly. For, because sin is inherently destructive of life, it must always be true that “*the wages of sin is death.*” (Rom. 6:23)

So then, right at the start of the Millennium, the rule of Christ is imposed on the world, which at that time will comprise only the living nations, for the dead have yet to be raised. The question naturally arises, who are the King’s agents, his ambassadors, his executive staff, so to speak, through whom his laws and his Gospel will be promulgated and who will be entrusted with the task of teaching all nations. Whether or not the Lord will be visibly manifest leaves unaffected the fact that He will need many missionaries active in the work of teaching his ways to men and women who know him not and leading them to conversion and acceptance of him as Saviour. Such workers will have had their training for this arduous task in this present life and will be ready at the inception of the Kingdom to take up their ordained task.

There are three such distinct groups. First, those disciples of Christ during this present Age whose lives have been wholly devoted to his service and have eschewed all earthly interests and pursuits in their utter consecration to him and his service. Not all Christians have gone to this length and that is not necessarily to their discredit. The true church, the Bride of Christ, is composed of those whose earnest desire is to be associated with him in the after-life in all that he undertakes and accomplishes. The immediate and at the present time the most important of such activities is the superintending of the work of the Millennial Age, the evangelical appeal to all, the assisting of those who respond to that appeal to come to a true and complete knowledge of the principles of righteousness. Such will be well qualified for their mission because they themselves will have in the past learned aright the lessons of life. They will be able to say to the man or woman struggling against the effects of sin in the past life “I understand, for I have trodden this path myself. See, this is the way out.” Only those who have learned such things in consequence of a close and unremitting adherence to the teaching of Christ will have attained the standard which

will enable them to say this, and that is why Jesus said of such “*Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*” (Matt. 7:14)

These, at the time of the Advent, will have been translated into the heavens, raised from the dead in what the Scriptures term the “First Resurrection” (Rev. 20:5,6) to be with their Lord in his celestial glory, citizens therefore of the celestial world. As such they will be normally not capable of discernment by the human senses, which are adapted only to this terrestrial, material, world. Their communication with people must be, as was the case with heavenly visitants in Old Testament days, by the expedient of assuming human form and speech—almost, it might be said, a case of changing the wave-length. It can be expected that such communication between members of the Church of Christ from heaven and the rest of humankind upon earth will be a frequent and familiar occurrence in that day.

The second agency the Lord will use to convey his message of salvation to men will be through the medium of those who in Old Testament days manifested the same spirit of dedication and loyalty to God as has been the characteristic of the Church in New Testament days. These are to be found among God’s ancient people Israel. At Mount Sinai, in the days of the Exodus fourteen centuries before Christ, Israel was constituted a “royal priesthood and a holy nation,” with a commission to preserve the oracles of God until such time as Christ should come and thereafter, in the days of the Millennial Kingdom, to declare his salvation to the ends of the earth. In other words, a missionary nation to act as priests and ministers in disseminating the Divine word and taking an important part in the evangelical work of that Age. It is to be feared that many of Israel through the centuries proved themselves unworthy of that calling, but as with the Christian community of this Age, a proportion did remain faithful and will be found ready to play their part in turning men from sin to serve the living God. These will be headed by people of themselves, heroes of faith some of whom, like Abraham, have had Divine approval recorded in Holy Writ; under their leadership the faithful of Israel will go out into the world to be what their prophets of old declared they should be but never in olden times fully realised, a “light to the nations.” (Isa. 49:6)

Thirdly, and finally, there are those Christian believers in Christ whose faith is full and sincere, and works to match their faith, whose hearts and minds have never been touched with the realisation of, and desire for, the celestial salvation which is the destiny of the true Church. They love the

Lord devotedly and would fain do him service, but here upon earth as terrestrial creatures rather than in heaven as celestial. The Lord honours their faith and desire, for in his Father's house there are many mansions, a great variety of life forms and environments, and when it comes to this Millennial work which has as its object the conversion and reconciliation of "whosoever will," there are many corners in his vineyard and a place for every worker. So, these too will be busily employed as missionaries at home and abroad, seeking those who heretofore had known of Christ but only in a distorted and misleading form, and those who had never known of him at all. There will be those of the living nations carried over into the next Age at the very inception of Christ's reign who might well be in this category when the last members of the celestial Church have left this earth to be joined with Christ. These will take up the witness and proclaim with no uncertain voice the meaning of the events which are happening and that the new world order has commenced. For these, already instructed in the Christian faith and the significance of the change in world affairs which has taken place, there will be missionary outreach beyond their wildest dreams, for there will now be peoples of all faiths, Muslim, Buddhist, Naturist and those of no faith at all, potential converts in the greatest evangelistic enterprise of all time.

This leads to consideration of the other side of the coin. How will all this be received by those same potential converts? What will be the attitude of the non-believing world at large to this greatly increased appeal of the Gospel?

One must realise that there will be distinct areas of contact when it comes to dealing with the entire human race. There have been for more than a thousand years past Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, beside the semi-superstitious faiths. Each of these have their own religious background and conception of God, largely mutually contradictory. Prior to that there were Christians and, earlier, Jews, two monotheistic faiths in a world of pagan gods and goddesses. The question might well be asked, how is the Christian evangel going to be presented effectively to people influenced by such a welter of differing theologies and outlooks, and the answer has to be that, as it has been since the dawn of history, God has to speak to each community or people in a language they can understand, and to a great extent inside the framework of their individual intellectual limitations. Christian missionaries who have spent many years in remote regions teaching primitive tribes will well understand what this means.

Probably the first impact will be in the so-called "Christian" world, the

assemblage of nations which at least profess one or another of the various forms of the faith which exist. Even this is debatable for a far smaller proportion of people have any belief in or even any knowledge of Christ and his teachings than was the case only a century ago or so. The Lord's query "*When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*" comes home with impressive emphasis in these latter days and constitutes one evidence that these are indeed the latter days of this Age. Nevertheless, it will be difficult for the atheists and the agnostics and the frankly indifferent to deny the existence and the power of God in face of the manifest evidence accumulating before their eyes. The Divine restraint of outward evil and, above all, the resurrection of the dead to stand, alive, upon earth again will need a lot of explaining away; probably some "die-hards" will be busy looking for a rational explanation which leaves God out of it but they are not likely to get very far. Even atheists must have dead parents and relatives whom they will eventually meet again, face to face, alive, and without God that will take a lot of explaining.

It can be expected then that the initial harvest of this new Pentecost will be among the professedly Christian nations, those who are the most easily capable of understanding the nature of the power which has taken control of the world and initiated this worldwide reformation. In this new world in which the true gospel of God is preached and there is no longer room for ambiguity and misunderstanding, the old denominational differences must needs vanish and so, too, will those theologies which present the Deity as a vengeful autocrat intent only on saving a few favourites and consigning the rest to an eternity of penal separation from him. The keynote of the new faith will be that God is Love, that He has created humankind for a purpose, and the achievement of that purpose will mean eternal life and happiness for all his creatures, if they will. Even though the Christian nations constitute but a relatively small proportion of the total population of this planet, the conversion and entry into this understanding of the Truth on the part of so many of these will enormously increase the number of available missionaries eager to go out and take the knowledge of Christ to the larger number who have never even heard of him.

As a kind of side issue, the scientists and evolutionists and others who for so long have held the field of explaining how the universe came into existence and how man came to evolve upon it from amino acids and inorganic chemicals with the aid of a little ultra-violet light from outer space will be doing a little hard thinking and probably come out with the sentiment expressed by the ruler of the wedding-feast of Cana at Galilee, "thou hast kept the good wine until now." (John 2:10)

There will be a rapid rewriting of theories, papers and textbooks. Parallel with this process will be the complete return of the House of Israel to God and their acceptance of Christ as their promised Messiah.

All the old Hebrew prophets were sure that this would come, and they depicted in glowing terms the glories of that day when the Lord would receive Israel's loyalty and never again be separated from them. To a great extent this conversion will have been already effected as the closing event of this present Age, when Israel, confident of Divine protection within her own borders, the bounds of the Holy Land, but menaced by the powers of evil in the world, are miraculously delivered by the Lord Jesus Christ, their Messiah from heaven, accompanied by his own, his Church. That event marks the full end of this present Age and the beginning of the Millennium and reveals the existence upon earth of a compact body of people who straightaway understand the significance of the times and their place in those times. It is probable that the first earthly missionaries of the Millennium will be those children of Jacob who experience that marvellous deliverance at the end of this Age, together with other nationalities who also have been looking and working for this day. Speaking of this event, Isaiah records the words of the Lord "*and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations...to the coastlands afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles (peoples).*" (Isa. 66:19 KJV RSV) As the resurrection proceeds, and their fellows of preceding generations are awakened to join them, it is tolerably certain that, as Zechariah says, "*I will sow them among the people: and they shall remember me in far countries; and they shall live with their children, and turn again.*" (Zech. 10:9) Jerusalem, the Holy City, will speedily become the focus toward which all will turn their eyes.

Perhaps the next sphere in which the evangelistic fervour of the times will find expression will be the Muslim world, millions of them, nearly as many as the professed Christians. It is not always realised that the God of Islam is the God of Jew and Christian. When Muhammad in the seventh century set out to convert his fellow Arabians from their idol worship it was the God of the Jews and of the Old Testament that he preached. Himself a stern monotheist, he misunderstood the New Testament presentation of Christ as the Son of God and as having come from the Father to take the nature of man upon himself and allowed Christ only the status of a prophet like the Hebrew prophets whom he venerated. Since the Muslims venerate Abraham as much as do the Jews, and look upon him as their ancestor and they the children of Abraham, it could be quite

on the cards that the undisputed appearance upon earth of Abraham and others of the ancients will initiate a revolution of thought in the Muslim world leading to an effective work of conversion among them. They may not, initially, be so near the Kingdom of God as the Jews and the Christians, but nevertheless not so very far away either. Esau, Ishmael, Abraham, Nahor, Peleg, Joktan, Shem; these are all ancients of old time prominent in both Jewish and Muslim lore; their counsel and leadership will doubtless exert a great influence in the Muslim world and so lead them to Christ.

These are the three theistic religions, that is, forms of worship of a supreme God who has a relationship with man. There are other quasi-religious faiths such as Buddhism which are not theistic in that sense. Buddhism springs from the teachings of Gautama Buddha, an Indian prince who lived six hundred years before Christ although Buddhism as a faith only came into existence a thousand years later. It is a religion of high moral tone and ethical values but there is no personal Saviour and no God in the Christian sense. The two Chinese philosophers, Confucius and Lao Tse (Laozi), lived at about the same time as Buddha and founded similar systems which found their adherents chiefly in the Far East. It could well be that the sincere follower of one or other of these faiths will have little to learn in the field of ethics and just dealing and right living; they are at the present time an example to the rest of the world in that direction. What they do lack, and will lack in that day, is the realisation, that as children of Adam they are alien from God, standing in need of the saving power of Jesus Christ, and reconciliation with God. These are farther away from God than are Christians and Jews and Muslims and it is in this province that the efforts of the missionaries must next be directed. One can expect this to be fertile ground; these are likely to be in much the same position as the rich young ruler who felt he had observed the principles of God's laws in their entirety; "*all these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?*" (Matt. 19:20) Like him, they will need to understand that despite all their good deeds and upright living, they need the Saviour. There is not much doubt that they will find him.

By far the most intense phase of the missionary work of the Millennium will be amongst the people who for generations have lived in primitive simplicity and who only in part have had the Christian gospel preached to them. These represent the greater part of the human race and have the most to learn. In most cases there is some idea of a God in heaven but usually confounded with numerous minor deities, evil spirits, and again with no idea of a Saviour who redeems from sin. As the generations

return from the grave there will be more and more of these, minds dark with the fear of evil spirits and demons, vengeful gods and hostile powers innumerable, and the work of disabusing their minds of such things and replacing them with the conception of a God of love, who is planning good things for his creatures, will without doubt be an arduous work. It may well be that the reason the Millennium is to endure for a thousand years—which some have queried as seemingly an unnecessarily long time for the conversion of the world when one realises that evil is suppressed and the Gospel has unfettered freedom of expression—is that in his wisdom the Most High foresees that such time is necessary to reach all these millions who have got to start at the very beginning and be freed from so many elements of Satan’s power before they can begin to make progress in the things of God. In still earlier times there were men who had degenerated so far from the nobility of the first men that they had become little more than animals, living in caves and trees, almost bereft of intelligence; yet they are all God’s handiwork and destined in the Age of Christ’s reign to be lifted up out of their degradation into the “glorious liberty of the children of God.” (Rom. 8:21)

So, at the last, there will return to earth the oldest of the ancients, those who lived in the earliest days before idolatry had come upon earth and men had begun to make themselves many gods. These from that old-time Golden Age had known and worshipped the God of heaven; even so they knew nothing of Christ, and his evangel will come strange to them. The Millennium may conceivably be well advanced by the time they stand again upon the earth but their ancient faith will stand them in good stead and their progress in the knowledge and faith of Jesus Christ be that more rapid.

*AOH*

*To be continued*



### “THREE GATES OF GOLD”

Let every thought thy lips would utter pass three gates of gold,—  
 But, if through these it fails to pass, then let it not be told;  
 And o’er each gate in silver letters written thou wilt find,  
 Above the first one, “Is it *true*?” the second, “Is it *kind*?”  
 And “Is it *necessary*?” o’er the third one and the last.  
 Then guard thy thoughts, let none escape, save those gates have passed!

*Gertrude W. Seibert*

*Poems of the Way*

**LIFT UP YOUR HEADS, YE MIGHTY GATES—A HYMN***Tunes: Migdol, Truro*

LIFT up your heads, ye mighty gates!  
Behold! the King of glory waits;  
The King of kings is drawing near,  
The Saviour of the world is here.



The Lord is just, a helper tried;  
Mercy is ever at His side.  
His kingly crown is holiness,  
His sceptre one of righteousness.

O! blessed they, and greatly blest,  
Where Christ is ruler and confessed!  
O happy hearts and happy homes,  
To whom this King of triumph comes!



Fling wide the portals of your heart;  
Make it a temple set apart  
From earthly use for heaven's employ,  
Adorned with prayer, and love, and joy.

Redeemer, come! I open wide  
My heart to Thee: here, Lord, abide!  
Let me Thy constant presence feel,  
Thy grace and love in me reveal.



O! come, my Sovereign, enter in;  
Yet more Thy nobler life begin;  
Thy Word and Spirit guide us on,  
Until the glorious crown be won!

*Bible Students Hymnal*

This hymn was originally composed in German no later than 1635 by Georg Weissel who lived near Konigsberg which was part of Prussia. That city is now called Kalingrad. It was not until 1855 that it made its way into English when it was translated into English by Catherine Winkworth. The hymn appears in tune books in either 4, 5 or 6 stanzas.

The following verses are thought to have been in the mind of the writer:  
**Psa. 24:7-10** Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift

up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in...The LORD of hosts.

**1 Tim. 6:14-16** The appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see.

**John 4:42** Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

**Eph. 2:4-7** God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ...and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

**Matt. 21:4-11** All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass...and a very great multitude spread their garments in the way: others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? And the multitude said, This is Jesus...of Nazareth.

**Psa. 144:15** Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the LORD.

**Rev. 3:20** Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him.

**John 14:23** Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

**2 Cor. 6:16** What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

**1 Pet. 2:5** Lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

**1 Pet. 5:4** When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

## THOUGHT ON ISAIAH 65:3-5

*“A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense on altars of brick...which say Stand by thyself, come not near (nigh) to me; for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke (stench) in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day.”* (Isa. 65:3-5)

Not only in the days of Isaiah was that spirit manifested. We have it today, with ourselves, in the professedly Christian church, all too often a smug self-righteousness which is the very negation of all for which Christ stood. There were Pharisees two thousand years ago who *“trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others.”* (Luke 18:9) They have their spiritual descendants today; if the Lord Jesus was right when He told those of his own time that they were of their father the Devil, we should logically come to the same conclusion now. That might come as a shock to some who labour under the delusion that they and they alone have the monopoly of Divine Truth. Better that kind of shock than the one that would inevitably come if they should stand and hear the Saviour say *“I never knew you...ye that work iniquity.”* (Matt. 7:23) *“There is a generation”* said the Wise Man in Proverbs *“O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up.”* (30:13) Complacent in the oversight of the little religious clubs they control, secure in the knowledge of their own assured salvation, contemptuous of believers whose understanding of the Divine mysteries differs anywise from their own, and resolved to allow no breath of air from outside to disturb the serenity of their sacred enclosure! But nothing can hinder the development of Divine Truth as it becomes known to successive generations, and nothing can restrain the strivings of the human spirit after a more accurate understanding of the ways of God. The very impulse so to strive was at the first built in human nature by God.

Sacrificing in gardens; burning incense on altars of brick! It is a terrible condemnation, and so easily earned. It is tempting to apply the terms to certain church buildings or particular Christian groups. But the Most High is not talking about our denominational affiliations when He talks like this, nor yet our preference for one or another kind of worship, whether rich in ceremonial or Puritan in simplicity. He is talking about those who use their position in the church to build a wall around their flocks to separate them from others of Christ's brethren, to compel them to gather around a man-made altar instead of the table of the Lord. Such, He says, are as the acrid smoke of a fire burning all day long and getting

**NOTICES**

**Bible Students Seminar Day**  
**Saturday 7 February 2026**  
 Crick Village Hall, Bucknills Lane, Crick, Nr. Rugby NN6 7SX

For those who wish to keep the memorial of our Lord’s death at the time nearest the anniversary, it is suggested that **14 Nisan after 6 p.m. Tuesday 31 March 2026** will be the date and time.

**Warrington Class Easter Convention**  
**Saturday 4 April 2026**  
 Crick Village Hall

**Bible Students Seminar Day**  
**Saturday 2 May 2026**  
 St. Martha’s Hall, Park Road, Tring, HP23 6BP dv

**BIBLE STUDENTS INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION**  
 4-9 AUGUST 2026  
 POLAND

**Bible Students Fellowship Conference 2026**  
 High Leigh Conference Centre,  
 Wednesday 12 - Sunday 16 August 2026

**GONE FROM US**  
 Melody Ault (U.S.A.)

*from page 38*

into the nostrils—an ever-present irritant and vexation. That is a very different thing from the incense which ascends to God from his faithful as a sweet-smelling savour. We all do well to remember that.

*AOH*



## IN HEAVEN'S GATE

*Earthly courtyards? Not for me,  
In heaven's gate I want to be;  
Forever, with my Lord and King,  
So my heart can truly sing.*

*In the realm I love the best,  
Where angels in white robes are dressed;  
A golden harp each one does play,  
Now the Kingdom rule holds sway.*

*I'm in a wilderness so bleak,  
My spirit home is what I seek;  
So, may I strive forevermore,  
To enter through yon heaven's door.*

*So dear sweet Jesus, hear my prayer,  
May I soon be, with you there;  
Among your brethren, oh so dear,  
My goal it is so crystal clear!*

*Yes, earthly joys hold naught for me,  
With heavenly things I now must be;  
A stranger—I remain below,  
Until the time, has come to go...*

*To my Master up above,  
Yes, the one I truly love;  
Earthly courts hold naught for me,  
In heaven's gate I want to be.*



*Where Eagles Gather  
Rosemary Page*