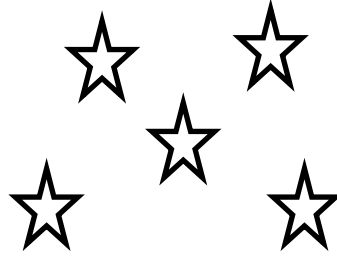


BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

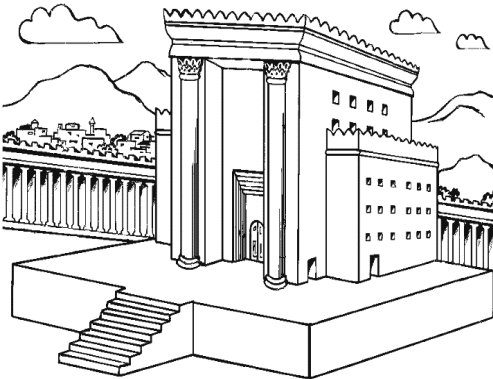
Volume 103 Issue 3

May / June 2026



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Ye are come unto mount Sion,
and unto the city of the living
God, the heavenly Jerusalem,
and to an innumerable company
of angels, to the general
assembly and church of the
firstborn, which are written in
heaven, and to God...and to
Jesus the mediator of the new
covenant...Wherefore we
receiving a kingdom which
cannot be moved, let us have
grace, whereby we may serve
God acceptably with reverence
and godly fear.
Heb. 12:22-28

BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

FOUNDED 1924

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

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

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

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

Two thousand years ago our Lord Jesus, the Messiah, began his ministry. One of his first steps was to choose disciples; John the Baptist had disciples. It was not obvious then that "the Church," made from many people would also be selected. Peter, James and John were marked out for special experiences with the Lord Jesus. To Simon Peter it was clear that Jesus was the Messiah so Jesus said, "Thou are a rock and on this rock I will build my Church." (Matt. 16:18 Diaglott) This was an early intimation that the Church would be part of the plan of God. This Church is still being built some two thousand years later.

This building process commenced when the Holy Spirit was sent at Pentecost. That vital and effective force has been the fire that has driven this worldwide work first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles.

Peter saw a vision of Elijah at the transfiguration. It was one of many signs and wonders which he saw. It has been said that Elijah pictures the Church in this present age due to the persecution he suffered and also the lack of success he had in Israel in bringing that nation back to God despite the miracle in 1 Kings 18. He was discouraged yet he was told there *will* be seven thousand who would be faithful to Yahweh and not to Baal. (1 Kings 19:18 NRSV)

The Church since the days of Simon Peter continues to have a role in the world. They are ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:20), deacons of the new covenant (2 Cor. 3:6) and Jesus' witnesses in this age. (Acts 1:8)

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THE Church's one foundation
 Is Jesus Christ, her Lord;
 She is His new creation,
 By water and the Word.
 From heav'n He came and sought her
 To be His holy bride;
 With His own blood He bought her,
 And for her life He died.

Though, with a scornful wonder,
 Men see her sore opprest
 By foes too great in number,
 By trials sore distress,
 Yet saints their watch are keeping;
 Their cry goes up, "How long?"
 And soon the night of weeping
 Shall change to morn of song.

'Mid toil and tribulation,
 And tumult of her war,
 She waits the consummation
 Of peace for evermore;
 Till with the vision glorious,
 Her longing eyes are blest,
 And the great Church victorious
 Shall be the Church at rest.

Bible Students Hymnal
S. J. Stone

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 CALL AND PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

The formation of the Christian Church is the predominant theme of the New Testament. The major part of the four Gospels contains the teachings Jesus gave his disciples to fit them for their role as the founding members of his Church; the Book of Acts relates the early history of its establishment in the Jewish and Greek worlds by the ministry of St. Paul, the Epistles concentrate upon instructions and exhortation relative to the Christian life, and Revelation pictures the ultimate triumph of the Church when its enemies have been overthrown and the object of its calling achieved. This latter factor, the object, and purpose of the Church, is one to which singularly little importance has been attached in contemporary theology, but it is one a clear understanding of which is vitally necessary to every dedicated Christian. The common practice of referring to any individual Christian denomination or organisation with its full membership—or to all of them jointly as “the Church” and equating their membership rolls with that of the “Church of the Firstborn, whose names are written in Heaven,” (Heb. 12:23 NIV) obscures the fact that from the New Testament point of view the Church includes only those believers in Christ who have consecrated themselves completely to his service by a dedicated life in the positive knowledge that by so doing they are being conformed to his likeness. Such will be associated with him in the eventual evangelising and reconciliation of the world. The Church is a “called out” people, its members those who find their vocation in the service of God, and identify themselves completely with his purpose to eliminate evil from the world and persuade all who can be persuaded to come into harmony with him and take their appointed place in his creation. This is the meaning of the declaration of James at the first Council of Jerusalem “God...visited the nations to take out of them a people for his Name.” (Acts 15:14 WEB) The general evangelical appeal to all, exhorting to conversion and reconciliation, goes on after the completion of the Church, and in fact this completion is the signal for an immensely intensified and widened scope of that appeal, for at its completion, the Church is joined with its Lord in heaven and invested with enhanced powers which can never be its possession on earth.

This is the truth that lies behind the many Scriptural allusions to the reign of the saints with Christ, the “marriage of the Lamb,” (Rev. 19:7) and so on. “*In the regeneration*” said Jesus “*when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*” (Matt. 19:28) Regeneration here means the giving of new life; the function of the Church is to be the medium of that new

life to humanity; the thrones of judgment symbolise the Divine authority with which the Church will execute that duty. *“They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years”* (Rev. 20:4) says the Revelator, assigning this process in time to the Millennial reign of Christ following his Advent. St. Paul had the same idea in mind when he reminded the Corinthian believers *“do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?”* (1 Cor. 6:2) The Christian life therefore is not merely a means whereby the individual can assure their personal salvation and attain the felicity of a future life when this one is ended; it is a vocation which must be entered with dedicated loyalty to God in whatever path He indicates is his will, and for the acquirement of qualifications which will fit the individual for continued and increased active service for God in that next life. The Church is a *“people for a purpose,” “called according to his purpose”* (1 Pet. 2:9 Diaglott; Rom. 8:28), and the recognition of that purpose is essential to one who would *“follow the Lamb wherever he goes.”* (Rev. 14:4 Diaglott)

An apparently casual remark of St. Paul extends this purpose to fields of activity beyond the human race. *“Know ye not that we shall judge angels?”* he asks (1 Cor. 6:3) The fact of, and the nature of, sin in the celestial world is only hinted at in the Scriptures, but that there is a time of trial and judgment yet to come for certain celestial beings as well as for humanity is clearly stated several times. Christ is definitely to *“reconcile all things unto himself...whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.”* (Col. 1:20) It is unthinkable that Divine creative activity will ever come to an end, and the eternally close association with the Father and the Son promised to those who make their *“calling and election sure”* (2 Pet. 1:10) is sufficient ground for expecting that the Church will play an important part in the execution of the Creator’s future plans, whatever they may be.

Many notable Christian thinkers and writers have realised the importance of this element of future purpose in the call of the Church and have left their thoughts on record. Space permits of only some quotations.

“We are to be priests and kings. There are vast spaces in the universe that may have to be evangelised or ruled or influenced for righteousness. It may be that important spheres of ministry are needing those to fill them who have learned the secret of victory over the power of Satan. Earth may be the school, the training ground, the testing place for the servants and soldiers of the hereafter. If it became him to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering, it stands to reason that his comrades

and soldiers must pass through the same, that having overcome they may sit with him on his Throne.” (F. B. Meyer: “*The Call and Challenge of the Unseen*” 1928)

“We know not what great works in respect to the future our Creator may have in view...but we do know...the promise is ours that we shall be like him and see him as He is, and share his glory. Whatever, therefore, shall be the future activities of the... ‘heirs of all things’ we shall be with him and share his work...The sacrificing...will be at an end, the reigning, the ruling, the blessing, the assisting, will all have begun and they will be entirely competent to accomplish the Divine promise; namely, that all the families of the earth shall be blessed, through whom ‘whosoever will’ may come back into full harmony with the Creator and his laws.” (C.T. Russell: “*The New Creation*” p70-72 1904)

“Not for our own sakes alone should we long for the return of our Lord and Saviour, but that the earth, now groaning and travailing in pain, may be delivered from the curse. Christ has already in his own Person triumphed over the serpent, and He now waits only for the completion of the company of joint heirs that shall rule with him. It is an idle dream which now possesses so many that the Church is to bring in the Kingdom in the absence of the King. It is inconsistent with the foretold humiliation and sorrow of the Church during the whole of this dispensation in which she is to walk in his footsteps and be perfected by the fellowship of his sufferings. The one great hope for the whole creation, towards which, blindly and unconsciously, all are reaching forward, is the ‘marriage of the Lamb.’ It is the hope of the Bride, who shall then be one with the Lord in all his glory, and power, and fulness of blessing.” (William Andrews c.1850)

“When the Gospel is preached again, it may be that Christ will not be the only preacher. If we are of those who have been chosen and redeemed, it may be that we shall be the happy messengers of God’s love and mercy to those who are still being purged from their sins, thus entering at once into the eternal passion of God and into the redeeming work of Christ; thus afflicted, like the Father, in all the sins and afflictions of the unrighteous. It may be through our ministry that the purpose of God will be accomplished. God grant that it may be so, for that surely would be an infinitely diviner service and reward than to sit, clothed in white raiment, striking harps of gold.” (Dr. Samuel Cox: “*Salvator Mundi*” 1877)

The standards set for those who would attain entry into the company of

the Church are high. That is only to be expected if its future mission is anything like that suggested above. The first and essential requirement is unreserved dedication to the service of God, of complete and wholehearted consecration of life, possessions, abilities, everything, to him, to be henceforth administered as a stewardship in his interests. That is what St. Paul had in mind when he exhorted “*I beseech you, therefore, brethren... that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice...which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.*” (Rom. 12:1-2) He touches here on the basic principle of the dedicated life—our transformation from earthly-mindedness to heavenly-mindedness by a process of renewal which is the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. “*If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (creation): old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*” (2 Cor. 5:17) It is to illustrate this truth that the New Testament so many times depicts the entry into this “new life” as a dying to earthly things and a raising again to heavenly things. “*We are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*” (Rom. 6:4) “*Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.*” (Col. 3:3) The consecrated believer is of necessity dead, not only to evil things of this world which are to be repudiated anyway, but also to many good things of this world, honourable and elevating and benevolent and useful interests, purely on account of his life’s dedication to God which fills his hands and his time with active service for God in the world. The very meaning of the word “consecration,” which is an Old Testament term, is “to fill the hands.” Hence it quickly becomes true of the believer aspiring to inclusion in the Church and ultimate association with Christ in his glory and work that, as Jesus said of such, “*they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*” (John 17:14) That might appear to the onlookers as a spirit of exclusiveness, or denoting indifference to the troubles and necessities of society, but it is not really so. The consecrated Christian life is tantamount to the position of the medical student or other aspirant to a profession who willingly gives up much of life’s ordinary interests during their youth that they might undergo the training, the instruction, the discipline, necessary to fit themselves for their intended vocation. Thus, it is with those who would be members of the Church of Christ.

The eventual home of those who thus “*endure to the end*” and receive “*an abundant entrance into the Kingdom*” is Heaven. That, of course, is always the hope of every Christian. Ideas as to the nature and location of Heaven vary from individual to individual and much depends upon one’s

personal interpretation of the symbolic imagery of the Scriptures. The modern idea that Heaven is a “state” rather than a “place” means, when analysed, just nothing. We are living beings needing an environment in which to live our lives and a means of contact with that environment, which is provided by our bodies. “Heaven” is clearly defined in the Scriptures as another world, another sphere of being, in which we shall exist as individuals as truly as now, having communion with fellow-beings and activities relevant to an environment just as truly as now. But the nature of that life and the conditions of that sphere are transcendently superior to those we know now. Paraphrasing the cogent reasoning of Paul in 1 Cor. 15, there is a terrestrial world and terrestrial body, and a celestial world and celestial body. As we now bear the image of the terrestrial, we shall then bear the image of the celestial. But since terrestrial flesh and blood cannot enter the celestial world, being of a different order of creation, we must, at the time of entry, be changed from terrestrial beings to celestial beings. The nature of that change is incomprehensible to us, for as John says in 1 John 3:2 *“it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”* In another vivid picture—2 Cor. 5:1–4—St. Paul likens the earthly body to a house, an earthly house, in which we live temporarily while looking forward to a celestial house which God is building for us in Heaven. With a swift transition of symbol, he changes his thought to a set of clothing; in our desiring that which is from Heaven we do not wish to be “unclothed” but to exchange our present inadequate garments for the better ones which Heaven provides. In no clearer fashion could Paul have indicated the radical nature of the change that takes place when at the end of our earthly experience the terrestrial body is discarded and returns to its dust, and we are “clothed upon” with the celestial body with all its enhanced powers and attributes. As Paul so eloquently puts it, *“that mortality might be swallowed up of life.”* (2 Cor. 5:4)

The fact that the Church, thus developed, completed, and “changed” to celestial conditions, is then to be the Divine instrument in the final and crucial era of world evangelisation implies that there must be a time limit to the “call of the Church.” There is a point in human history after which entry into the Church will no longer be possible because the Church is complete and God is ready to speak his final word to the “residue of mankind.” *“The earnest expectation of the creature (creation)”* said Paul *“waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God”* (Rom. 8:19) and in this pithy sentence he enshrines the truth that the promised era of Christ’s reign over the world with its progressive elimination of evil cannot begin until his Church is joined to him and ready to take part in this work.

Hence the many Scriptural allusions which insist that the first work of the Lord at his Advent is to gather to himself his entire Church and only then reveal himself to the world and commence his reign.

It is this consummation of the hope of the Church which is depicted as a royal marriage—the Church is the Bride of the Lamb, to use the symbolism of Revelation, and the time of the wedding feast has come. At this climax in human history the heavenly chorus is depicted singing “*Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth...for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.*” (Rev. 19:6-7) Immediately following this wedding feast the symbols change; the Lamb becomes a militant and avenging rider upon a white horse, issuing forth from Heaven to wage battle upon, and defeat, the massed evil forces of earth; the Bride becomes the “armies of Heaven,” following him and sharing in the work that must be done.

The Christian gospel has been preached in the world for two thousand years. The commission given to the first disciples was “*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation*” (Mark 16:15 ASV) “*You will be witnesses to me*” Jesus told them “*to the uttermost parts of the earth.*” (Acts 1:8 WEB) True to that injunction, the evangel of Christ has been carried by word of mouth or by printed page to every part of the inhabited earth, although not all of the earth’s millions have accepted or even heard it. It must be noted that Jesus did not say they would; his disciples were to be witnesses to him and to declare his word in a world-wide manner and this they have done. But this has not been an increasingly successful campaign in consequence of which the whole world has ultimately become Christian, and with no reverses. In some lands the missionary work of one period has had its successes completely blotted out in a later period. Much of the present-day Muslim world was predominantly Christian in the early Middle Ages; large Christian populations existed in China and other parts of Asia and in North Africa in the sixth to eighth centuries. Even the Western world, where Christianity is nominally accepted, is increasingly rejecting the faith. One might say, hastily, that the two thousand years of preaching has been a failure and the intention of Christ not realised. But there has been no failure. Jesus himself indicated that upon his return at the end of this Age lack of faith in him would still be a prominent factor in the world situation. The most effective result of the witness has been the call and selection of the Church; that work has proceeded throughout the past centuries quietly, unostentatiously, and yet effectively, in full harmony with the Divine intent. With that aspect of the Divine plan an accomplished fact, God will

“HE SHALL GIVE HIS ANGELS CHARGE!”

An exhortation to trust

To the vivid mind of the Apostle Paul the existence of Satan was a very real thing. Nowhere in any of his letters does Paul suggest that the “Prince of the power of the Air” (Eph. 2:2) was only an imaginary being. In every reference to Satan Paul conveys the idea, as strongly as words can possibly convey, that he is the great personal Evil Spirit, into whose hands, as the Prince of this world, the rulership of this present evil world has been permitted. He also calls him “the god of this world (or age).” (2 Cor. 4:4) For many years this clear-cut conception has been losing its sharp distinction among Christian people, and even theologians have been known to state that all evil is impersonal. To the Lord Jesus, and the Apostles, Satan was assuredly no mere impersonation of evil, but an evil personality; as truly personal as the Archangel Michael who called down the Lord’s rebuke upon him. (Jude 9)

From the earliest pages of the Divine records Satan is shown as an instigator of evil (John 8:44), as one employing cunning “wiles” (or stratagems) and as an accuser of righteously inclined people. God has given him great latitude, even allowing him and his evil co-labourers to slay the saints of God.

Taking full advantage of God’s permission, Satan has produced a world-order in which evil is the predominant factor; so much so that Paul describes it as “this present evil world.” (Gal. 1:4) This world-order, passing on from generation to generation, has corrupted, for centuries, the words, thoughts and activities of nearly all the human race. But for the grace of God working in the hearts of the saintly few, this corruption would have been complete. Institutions created under the Satanic influence by one generation become the swaddling-bands to bind and fetter the next and future generations. The strait-jacket of custom is there when we are born, and it is tightly laced about us from our earliest days.

Both in and out of “Society” strict conventions are rigidly applied from which neither education nor illiteracy afford release. Deeper than any other national trait is the tendency to follow in “father’s footsteps” or to do as “mother” did. Life runs in grooves, worn deeper with each succeeding generation. Thus, with the first breath, the child comes under the control of a regime behind which is the cunning, seductive mind of the Prince of this world; this world-order—with its many ramifications. It is because people have become accustomed to this general situation, and

attribute it to “heredity” and “the glorious past” that the recognition of Satan’s personality tends to become blurred and indistinct. Too much emphasis is laid upon the “trend of things,” and not enough upon the design and the designer of this world’s affairs. The “it” of sequence too often displaces the “him” who designs it. Good indeed would it be for the world if they could realise that the crises of life are produced more by Satanic design than by the drift of circumstances.

It is vitally imperative for the Christian to realise “what” or “who” he is “up against” in his daily warfare. It is no opposition of a mere impersonal principle, but of a cunning highly placed adversary. There is the mental calibre of a Spirit mind—more comprehensive in its range and more subtle in its operation, than the mind of mere man. That cunning mind is fortified by many centuries of experience. It has the advantage too, of seeing but of remaining unseen by its earthly opponent. It is a real foe, perilously real; an actual, personal, veritable opponent, bent upon the destruction of every child of God.

No child of God should be afraid to realise this fact. It should not cause fear or terror in even the least of God’s saints. No matter how vividly or realistically the mind can visualise the existence or the nearness or the malignancy of Satan, there is not the slightest need for alarm. It is one of the greatest phases of victory in the Christian life, to be consciously aware of the unseen presence of a malignant foe, and yet know no fear or disquiet of soul thereat. It bespeaks a courage—a self-control—born of true faith, to realise the perils, and yet to remain unperturbed and undismayed. The Holy Spirit is thus, bearing a rich fruitage in the heart.

It has ever been God’s desire to produce in his people this rest of soul, by assuring them that He and his heavenly messengers are much more than a match for all Satan’s cunning and malignant power. From Psalmist days God has encouraged his people by telling them that his angels (even legions of angels) encamp round about them that reverence him, in order to deliver them. By Apostolic pen, God has assured us that they are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation. (Heb. 1:14) Every angelic minister, authorised and equipped with Divine Power, is just as real and personal and as veritably present as the hosts of wickedness. Jesus once said “their angels do always behold the face of my Father.” (Matt. 18:10) Their angels! As though every child of God were attended by an unseen bodyguard, whose mission is to superintend the details of life’s experiences allowing Satan to come near enough to test, but not to injure God’s little ones.

It is probably because we are not admonished to pray to the Guardian Angels, nor yet to seek contact with them, that we may not be so keenly aware of their presence with us; or it may be, though reading these promises, we forget to apply them, and fail to see, like Gehazi, till the Lord graciously opens our eyes, the chariots of the Lord, and the horsemen thereof. (2 Kings 6:17) filling the heavens around us. As the difficulties of the way surround our future pathway, and we see indications of unrestrained fury manifested by Satan and his evil hosts, it will be an act of grace toward each other to remind one and all that the invincible armies of heaven are not one whit less personal, nor one bit more distant from our side than the evil forces on the other side. *“He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.”* (Psa. 91:11) On behalf of each child of God, old or young, weak, or strong, these Divinely sent ministers, who come invisibly near, are equipped with Divine Power, and are commissioned by a loving gracious Father to look after his children, and keep the opposing evil forces at just such distance that they may test, but not injure.

But while it cannot be other than comforting to know of this angelic bodyguard, God has provided additional means whereby we may be protected from the subtle snares of the great deceiver. The Devil’s weapons are mainly in the form of untruths. To protect against these God has provided an armour of Truth, a full equipment to cover both heart and mind. *“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”* (Eph. 6:11) This is the part we must give attention to, deliberately and consciously: leaving the safety of our person in the hand of God and his messengers. Thus equipped with the Truth within, and protected by the angelic bodyguard without, we should be able to look out on the most dangerous crises of life, with great peace of heart, assuring each other in fullest confidence, that though devils rage and men run riot, all things are still working together for good under God’s protecting hand. (Rom. 8:28)

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Continued from page 89

turn to the nations which has yet known him not or will not have him, with the full force of his persuasive power, exerted through the agency of this same Church. Those who have trodden the dark paths themselves will be the ones best fitted to lead sin-sick humanity into the green pastures and by the still waters of the Divine goodness. So, it will become literally, true that *“the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together”* (Isa. 40:5) and the triumph of the Church be realised.

SIMON PETER—FISHER OF MEN

3. Discovering Christ

It could only have been a few weeks after the incident of Simon walking on the water that he made the historic declaration which changed his name and sealed his position as leader of the little band of disciples. They were at Caesarea Philippi, in the extreme north of the land and about as far away from Jerusalem as it was possible to get, but Jesus knew that within a few weeks He must go to Jerusalem and speak his message there. It was necessary that his disciples be made aware, more than they were at present aware, of the serious implications of their calling, of the opposition, persecution and suffering that was going to be entailed. It had been comparatively easy going so far: plenty of miracles with all the public acclaim which that evoked, and a generally favourable reception of those words of life which always accompanied the miracles. But things were going to change soon, and a deeper, more serious, faith was needed to withstand the trials which lay ahead.

So up there in the quiet and privacy of the mountains Jesus put two momentous questions. “*Who do people say the Son of Man is?*” (Matt. 16:13 NIV) He asked, and waited quietly for his disciples’ reaction. They returned a variety of answers: John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, one or another of the ancient prophets, risen from the dead to teach this generation. Jesus attached little importance to the answers. That question was only intended to lead their minds to the second and more important one. “*But who do you say that I am?*” (v.15 RSV) After two years’ association with him had they yet grasped the truth of his person, that He was indeed the Son of God, the one for whom Israel had waited for many centuries past? Had they realised that the day of sending prophets was past, that God was now moving into action to accomplish the redemption of humankind from sin and death, that the one whom they loved and served was more, far more, than a resurrected holy man from the past, that He was in fact the Son of God come to lead the world back to God? If these men were to constitute the spearhead of Jesus’ work in the world after He had returned to his Father, it was high time that they began to understand these things.

Simon, at least, did understand. His impetuous, questing mind, aided, we cannot doubt, by a sudden illumination of the Holy Spirit, saw all this in a flash. All the pieces of the puzzle fell into place. His Leader’s identity, his origin, his mission to Israel, his relation to the golden prophecies of olden time, came together in his mind and pointed to the answer. “*You are the*

Messiah, the Son of the living God.” (v.16 NIV) For the rest of his days that one irrefutable fact remained unshaken in Simon’s mind; through all the many changes of a long life spent in the Master’s service, adorned by triumphs and blemished by failures, he never lost sight of the revelation which came to him that day. Jesus, looking upon him, knew that his man was ready.

It was at this point that Simon received of the Lord his new name, Peter. There was a significance in the name. Simon’s native name, given at his birth, signified the hearing one, one who listens and accepts what is told him. That was true enough of Simon’s early discipleship; this forthright declaration at this crucial moment demonstrates how well he had heard. During all that time his character had been crystallising in the direction of the service which now was to be his life’s work, and Jesus knew that character to be rock hard and firmly set. So, He named him Peter, the rock *petros* means a piece of rock or a boulder. “*Thou art a rock*” He said “*and on this rock I will build (found) my church (Gr. ecclesia).*” (v.18 Diaglott) Whether Jesus used that word *ecclesia* to denote the little company of believers who were to look to Peter for leadership during the next decade or so, or the larger Church of this present Age which owes so much to Peter’s yeoman service during another thirty years of life, is not very important, for both are true. He probably meant the former; at any rate from this time forward Peter was the acknowledged leader of the disciples and the one who assumed the initiative after the Resurrection and by common consent was looked up to for guidance and counsel in those difficult yet halcyon days of the first-generation Apostolic Church.

According to John’s Gospel, Jesus did use this expression, “Thou art a rock” prophetically, when He met Peter for the first time two years earlier. In that account He is recorded as using the Aramaic term for a piece of rock, *kephas*, instead of the Greek *petros*. (John 1:42) Paul uses the Aramaic word when referring to his brother-Apostle in Corinthians and Galatians. Be this as it may, it seems definite that it was on the later occasion that the name was formally and definitely bestowed and put into use. Mark, who is the most careful of the Evangelists in matters such as this, refers to the Apostle always as Simon prior to the incident and Peter afterwards, with but one exception. At any rate, from this time onwards, both to the Apostolic Church, the Early Church and to the present, the impetuous Apostle is universally known and remembered by the name of Peter.

Six days later Peter, with James and John, received new and startling

confirmation of their Lord's Messiahship. Jesus had taken them "up into a high mountain;" most probably it was Mount Hermon, the highest mountain in Israel and not far from Caesarea Philippi. There, in quietude and privacy, away from the ever-insistent crowds, they witnessed an amazing scene. Jesus "*was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And...there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.*" (Matt. 17:2-3) Stricken with awe, and somewhat terrified by the radiance of the vision, Peter nevertheless realised instantly that this was the fulfilment of Jesus' words to his disciples a few days previously to the effect that some of their number would not see death before they had seen the Son of Man coming in his kingdom. There is not much doubt that he jumped to the conclusion that Jesus was here and now about to assert his Divine authority, take his rightful power, assume the position of king over Israel and inaugurate the long-promised Messianic reign. The presence of Moses, Israel's Lawgiver and greatest man, and Elijah of whom it had been predicted that he would return at the Day of the Lord, was further evidence. A Messianic kingdom without the presence of Moses and Elijah to lead the people to God as they had done in their respective lifetimes was inconceivable. So, Peter gave voice to the obvious suggestion which must have been in the hearts of all three disciples as they beheld. "*Let's make three tents here: one for you, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.*" (Matt. 17:4 WEB) Without doubt he was already seeing himself as hastening down the mountainside to call the people to come into the presence of their King and hearing the shouts of acclamation as the reign of Messiah began. But just as in the days of Moses there had to be a "tent of meeting," a tabernacle, where Moses met with God to receive commands and talk with God on matters to do with the welfare of Israel (Exod. 33:7-10 & 34:29-35), so it must be now. Peter remembered that Moses too had appeared radiant after being in the presence of God, so that he had to assume a veil to cover that glory except when he went in to talk with God. Now there must be three similar tabernacles for these three supernaturally radiant ones, before the people could be admitted to hear their voices and acclaim their king. Something like this, in a confused sort of way, must have possessed Peter's mind. The Divine glory of Jesus, the resurrection glory of Moses and Elijah, must be veiled from mere human sight and the disciples themselves must be the ones to go between these three and the people, even as in those far-off days of the Exodus Moses had been the go-between for God and Israel. So, Peter's thoughts ran riot in his exaltation at the great thing which was happening.

The radiant glory encompassed the disciples and they fell on their faces in

reverence. The voice of God sounded in their ears; *“This is my beloved Son...listen to him.”* (Matt 17:5 RSV) There was a silence... They looked up. The glorious vision was gone. There was no Moses, no Elijah, only Jesus as they had always known him. No kingdom, no reigning in power, no public acclaim, just three puzzled men following their Master down the mountainside and hearing his injunction to tell no man *“until the Son of Man is risen again from the dead.”* (v.9) With that all their hopes of imminent regal glory withered and died.

Yet, of course, Peter and his companions had seen the Son of Man coming in his kingdom. They had witnessed a manifestation of that other worldly power, which is always there, behind the scenes, and will be outwardly revealed to all in the day of the world’s deliverance from sin and all evil. Moses and Elijah, with other ancient stalwarts of faith, will be there to administer earthly affairs in that blessed day. They really had experienced a preview of what Mark, in his version of the incident, describes as the kingdom of God come with power.

Peter never forgot that experience. It finally established his faith and coloured his thoughts and words for all time to come. Thirty-five years later, nearing the end of a stressful life in the service of Christ, he recalled the wonder of that day. *“We have not followed cunningly devised fables... but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.”* (2 Pet. 1:16-18) There were yet to be times in his life when he faltered and vacillated. The weakness of the flesh temporarily overcoming the assurance of the Spirit, but basically his devotion to Christ was sound, and his faith proved true at the last. AOH

ELIJAH

As champion of the God of Israel,
Alone he faced the pagan priests of Bel;
Sublime his life, and when the ending came
God took him in a chariot of flame.

ELISHA

Fearless in speech and great in miracle,
On him the mantle of Elijah fell;
He cleansed the Syrian leper from his stain,
And raised the Shunammite to life again.

*Poems of the Way
W.H. Pepworth*

ELIJAH AND ELISHA—THE FINAL JOURNEY

References from NKJV unless otherwise stated

“It came to pass, when the LORD was about to take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal...” (2 Kings 2:1)

In the very last book of the Old Testament, in fact the very last two verses of the Old Testament, we have a prophecy which reads: *“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”* (Malachi 4:5,6 KJV)

Elijah’s literal life seems to have been directed by God so that its details “typified” or “prefigured” certain future events:

1. John the Baptist was declared to be similar to Elijah in some respects, *“And if you are willing to receive it, he [John] is Elijah who is to come.”* (Matthew 11:14; see also Luke 1:17)
2. Jesus also implies that he [in his flesh] was similar to Elijah in some respect, *“Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise, the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands.’ Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.”* (Matt. 17:11-13)
3. Scripture also implies that the church in the flesh is similar to Elijah in some respects. The drought in Elijah’s life was 3½ literal years [1260 days]; the church in the flesh was 3½ symbolic years [a day for a year-1,260 literal years] in the wilderness condition, during which there was a spiritual famine because of the lack of truth—the living water. (See Revelation 12:6; 11:3)

We will not elaborate further on these points, which would take another article, but this current article will consider some thoughts about Elijah’s “final journey,” and what the significance of that may be.

All of Elijah’s life, from the no rain (1 Kings 17:1) pronouncement to the *“still small voice”* (1 Kings 19:12), seems to be a sequential picture, or “type,” of the church’s experiences in the flesh. After Jezebel’s threats, Elijah fled to Mt. Horeb, *“the mountain of God.”* (Exod. 3:1) Here he had the experience with the wind, earthquake, fire and *“still small voice.”* Arriving at Mt. Horeb, and experiencing the wind, seems to be the chronological equivalent of the Great World War of the last century.

It seems reasonable that the consecutive narrative of Elijah's life [as a type of the church in the flesh] ends with 1 Kings 19:12 or so; after the 3½ years drought, the contest with Baal vs. Jehovah, the heavy rain, the fleeing into the desert and the mountain, and then the wind, earthquake, fire, and "*still small voice*." This seems to bring the picture, or "type," to an end in the Kingdom.

The succeeding stories of Elijah, such as selecting Elisha, Naboth's vineyard and fire from heaven destroying the 50s of men are each essentially complete in themselves, and need to be interpreted in their own time frame [and will not be considered here].

The same seems to be true with 2 Kings 2 and the various stopping places of our text. These places are not dates, but conditions or stages of the church's journey [somewhat similar to the seven stages of the church as portrayed in Revelation 2 & 3].

The view presented here in 2 Kings 2 is that the "final journey" pictures the Church Age (Gospel age)—beginning to end. Elisha and Elijah were together all the way. All during this time, in antitype, the Christian believers [variously represented by Elijah, Elisha, sons of the prophets] were expecting the soon return of Jesus and the completion of the faithful church [i.e., the "*taking*" of Elijah]. So, the "*day*" when Elijah was expected to be taken has actually been about 2,000 years long [although none knew that ahead of time] and is still ongoing.

Gilgal, where the Tabernacle was briefly located, may represent the early church in its purity from 33 AD, through the apostles, and through the lifetime of those who knew the apostles. This is where the Israelites camped immediately after crossing Jordan. [It may be that this Gilgal near Jericho is not the same as the Gilgal of Elijah and Elisha.]

Bethel, the Tabernacle was briefly here but later it became a centre of gold-calf worship, may represent the rise of the Nicolaitan (Rev. 2:15) spirit in the church, and then Christianity becoming the official religion of the Roman Empire. At this time, and onwards, things began to go very bad as respects the beliefs and arrangements of true Christianity.

Jericho where after capturing the city, Joshua [Jesus in the Greek] put a curse on this place may represent false Christianity [i.e., churchianity] in its prime during the Dark Ages. This is the time of the man of lawlessness, the antichrist, etc.

Jordan, the impact of the Second Advent movement [William Miller and forward], while considerable among certain religious groups, was very

little among denominational “religion” as such, and none among the worldly. There was only one time in history where hard truth [rolled-up mantle; 2 Kings 2:8] struck and divided the people, both religious and political. This was the great Reformation of the 16th century—Justification by faith! Scripture Only!

5. Elijah and Elisha walked on for a time [some 500 years now]. At some point yet future, the fiery horses and chariot will separate the two, and Elijah will be “*taken*.”

Notice this follows the Rev. 12 sequence—of the pure virgin woman; then pregnant, crying with pain and delivering a child; this child then becomes the grown-up Man of Lawlessness and dominates for a long time.

Once Elijah [the true church] is “*taken*,” who will be the Lord’s earthly representative? It would seem that the type changes, and Elisha [from this time forward] typifies the Ancient Worthies. They will have Elijah’s mantle of authority; they will have an extra measure of the holy spirit. So, once the true church is gone, the *Elijah type, or picture, ends*, and the scene now shifts to Elisha [the Ancient Worthies], whose first work is smiting the Jordan this second time.

What is the significance when Elisha strikes the water (2 Kings 2:14), which once again divides, and he crosses over? This is a future event, so we should not be too definite about the details, but this crisis point in time may also involve some remaining Christian believers with various degrees of character development and sincerity, and Jewish people [now converted to Messiah.] (Zechariah 12:10-14)

From that time of Elijah being “*taken*,” the recrossing of the Jordan, and onward, Elisha may well represent the Ancient Worthies in the ongoing Kingdom arrangements.

The actual striking of the water the second time would be similar to the first time, but even more profound. This message, it seems, will be the announcement that the “*kingdoms of this world have become the Kingdom of our Lord and His Christ (Messiah)*” (Rev. 11:15 NKJV Footnote).

This will be the second time in history where hard truth [rolled-up mantle] strikes and divides the people, both religious and political.

Perhaps the hard truth will sound something like these Scriptures:

“*The LORD also will roar from Zion, And utter His voice from Jerusalem; The heavens and earth will shake; But the LORD will be a shelter for His*

people, And the strength of the children of Israel.” (Joel 3:16)

“Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!” (Psalm 46:10)

“Therefore, prophesy against them all these words, and say to them: ‘The LORD will roar from on high, and utter His voice from His holy habitation; He will roar mightily against His fold. He will give a shout, as those who tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth. A noise will come to the ends of the earth—For the LORD has a controversy with the nations; He will plead His case with all flesh. He will give those who are wicked to the sword,’ says the LORD.” (Jeremiah 25:30-31)

“For behold, the LORD will come with fire and with His chariots, like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword the LORD will judge all flesh; and the slain of the LORD shall be many.” (Isaiah 66:15-16)

“Behold, a whirlwind of the LORD has gone forth in fury—A violent whirlwind! It will fall violently on the head of the wicked. The anger of the LORD will not turn back until He has executed and performed the thoughts of His heart. In the latter days you will understand it perfectly.” (Jer. 23:19-20)

“Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, ‘Peace, be still!’ And the wind ceased and there was a great calm.” (Mark 4:39)

Thus, there is no “smiting the Jordan” message for the Christians of the present time. The first smiting is centuries past; the second smiting (by Elisha) is yet future, and will be after Elijah is “taken.”

Such reflections about the future, contrasted with the privileges of the present, should stimulate every consecrated child of God to make diligent use of the present grand opportunities and privileges of this “narrow way.”

Final Thought

“Afterward I will return and restore the fallen kingdom of David. I will rebuild its ruins and restore it, so that the rest of humanity might seek the LORD, including the Gentiles—all those I have called to be mine. The LORD has spoken—He who made these things known long ago.” (Acts 15:16-18 NLT)

TREE LEAVES

Leaves are common and yet quite uncommon. In Isaiah 64:6 are these words: “*We all do fade as a leaf.*” In this short statement, many lessons may be learned about our lives which it will be profitable to observe.

Only God can make a leaf. Each leaf has life, each leaf denotes the plant or bush or tree from which it fell. Each leaf in itself tells whether it is a new leaf, young in days, or an old leaf that has withstood the storms of the season and is now ready to fall. In this respect human beings are quite like the leaf. There are young ones with their soft tender years, their lovely trusting hearts, their sweet ways and with the buoyancy of youth. The years may pass by, and these begin to fade and to fail as the leaf on the tree.

Leaves are not fruit. Leaves in the Bible speak of a profession and a confession which may or may not be accompanied by fruit. Our Lord found a fig tree on which there was “nothing but leaves.” He expects more than leaves in our lives. He would have us laden with fruit for his glory and blessing for our fellows.

Leaves are born to die. They appear in the spring and we know quite well that they shall fall in the autumn. By examining the leaf after it has fallen, we may tell something of its experiences through the summer. Some fall full-sized unmarred, beautiful in colour, glorious in tints; whereas others fall curled, shrunken, sear and yellow and even perhaps eaten by worms and other enemies. Some are split and torn by the savage winds. The condition of the leaf tells either a story of protection and progress or a story of adversity and hardship. So, it is in the life of a man or woman who reaches the end of the long summer of life. A sudden gust of wind, some disease, or some accident may quickly tear the soul away from its moorings and it is blown to the grave. Some fall in the midst of the summer of life from the glorious heights of the tree top to the gutter of the street, to become soiled and wrecked long before their time. Some hang on through the storms of the seasons and cling throughout the winter to the limb of the tree as though it would not let go this life. These are they who live on, past the allotted threescore years and ten, past ninety, and attain even the century mark.

Some believers grow more beautiful as they grow older. Others give a benediction of peace as one sits in their presence. Some develop most beautiful traits of character when the hair becomes whitened with the

wintry blast and the face becomes wrinkled with the sorrows of the summer. Others become crueller as age creeps on. They give way to their passionate tempers, they become unruly, hard to live with, unreasonable in their demands, unsatisfied, fault-finding, and critical. These are the leaves such as fall from the cottonwood and the peach trees. There is nothing attractive there, nothing beautiful. This leaf falls in the wind, is swept away from sight and is never missed.

Leaves such as the hard maple, which cling through the winter season, do not drop from the tree until new life appears in the balmy springtime. The fresh young buds push off the old, dead leaves, and what the storms could not do the new life does. How true this is today in our social system. The older ones who have served faithfully through the years are pushed out of the way and lose their positions because of the advent of younger ones with their fresh courage and their buoyant ambitions. Thus, the leaf must leave its accustomed place and be cast aside to wither and wilt and waste away.

There are the leaves which are so beautiful in the fall of the year that the school children gather them, place them in their books, take them to school for the teacher to see, and save them for after years. In gathering these lovely leaves, many leaves are ignored by the children because they are not attractive. They do not appeal to the child's sense of value. There are those in life who are like this. They seem to serve only themselves. They do not care to develop those Christian graces which will make them beautiful throughout their life and especially lovely in their last days.

Fig leaves proved to be only false finery for *Eve*. They shrivelled and shrank and left her exposed to the eyes of an offended God. So today, leaves of profession will not suffice to hide the soul from the living Lord.

March / April 1986

IN GOD'S ETERNAL SPRING

The petals of a lovely rose
May fall and die at summer's close
And grief we feel for that brief hour—
For it had been a lovely flower.

It lies at rest on dewy grass—
So fragrant still to all who pass.
E'en tho it die...our father knows
That SPRING will resurrect the rose.

And so when death makes all seem
vain
Mankind like flowers shall live again.
"All in their graves" shall hear their
King,
And rise in God's eternal Spring.

Poems of the Way
Alice M. Ripper

NOTE ON THE “SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN”

“And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles.” (Isaiah 66:19)

The words rendered “sign” or “ensign” (Greek *semeion* and Hebrew *oth*) have the parallel meanings of signal, token or miracle and are rendered by all these terms elsewhere in the Scriptures. The sense, both in Matthew and Isaiah, is that of a signal. In each case the “sign” heralds a noteworthy event in history—so far as this Age is concerned the most noteworthy event of the entire twenty centuries. The ending of Armageddon is the signal for the manifestation of earth’s new King to the world and the “de facto” establishment of his ruling power. The quotations from Isaiah associate this sign or signal with the emergence of evangelists from Israel, the Holy Nation, to declare God’s glory, and this poses the question; what does the “sign of the Son of Man” mean to the observers on earth, expressed in concrete terms?

A pointer to the answer is provided by our Lord’s words on the same subject to men of his own generation. The Pharisees and Sadducees came to him on one occasion, desiring him *“that he would shew them a sign from heaven”* (Matt. 16:1-4) something they could see with their natural eyes to convince them of his Messiahship. Jesus refused. *“A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas...Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?”* In this incident Jesus established the principle that the proofs of his authority and his mission resided not in the creation of a visible apparition in the sky, but in an intelligent appraisal of the significance of current events, “discerning the signs of the times.” In Jonah’s case the force of the “sign” resided in the witness that was given afterwards. Jonah’s preaching after his deliverance was a signal to Nineveh that God was coming into their affairs, to judgment; the record says that they repented. The corresponding sign at the First Advent was the Holy Spirit’s power with which the Apostle preached Christ in Jerusalem after his resurrection: not until then were fulfilled Jesus’ words *“For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of Man be to this generation.”* (Luke 11:30) It is fitting therefore that at the Second Advent also the “sign of the Son of Man” should be associated with an even greater outpouring of the

Holy Spirit, which is to energise that world evangelism which immediately follows the full end of “this present evil world.” “*Except ye see signs and wonders*” said Jesus when he healed the son of the Capernaum nobleman “*ye will not believe.*” (John 4:48) From all of this it is evident that the “sign of the Son of Man in heaven” is not going to be a visible appearance of glory in the sky, but a momentous happening or combination of happenings upon earth, of such a nature that people will have no alternative to accepting the fact that, at last, the Lord Christ has taken to himself his great power and commenced his reign.

November / December 1990

CALLED ONE, CONSIDER

If God has called you to a station
That far surpasses human thought,
Do you expect to live like others,
Or unto Him by whom you're bought?

The consecrated heart rejoices
To find in Him its only rest;
Let others revel in their pleasures—
In God you'll find a joy more blest.

This life in Christ will surely draw you
Apart from earthly friends and ties.
Can you, with Paul, count earth's aims refuse
In view of heaven's fadeless prize?

In God's due time you'll share His nature
In glory's realm—His own abode.
Be faithful, loyal, true and steadfast
While on this straight and narrow road.

Consider His great love unending,
O soul, take not His grace in vain—
He loves you dearly and desires you
To with His Son in heaven reign.

*Poems of the Way
Helen Watina*

THE MINISTRY OF EVIL

The life of every human being has its lights and shadows, its seasons of joy and its depths of sorrow. These make up the warp and woof of experience, and the web of character that flows from the active loom of life will be fine and beautiful, or coarse and homely, according to the skill and carefulness with which the individual appropriates and weaves into it the thread of experience. In every life, under the present reign of sin and evil, the sombre shades predominate; and to such an extent that the Scriptures aptly describe humanity in its present condition as a “groaning creation.” Nor is the Christian exempt from these conditions that are upon the entire world; for “*we also groan within ourselves, waiting for deliverance.*” (Rom. 8:22,23*)

But while we are waiting for the deliverance, the daily experiences of life have a most important mission to us, and the manner in which we receive and use them should be a matter of deepest concern to us; for, according to the use we make of them, each day’s prosperity or adversity and trial bears to us a blessing or a curse. Those experiences which we are accustomed to regard as prosperous often have in them subtle dangers. If wealth increase or friends multiply, how almost imperceptibly the heart finds satisfaction in earthly things; but, on the other hand when the keen edge of sorrow and disappointment are felt when riches fail and friends forsake, and enemies take up a reproach against us, the natural temptation is to despondency and despair.

Just here is an important part of the great battle of Christian life. He must fight the natural tendencies of the old nature and confidently claim and anticipate the victory in the strength of the great Captain of his salvation. He must not succumb to the flattering and deceptive influences of prosperity, nor faint under the burden of adversity. He must not allow the trials of life to sour and harden his disposition, to make him morose, or surly or bitter, or unkind. Nor may he allow pride, ostentation, or self-righteousness to grow and feed upon the temporal good things which the Lord’s providence has granted him to test his faithfulness as a steward.

Sorrows indeed may, and often will, come in like a flood, but the Lord is our helper in all these things. The soul that has never known the discipline of sorrow and trouble has never yet learned the preciousness of the Lord’s love and helpfulness. It is in seasons of overwhelming sorrow, when we draw near to the Lord, that He draws especially near to us. So, the Psalmist found it, when, in deep affliction, he cried to the Lord and

reasoned of his righteousness, saying: “*Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD. Lord, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.*” (Psa. 130:1,2) Feeling his own shortcomings and longings for full deliverance from every imperfection, and prophesying the bountiful provisions of the Divine plan of salvation through Christ, he adds: “*If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities (imputing them to us), O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared (reverenced).*” (vv.3,4)

How blessed are such assurances when the soul is painfully conscious of its infirmities and inability to measure up to the perfect law of righteousness. When the heart is true and loyal, God does not mark our infirmities in a record against us. They are not imputed to us, but are freely forgiven through Christ in whose merit, we trust and whose righteousness is our glorious dress—arrayed in which we may come with humble boldness, even into the presence of the King of kings and Lord of lords.

If God thus ignores the infirmities of our flesh and receives and communes with us as new creatures in Christ, his children should also so regard one another, considering not, and charging not against each other, the infirmities of the flesh, which all humbly confess and by the grace of God strive daily to overcome. “*If God be for us, who can be against us?*” (Rom. 8:31) The case is different, however, when the infirmities of the flesh are cultivated, indulged and justified that the errors may be continued. Then, indeed, they are charged against us, and if we do not speedily “*judge ourselves,*” the Lord will judge and chasten us. (1 Cor. 11:31,32)

“*I wait for the LORD,*” the Psalmist continues, “*my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning.*” (vv.5,6) How necessary is this patient waiting for the Lord! In the midst of cares, perplexities, difficulties, and infirmities we may remember that all the jarring discords of this life are working together for good to them that love the Lord, to the called according to his purpose. But for the consummation of this purpose of God toward us we must “*wait,*” and while waiting patiently, endure hardness as good soldiers. Trust in the Lord and wait patiently for him, and He will bring, it to pass. (Psa. 37:5,7) Time is an important element in all God’s plans; we are not, therefore, to be disappointed when the test of endurance is applied while the blessings we crave tarry long. God took time to frame the world and to fit it for human habitation; time to give the world its necessary experience with evil; time to prepare for the advent of Christ as the

world's Redeemer; time for the preparation of the church to share in his glorious reign; and time must be allowed for the shaping and adjusting of the individual affairs of all his people. God has not forgotten when the answers to our prayers seem to tarry long. He who heeds the sparrow's fall and numbers the very hairs of our heads is not indifferent to the faintest call or the smallest necessity of his humblest child.

“My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning.” (Psa. 130:6)

Believers are not in darkness respecting the dawn of the Millennial morning, because taught thereof by the Comforter (see 1 Thess. 5:4), and because to their eyes of faith the Day Star (the Day-bringer—Christ) has already appeared, and they rejoice in the inspired testimony that, although *“weeping may endure for a night* (of sin's predominance), *but joy cometh in the morning”* (Psa. 30:5) of the great day of the Lord. As the dawn of the new day, the day of Christ, becomes more and more distinct, many can and do see signs that *“the night is far spent and the day is at hand;”* (Rom. 13:12) and by and by, notwithstanding the dark clouds and terrible storm of trouble that will temporarily hide the signs of morning from them, all the world will awake to the fact that *“the morn at last is breaking.”*

May / June 1986

OUR MINISTERING SPIRITS

What will my guardian angel say... Tonight
when I go to sleep... And he wings his
flight through the realms of space...
A tryst with my Father keep... Shall he
enter His presence with shining face...
And tell Him that I've been true... To Him
and His word and in every place, sought only
His will to do... Or must he go with a
heavy heart... And entering with head
bowed low... Tell Him his child had
wandered apart... From the way where
the faithful ones go?... O, grant me,
my Father, strength never to stray...
From the pathway where I can see...
The prints of my Saviour's weary feet...
As they led Him to Calvary... Let me
never forget that for me Jesus died...
That for my sins he suffered such shame...
And keep me, Oh, keep me, close to His
dear side... To the honour and praise
of Thy name.

The angel of
the LORD encamps
all around those who
fear Him, and delivers
them. (Psa. 34:7)

*Margaret H. Black
Poems of the Way*

AMOS THE HERDSMAN

1. A Voice from Zion

He was born and brought up a simple peasant, earning his bread by the tending of cattle belonging to one of the wealthy farmers of Judah. He supplemented his meagre wages by gathering wild figs as he followed his charges over the rough hillside country of Tekoa, a few miles to the south of Bethlehem. He was probably of the royal tribe, the tribe of Judah, maybe even distantly related to the royal family, the house of David, but, if so, a very humble and undistinguished member of that house. In outward appearance no different from his fellow workers, he was an ordinary labouring man having no access to the privileges of the wealthy and the powerful. At the end of the day, he returned to his primitive cottage in the village and emerged again in the morning to take up his task as he had done all his life and his father had before him.

In one respect Amos was different. Outwardly a labouring peasant, inwardly he burned with zeal for the laws and the ways of God. Judah and Israel had relapsed into almost complete idolatry and Amos was one of the few far-sighted men who realised that the consequence could not fail to be utter disaster. Under the terms of the Mosaic Covenant Israel was guaranteed security and prosperity all the time that they adhered to the Covenant and loyalty to God. Failure so to do, apostasy from the true faith, the going after false gods, would, conversely, bring invasion, adversity and disaster. Israel in general in the days of Amos did not really believe that disaster would come. They were prosperous and for the time being had the whip-hand over their enemies. Even though their own histories told them of past times when the penalty of the broken Covenant had been exacted from their forefathers they did not believe that it would happen to them. They were prosperous; they had been prosperous for a long time. They worshipped false gods; they had worshipped false gods for a long time. Nothing adverse had happened; nothing adverse would happen. So, they continued in their way, confident.

But Amos knew that disaster would come; moreover, that it was imminent. He knew that God was long-suffering towards His errant people and would wait a long time before inflicting judgment. But that judgment would eventually come he was certain. In his fervent zeal and burning desire, not only for the honour of God's Name, but also for the welfare and happiness of his nation, he had to speak out. The inspiration of the prophet came upon him and he left his cattle and his country home and made his way to the cities where his voice could be heard.

The king of Judah, the two-tribe nation, was Uzziah. The ten-tribe kingdom of Israel was ruled by Jeroboam II, who was probably the most able king the northern kingdom ever had. In the first place he had cultivated friendly relations with Uzziah of Judah and so made himself safe from attack from that quarter. He conquered his eastern neighbours, Moab and Ammon, making them subject to Israel, under native rulers appointed by him. Edom was a friendly ally. The traditional enemy of Israel, Syria, was invaded by Jeroboam and conquered. His sway extended from the borders of Edom in the south to Hamath in the north of Syria virtually as far as the original empire of Solomon. Concurrently with this, the greatest foe of all the middle Eastern countries, Assyria, was experiencing serious internal trouble under a succession of undistinguished kings, and had no time or resources for foreign conquest. The Assyrian armies were needed at Nineveh. A generation or so ago the prophet Jonah had foretold the coming destruction of Nineveh, and since the same prophet had also foretold the career of conquest of King Jeroboam before it happened (2 Kings 14:25) his stock was high in Israel and the general feeling was that Assyria need not be feared again. Few in Israel stopped to reflect that perhaps the Lord was giving them this time of freedom from enemies that they might return in faith and loyalty before He invoked the penalty of continued unbelief, just as He so recently had done with the Ninevites who had repented at the preaching of Jonah so that the Lord in His turn “*repented of the evil, that he said he would do unto them; and he did it not.*” (Jonah 3:10) A parenthesis in the history of Jeroboam’s predecessors who were in subjection to Syria confirms that the Lord did do just this in the days of Jeroboam: “*(And the LORD gave Israel a saviour, so that they went out from under the hand of the Syrians: and the children of Israel dwelt in their tents (houses), as beforetime. Nevertheless they departed not from the sins of the house of Jeroboam...and there remained the grove (idol shrine)* also in Samaria.)*” (2 Kings 13:5-6) That saviour was Jeroboam, who despite that the hand of the Lord was with him to deliver Israel from Syria as He had been besought by King Jehoahaz his grandfather, continued still to do “*evil in the sight of the LORD.*” (2 Kings 14:24) The goodness of the Lord brought no response.

The consequence of this period of peace was material prosperity. The ten-tribe kingdom of Israel was more wealthy than it had ever been before or was again. Spoil taken from their vanquished enemies and the profits from commerce and trade created a class of rich Israelites who lived in magnificent houses lined inside with paintings and frescoes, and in some cases panels of ivory brought from Africa. (Amos 3:15) The interiors boasted elaborate and artistic furniture. Gardens and vineyards, summer-

*Asherah poles

houses and shady courts, surrounded them. The occupants gave themselves over to feasting and luxurious living, with no thought for the morrow and no care for the needs of the poor. For there were poor as well. In every such society, as the rich grow richer, so the poor become poorer. Outside the cities of grand houses were the mean dwellings of the peasantry. But all, rich and poor alike, had forsaken God and turned to the false gods of Canaan. In the capital of Samaria, and at the tribal centre of Gilgal where the Tabernacle had rested awhile when Joshua and his hosts invaded the land, there stood images of the bull-god for worship. (Hos. 8:5 & 10:5) The original place of idolatrous worship set up at Dan in the days of the judges (Judg. 18:30-31) was still there, served by an apostate priesthood. At Bethel there was a great temple, where the king and his court came to worship Baal. (Amos 7:13) Altars to false gods abounded all over the country. (Amos 2:8) The shrine sacred to the idol goddess which Jehu had built in Samaria remained and was still a centre of worship. (2 Kings 13:6) The time had come which is spoken of in 2 Chron. 36:15-16 where it is recorded that *“the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy.”*

There was less than half a century to go before the judgment came, and the end of the Kingdom of Israel. Within that half century king and people had one last chance, the final opportunity of deliverance. God sent them the prophet Amos.

Amos was probably a young man when the Lord called him. There is an impetuous ring about his repeated expression “Thus hath the Lord God showed me” which breathes a spirit of haste and urgency more in keeping with the impatience of youth than the calm mellowness of middle age. Peasant though he was, he was well informed both as to Israel’s own corruption and decadence, and that of the surrounding nations with whom Israel had so much to do and from whom she had drawn so much of that corruption. His prophecy commences, not with the declaration of imminent judgment upon Israel which would normally be expected, and which in any case does form the main burden of his prophecy, but with the Lord’s condemnation of those same surrounding nations for their oppression of Israel. Maybe there was good psychology here, a mode of approach dictated by the indwelling Spirit of God by which he was inspired. Maybe his hearers would listen more intently if the message of

judgment related to peoples other than themselves, peoples for whom in the main they harboured thoughts of enmity. It is significant that after the judgments upon the six alien nations his next message is directed against Judah, the southern kingdom. Only after that does he turn his attention to Israel, but when he does so it is evident who is the real object of his denunciation.

Amos received his call to the service of God, according to his own statement “*in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam...king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.*” (Amos 1:1) This precision avails little since we do not know the date of the earthquake. It is established that Uzziah reigned from 791 to 739 BC, and Jeroboam II from 793 to 753, so that it was between 791 and 753 when Amos executed his mission. A closer approximation may be possible; Uzziah’s leprosy was the result of his presumption in attempting to usurp the priest’s prerogatives in the Temple. (2 Chron. 26:16-21) In consequence he was barred from contact with his fellows and Jotham his son acted as regent until his death. The most likely reconciliation of the chronology of the period shows that this regency commenced in the 41st year of Uzziah’s reign, 751 BC so that this was probably the time of Uzziah’s sin. Now Josephus in his history of Israel says that at the moment of Uzziah’s refusal to heed the High Priest a great earthquake shook the city and rent the Temple roof so that the sunlight streamed through and fell upon the king’s face, revealing the sudden infliction of leprosy. (*Jos. Ant.* 9.10.4) The source from which Josephus took this is not known; it may be from the variant Hebrew version of the Old Testament which he is known to have had, but if there is any substance in this, the mission of Amos would have been in 753 BC, the year of Jeroboam’s death.

So, the fervent voice of the youthful prophet burst upon the complacency of King Jeroboam and his court as they paid their devotions to the idol god of Bethel. “*The LORD will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem.*” (Amos 1:2) That, for a start, was an unwelcome reminder to the hearers that the true sovereignty of Israel was at Jerusalem, kings of the line of David, sitting upon the throne of the Lord, and that there was the Temple of the true God of Israel where men ought to worship. “*The pastures of the shepherds mourn, and the top of Carmel withers.*” (Amos 1:2 RSV) Northern Israel was pre-eminently the land of lush pastures, suitable for many flocks, and well furnished with trees—trees of the forest and fruit trees. “The top of Carmel” is equally accurately translated “the trees of the fruitful places” and this is more likely to be Amos’ meaning.

Compared with the more arid highlands of Judah, the pastures and forests of the northern kingdom, in which they took such pride and from which they drew much of their wealth, were to wither and be destroyed. But having attracted the attention of the people to whom he had been sent—and from chap. 7 it is evident that he had made his way from Tekoa straight to the pagan sanctuary at Bethel and there announced his mission in the hearing at least of the idolatrous High Priest if not of the king himself. Having thus attracted the attention of the people, he turns aside from the real subjects of his condemnation and commences by declaring what the Lord is shortly going to do to the nations round about; Syria, Philistia, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, and Moab; all incurred the Divine wrath and must enter into judgment. These have first to be considered and after this the guilty nation must listen to the declaration of its own faithlessness to God and the judgment that must inevitably follow, except they repent.

In point of fact, they did not repent. And not many decades later the Assyrians came and destroyed their cities and their land and took them all away to die as captives in a strange land. The final penalty of the broken covenant had been exacted.

So, Amos, the herdsman, stood there in the sanctuary of the idol, facing an apostate king and an apostate priesthood, telling them of the doom that must surely come. In a very real sense Amos was the Herald of the Captivity.

(To be continued)
AOH



THE PRAYER OF THE CONSECRATED

Hear Heavenly Father, reverently, and in the name of Jesus I approach Thy throne of grace to renew my consecration vow *today*, not content with having made my consecration years ago, nor even yesterday, I renew it today, and present to Thee my body and all its powers, my heart and all its affections. I give to Thee willingly and gladly everything I possess to be wholly Thine today. I would not withhold from Thee one single thing

“Gracious and loving Father and dear Lord Jesus, come in all your fulness into my heart and life—take full possession—and reign there supreme without a rival today. Dear Lord Jesus, my glorious High Priest and Head to Thy Body, the Church, continue to offer me today upon God’s Holy Altar of sacrifice, and until the sacrifice is completed in death.

The Call of the Bride
W.J. Thorn

PARADISE ON EARTH

Earth's coming glory 9. Let the Earth Bring Forth

A great deal is said and heard nowadays about energy. Energy, to the ordinary person, is something that results from the consumption of electricity, oil, gas, coal and also now renewables and furnishes heat and light in the home or power to drive the car. In the industrial world it powers the machines which proliferate in this modern age and puts more and more people out of work. Now and then a voice is raised asking what is going to happen when the oil and gas and coal is exhausted, but no one takes very much notice of that, and the prodigal waste of earth's resources continues at an increasing rate. The world consumption of energy in the year 1950 was four times what it was in 1850; in 2024 it has gone up 23 times and increasing.* And it all goes up, quite literally, in smoke. When one burns a hundredweight of coal in the domestic grate one has enjoyed a season of warmth, but the coal has gone. When one turns on the electric light for say ten hours a unit of electricity has been used; a power station somewhere has burned a pint or so of oil and turned several pints of water into steam to produce that unit and the oil and the water have gone. When one uses a gallon of petrol your car has travelled thirty five miles or so but the petrol has gone. Coal and oil and uranium do not grow on trees; it is estimated that oil and gas will run out in 50 years and maybe 70 years for coal. (Infinity Renewables). What then?

To that growing body of Christians who share the conviction that we are living in the closing years of this Age, that the dawn of the Millennium is at hand, that God is about to intervene in the affairs of humankind for their benefit, this position presents no cause for alarm. It can be taken as certain that He who created the earth and provided for man's continuing existence upon it has not overlooked the necessity of such supplies of heat, light and power as humanity will need in that blessed day. And, let it be said, by more pleasant, and, shall we say, cleaner processes than humans seem invariably to adopt. Digging coal from the bowels of the earth, extracting oil and gas from the recesses of the deep sea, creating radio-active waste with all its unknown hazards and evils, are activities which can hardly be associated with the sunlit visions of the Millennial Age so eloquently pictured in the Bible. After all, what we call the processes of Nature are actually God's mechanism for running the earth and it is to the world of Nature that we should look for a solution to our problems, under the guidance and control of humanity, to produce a sufficiency for all of their needs. If people are to go back to Edenic conditions, the Golden Age of Legend, will there be a need for all this heat and light and power? It could

perhaps be thought that artificial light is not really necessary. We could go to sleep at dusk and awake at dawn. The birds do. If the world climate is to be as equable and congenial as the Bible suggests—and the human physique healthy and perfect, shall we want all this central heating? The horses live in the fields summer and winter without it. In a society where labour and activity is a pleasure rather than a drudgery, and human physical strength is at its peak and everlasting life means that time is no object, what need for all these rapid production machines, means of high speed transport, labour-saving devices, when there is plenty of time and strength to do all that one wishes to do. The great civilisations of pre-Christian history managed without a great deal of it. Who knows what hitherto unknown and unsuspected powers and attributes reside in the human body and brain when the curse of sin has been removed and people have become what God has always intended, an image and likeness of himself? People take great pride today in inventing and constructing computer programs which can perform calculating functions thousands of times faster than can any person; most of them forget that God can think faster than these. Is it unthinkable that one day in the perfect state men and women's own mental powers will be so enhanced that they may be able to outdo the most sophisticated of today's Information Technology (IT) even with AI?

But on the other hand, it is perhaps unreasonable to conclude that man and woman in the eternal state is destined to rise no higher, in their development, than did Adam the first man in his original creation? The basic law of Nature, of all creation, is development, advance, achievement, a perpetual advancing forward and climbing upward. The story of Eden pictures Adam in full possession of his faculties, placed in a prepared garden adequate to furnish the necessities of life, but it goes on to tell him that he must "*till*" the ground that it bring forth more fruit, and "*subdue*" the earth, which means he was to explore and use its resources for his welfare and a satisfying life. The Book of Genesis tells of an antediluvian character of almost six thousand years ago named Tubal-cain (Gen. 4:22) who was the first to discover that the earth contained metallic ores which could be refined into metals like copper and iron; within five centuries of his discovery the Sumerians were making works of art in gold, bronze, copper, which have never been equalled. Through the centuries people have improved the strains of wild grains and fruit trees and farming animals so that their modern counterparts immeasurably exceed their ancient forebears. Who is to say that this process will not go on into the illimitable future so that the future promises to be one of never-ending effort and achievement?

So although the next Age is often spoken of as though it is a restoration to Garden of Eden conditions, a little thought shows that such is only partially true. The world of the future will be what Eden was intended to become, what might be termed the appendages and conveniences and attributes of human society on a much higher level and making much more use of earth's possibilities than could ever have been the case in the old story of the first human pair. A great many of the necessities of civilised society would seem to be inherent in the framework of human life upon earth in the day of Christ's reign over the nations. This brings us back to the question of light, heat and power.

It goes without saying that the nuclear power stations will have to go, and quickly. They are too dangerous to handle. Gas and oil may well have gone before the Millennium gets well started although it has lasted longer than anticipated back in 1986; in 2020 according to Infinity Renewables in 50 years gas and oil reserves will run out. The mining of coal, no matter how safe the process can be made to be, will certainly have no place in the Millennial world and this too would run out eventually. Humankind will be left with the original sources of power of ancient times—wind, water and the sun.

Primitive peoples, and medieval ones too, got on very well with such means. True, there were not so many of them and their needs were less. England in the 13th Century had ten thousand windmills in operation. They pumped water, ground corn, operated simple machines, with no fuel costs. Some people now living can recall seeing such mills working in their youth and some have been preserved as museums. The Babylonian king Hammurabi, contemporary with Abraham, used windmills in his empire to pump water.

In recent years wind-power has been used to help solve current energy problems. Russia had 30,000 propellor-driven electric generators operating back in 1954. The United Kingdom began by experimenting with wind power in favourable spots such as the North of Scotland and the Isle of Man, feeding electricity into the national grid. According to Wikipedia 30% of Britain's electricity power in 2025 is met by wind power, nearly three times as much as the much-vaunted nuclear stations produce at present. There is potential to increase. There are more than 75,000 onshore wind turbines in the USA. Worldwide wind power has increased 80-fold since 2000.

Water power comes next. Every major country in the world has its hydro-

electric stations where water stored in a man-made lake, fed by rivers or streams in the mountains, passes to a lower level where it operates turbines driving electric generators. In the Middle Ages every English stream of any size had its waterwheels along the banks, turning millstones or operating weaving looms, or on farms pumping water. Ancient Egypt got much of its power from waterwheels and so did ancient China. Modern people worldwide have doubled their use since 1991. It is estimated to increase by 7% by 2030 in emerging and developing countries. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on the Blue Nile was officially opened on 9 September 2025. As with the wind, there is plenty of power from water.

Tidal power and devices using the force of the waves of the sea are often talked about and some installations are in use, although an admittedly satisfactory design has yet to be produced. The largest facility is the Sihwa Lake Power Station in South Korea completed in 2011, but it is still in its infancy. The potential is great.

But all these devices involve intricate and heavy machinery, and one wonders if humanity in the perfect state is intended to construct and use such means when the Lord can ordain the forces of Nature to serve their needs. There is one source of energy which in magnitude as well as simplicity exceeds by far all these devices that humans have developed. That source is the sun.

The sun's energy is in its light, falling upon the earth. (The sensation of heat felt when the sun shines is caused by sunlight agitating the atoms of the atmosphere as it passes through.) The light is the energy and this is manifested either as heat in the familiar way, or transmuted into solid substance by chemical reaction as when falling upon a leaf, or transformed into electricity when agitating the electrons of certain light-sensitive metals in what is called a solar cell. The science of solar energy has developed for over a century, but it is realised that we were only on the fringe of what could be achieved in the 1980s. All kinds of devices for collecting and utilising the sun's energy have been tried. Sets of mirrors reflecting its rays to a focal point where an intensely high temperature is attained sufficient to melt steel, banks of collectors in which water is heated and used for domestic purposes; evaporators which convert seawater into fresh water, small cookers, used extensively in India, where meals are cooked by the sun. The energy is free and everlasting.

Later research, has resulted in the discovery of the solar cell. Thin wafers

of certain metallic elements, exposed to light, generate electricity. A number connected together yield sufficient current for the purpose intended. Such cells have the merits that there are no moving parts, nothing to wear out, and so far as can be known at present are probably everlasting.

Since 2000 according to ourworlddata.org solar power has increased from 1 TWh to 2128 TWh in 2024. (TWh = Terawatt hour)

All of this is leading up to the conclusion that as the sun shines on the trees and plants silently and efficiently, creating food for man's sustenance, fabrics for his adornment, and materials for his use, so there may well be a means whereby every need that man or woman may have in the way of heat and light and power will be similarly supplied. There have been in recent years some experimenters who have found that certain trees under certain circumstances produce electric currents when a wire is run from the topmost boughs to the ground. It is fascinating to think that perhaps, after all, knowledge might be so increased that what now is produced with much toil and labour becomes available, free of cost, from the powers of Nature around us.

If such proves to be indeed the case, we can forget windpower, waterpower and tidal power, all of which together could furnish many times the energy per annum at present used by the world, in favour of the sun, which could provide over a thousand times that energy if needs be. It has been calculated that an area of the New Mexico desert only eighty miles square could supply all the power at present required by the United States. The Sahara Solar Breeder Project aims to provide 50% of the world's electricity by 2050 from the desert. It would be tedious to cite other instances; suffice to say that there is every reason to expect that Nature will prove adequate to meet every need.

But, says one, coal is not the only product of the earth. Metals, such as iron and copper, minerals like sulphur and carbon, must be obtained from the depths. What about the iron-miners and copper-miners? Will metal also grow on trees? Or do we have to do without metals?

There are just a few pointers to another sphere of Nature's creative powers, at present doing no more than point the way to the possibilities. There has been in recent years—since the latter half of the last century—a great deal of attention paid to Bioelectricity, the use of the powers of bacteria in bringing about chemical changes in materials. In the past their

usefulness has been more or less confined to sewage treatment works where they break down organic waste into useful fertiliser and pure water. In more recent times bacteria have been made on the one hand to generate electricity from vegetable products, and on the other hand to produce edible protein from oil and natural gas. Now it is being found there are other possibilities. One species of bacteria has the property of extracting pure iron from iron ore; another does the same with uranium, and another with sulphur. Most of these processes are still in the experimental stage but there is definitely something there, and it is now called bioleaching. It may yet be found that there is a natural process of “growing” minerals and other substances which at present and throughout past history have had to be won by arduous labour from the depths of the ground. The present supply would in any case run out one day, just as coal and oil and uranium. Unless the Lord has arranged for continuing supplies to be produced as needed then eventually humanity would have to do without them.

Some of the foregoing is largely speculative. It cannot be otherwise. But we live in an age when the fantastic of today is the commonplace of tomorrow. These endeavours of present-day researchers to solve the problems which are admittedly facing the world of the immediate future are pointers to the solutions which have notably come and will undoubtedly increase and come. The point being made here is that those solutions do not lie in the field of increasingly complex mechanical devices, a world of computers and robots, but in the field of Nature where the whole earth will bring forth everything that is good and necessary for the service of humanity, where Nature is our assistant, and people learn to manipulate the forces of Nature to their own advantage and well-being. In the Eden story God put Adam whom He had created in the garden, “*to dress it and to keep it.*” (Gen. 2:15) The two words mean in the first place to cultivate and in the second to preserve, as a steward or guardian. So, in the Millennium mankind will learn to care for and to maintain this earthly heritage, so that, as it was said so long ago by the prophet “*then shall the earth yield her increase.*” (Psa. 67:6) Just as the trees and plants will bring forth the food that people need, so will Nature, in one way or another, albeit by the activity and the oversight of humanity, bring forth their other necessities.

*AOH updated
To be continued*



For star differs from star in glory. 1 Cor. 15:41 RSV

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CHRIST, OUR TEACHER

LET Him teach thee, weary soul; (Psa. 27:11.)
Let His hands now make thee whole; (Job 5:18.)
Let His peace thy heart control,— (Col. 3:15.)
Let Him teach thee.

Into paths of righteousness (Psa. 23:3.)
Let Him lead and let Him bless; (Psa. 67:7.)
Let Him save thee from distress,— (Psa. 107:13.)
Let Him teach thee.

Let Him guide thee with His eye: (Psa. 32:8.)
Let His hand thy need supply; (Phil. 4:19.)
Let His goodness satisfy,— (Psa. 65:4.)
Let Him teach thee.

Let His good Word sanctify; (John 17:17.)
Let the furnace purify; (1 Peter 1:7.)
Let Him say, “Fear not; ’tis I,”— (Mark 6:50.)
Let Him teach thee.

Let Him probe thy heart within; (Psa. 66:10.)
Let Him search out every sin; (Psa. 139:23.)
Let the glorious light shine in,— (2 Cor. 4:6)
Let Him teach thee.

Let the Shepherd kindly feed;
Let Him firmly, truly lead; (Isa. 40:11.)
(He’ll not break the bruised reed,) (Isa. 42:3.)
Let Him teach thee.

Let Him give thee songs at night; (Job 35:10.)
Let Him make the darkness light; (Isa. 42:16.)
Let Him set thy spirit right,— (Psa. 51:10.)
Let Him teach thee.

In the tumult let Him hide, (Psa. 27:5; 31:20.)
Let Him keep thee at His side; (Ex. 33:21.)
Let His name be glorified,— (Isa. 61:3.)
Let Him teach thee.

Poems of Dawn