



Thou, therefore, endure  
hardness as a good  
soldier of Jesus Christ.

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# BIBLE STUDENTS

# MONTHLY

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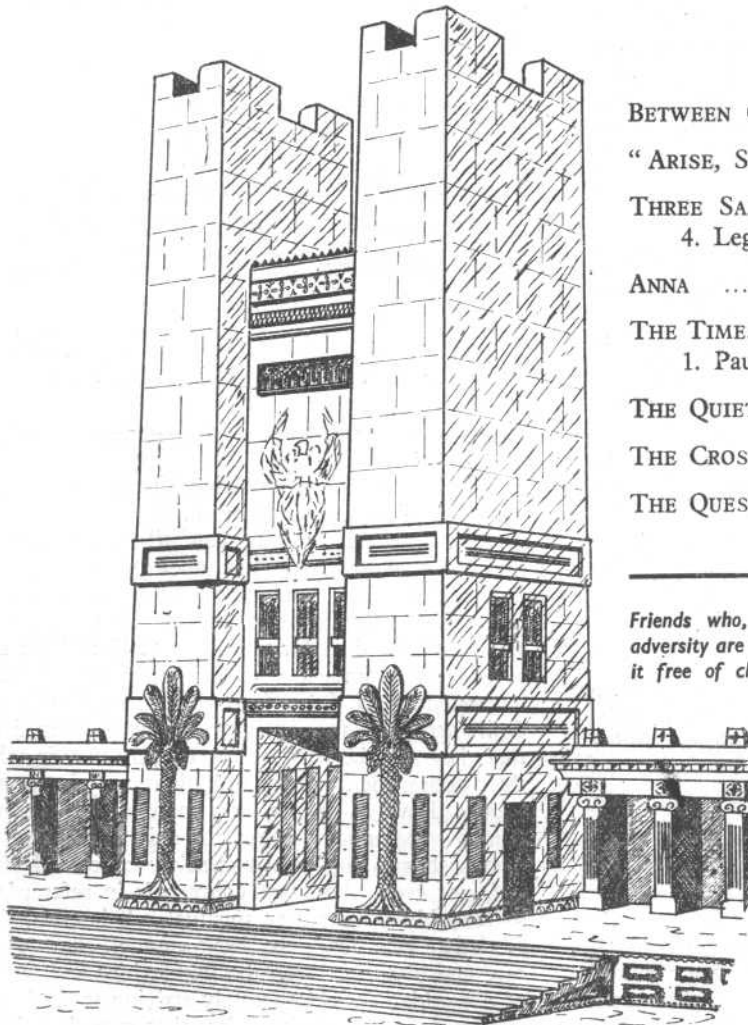
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Lift up your heads, O ye gates,  
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors,  
And the King of glory shall come in.

## BETWEEN OURSELVES

A new series commences in this issue. Entitled "*The Times of this Ignorance*," it takes as its theme the memorable address of Paul to the Athenians on Mars Hill, recorded in the 17th chapter of Acts, and traces the relation between man's ignorance and God's purposes through history. The subject should be an interesting one.

\* \* \*

The Benevolent Fund is now in the care of Bro. E. Allbon, 20, Sunnymede Drive, Ilford, Essex, assisted by a representative panel comprising Bros. G. Absalom (Beeston), A. Boyce (Dewsbury), and G. A. Ford (Luton). Donations intended for the Fund, and all other correspondence in connection with the same, should be sent to Bro. Allbon. Our friends need no reminder as to the excellent work that has been performed by this Fund through the years.

\* \* \*

It is a pleasure to supply reasonable quantities of free literature to those who by stress of circumstances are unable to meet the cost, for judicious distribution. None who wish to preach the Gospel in this fashion need be without the means so to do.

\* \* \*

This is for the eyes of those who attended the farewell meeting to Bro. J. T. Read held in London on 23rd October last. Someone on that occasion left behind them a rather nice pair of gentlemen's gloves, which has, so far, not been claimed. Will the owner please write to Welling for them?

\* \* \*

Will those interested please note price increase in two American books? "*Fulfilled prophecies that prove the Bible*" and "*Seeing prophecy fulfilled in Palestine*" both by Davis, and published by the Million Testaments Campaign, will in future cost 2/9d. each post free instead of 2/0d. as heretofore. Both can be obtained from Welling.

\* \* \*

Bound volumes of the "*Bible Students Monthly*" for the three years 1946-1948 (all in one volume) are available to order at £1 for the three-year volume. Please send in orders as soon as possible. Similar volumes for the three years 1941-1943 can also be supplied. Single volumes for 1944 or 1945 (one year per volume) are available at 5/0d. each, but the available supply of these two is limited.

## LONDON MONTHLY MEETING

Saturday, 22nd January, 1949  
6.30-8.30 p.m.

In the Tudor Hall  
CAXTON HALL

Caxton Street, Westminster, S.W.1  
5 mins. St. James Park Station and Victoria Street

*Praise and Worship*

*Fellowship*

*A talk on the Christian outlook for today  
and an opportunity for questions*

*A Scriptural address by guest speaker*

Chairman: Bro. A. O. HUDSON

Speakers: *To be announced*

The beloved Apostle tells us in that text which we all love to quote (John 3. 16) that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" for our sakes. Yes, the great Creator of everything, perfect and pure and lovely, loved the fallen race so much that even while we were yet sinners Christ died for us (Rom. 5. 8) and we also, as we become imbued with His spirit become deeply interested in all that affects the human family, and desire fervently that their eyes may be opened and that they may be led to the only sure way in which their desire, the desire of all nations, may be brought about. Love is in its very nature, an extrovert quality. It cannot continue to exist where the one who wishes to cultivate it is solely concerned about self, not even when that concern is in reference to so laudable a matter as spiritual self-interest. The Christian who fears the bestowing of some of his care and attention upon the perplexities and worries of a world that is desperately striving to find some way out of its difficulties, lest that attention should interfere in some small measure with what he conceives to be his spiritual progress is, we believe, defeating his own purpose in life. (*The "Herald of Christ's Kingdom"*).

## “Arise, Shine . . .”

A THOUGHT FOR  
THE MONTH

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

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

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

is not kept clean and polished it loses its capacity to reflect. Maybe some of the lights have been put under bushels and cannot be seen. And some have turned away from the Light and so cannot reflect, for the Light is not reaching them at all.

There was a book published many years ago called *“Efficiency in Hades”*, in which an American production expert, visiting that mythical place of torment, and being conducted round by Lucifer, observed to his guide “It does seem uneconomic to burn all these sinners just to provide illumination for a few elect in Heaven!” whereupon Lucifer rejoined meditatively “Perhaps the elect wouldn't give a good enough light themselves.” That is the world's condemnation, not of the failure of Christianity, but of the failure of Christians. And the question ought to be asked: Is it being said of us, as individuals or as a group? It is so fatally easy to become satisfied with our own position before God, our own acceptance of His plans for human well-being, and the prospect of the promised future “reign with Christ”, and forget that the validity of our belief in the future things can only be attested by the degree to which we endeavour to practice them now. Because the very essential of the Millennial work is service for one's fellows and a constant pointing and leading them to Christ, and the way of life which is Christ's way, then we are failing in our bounden duty and privilege if we do not take good heed of those around us who are submerged in darkness and in the shadow of death, and do all that lies within our present power to lift them out of it.

Neither is it enough to content ourselves with a vigorous campaign of preaching the coming Kingdom as God's panacea for all present human ills. True, we are called upon to herald that Kingdom consistently and persistently; but what is the practical use of saying to our starving brother “Depart in peace; be ye warmed and filled” if we give him not those things whereby he may be warmed and filled? The words of James might very well be interpreted here to mean that we who have the knowledge and ability to show how the Kingdom is going to work should not content ourselves with just telling men what it is going to be like when it has come; we should show them in our own fellowship and by means of our own treatment of, and attitude toward, all men, what it is like. If we

all make a sincere and honest-to-goodness attempt to regulate our own daily life and actions toward each other and toward all by the principles which we profess to believe are the Divine will, and are to regulate life in the Millennial Age, then we shall do more to shine light into the darkness wherein people walk, and dispel the shadow of death, than has been accomplished by all the academic arguments and philosophical discourses that have been delivered from the time of Origen until now.

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

## THREE SAMUELS

Three stages in the life of a great man:  
YOUTH—MANHOOD—OLD AGE

### Part 4—Legacy to Posterity.

The last days of Samuel were days of disappointment. The man whom he had anointed king over Israel had proved himself unworthy even before he had well taken up the duties of kingship. When the Ammonites threatened the land of Israel (I Sam. 11.) Saul sent to all the tribes calling upon their warriors to rally to his standard and resist the invader. Three hundred thousand men of Israel and thirty thousand men of Judah were at his side almost immediately (it is interesting to notice that there was a distinction between the Houses of Israel and Judah at so early a date as this, over a century before the division in the days of Rehoboam. Apparently the forces of disunion were even then gathering strength). It is evident from the story that Saul had not yet fully assumed the reins of power; Samuel was still looked upon as the head of the State, and Saul in his call to arms joined his own name with that of the old judge. "*Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel . . .*". And Samuel, in his wisdom, called the people, not into immediate conflict with the enemy, but to Gilgal, one of Israel's sacred sites, that he might reason with them concerning their calling and their covenant, pleading with them and beseeching them that despite their great fault in asking God an earthly king, they might still walk before God in His ways and reap the blessings of obedience promised in the covenant. There is something grandly pathetic in this glimpse of the saintly old man, conscious perhaps that this was the last opportunity he would ever have to witness to his God before the people on a national scale, conscious certainly that his own days were numbered and his influence fading fast, pleading with the people that they might remain faithful. "*God forbid*" he exhorted earnestly "*God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you; but I*

*will teach you the good and right way*". And then his mood changed—or was it that he realised a demonstration of the Divine disapproval of the nation's attitude was long overdue—and with vehemence he cried "*Now therefore stand and see this great thing which the Lord will do before your eyes. Is it not wheat harvest to-day? I will call unto the Lord, and he will send thunder and rain, that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking you a king*". (I Sam. 12. 17.) So Samuel called upon God, and there came thunder and rain, sweeping down upon the standing crops, crushing them to the earth, so that the people were affrighted and stricken with remorse. Here was an enemy their king could not overcome; foreign invaders he would oppose and perhaps overthrow by his own prowess and that of his followers, but the powers of Nature only God could control. When they asked Samuel for a king like those of the other nations they had forgotten that. And now they came before him with some tardy acknowledgment of their sin. Too late, they relented of their purpose and came to their father in God for help in their dilemma.

It is to Samuel's credit that he did not take advantage of the situation to force a return to the old order. The people had asked for a king and had chosen a king, and now they should have their king. Samuel must have realised that all of this was in higher hands than his own, and that God had a purpose in permitting the institution of the monarchy. Moreover, Saul was now the Lord's anointed; he had been anointed by Samuel at the express command of God. Neither he nor the nation could go back on that now. So Samuel exhorted them to frame their national life within the limits of the new order but always in conformity

with the laws of God, "for" said he, "*the Lord will not forsake his people for his great Name's sake; because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people*". A wonderful phrase, that, and one that stands as a beacon light through all Israel's history. No matter to what depths of unbelief and apostasy they have fallen, it is still and will always be true that they are the people of the Lord, that mainly from them is to come at last the nation which will shine forth from Jerusalem and turn the peoples of the earth to righteousness. There will be a remnant fitted for the purpose of the Lord.

Now that is true of spiritual Israel also on the higher plane. The Christian Church has been guilty of many failures, many denials of its Lord. Institutional Christianity has become a byword, and the lives of individual believers often a cause for reproach. But despite all this the purpose of God stands firm, and in His own due time He will have gathered a people, a remnant, from the work of these two thousand years, which will be amply qualified for the spiritual rule of the world, in association with the Lord Jesus Christ in the heavens, throughout the Millennial Age. The Lord will not forsake His people . . . because it hath pleased the Lord to make them His people. Despite all the failures, all the shortcomings, all the hardness of heart, there will stand revealed at the end of this Age two companies of "holy ones", one earthly, in the Promised Land, one heavenly, with Christ, in the glory beyond, each ready to take up its own part in the final work of world reconciliation. Samuel must have had faith in some such eventual outcome of God's work when he bade Israel on that day to walk before God in sincerity and truth.

There was not much more for Samuel to do in this life. Saul was beginning to take things into his own hands and at eighty years of age Samuel would not be able to do much to stop him. That faith in the hearts of the people that had kept the Philistine hosts at arm's length during Samuel's judgeship was ebbing away fast now. Saul was engaged in war with the ancient enemy during the greater part of his reign, and although he nominally acknowledged God and rendered due homage to Samuel there was little true religious feeling or piety in his make-up. Eventually the day came when, flushed with his victory over the Amalekites, he ignored the command of Samuel that all their flocks and herds and possessions were to be utterly destroyed, and retained the best of them as spoil. Samuel, learning of all this before he set out to meet Saul after the battle, knew that Divine judgment could not be much longer delayed. In that same night Samuel had heard the voice of the Lord saying to him "It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king; for he is turned back from following

me, and hath not performed my commandments". And it grieved Samuel, and he cried unto the Lord all night. (I Sam. 15. 11.)

Did the old man's mind go back seventy years to that other night when first he had heard the voice of the Lord, and upon his youthful ears had fallen the dread news of the doom of the house of Eli? What were the thoughts that possessed his mind as now he heard the sentence pronounced again? First it was his teacher who had been dispossessed, and Samuel kept in the favour of God; now it was his pupil who was cast off, and he himself remained. The wheel had turned full circle, the cycle of history had come back to its starting point, and again was Israel without a leader. Once more the full care of the nation before God must fall upon his shoulders. And there was a difference! In that long-since-gone day when Eli had been deposed, he himself had been in the first flush and bloom of youth, with all the zeal and enthusiasm that is characteristic of youth. He had thrown himself in the work of God with all the zest and ardour of his young heart, and had worked—only his God knew how hard he had worked—to restore Israel to God and keep them there. But now he was old; physical and mental powers were failing. The will to serve was still there; but how could he take up the work of the reformer and the national leader again as he had done those many years ago, and discharge it with the effect that had changed the life of the nation in that day? How could God expect him to bear this new and crushing burden in the evening of his days? Wearily he got up and set out to make his way to where Saul awaited him.

"*Blessed be thou of the Lord*" was the bland greeting with which he was hailed as he came within sight of the jubilant king "*I have performed the commandment of the Lord*". Samuel had loved Saul, even as had all Israel, and he had spent a grief-stricken night with the Lord on the other man's account. But there was no softening nor any indication of his inner feelings in the curt, uncompromising reply that quickly swept the complacent smile from the king's face. "*What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?*". The old man was not going to be trifled with; he had in his younger days seen the dire result of Eli's own easygoing toleration of disregard for Divine laws and he was not going to condone or pass this by even though Saul were to him as a son. And Saul immediately realised that the old prophet was in no mood for honeyed words and fair speeches, and hurriedly began to make excuses. He tried to explain that it was the fault of the people, that they had insisted upon keeping the best

of the spoil alive "to sacrifice" he said hopefully "unto the Lord thy God"; as though to soften Samuel's stern demeanour by a compliment to himself. He might have spared himself the trouble, for the old man brusquely interrupted his labouring words. "Stay" said Samuel "and I will tell thee what the Lord hath said to me this night". And Saul had sullenly to listen to the sentence of excommunication which blasted all his hopes and schemes for a dynasty that should sit on the throne of Israel and bear his name through all succeeding generations. It was this happening that gave occasion for words that have been the inspiration for countless disciples throughout all ages since. "*Hath the Lord as great delight*" queried Samuel scornfully, "*in sacrifice and offering as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams!*"

That was the end. Samuel never came to see King Saul again. He retired to his home at Ramah and there he remained, whilst Saul went on hopelessly fighting the Philistines and never getting really free from their yoke. The king who was to have led the forces of Israel out to battle like the kings of other nations never succeeded in making Israel a truly independent kingdom. He never achieved the resounding victories for which his ardent followers hoped and for which purpose they had clamoured for his appointment. It was Samuel who had given the nation freedom—Samuel, who trusted not in carnal weapons but in the power of the living God, who had pinned his faith not to the prowess of men but to the Covenant of Moses. In rejecting the way of Samuel Israel had rejected the way of peace.

Israel went on fighting, and Samuel mourned for Saul, and for the blighting of a life that had opened with such promise, and for the disasters that must inevitably fall upon Israel. Until, in the fulness of time, there came to his inner consciousness, as it had done so many times in past years, that familiar Voice.

"*How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite; for I have provided me a king among his sons*".

The aged prophet might have been excused for demurring. His first venture at anointing a king had turned out an arrant failure. Israel was in worse condition than before. What guarantee could there be that this fresh attempt would turn out any better. And if Saul got to know about it, he would certainly wreak his vengeance on Samuel. He could expect nothing less than instant death

for treason of that nature. It is clear that Saul was by now king in every sense of the word and Samuel's influence in national affairs was nil. But that was only as man seeth; God had work for him to do yet, work that would bear much fruit in days to come. Samuel demurred no longer but took up his staff and made his way to Bethlehem.

The story of David's anointing is well known. It was the last service that Samuel performed. At the point of death himself, he handed the torch, all but dropping from his failing fingers, to the fifteen-year-old lad who stood before him, so fresh and lovable in his innocent and vigorous youth. The friendship that sprang up on that memorable day between these two, between whom three generations arched their years, was never broken. In after days, David, fleeing from Saul, came to Samuel at Ramah for protection. He found the old man presiding over a school of the prophets, a national leader no longer, but still in the intensity of his zeal using what remained to him of physical and mental strength in the giving of instruction in the things of God to a few young men who looked up to him as pastor and father.

Could there have been a more fitting close to such a life? From the being pre-eminent in affairs of state, the one to whom the whole nation looked for guidance and judgment; from being the defender of his people against their inveterate enemies the Philistines and the means of freedom from those enemies over a lifetime of years; from making and unmaking kings; from all this he had retired into the seclusion of his native village, content to spend his last days in the day-by-day teaching of a handful of young lads.

How many who in these later days have exercised great privilege of service and held prominent position before the Lord's people have found themselves able so gracefully to give place and serve at the end in such unnoticed and humble position, if so be that they might thus still glorify the God in Whose Name they have done all things? The humility of Samuel, as revealed by this final phase of his recorded history, throws a flood of light upon his character, a character that in this respect at least is worthy of all our emulation.

It was to that saintly old man that the King of Israel came on one more occasion, when the madness that was to darken the last years of his life was already gaining its hold upon him. It is a strange account, this story of the three bands of soldiers who went, each in turn, to arrest David at Samuel's Ramah retreat, and how they were overawed and subdued by the environment in which they found themselves, falling down and prophesying with the

prophets they found there; and how Saul, impatient at the non-return of his messengers, went himself to Ramah and was himself overtaken by the same prophetic fervour. He fell down and prophesied before Samuel, we are told, and lay until the morning; and then got up and went away. (I Sam. 19. 13-24.) To understand this strange passage we must realise that the term "prophesying" included many kinds of emotional orations and it was more than likely that Saul's outburst on this occasion was a more or less incoherent frenzy born partly of baffled rage at his inability to win back Samuel's support and those blessings of God which he had lost by his own selfwill and pride, and partly of his fearful dread, both of David, whom he now knew to be the Lord's anointed, and the ever-present Philistine menace. It is hardly likely that the Holy Spirit spoke in any way through this man whom God had rejected. And the momentary excitement over, Saul arose, and for the last time passed out of sight and ken of the one who had

placed him upon the throne and established the kingdom under him.

So Samuel breathed his last, an old man and full of days. He died as he had lived, in the company of the Lord's people and in the exercise of devoted ministry. The last sight of which he was conscious, as the failing eye-lids flickered down over the serene eyes, was that of the young men, the sons of the prophets, gathered around his couch, mute promise of the continuation of his life's work. He rested from his labours, but his works continued. Israel was to pass through strange and troublous times, but the light would break through once again and the standard which Samuel had held aloft for nearly a century would be honoured once more. Many a generation yet to be born was to rise up and bless the name of Samuel, his sterling faithfulness to God and to his fellows echoing down the corridors of time for ever.

THE END

## Anna

### THE STORY OF A WOMAN OF FAITH

*"And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser; she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity. And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she coming in at that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for deliverance in Jerusalem". (Luke 2. 36-38.)*

So short a passage! So little said! But how eloquent. She comes in, without having been previously introduced to the reader of sacred story. She goes out—and is never heard of again. But within that short space of a few minutes during which she occupies the Scripture stage, she does something that makes her brief appearance immortal for evermore. She "spoke of Him".

Anna is the only one of that name in the New Testament. There is only one in the Old Testament; Hannah, the mother of Samuel, has the same name, in its Hebrew, as the other is in its Greek form, and in both languages the word meant graciousness. Both women "spoke of Him". Hannah was the first one in all the Scriptures to use the name "Messiah" as describing the one that should come. Abraham and others in earlier days had rejoiced to see His day and Moses had spoken

of the Prophet that should arise, like unto himself but greater. But no one before Hannah applied the word "Messiah" to Him and that is significant. Hannah was as truly a prophetess as was Anna a thousand years later. "The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth" she sang "and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his Messiah". (I Sam. 2. 10.) Now the later Anna stood in the temple courts holding in her arms the tiny babe that was the fulfilment of the prophecy. Messiah had come, and Anna knew it!

How did she know? By what process of reasoning did this aged saint connect this helpless child, brought to the Temple by this young couple, with the Messiah of prophecy, the One Who would come from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, travelling in the greatness of His strength, proclaiming His mightiness to save. What was it convinced her that here in this little family group lay, not only the doom of the mighty empire of Rome, but also of all the "kingdoms of this world" and all the forces of wickedness and powers of evil everywhere? What was it in that small, innocent face that showed her the lineaments of a King?

It could only have been, as it was with Simeon on the same occasion, a direct revelation of the Holy Spirit. God had answered her long-continued

prayers and fasting, her patience and expectation, with a word at once from Himself. To Simeon, it will be remembered, it had been revealed by the Spirit that he would not see death until he had seen the Lord's Christ—the Messiah. And he came "by the Spirit"—by the direct leading of the Holy Spirit—into the Temple just at the time Mary and Joseph were there with her first-born child. In that moment, as Simeon's old eyes fell upon the little group, there came an inward word to Him; "*This is He!*" and his heart overflowed with reverent joy as he realised the dream of a lifetime fulfilled. So it must have been with Anna; coming in just as Simeon was pouring out his heart in his wonderful praise-prayer-prophecy, the Spirit spoke to Anna likewise and she too knew that the consolation of Israel had come; the time was fulfilled; the hope for which the twelve tribes, instantly serving God by day and night, waited to come, was realised. God had at last visited His people.

Anna had spent a long life waiting. Eighty-four years a widow, seven years a wife before that—for such is the meaning of the Greek expression; not that she was merely eighty-four years old—so that even had she been married at the age of sixteen, a common age for Jewish girls to be married at that time, Anna must have been one hundred and seven years old at the time of this incident. It is not stated, but it is implied and may reasonably be accepted as a fact, that she had served God in the Temple and waited for the promised Messiah for at least the major portion of that time. What had she seen in all those years?

Anna was born when the state of Judea was very different from its condition at the birth of Jesus. Rome had not yet appeared upon the scene, and although the Greek kingdom of Syria still claimed sovereignty over the Jews, Judea was in fact an independent State under the rule of John Hyrcanus, the son of that Simon who was one of the Maccabean patriots that had delivered the country from its foreign oppressors. She was perhaps five years of age when Aristobulus succeeded John, and then, in the following year, Alexander Jannaeus succeeded Aristobulus. This part of Jewish history, lying as it does between the Old and New Testaments, is not so well known to many of us as the days before Malachi or after Jesus, but in the reign of Alexander the boundaries of Judea were extended, by means of conquest or treaty, right back to the limits that had been reached by David and Solomon in olden times. In the person of Alexander a Jewish king reigned from Sinai to the Euphrates, and Judea was the most powerful State in the Middle East. So influential was she, in fact, that the Roman Empire entered into treaty alliance

with her—the text of the treaty, still preserved, is curiously like modern ones, both nations binding themselves not to make war upon the other and to help each other with military assistance should one be attacked by a third party—and Jewish ambassadors were in residence at Rome. It was a time of high hopes on the part of all true Jews that the Kingdom of God and the day of Israel's triumph was at hand. It only needed the appearance of the Messiah to take over the reins of government. The Land of Promise as defined to Abraham—from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates—was already under their control. Greek power was rapidly declining, and Rome, the only other great Empire, treated with Judea as an equal. Surely it could not be long now before the great Senate of Rome would listen with dignified respect to the orders of King Messiah, transmitted by the Jewish ambassador in the city; and Jerusalem replace both Athens and Rome as the world's seat of government. In those stirring days, ninety years or so before the angels sang at Bethlehem men went about in daily expectation of the revelation of Messiah from heaven.

Some there were—as some there have been in every age—who knew from their deeper understanding of the things of God that the coming of the Kingdom could not be thus. History reveals that behind the pomp and glitter of the rapidly growing State, the marching and shouting of armed men, the glowing speeches and lavish promises of Judea's politicians, there was a nucleus of devout souls, chiefly the poor of this world, looking for a Messiah who would be first of all a Teacher of righteousness. They knew that all was not well with their homeland and its people. They knew that sin covered them with its heavy hand, and that not until sin was removed could the glowing promises of the prophets be fulfilled. So they studied the old prophecies and told each other of the golden time that would come when God arose to shake terribly the earth and reveal to all men the King who would reign in righteousness, even although with their limited vision they could hardly begin to see how these things could be. But they would have nothing to do with the politicians, nor yet—very much—with the established forms of religion, insincere and corrupt as they had become with the nation's rise to temporal prosperity. Zadokites, these faithful few were called in their day, and they found a substantial following among the ordinary people in that time, so long before the Messiah in whom they believed was to manifest Himself.

It is very possible that Anna came of a family that adhered to this faith and expectation. Her steadfastness through the years might very well

have been due to parental influence and training. Phanuel might possibly have been an early leader among the Zadokites, a century before the One in Whom their hopes were fixed could appear. And if so, if she grew up into early womanhood, married and widowed before she was twenty-four, neither she nor her fellows would have been unduly distressed or cast down at the rapid change of fortune which befell the triumphant State when Alexander Jannes died in B.C. 75 and war, disruption and anarchy began to set in. The enemies of the nation were not laid low after all; they had only been quiescent; and now the men who had so fondly imagined their victorious military Messiah soon coming to place Himself—and them—at the headship of the nations; saw their territories invaded, their conquests wrested from them, and the ever growing menace of foreign oppression looming over them more menacingly every day.

It was only another eight years, when Anna was in her early forties, that the crash came, and the death of Queen Alexandra of Judea was followed by the submission of her sons to Pompey, the victorious Roman. From that time Judea became a Roman province, and hopes of the Messianic Kingdom were rudely dashed. But the Zadokites still believed, for their faith was not founded on the fortunes of war or the virtue of political arrangements, and as Anna quietly went about her duties in the Temple, she prayed and fasted and waited still for "He that should come", not knowing how much longer He would tarry.

So another ten or twelve years went by, slowly, whilst Judea became more and more helpless in the grasp of her Roman master. Away in the far north-west Julius Cæsar was invading Britain, and our own ancestors in these islands were undergoing their first experience of the power that already held Judea in a grip of iron. Anna, past fifty years of age now, endured the horror of seeing the Temple itself, the centre of all her hopes and those of her countrymen, desecrated and plundered by Crassus the Roman general. Would Messiah never come? Had God forgotten to be gracious? The question must at times have come to her mind but she put it from her knowing that the word of the Lord could not return to Him void, but must at the end prosper in the thing whereto it was sent.

So onward, through the long years, until Herod the Edomite came and began to rule the country under title from Rome, a would-be king even although a tributary king. Perhaps at that the hopes of some began to rise again, and when, eighteen years before the birth of Jesus, Herod announced his intention of pulling down the decaying fabric of Nehemiah's Temple, which had stood on

Mount Moriah for five hundred years, ever since the return from Babylon, and erect a magnificent new Temple in its place, many there must have been who wondered if this was indeed a preparation for Messiah. Anna and her friends must often have talked about it. There would be Simeon, like herself, well into the eighties. There would be a middle-aged couple, Zachariah and Elisabeth, hoping against hope for the child that never seemed to come, but hoping with even greater intensity for the coming of Messiah. Then there was Jacob and his small son Joseph, and another Joseph, a wealthy young man from Arimathea, all waiting for His appearing and His Kingdom. And as the splendid structure of the Temple grew under the industry of Herod's builders and stone-masons their hearts would swell with anticipation and they would say one to another "Surely He will come soon!"

And then, one day, coming into the Temple court, Anna saw a little group standing. Simeon, the friend and counsellor of many years, was holding a little child in his arms. His face was upturned to heaven as if in thanksgiving and praise. Anna recognised the parents in an instant; Joseph the son of Jacob, grown to manhood now, and his seventeen-year old wife Mary, both of them zealous and devout believers in the coming of the Lord, both of them brought up from childhood to look for and wait for His coming. Anna had known them both since they were born—it seemed only yesterday. She had known their parents, too, since their own birth. She had known their grandparents. Her tired old mind flashed back over the long years and she thought of her own friends of youth, long since laid aside to sleep, in the sure and certain hope of a promise of which they had never seen the realisation in their own lifetime. She saw the new generation before her, the young people who were destined to carry the hope of Messiah onward into the coming years, years which she knew she herself would not live to see. And then a sudden thought flashed into her mind; she looked more closely at the little group, at the rapt expression on Simeon's countenance, the sweet, eager face of the young mother, the grave, reverently proud features of Joseph, and she looked at the Babe.

And in that moment she knew.

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Conscience tells us that we ought to do right, but it does not tell us what right is—that we are taught by God's Word. *Henry Clay Trumbull.*

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Our Lord has written the promise of the Resurrection not in books alone, but in every leaf of Spring-time. *(Luther)*

# THE TIMES OF THIS IGNORANCE

A Study in  
Divine Purposes

## Chap. 1.—Paul and the Athenians

*"Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Deity is like unto gold or silver or stone, engraved by art or man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at (overlooked) but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent". (Acts 17. 30.)*

The times of Divine action in the outworking of His plans are several and varied. The Scripture speaks of "Times of Restitution"; in these days we have come to realise the significance of that expression and to look forward to the promised restoration. They speak also of "Times of the Gentiles"; for many years past earnest students of the Holy Word have traced the course of those times through human history, and watched and waited for their end. Now the Apostle Paul, speaking to the wise men of this world, the philosophers and thinkers and debaters of the glory that was Greece, speaks of "times of ignorance". Times of ignorance! Was it a mere figure of speech, a flowery embellishment with which to round off his discourse, a polished antithesis to mark in sharp relief the knowledge that he was bringing them from God, the knowledge of Jesus and the Resurrection? By no means, for these "times of ignorance", says Paul, span a period and are to have an end, an end which is marked by the cessation of God's tolerance of the condition of "no-knowledge", and a universal command to repent that the light of the knowledge of God's Plan might begin to overspread the earth until it covers the land as the waters cover the great sea. There were definite causes that had produced those "times of ignorance", and they had occupied a definite place in the Divine Plan, but now their end had come and another and totally different work for mankind on the part of the Most High was to take their place.

The unhappy translation "winked at" does not convey a true impression of Paul's exposition here. God did not by any means condone or ignore the conduct of man or the darkness of this world. The Greek word used is one that signifies the looking over and beyond a thing, as though God, surveying these times of ignorance from the standpoint of His great knowledge, looked beyond them to another time when men would hear the call to repent and come to the light that then would be

shining, and in coming, find salvation and life. The word does not mean that God "overlooked" in the sense of "letting bygones be bygones". There is a law of retribution in the Divine dealings with man which will apply to all men everywhere and in all ages. God "looked beyond" the "times of ignorance", and guided the destinies of this world meantime, not according to man's present deserts, but in the light of his future possibilities.

These few words of Paul, spoken to the intellectual pagans of his own day, throw a flood of light upon this very important aspect of God's dealings with man. It has been the usual custom to ignore the long millenniums that stretched between Creation and Christ as though they had no particular usefulness or importance, except for the relatively short span during which Israel was receiving its national training under the Law. But a close examination of Acts 17 reveals a clear understanding, on Paul's part, of the vital place those ages occupy in the Divine scheme of things. They were years in which man, though ignorant, was making his way more or less blindly towards the light; until he had arrived at a certain stage in that progress the revelation of Christ could not be made to man because none would be found able to understand; but when in the fulness of time some could appreciate Him in the way He must come, and accept Him and set their lives to carrying on His work, then, and at once, the times of ignorance must come to an end, and God could, with complete confidence, set in motion the great forces which were destined to complete His plan for humanity. As a first step in that proceeding, He called upon men in a fashion He had not called and could not call before, to repent.

"Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship" cried Paul to his listeners, "him declare I unto you". The Greeks had built up a complete pantheon of deities, descriptive of all the attributes of God and all the outward manifestations of His working which they could perceive; but they were not satisfied. There was still something about God that they did not understand, an understanding of His ways to which they had not attained. The elaborate mythologies and philosophical speculations which they had formulated and in which they indulged still failed to satisfy the more reflective among them, and so in blind groping for more light they had

erected, among all their shrines and images, this altar "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD", and trusted that one day He would reveal Himself to them.

So they listened as Paul told them how that far away, in the days of Creation, the Unknown God had made the world, and all that is in it, and placed man upon it, and in full anticipation of the Fall and all that it would entail of man's ignorance and blindness concerning Himself, had ordered the course of the nations in history, and their geographical distribution over the earth ("*hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation*" vs. 26.) that they might struggle in their blindness to a position from which some of them at least could receive Christ and become His instruments of blessing to all the rest. "*That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from any one of us*" (vs. 27). There is progression here, a progress from utter ignorance to a measure of knowledge, and then, when the call to repent has been sounded, and heard, and heeded, onward still into that full knowledge which is the prized possession of the sons of God.

The "times of this ignorance" of Paul's address, then, commenced at, or soon after, the Fall, and they ended with Christ. It was Paul's object to convince the Greeks of the significance of the times in which they lived. A great step forward in the Plan of God had been taken. Whereas, in the past, men had struggled blindly towards the light, and the highest and best of their conclusions had been enshrined in the Greek philosophies which Paul was now dismissing as ignorance itself, God, having looked beyond man's failure to know and understand Him aright, was now revealing a complete and satisfying message of life in the person and work of His Son. The solution of all the questions and speculations, the searching and questionings, of the past, was expressed in the simple exhortation "Repent—believe in the Lord Jesus Christ—and thou shalt be saved".

So the Times of Ignorance were brought to an end on the Day of Pentecost by God's command to men to repent. There can be no disputing the meaning of the words. They stand, clear and unmistakable. From the dawn of history God had looked upon His creatures' endeavours to understand the mysteries of life and death, of good and evil, and in the knowledge of His own future plans had allowed their errors and mistakes and wanderings in devious and dark ways. He knew that all this experimental striving, as it were, was necessary to prepare men's minds to receive the great revelation He planned to give them. It would not have done to reveal Christ at the time of Abraham, nor yet at the time of Moses. Human

minds were altogether unprepared to receive the truths He must bring, too undeveloped by far to understand the High Calling and the principles of the Millennial reign. But by the time that Cæsar Augustus ruled the world there were some who could understand and who would respond, and it was at that point that God changed His attitude and His course of dealing, and commanded all men, everywhere, to repent. And that call to repentance is intimately connected, as we know full well, with the onset of world judgment—the judgment and retribution that must come upon the world for its evil—and the further development of God's plans for world conversion during the Millennial Age.

At Pentecost, then, there came a great change in the possibility of men's understanding of God. That change brought with it responsibility. The hearing of the message could no longer be flouted. Men would now be expected to understand and begin to weigh up for themselves the implications of this new word of authority that had come into their lives.

The exhortation to repent was not a request: it was a command. It was a command having the same force as the other command given to man at the time of the first creation. "*Of the tree . . . that is in the midst of the garden, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*". Failure to heed and obey this command to repent will have the same result: there is for the unrepentant, if such there be, after full opportunity, nothing but death, the cessation of that existence which God has given but of which the recipient will not make rightful use. Neither was the command addressed to a select few, nor to an arbitrarily chosen small number. It was to all men. "Now commandeth *all men everywhere* to repent". The fact has to be taken into account in our understanding of the work of the Age that commenced at Pentecost.

Perhaps there has been a tendency to differentiate too sharply between the works of the Gospel and Millennial Ages. Often has it been said that God has no interest in the world at present: He is dealing exclusively with the Church, and the turn of the world will come in the next Age. That is true in measure, but it is not a complete expression of the Truth. From the point of view of Paul, speaking at Athens, making a difference between man's helpless striving after the light before Pentecost, and the work of human reconciliation to God which has been progressing since Pentecost and will progress until it is complete in the Millennium, this whole period, from Pentecost to the end of the Millennial Age, is one great span of time during which the work of reconciliation progresses

to its logical fulfilment. The command to repent goes out at the beginning of the Age and applies to all men: all men do not hear the command at first: for many of them the word will not come until after the Kingdom is established. The heralds of the Kingdom, the messengers of God, must first take up the proclamation and bear it through the earth. "*Ye shall be witnesses unto me in Judea, and Jerusalem, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth*". During the first two thousand years the command is being heard and responded to by a comparatively small number of people; from these are drawn those disciples who by reason of their experiences as "His witnesses" in this life will be equipped and qualified to carry on the work in greater power in the next Age, so that all men, even the resurrected millions who themselves lived during the "Times of Ignorance" may hear the command to repent and, if they will, obey.

It is on this basis that missionary zeal must be based. Pseudo-theological talk of "sowing" and "reaping" at the end of the Age, and comparisons with natural harvesting operations is really quite beside the point. The plain fact is that God, at Pentecost, commenced to reconcile the world to Himself in Christ. There are two great stages in that work of reconciliation, the first of which

is the selection and preparation of the company through whom the major portion of the work is to be done, but it is one great work as a whole, and it was at Pentecost that the Father looked down upon a blinded and ignorant world and, as it were, said "it is enough: behold the way of salvation: turn and repent, and come to Me". From that time forward it has been the privilege and commission of every consecrated follower of the Lord Jesus to herald far and wide the cry that must continue yet for another thousand years before it has achieved its full purpose: "Repent—believe the gospel—and live".

That is why the Christian faith is, and always has been, and always will be, a missionary faith. That is why the church or sect or group that loses its missionary zeal and ceases to proclaim abroad the faith that is in it must inevitably perish. With Paul, we must say "Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel"—The times of ignorance have ended, and we who are God's ambassadors are sent forth to bear His message, a message that will not cease to be preached until all of earth's millions have heard and made their final decision.

For God now commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent.

## THE QUIET TIME

*"My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places."*

### CONSECRATION

*O sacred union with the perfect mind!  
Transcendent bliss, which Thou alone canst give.  
How blest are they this pearl of price who find,  
And, dead to earth, have learned in Thee to live.  
And thus while dead to human hopes I lie,  
Lost, and forever lost, to all but Thee,  
My happy soul since it hath learned to die  
Hath found new life in Thine infinity.  
With joy we learn this lesson of the Cross,  
And tread the toilsome way which Jesus trod;  
And counting present life, and all things, loss,  
We find, through death, the way of life in God.*

### PURITY

In the northern coalfields, round about the mouth of the coal-pits, there is a tiny white flower with almost waxen petals. There it grows and flourishes amid all the dust and grime, for its waxen-like petals throw off the dust which settles upon it. Character can triumph over circumstances. It is the life within, not the circumstances without which counts.

### LIGHT

Light enters the smallest opening accessible to it. It searches out the recesses that would otherwise remain dismal and dark, thus penetrating the gloom. It is a fact disclosed by science that it lays hold of the lurking germs of disease whether in the home or in the human system. Of Him who came as the world's light, such is His ministry. Instead of sin fastening upon Him it could not even stand in His presence.

### JOYFUL SERVICE

If you want to know the character of a house, ask the servants—especially the old servants. So with the service of our Lord, ask the old servants and you will get the best account of it. Those who have been at it longest have the best things to say about it. Ask such a one as Paul the aged. Observe the cheerfulness of his latest epistles. You have heard a good deal about his suffering in the midtime, but when he was Paul the aged and is writing to Timothy and Titus, he is extremely cheerful and consolatory.

# The Crossing of Jordan

An Instance of  
Divine Deliverance

*"Within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the Lord your God giveth you to possess it". (Josh. 2. 11.)*

The great day had dawned, and Israel stood at the banks of the Jordan, gazing at the Promised Land half-a-mile away beyond the flood. For full forty years had the promise stood; the fathers who had set out from Egypt to inherit this land were dead, their remains buried in the wilderness, but these their children had lived to see the fulfilment of the promise. This very day they were to pass over and enter upon their inheritance.

The crossing of Jordan is usually bracketed together with the passage of the Red Sea. They are two very similar miracles. But there is a fundamental spiritual difference. The passage of the Red Sea was a going into the wilderness; that of Jordan was a coming out of the wilderness. The one was the prelude to a time of humiliation and suffering, the other to a time of conquest and triumph. The one has been used to picture the Christian's deliverance from the bondage of sin and his entrance upon the Christian life, a life of humiliation and suffering whilst in the flesh. The other pictures his final victory and entrance into the heavenly kingdom, into the light and joy of the presence of God, the full attainment of the promised spiritual inheritance. The passing into the glory of the Divine is often spoken of as a crossing of Jordan; never as a crossing of the Red Sea.

For three days they had waited, watching the turbulent waters rushing past, for it was early summer and the snows of Hermon were melting. *"Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest"* (Josh. 3. 15.) The stream, normally only about a hundred feet wide and easily fordable, was a raging torrent half-a-mile from bank to bank and quite impossible of passage even by boats, if they had any, and they had not. The Canaanites on the other side were feeling tolerably secure, at least for the next few weeks until the waters would begin to subside.

Obedient to the command of Joshua, the priests were carrying the Ark of the Covenant, swathed in its blue coverings so that it should not be exposed to the gaze of the people, and at a respectful distance, two thousand cubits—a little over half-a-mile—the leaders of the people followed. How they were to cross the river no man knew, but,

confident in Joshua and in their God, the priests went steadily forward, and down to the water's edge. With, perhaps, only a moment's natural hesitation, they stepped boldly into the water.

Even as they did so the wet mud appeared under their soles. They stepped forward again, slowly, into the stream, and again the water had hardly laved their ankles before it receded and the mud appeared. So they went on, more confidently now, and the water's edge retreated from before them as fast as they stepped into it. The hosts of Israel, higher up on the slope that led down to the river, could see what was happening, and a mighty shout of exultation arose on the still air, a shout that aroused the attention of the Canaanite guards on the other side of the river, and caused them to look more closely at the corresponding retreat of the waters from their own bank, and then disappear in abrupt haste to warn their superiors of the strange phenomenon that was occurring down there in the bed of Jordan.

The priests were still advancing, very slowly. Sometimes as they stepped into the water they had to wait a few minutes before it had receded sufficiently to permit the taking of another step. But always the waters were shrinking and the priests advancing. The watching hosts on the hillside, limited still to their two thousand cubits distance from the Ark, therefore not as yet able to approach even the river's bank, cried and shouted to each other in awe and wonder at this great thing the Lord was doing in their sight . . . . .

The stream was down in the deepest part of its channel, gliding along more quietly and only thirty yards or so wide. The wide terraces so lately covered by the rushing waters were baking and steaming in the tropical sun, the soft mud rapidly hardening as it dried, ready for the trampling of the thousands of feet that would shortly be crossing its wide expanse. And the priests still advanced, slowly, forward . . . . .

There was but a brook now in the midst of Jordan. Farther up the valley, as the watchers on the hillside looked into the distance, the river bed was completely dry. There was no more water to come down. The last of the flow would soon have passed them on its way into the Dead Sea. The gateway into Canaan stood open before them.

The priests had stopped, and turned aside a little, standing in a group, with the Ark in their

midst clearly visible as they held it hoisted up upon their shoulders. They stood thus; there was a moving and a jostling of men; and as though animated by one impulse the whole host surged forward, down the slopes to the edge of the bare hard mud, swarming on to the level terraces, dropping by successive steps to the place where the priests were standing, spreading out as they did so until the whole valley as far as eye could reach, in either direction, was filled with the thousands of Israel, walking, running, climbing, to the accompaniment of shouts and cries of triumph and joy, up to the terraces on the Canaanite side, and assembling in the wide meadows beyond which could be seen the walls of the garrison town of Jericho. It was not until the last few stragglers had brought up the rear and made their way up the slopes to the Canaanitish side that the priests reformed their little party, and with the Ark still in their midst, moved up in turn, out of Jordan, into the Promised Land. From behind them as they did so came the sound of rushing water. The lowest channel was filling, water was coming down again from the higher reaches, and even as the people looked the river began to flow in strength and fury, lapping behind the feet of those slow moving priests until by the time they had gained the topmost level with their burden the swirling flood stretched once more from bank to bank. Moab and Canaan were separated again and no man might go nor come. But the host of Israel was in Canaan.

It was a miracle; of that there can be no doubt. Whatever the natural means by which the flow of the river was interrupted, it was by Divine intervention that it occurred just at the moment when Israel needed such an occurrence to make possible their entrance into the Holy Land.

The account in Joshua 3. 15-16 reads "*as they that bare the ark were come into Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water . . . . that the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap far away, by the city Adam, which is beside Zaretan; and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off; and the people passed over right against Jericho.*"

The waters "stood, and rose up upon an heap." Where was this heaping of the waters? The "city Adam" is the modern El Damieh, sixteen miles up stream from Jericho, and Zaretan is Zarthan, opposite El Damieh, on the eastern bank of the river. At this point the Jordan traverses the narrowest part of its valley; it flows between clay banks ranging from forty to one hundred and fifty feet high. The clay is soft, and landslides into the river occasionally occur. A heavy landslide

can dam the river completely and interrupt its flow until the weight of the mounting waters is sufficient to wash away the obstruction and permit the river to resume its normal course.

Such a thing has happened three times at least in recorded history. On the 8th December, A.D. 1267, the west bank at El Damieh collapsed and dammed the river so that no water flowed down the channel for sixteen hours. This record rests on the authority of an Arab historian, Nowairi. It meant that the bed of Jordan from El Damieh to the Dead Sea was dry for all that time and anyone could cross on foot. In the year 1906 the same thing happened in consequence of an earthquake, and again in 1927, according to Prof. Garstang, the celebrated earthquake which shook all Palestine, and cracked the Mount of Olives, caused the west bank at El Damieh to collapse. On this occasion the flow of water was interrupted for no less than twenty-one hours, and a number of people did actually cross and recross the river bed on foot.

It is known nowadays that the fall of the walls of Jericho, a few days after the Israelites crossed Jordan, was caused by an earthquake, occurring at the critical moment. It might well be, as suggested by Garstang, that there was a tolerably long period of earthquake activity at this time and that such an earth tremor, occurring at the right moment, threw down the cliffs and dammed the river, just as in 1927. There is at any rate a remarkably exact correspondence between the story in Joshua and these more modern instances and there seems no reasonable doubt that the crossing of Jordan was due to this precise cause.

"Coincidence" says someone. "If this has happened at other times in history then it was just pure luck that it happened when the Israelites were ready to cross. Perhaps, even, Joshua had received secret information by swift runner of what had already happened sixteen miles upstream and knew that within an hour or two the river would be running dry."

Perhaps—if it were not that the Scripture provides its own refutation of the suggestion. Joshua knew precisely what was going to happen at El Damieh several hours at least before it happened! Many of the Israelites knew what to expect probably two hours or more before the clay banks fell into the river and began to dam back the waters!

At some time during the previous day, when Israel was already gathered on the banks of Jordan in anticipation of the crossing, Joshua had said to them "Sanctify yourselves; for *to-morrow* the Lord will do wonders among you" (ch. 3, vs. 5). He, and they, knew that by some means or other they were to cross Jordan. Joshua now knew that it was

to be the very next day; whether at that time he also knew the means by which the crossing was to be effected does not appear. But that night—early in the morning hours—the Lord spoke to Joshua (vs 7) “*This day,*” He said “will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel . . . and thou shalt command the priests . . .” etc. This was the day of the crossing; it is probable that the word of the Lord came to Joshua during the silent watches of the night, for it is most unlikely that the day itself with all its excitement would give any time to Joshua for quiet communion with God. And there was a full programme of events to be fitted into twelve short hours. First was Joshua’s charge and instructions to the children of Israel, including the selection of twelve men from amongst their number to be responsible for bringing out of the river’s bed twelve great stones to be a memorial of their crossing. It was whilst giving these instructions that Joshua revealed his knowledge of how the miracle was to be effected. “The waters of Jordan” he said “*shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above, and they shall stand upon an heap*” (vs 13.) This speech must have been delivered not later than eight or nine o’clock in the morning, for it would take the people several hours more before they could be ready for the crossing, and time for the, perhaps, two millions of people to cross before sundown had still to be allowed. By eleven o’clock, perhaps, the people began to remove from their tents and by midday the priests would be venturing into the edge of the rushing flood, and it would be at this time therefore that the first effects of the collapse that had occurred upstream became visible at Jericho in the retreat of the water’s edge. Now if this effect became observable at Jericho at midday the disaster at El Damieh would have occurred not more than two hours before; the high velocity of the water in the Jordan would drain the channel between the two places within that time. It must be concluded then that the collapse occurred not earlier than ten o’clock and yet Joshua knew precisely what was going to happen when he rose that morning, and probably earlier, during the small hours.

Reasonably, it may be expected that God revealed this coming event to him by means of a dream, as has been done so often in Scriptural story. Joshua saw the high, overhanging cliffs, the rushing river sluicing its way between them; in that incomprehensible manner associated with dreams he knew that he was looking at Jordan, although the place itself he had probably never seen before. Even as he looked, the ponderous masses moved and slid, with irresistible force, across the foaming channel, and as the waters behind began to pile themselves up behind the barrier into an immense lake, and those

in front quickly drained away and left the river-bed bare, he knew that he was seeing what the Lord was about to do, and awoke, ready for his great task. Thus it was that he was able to give Israel so accurate and graphic a description of the marvel that was to happen in a few more hours’ time.

The rest of the day’s programme fits into this picture very well. By one o’clock the crossing was in full swing. It need not be assumed that the people waited to negotiate the river channel in one long procession—two millions would take a long time to cross in that way. More probably Israel was encamped along a wide “front”—perhaps five miles or even more along the course of the river—and when the word was given they began to cross in a body. In such fashion the entire host, with all their flocks and herds, tents and baggage, could be inside the Promised Land in three hours. By four o’clock the transfer could have been accomplished and the priests begin to make their own way up out of the river-bed. Even as they did so, the water began to flow again, following their retreating footsteps as they came slowly up the terraces. By six o’clock—sunset—the river was in full flood once more.

The crossing of Jordan was a miracle. The agency used was a natural one; the powers of Nature were enlisted in the service of God. But God knew beforehand what He was going to do and when He was going to do it; He gave His servant Joshua due notice several hours before the event, and then, when the hour had struck for the barriers to be thrown down and Israel enter his Promised Land, “*the sea saw it, and fled; Jordan was driven back . . . at the presence of the Lord.*”

---

## EVIL SURMISINGS

Whoever neglects the Lord’s commands along the line of “evil surmisings” weaves a web for his own ensnarement, however “circumspectly” he may walk as respects other matters; for a heart impregnated with doubt and suspicion towards fellow creatures is more than half prepared to doubt God; the spirit of sourness and bitterness implied is at war with the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of love. Either the one or the other will conquer. The wrong spirit must be gotten rid of, or it will defile the New Creature and make of him a “castaway”. On the contrary, if the new nature conquer, as an “overcomer”, it will be along this line; if evil surmisings are overcome, half the battle against present difficulties and besetments is won. The surmisings are from the heart, and lead us either to good words and acts, or to evil words and acts.



## THE QUESTION BOX



**Q** *What was the intention behind Jesus' instruction to the disciples in Luke 22.36 "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one"?*

**A** Perhaps a process of elimination will help. Could Jesus have intended His disciples to acquire and carry swords for offensive purposes? The answer is clearly "No". His whole teaching militates against that suggestion. The Christian way is one of peace, and our warfare, as Paul says, is "not with carnal weapons". When before Pilate a few hours later, Jesus said "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, but now is my kingdom not from hence" (i.e., not based upon the principles or methods of this world).

Was the injunction to the end that He might be successfully defended in the Garden, and rescued from those who were coming to arrest Him? Again, no! He went there willingly, knowing that He was going to arrest and death. It was for that purpose He had come into the world. When Peter did use his sword in a vain attempt at rescue, Jesus commanded him "Put up thy sword again into its place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."

Could the swords have been recommended for the disciples' own defence in later days? There may be more reason to stop and consider this, in the light of the words of Jesus which led up to the exhortation in question. "When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, 'Nothing'. Then said he unto them 'But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip; and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one'". Did this mean that the Divine care that had provided for their wants when they went out two by two to evangelise the villages of Israel was now to be withdrawn and henceforth they must rely upon their own effort for sustenance and safety? If so, this would seem to be a strange reversal of the Divine way, and moreover is not borne out by the disciples' later lives. So far as their history is recorded they were always dependent upon God for their needs. With respect to personal safety there is no indication anywhere that they ever used the sword for defence against human enemies; on the contrary, they were assured that they must be afflicted, persecuted, imprisoned and even in some cases put to death for

His Name's sake, and all of this they were to endure that they might win the promised crown of life. There is no thought of using physical means of defence here.

But the answer must lie in the comparison made by Jesus "When I sent you. . . . But now". When they went out as evangelists it was to the comparatively settled and peaceful villages and towns of Judea and Galilee, where they could go from place to place without encountering wild beasts or other wayside perils. At nightfall they would reasonably expect to find refreshment and lodging from their fellow-Jews and go on their way in the morning. That kind of hospitality was a binding custom on all at that time. But after Jesus' death they were to travel to distant lands across waste and desolate country, where food would not be easy to obtain, nor hospitality from those of like mind. A scrip to carry reasonable provision, and a purse to carry the small amount necessary for daily expenses, would be requisite. Wild beasts—wolves, jackals, hyenas, leopards, panthers, tigers and lions, all common in Western Asia outside the inhabited districts—would constitute a menace, and in days when there were no such things as guns, the sword was the only possible defensive weapon against such. All travellers carried them habitually for such purposes.

It might be, then, that the words of Jesus were intended as an intimation of the mission that lay before them, the scrip, the purse and the sword being cited as symbols of the nature of their future experiences. No longer was their life's work to be a simple pastoral ministry in the homeland of Israel, but a vigorous missionary work, amid unknown peoples and unimagined perils, in strange lands and places, to the uttermost parts of the earth.

"And they said unto him 'Lord, here are two swords'. And he said unto them 'It is enough'". He realised, perhaps, that they had failed to grasp His meaning, and were thinking only in terms of immediate defence from the danger that threatened Him at that time. And so far as that was concerned, two swords were enough—enough for Him to refuse their aid at the critical moment and drive home for all time the lessons He was trying to teach them. After His death and ascension, perhaps, the disciples realised as they did not realise earlier how woefully they had misunderstood Him on that fateful evening.



Thou, therefore, endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

BIBLE STUDENT'S MONTHLY

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# BIBLE STUDENT'S

# MONTHLY

Bible Study

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Vol. 26, No. 2

FEBRUARY, 1949

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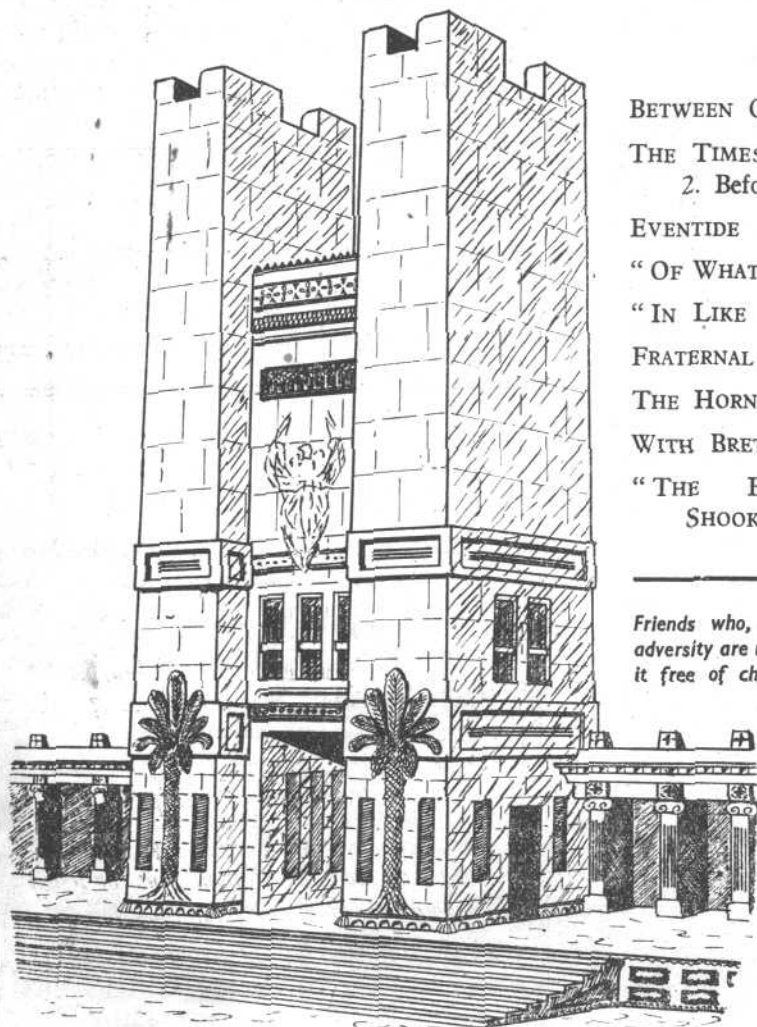
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Lift up your heads, O ye gates,  
 And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors,  
 And the King of glory shall come in.

## BETWEEN OURSELVES

A very sincere invitation is extended to brethren who have not responded to the circular recently sent out by Pastoral Ministry, but who nevertheless would like to have the benefit of the service; to write now and make request. It is stressed that no company is too small in number to participate in the visits; in fact, this Ministry is intended for the "twos and threes", and small groups, rather than for the larger ones who are better able to make their own arrangements, although, of course, all groups, small or large, are equally welcome to the brethren's services. Do not hesitate, therefore. If the ministry is acceptable to you and could be a blessing to you, write to The Secretary, Pastoral Ministry, 62, Greenway, London, S.W.20, at once.

\* \* \*

A very warm welcome is extended to the London Monthly Meeting, held on the third Saturday of each month in the Tudor Hall, Caxton Hall, S.W.1. Full details of this month's meeting appear on this page. This is a unique opportunity to meet brethren from other parts of London and join with them in praise and worship without interfering with your own regular Sunday meeting attendance.

\* \* \*

A monthly united meeting for praise, worship and fellowship is now being held by the brethren of the Nottingham Area in the Chapel of the Y.M.C.A., Nottingham. This meeting is normally on the first Sunday in each month, and a warm welcome is extended to friends from outlying districts who can make it possible to attend.

\* \* \*

This is for the attention of our friends in Chicago, U.S.A. The British Post Office have passed us a Money Order for Two Dollars handed in at "Chicago Austin" on or about 13th November last but so far we have not heard from the sender as to what this amount is intended for. (The Post Office do not normally give the name of the sender and in this case we have no clue.) Will the friend responsible please write to us?

\* \* \*

The Benevolent Fund is in the charge of four brethren to whom Bro. E. Allbon, 20, Sunnymede Drive, Ilford, Essex, acts as Secretary. All communications relative to the Fund should be sent to Bro. Allbon. The sincere appreciation, in the Lord, of these brethren go to all whose loving thought makes the continuance of their work possible. They continue in their privilege in confidence that while the need persists, our Master will inspire His own to meet that need.

On another page we print a short report of Bro. H. Nadal's recent visits to Germany. Many of our readers are already acquainted with the work of collecting and despatching food and clothing, to that country, which is being carried on under our brother's direction. It will be a pleasure to give details to anyone else who may be interested, if such will write us with the request. Meanwhile the report itself will, we hope, be of interest to all.

\* \* \*

Will those interested please note price increase in two American books? "*Fulfilled prophecies that prove the Bible*" and "*Seeing prophecy fulfilled in Palestine*" both by Davis, and published by the Million Testaments Campaign, will in future cost 2/9d. each post free instead of 2/0d. as heretofore. Both can be obtained from Welling.

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### Gone From Us

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Sister L. Aldridge (*Ealing*), 27th November, aged 84 years.

\* \* \*

"Till the day break, and the shadows flee away."

## LONDON MONTHLY MEETING

Saturday, 19th February, 1949  
6.30-8.30 p.m.

In the Tudor Hall  
CAXTON HALL

Caxton Street, Westminster, S.W.1  
5 mins. St. James Park Station and Victoria Street

Praise and Worship  
Fellowship

A talk on the Christian outlook for today  
and an opportunity for questions  
A Scriptural address by guest speaker

Chairman: Bro. A. J. Lodge

Speakers: Bro. H. C. Thackway  
Bro. T. Holmes

# THE TIMES OF THIS IGNORANCE

A Study in  
Divine Purposes

## Chapter 2—Before the Deluge.

The times of man's ignorance commenced very shortly after the Fall. The Scriptures are very brief in their account of those early days in human history, but even in their brevity there is a great deal of solid information, and the most important characteristic of that age, man's rapid descent into sin and degradation, is clearly shown. To such an extent had that downward course affected all mankind that by the time of the Flood, something in the region of two thousand years after the Fall, it was recorded that "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil, continually". The original mental and moral image and likeness of God that had been impressed upon the first human beings at the time of their creation had been almost entirely lost, and with that the knowledge of God had departed. Notwithstanding the near-perfect physique and mighty intellectual powers of the men of the antediluvian age, had God not intervened at the time of the Flood the human race would have very rapidly passed into extinction. What seems at first sight to have been a merciless massacre of helpless creatures and a renunciation of the Divine purpose in creation was in fact the only way by which human life could be preserved on earth. The old wicked generation was removed and a righteous remnant preserved alive whereby a fresh start might be made.

Mankind did not come to this sad pass all at once. The process of degradation and sinking into ignorance was a gradual one. There is really plenty of evidence in the early part of Genesis that the first few generations after the Fall consisted in the main of godly men and that God was worshipped in sincerity. Whilst the defection of Cain evidently led his posterity into sinful ways more rapidly than was the case with the other sons of Adam, even Cain showed some reverence for God at the time of punishment for his crime. And it is important to notice that upon his banishment Cain "went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt . . . in the east of Eden". (Gen. 4. 16.) It would appear that the first human family still dwelt in the "presence" of God, that is to say, with some definite acknowledgment of His rule in their lives; that although sin had entered and begun its defiling and corrupting work in their hearts and minds and bodies, yet, despite the expulsion from Eden and the measure of separation from God that accom-

panied the Fall, the first human family continued in acknowledgment of God and in a form of worship before Him. So much is implied at least by the fact that in the fulness of time both Cain and Abel brought of the fruit of their labours an offering to the Lord, an acknowledgment that all they had achieved in life was due to Him and His bounty. These early progenitors of our race were the ones who preserved and handed down the story of Eden and immediately subsequent events; the faithfulness with which its dark shadows as well as its lighter views have been recorded is evidence that those who passed them on and wrote them down were men who despite their sin-stricken condition had reverence for God and a desire to serve Him still. At the birth of Seth—which must have been after Cain's departure—Eve showed by her words her personal faith in God, and still later on, in the time of Enos the son of Seth, "men" says the Chronicler "began to call themselves by the name of the Lord" (Gen. 4. 26 margin) as though only then had apostasy from God become sufficiently clearly marked that it became necessary for pious men to proclaim themselves God-worshippers, as distinct from the remaining, godless portion of the human race.

The Cainite Lamech had two wives, an indication that in his day, that of the sixth generation, knowledge of the original principles behind the institution of marriage was being lost and those principles violated. At much about the same time Enoch, of the line of Seth, was especially noted for being a God-fearing man. "Enoch walked with God . . . and God took him". At that point the veil drops over the Scripture record and nothing more is revealed about the course of human history until the time of the fallen angels and of the Flood, events which terminated Time One of the "Times of Ignorance".

Scripture gives no indication of the date of this angelic rebellion unless it be the rather vague "hundred and twenty years" of Gen. 6. 3. Jewish tradition placed the event in the days of Jared, which might easily have been a thousand years before the Deluge. It is difficult to believe that the corrupting influence of the rebellious angels upon mankind could have continued so long. Jewish tradition also represents men as crying to heaven

for release from the oppression of the angels, and sending to Enoch, in the mountain retreat to which he had been translated by God, imploring him to intercede with God on their behalf. But there can be no certainty as to the length of their disastrous rule.

We leave the first thousand years of human history, then, with the impression that men had retained much of the original knowledge of God imparted to their first parents in the garden, and that despite the entrance of sin and death there was still the endeavour to worship and serve God. Much of this may have been due to the personal influence of the first pair. There is evidence that both Adam and Eve retained their faith in God for many centuries at least after the Fall, and in all probability did all they could to implant that faith in their children. There are only two recorded utterances of Eve, but they are both significant. At the birth of Cain, her first-born, she said (Gen. 4. 1) "*I have acquired a man from the Lord*". There was acknowledgment of the sovereignty of God in that word, and, perhaps, an expression of faith in the original promise that God would one day, by means of the seed of the woman, undo the harm that had been caused by her sin. And this conclusion is intensified when, many years later, a hundred and thirty if the Hebrew chronology be followed or two hundred and thirty if the Septuagint, Seth was born and Eve said "*God hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew*". (Gen. 4. 25.) And here is an interesting thing. Seth was born *after* the murder of Abel. But Eve must have had other sons, not named in the Scripture, between Abel and Seth, for Cain's fear was that "every one that findeth me will slay me". There must have been a goodly number born of Adam and Eve and grown to maturity during that first hundred years, before the birth of Seth. How then did Eve come to know that it was of *Seth* that the promised seed should come five or six thousand years later, as we know the case proved to be? Is it possible that Eve was in fact the first of the prophets; that she, first of all, prophesied concerning Christ? And if that is so, must she not have been a godly woman, in the midst of her fallen condition looking forward in faith to the day when God should arise to make an end of sin?

There is less to go upon in the case of Adam, but what there is, is significant. It was P. J. Wiseman, the archæologist, who pointed out some years ago that the expression occurring some ten times in Genesis "*This is the book of the generations of . . .*" was the signature, so to speak, of the actual and original writer of the preceding portion. He asserted that, startling as the fact

may seem to be, the writer of Genesis chapters 2, 3 and 4 must have been Adam himself, the first part of chap. 5 verse 1 being, as it were, his "signature". Now if these three chapters are in fact from the hand of Adam, written at a late stage in his life, certainly after the birth of Enos the son of Seth (Gen. 4. 26) they constitute an indication that Adam, like his wife, had remained steadfast in his veneration for the God whose bounty he had so misused in the early days.

But when, a millennium later, the curtain rises on the stage already set for the great Flood, the world presents a very different picture. God could find only one righteous family in all that generation, and all other flesh had corrupted its way upon earth. Men were ten or twenty generations away from Eden and the Fall; Adam and Eve had been dead for nearly—perhaps more than—a thousand years; and the story of Enoch, the righteous man who disappeared from amongst men because God had taken him, was already seven hundred years old. To the men of the Deluge generation, Adam was as far back as would be, to us, our own legendary King Arthur with his knights of the Round Table; Enoch as remote as William the Conqueror, and the stories of those early days as we now have them in Genesis, and the knowledge and worship of God, was preserved only in the family of Noah. Ignorance had come to the full, men had built up a world replete with all that life could offer in the way of indulgence and self-gratification—we have no means of knowing to what high degree of civilisation they had attained but with their powerful physique and mighty intellects, not so impaired by millenniums of progressive degeneration as are ours, it must have been considerable—and God was ruled out of all their thoughts and all their actions. It was a time of steady descent into every kind of sin with no sign of release, and, because even the very idea of repentance had not appeared, no possibility of release. Peter tells us (2 Pet. 2. 5) that Noah was a "preacher of righteousness"; it is evident that his preaching was quite unheeded. The Flood came and took them all away, without knowledge, without hope, steeped in their sins, lost for ever . . . unless God had devised a way of reclamation in some coming day. It is in confidence that God has in fact devised such a Plan that we see a world of meaning in Paul's words to the men of Athens.

---

Some persons follow the dictates of their conscience only in the same sense in which a coachman may be said to follow the horse he is driving.

Wheatley.

## Eventide

*"So he bringeth them unto their desired haven"*



How greatly different from that of other men was the attitude of Jesus to popular acclaim! Which of the many leaders of Jewish thought would have opposed or curbed the rapidly rising tide of eager sentiment to make him king, as Jesus did? Had they no good cause for this? Even in mighty Rome he who could bring in the grain—thus ensuring ample food—could always count upon the approval of the multitude for his Imperatorship. But here in Israel was One who, without ships or Egypt's stores at his command, could multiply "the little" into "much", and feed from a mere handful of bread the insistent needs of a hungry multitude. No Imperial Cæsar, even in mighty Rome, had attempted, at any time, to do a thing like that! Surely therefore, more than any occupant of the Roman throne, Jesus seemed to be a man born to be a King!—so the people thought.

Israel had been fed with bread once before—fed in its passage through a wilderness. Messiah, when He came (so the Rabbis said) would do this again, but on a far surpassing scale. Moses—so they assumed—had for many years provided bread unceasingly; Messiah would do all this and more. When therefore Jesus sought to drive home the deeper meaning of the miraculous supply of food, the eager multitude gave voice to this Rabbinic expectation when they said "Evermore give us this bread". Accepting His correction that God, not Moses, gave the former bread, and the assertion that God would give "bread" yet again "to give life to the world", their immediate response was "Sir, let the provision begin right now, and let it never cease". (John 6. 25-34.)

How completely earth-bound and immediate was their concern! Bread, in plenty, and at no cost—such was their expectation now! Having once been fed to satisfaction's full content, might this not now go on unceasingly forevermore? Before a Provider-King like that the whole wide world would soon be on its knees, and Judea, not Rome, would rule the world!

But Jesus could not foster expectations like that. He had not come to be the world's Provider-King, as yet—and hence had need to "choke off" this expectant following. Lifting His explanations to a higher plane Jesus then went on to say "I am

that bread of life . . . I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any eat of this bread he shall live for ever . . ." That was a conundrum they could not solve. "How shall this man give us his flesh to eat?" they asked. To further intensify their mystification Jesus then said, ". . . except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood ye have no life in you". In this first shadowy enunciation of Memorial truth Jesus showed how greatly His mission in the earth exceeded their utmost thought.

Thereupon, with no more easy bread forthcoming, many of these followers turned away and forsook Him. After all, He was not an ideal man for a King: why then waste more time over Him? "From that time many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him" (v. 66). Turning now to the twelve Jesus said "Will ye also go away?" "To whom can we go, Lord?" was Peter's reply for them all. "Thou hast the words of eternal life." The Baptist was dead; his former disciples could not go back to him; there was no other teacher in Israel to whom they could go; moreover they had believed and were sure that only He was the Holy One of God.

There is a pathos and depth in that heart-felt response—a response which has leaped from countless hearts as the centuries have passed! When the great crises of life have fallen over saintly souls, and great decisions have confronted them, the same deep need has shaped the same response. Mighty nations may rise—and fall; gifted men may come—and go; times of plenty give place to times of want; amidst it all there has been but One sure retreat, but One unfailing Friend. When the fairer prospects of life have suffered blight, and chilling frosts have nipped earth's fairest blooms, when friends have failed, and even loved ones turned false, the language of the lonely has ever been the same. "To whom else can I turn, O Lord, but Thee? Who, like Thee, can satisfy life's deepest needs?"

We, too, in the deepening chaos of this turbulent world, have our needs of Him intensified every passing day. Thousands walk no more with Him, but have turned away for lack of understanding of the Heavenly Bread. Openly they oft deride Him whom we love, blatantly they ask for "pie"

not in the "sky" but on the earth; for to-day, not for another day. What shall I say when the Saviour turns to me? Shall I also go away? Nay, Lord, for

*"I need Thee every hour, most precious Lord,  
No tender voice like Thine can peace afford.*

*"I need Thee every hour, stay Thou near by,  
Temptations lose their power when Thou art  
nigh.*

*"I need Thee every hour, in joy or pain,  
With me, dear Lord, abide, or life is vain.*

*"I need Thee every hour. Teach me Thy Will  
And Thy rich promises in me fulfil.*

*"I need Thee, oh I need Thee, every hour I  
need Thee,*

*O bless me now, my Saviour, I come to Thee."*

With every closing day let us turn inwards unto Him and say with all our heart

*"Thou, O Christ, art all I want,  
More than all in Thee I find."*

While others turn away and walk no more with Him, let the language of our deepest need say yet again,

*"Now none but Christ can satisfy,  
None other Name for me,  
There's love and life and lasting joy  
Lord Jesus, found in Thee."*

## "OF WHAT SPIRIT?"

A THOUGHT FOR  
THE MONTH

*"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." (Jas. 1. 27.)*

There is a very manifest tendency in these days of extremes to lay the emphasis upon that aspect of the Christian calling for which one has a preference and to ignore that which does not suit one's own taste. There are, it may be, three types of those who "profess and call themselves Christians", in any sect or group, as though we might define them the Professional, the Pious and the Practising. They have their distinguishing characteristics which separate them the one from the other, and each a varying degree of usefulness in the Lord's cause, but one of the three is the more likely to learn the lessons of life and to be fitted for the future work of the Church than are the others.

The Professional Christian places his church or sect foremost, upholding it and its institutions and its traditions, right or wrong. He is not usually conspicuous for his knowledge of the Scriptures or his appreciation of the call to discipleship, but he is well-informed on affairs of the day, details of current events, and those things which have to do with church activities, social interests, youth welfare, and so on. The Church is, to him, a convenient background for table tennis parties and whist drives, and the presiding minister a useful contact to give "tone" to whatever is being done. If he ever had studied the Bible to satisfy himself as to the basis of his faith it was a long time ago and he is more concerned now with keeping the church attendance up to normal and its finances in a sound condition. He has never heard—or never heeded—the call to consecration, and the phrase

"a covenant by sacrifice" means nothing to him. He knows a lot about this world but very little about the next. That does not worry him, for all his interests and ideas are wrapped up with the things of this world, and the hidden Christ is only a historical figure, the long-since-dead founder of the institution which he himself to-day actively supports. Of the coming of Jesus to establish an earthly Kingdom he may have heard, but if so he has given so fantastic an idea no credence. If such an event did happen he would of course quickly accommodate himself to the new situation and say, importantly, to his new leader, *"Lord, Lord, in Thy name I have done many wonderful works . . ."*

The Pious Christian is of different stamp. His Christianity is to him a very intimate and personal thing, a means by which he may attain his own salvation but not an instrument wherewith to influence his fellows, the "world", outside. He holds tenaciously to the Scriptural truth that God has appointed a future day in the which He will deal with the world of men, and is not disturbed therefore if little or none of the light he possesses reaches them now. As often as not he lays considerable emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge and the desirability of Scriptural research for its own sake, and is therefore a keen student of the Scriptures, and an expert in matters of prophetic interpretation. He is intensely—and sincerely—devotional, attaching supreme importance to personal Christian experience, to the inward sense of the indwelling Holy Spirit and the consciousness and confidence of salvation. He has heard the call to consecration and counts himself a footstep follower of the Lord Jesus; but his solicitude for his own spiritual welfare and perhaps that of his immediate fellow-believers excludes in great degree any thought for the interests,

spiritual or material, of humanity in general. Scorning and despising "the flesh", and this life and world and all that is in it, he looks only to the next life and next world, waiting with some impatience for the day when he can meet his Lord and say "*Lord, we have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets . . .*"

Apart from both these is the Practising Christian, the one who has made his faith a personal thing and goes on from that to make his Christianity effective in the world. He is separated from men by his consecration but associated with the world for his service, service to fellow-men which is also service to God. He is a light in the world, showing outwardly an illumination which is all-pervading within. He holds forth the bread of life, bread which he himself has received from the One Who gives living bread from heaven. His service is according to his ability and opportunity, but it is always a service that conveys to other men something of the good that he himself has received, and

shows them something of the life that he himself lives in Christ. To him Christianity is a way of life, and every aspect of life has to be shaped and controlled by the faith for which he stands. He has learned to effect the proper division between outward works and inward piety, between service for this world and preparation for the next, and in so doing he is becoming well fitted for appointment to the exalted position of joint-heir with Christ, a Priest and King, for the world-wide work of the next Age. It was of such that the Saviour declared they were to be in the world but not of the world: the Professional Christian is *IN* the world and *OF* the world: the Pious Christian is *NOT IN* the world and *NOT OF* the world: neither of these is the injunction left us by our Lord. "*IN* the world but *NOT OF* the world" is His ideal, and the only position that can earn His commendation at the end "*Well done, thou good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy lord*".

## "IN LIKE MANNER"

### A BIBLE STUDY

"*Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*" (Acts 1. 11.)

An important text, this, when the *manner* of our Lord's return is being considered. The authority of the heavenly messengers cannot be questioned; they were certainly commissioned by God to convey this message to the disciples. The words themselves are clear and unambiguous. There is nothing of a symbolic or metaphorical nature about them; they have a positive and definite ring. We do well therefore to give this brief but vital passage some careful thought, for it contains doctrinal teaching of considerable moment.

It is well to recall fundamental principles at the outset. We hold as essential to an orderly understanding of the Divine Plan that our Lord Jesus Christ, since His resurrection from the dead on the third day, is no longer *man*. His humanity He gave on the Cross, as He said, for the life of the world. The Father highly exalted Him, giving Him a name which is above every name and setting Him at His own right hand. In this we perceive the Scriptural teaching that our Lord, who "laid aside" the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, for the suffering of death, at His resurrection took again that glory and entered into the splendour of spirit being. From then He was "the Lord that Spirit", pre-eminent among the spiritual hosts of Heaven, and like them in-

visible to human sight, except as He might choose to reveal Himself in temporary human guise, as He did in the "appearances" during the time between His resurrection and His ascension. But the "gardener", or the "stranger", whom the disciples saw on those occasions, was not the real Christ, Whom they could not look upon with mortal eyes and still live. What they did see was an outward frame of flesh and clothes adopted for the occasion, as did Daniel and Noah and Abraham and others who in their own time similarly held converse with messengers from the spiritual world. The Lord Jesus at His Return comes in the full glory of His spiritual being and is not visible to human eyes unless it be in the same way that Gabriel appeared to Daniel (Dan. 8. 15) and to Mary (Luke 1. 26).

Is this what the angels meant when they said He would return "in like manner"? In discussing this question the background of the incident must be considered.

The disciples were still in almost complete ignorance of their Master's plans. They just could not realise that the age-old hope of Messiah's Kingdom, to follow immediately upon His Advent, was not to be fulfilled. After His death those hopes had been dashed but now that they had become convinced of the fact of His resurrection the old expectations revived. They had asked Him now if, at this time, He was about to restore again the Kingdom to Israel; for He was talking about their

tarrying in Jerusalem to receive the Holy Spirit and that reminded them of His earlier words when He had said that He Himself must go away and the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, come in His place. And then He had led them out to the Mount of Olives, given His parting injunction, blessed them, and before their amazed eyes visibly ascended into the heavens and disappeared from sight. At that moment they surely stood in need not only of enlightenment but also, sorely, of comfort and encouragement. This was a second and final crushing of all their immediate hopes. They knew now that He had gone; all their rosy dreams dissolved into nothingness.

"*Ye men of Israel . . . this same Jesus . . . shall so come . . .*" From the time those words fell upon their ears there is no evidence or indication of further doubt or disappointment. They went back to Jerusalem and took up their life's work. No more do we hear of frustrated hopes or uncomprehending minds. The answer to the enigma lay in those words and the disciples were perplexed no longer. What was it the angels really did say?

The earliest extant manuscripts of the Book of Acts are in Greek. It is likely that Luke wrote the book originally in Greek, for he was an educated man of his day. But the words used by the angels would be Aramaic, the common language of the peasantry and the language habitually used by Jesus. If Luke did write in Greek, and since he was not present at the time, he must of necessity have chosen that Greek expression which corresponded most nearly to the form of Aramaic words which the eye-witnesses transmitted to him as those that were used at the time.

The phrase that he selected to convey the sense of the central and most important feature of the verse, determining the meaning of the whole, and which is rendered in the A.V. "in like manner", is one that derives in the first place from the motion of the heavenly bodies across the sky, and their regular return in their allotted paths: of the sun in its course along the ecliptic, and of the planets in their orbits. "*Hon tropon*" has the significance of a thing being done in a manner or fashion already established, and expected to follow in regular sequence. The idea behind it is that of the sun returning along its accustomed path after having gone out of sight at its setting—the same sun, and not another: the same path, and not another. (It is the same Greek root-word *trope* that gives us our English word "tropics", the zone around the Equator above which lies the sun's apparent path throughout the varying seasons of the year.) In the New Testament—and in the Greek

Old Testament also—the same expression is used to indicate similarity between two related things. Some consideration of a few such texts will show that the assurance "*This same Jesus which is taken into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven*" is indicative of the certainty that as He had gone into heaven, so truly would He come back again, as assuredly as the sun comes back on its accustomed course in the morning after sinking out of sight the previous night. In the following examples "*hon tropon*"—in like manner—is shown in italics.

Acts 7. 28. Wilt thou kill me, *as* thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday?"

Acts 15. 11. "We believe . . . that we shall be saved, *even as* they."

Acts 27. 25. "I believe God, that it shall be *even as* it was told me."

2 Tim 3. 8. "*Now as* Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these resist the truth."  
An example from the Apocrypha.

2 Macc. 15. 39. "*As* wine mingled with water is pleasant . . . even so speech finely framed delighteth the ears."

From the Greek Old Testament (the Septuagint).

Exod. 4. 13. "For *whereas* ye have seen the Egyptians to-day, ye shall see them no more again for ever."

Psa. 42. 1. "*As* the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God."

Obad. 16. "*As* ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall the heathen drink continually."

Surely these examples show very clearly that the angels' meaning was, not necessarily that Jesus is to come in the same outward guise and fashion as He went, i.e., in form and attire like a man, descending visibly out of a cloud upon the Mount of Olives, but, rather, that even as He has gone into heaven, so surely will He come again. It was this that made all the difference to the disciples when they returned from the Mount on that memorable day. The certainty of His return was as the certainty of His going. They knew He had gone; there was no doubt about that. Just so certainly, they were assured, He would come. His going was the guarantee of His returning. As He has gone, so shall He come. The manner of that coming is defined very fully in other Scriptures; the angels were not concerned to describe that. Their mission was to sustain tottering faith, and it was discharged by this word of encouragement and assurance that they gave to the little group standing there on the top of the mountain, a positive declaration of the certitude of His return. "*As truly as He has gone into heaven, so truly will He come again*".

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# FRATERNAL FELLOWSHIP

*An appeal for sincerity and consistency.*

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From the testimony of the Scriptures and from the records of observed human conduct, it is apparent that the desire for fellowship is inherent in the mind of man. There is a corresponding increase in this urge for companionship according to individual and collective harmony with the Creator and His laws. This should be manifestly true of those who probe the intellectual and spiritual realms, but it is not always apparent from the history of God's people through the ages. God's pronouncement soon after the creation of man, that it was not good for him to live alone, is a universal principle proven over and over again by a careful examination of the inspired Word. Yet the very ones who should have borne witness to this as further reiterated by Jesus and His apostles, have been those communities which time out of number have been cleft by the power of faction and strife. Upon the present generation of God's people has come the last lingering opportunity to exemplify this wonderful spirit of communion even among imperfect men, before God intervenes and changes the whole order of society. How will the remaining members of the Church face this problem and this privilege of the Last Day?

The study of the development of the various civilisations recorded in the Old Testament and secular accounts is very interesting and instructive, as illustrated by the work of Sir Flinders Petrie and other eminent archaeologists, but for the present study, a few examples taken from the history of God's chosen nation will suffice. There are a number of instances where the partnership of two holy souls seem to have been used for a particular work of God, and not least among these was that of the two natural brothers, Moses and Aaron. Each was brilliant in his own sphere of intellect, and by co-operating with his brother was able to accomplish a great work on God's behalf. The one, a profound thinker and skilful leader—the other a great orator, capable of addressing the royalty and nobility amid the splendour of the court of Egypt, and later of organising the ceremony and ritual of Israel's priesthood. This tremendous intellectual combination was overpowered by the influence of Almighty God to withstand the might of one of the ancient world's most wonderful empires, and together they led a nation of over two million persons from the Nile basin for many miles east-

wards. How often did those two great minds consult together, during the long trek, seeking Jehovah's guidance, acknowledging each other's abilities. Such a task is without equal in the whole history of mankind, but what might not be accomplished even here and now, if there was more loving co-operation between the members of the great priesthood of Melchisedec?

The love existing between David and Jonathan, although such a classic example of friendship, cannot be passed over without some reference. These two young men were by natural birth diametrically opposed. They were of different tribes of Israel, Jonathan, the young prince, was heir to his father's throne. Yet no shade of pride marred the happiness of their companionship, for David, the rugged, humble shepherd boy, who in the course of time became the national warrior hero, and prospective king in Jonathan's place, was just the youthful partner for the refined product of the Hebrew court. Jealousy found no place in their hearts, as it would if anything but the spirit of their God had ruled them. It is not hard to imagine this noble pair, as they delighted in each other's company, travelling over hill and dale, sharing each other's blessings and sorrows, chiding yet tolerant of each other's faults, moulding the character of him who was to be Israel's greatest earthly king. Without delving deeper into the story, can we reflect upon the kindling joy which would be exhibited more, if those who are training to sit on David's throne could dispense with proud, envious thoughts?

Yet one further illustration of fellowship between characters of the Old Testament has our attention in Elijah and Elisha. Maybe, as the latter was growing from boyhood into youth, and saw the rebellious, sinful nation, which was under covenant with God, he longed to help the ageing prophet with the work of reform. His young heart yearned to tell forth the message of repentance, and we may expect that he was oft to be found at Elijah's feet, gleaning all that he could of the words of life that went so unheeded by that stiff-necked race. Can we see Elijah gradually discerning that his task was nearly over and that the young man who, when conditions permitted, followed him everywhere, was to be his successor? What thoughts arose in his mind regarding Elisha who might at any time sud-

denly appear in the lime light, while Elijah must steadily decline into old age? It would seem from the narrative that the older recognised the need of the younger—that he realised the day was coming when he should hand on the torch of truth to another, and “envy of his precocious junior” would hardly enter the seer’s mind. What would have been the effect on Spiritual Israel if every servant of the Lord during the present age had recognised his responsibility to the next generation? Thus this great man of God, by granting companionship to Elisha, gradually fitted him for a work that was mightier and more majestic than he, Elijah, had been commissioned to do. His task had paved the way for Elisha’s victorious life. (2 Kings 2.)

The lessons that are to be learned from the great stories of Israel could be recounted again and again, and never exhausted, but they can be left for other considerations—suffice it that the Holy Scriptures of ancient Israel contain lessons which we might beneficially incorporate into the code of conduct of our own community. (Romans 15. 4.) Old and young, rich and poor, weak and strong must all find their place in the Church of God, if full advantage is to be taken of the opportunities that our Father has provided for His children, with each not only realising the necessity of the service of every other member of the Body of Christ, and esteeming others higher than themselves, but finding that great joy which results from “dwelling together in unity”. (Psalm 133; Ephesians 4. 16.)

The advent of the “only Begotten of the Father” upon the earth, however, gave a somewhat different complex to the subject and indeed enhanced the whole idea of human relationships, for in looking to God as a Father, a deeper relationship came through Him. In Israel, they had just been fellow-servants, but now they were linked to God by sacred ties of begetting, and therefore were under obligation to acknowledge the link between each other. Jesus was pleased to call His disciples “brother” or “sister” and desired that they should do likewise, each to the other. His tender, spotless heart must often have twinged with pain as He saw them wrangling and quarrelling among themselves, like the babies of a human family, without exhibiting the traits of maturity. How His sensitive nature would be touched as He saw them slowly grasp the lessons of brotherly love, a rule of life hitherto strange to most of those between whom no earthly relationship existed. Can we not see them going forth in the work of bearing the message, two by two, anxious to bring honour to their beloved Master’s name, and of telling to the “man in the street” something of the great truths they had learned of Him. Do we think that His

instructions lacked concerning the care with which they should look after each other? Surely no, for in later days He was to speak to them concerning their love for each other being the distinctive “hall-mark” from the world. (John 13. 36.) Then came the stinging blow to His labours among them, for throughout His ministry He had urged them “in honour prefer one another”, and at the very eve of His death they were arguing as to who should have the chief seats at table. Do you think He questioned them upon the implications of the various covenants as He gently washed their aching feet? Were the doctrinal disputes allowed by the weary “Elder Brother” as they sat at the last meal of which He was to partake? His one thought was to encourage and exhort them, and to bring home to their obdurate minds the lessons of unity and oneness in Him, that they, by developing characters like unto His own, would one day share the greater fellowship of similar nature in the Divine sphere.

One of the most prominent features of the New Testament writers was in continuing the work of their Lord, to promote the fellowship of the brethren in Christ. It was not an easy task for the Apostles to imbue the early church with the spirit of the Master spoken of in 1 Peter 1. 22. The love of Christ was such that He was willing to lay down His life for their sakes, and now, in accordance with His words, they were to do likewise. It was not a trivial thing for Jew to love Gentile, nor for poor to love rich, but now united in Jesus how could they forbear to honour His command? Yet the need for repetition was apparently great, and forceful arguments were necessary in order that the lesson should be driven home. Among the many recorded letters of Paul there seems only one to whom he could write without a warning against unbrotherly conduct. The church established so soon after their Lord’s ascension was indeed a wonderful community, in which it would appear that the love Jesus commissioned his followers to exhibit one toward another abounded to the uttermost. Alas! how quickly they forgot the parting exhortation of Jesus, and how rapidly they allowed the spirit of the old nature, with the shadow of sectarianism, to becloud their heavenly vision. Unto Rome, Paul needs write concerning judging other brethren, reminding them of the blessed privilege of the stronger aiding the weaker. This great Christian philosopher, having set forth a long doctrinal treatise, realised that many to whom he was writing would find difficulty in understanding all that he had said, therefore in chapter 15, verses 5 and 6 he bids them to adopt that Godlike quality of patience and consolation one toward another. Turning to his letters to the Church at Corinth

we find a condition in the church that has been prevalent throughout the Gospel Age. What havoc pride of leadership caused to the early believers in Greece, and what wreck has it made of the Christian faith to many, even unto the present day. The failure to recognise Christ alone as the supreme guide of the church, and the desire to have an earthly leader in His place, caused Paul to write at length concerning the ministry and its effect on the fellowship of the members of Christ. Instead of brotherly kindness prompting their words and actions, rivalry and carnality in its worst forms had arisen among them. The treatment given to the subject in the second letter indicates that at least the lessons had been learned in part, but Paul, knowing the elements of the old nature were still among them, reminds them in chapter 5, verses 14-17, of the vitalising basis of their standing in Christ, that not of their own intellects or goodness were they admitted into the Divine family, but through the love of Jesus which henceforth must be the influence which binds their hearts together into one community.

Thus such a rough analysis could continue into all the writings of Paul and his fellow journalists, but like so many intriguing phases of this subject, it must await the scrutiny of other researches. This one theme, however, is manifest in all the New Testament epistles, that reliance upon the earthly methods and worldly ambitions, the return to the naturally human attitude towards the lives of others, could have but one effect upon the children of God—the undermining of their faith in Christ's ransom sacrifice and of their love one for another. Only to the grand little corner of God's vineyard at Philippi, could the Gentile evangelist write in full terms of appraisal. They alone had caught the richness of Divine affection and to them only he was able to open his heart and speak of the choicest things of the spiritual realm. What joy it gave the great Apostle that they had rejoiced in the fraternal love of the Anointed, and how he must have longed that other Christian communities might emulate them.

What effect has all this upon the church who remain in the flesh in the closing years of its earthly sojourn? Are there not some lessons here that we could learn which would help to strengthen our fellowship, that would make us more fitted to dwell with our Lord and with each other during the ages of eternity? Let us briefly review our position as Christians. We were consecrated from the world to the service of God, and by His spirit of holiness we were begotten unto a lively hope. Steadily the light of our Father's Word shone upon our pathway and gradually His purpose for the race

was revealed. In adoration, praise and worship our lives were set apart for His service, and we began to delight in the company of fellow pilgrims. In fact Peter's words in the opening chapter of his first epistle, verse 22, became a wonderful reality, and in all sincerity we loved our brothers and sisters in Christ. But as the years went by, hope sometimes remained unfulfilled and the "pure heart fervently" became an empty dream; instead of hearts welding into solidarity they drifted apart, and lost the first love for each other. For centuries only a few faithful Christians held fast to the faith in Christ Jesus, until one after another, the Reformation leaders came and gathered a little band of true believers. Upon the death of each reformer, the old dogmas returned, not with such forcefulness as hitherto, but sufficiently to spoil the family spirit which is the heritage of God's children. Thus our own fellowship has fallen for the same fate, for as with each other little movement of Christian endeavour, there have been those who have sacrificed the bonds of love in the Lord for the sectarian spirit of bondage and the creedal barriers which have caused strife and envyings. Ominous signs in world history portend that ere long the days of the Church will be over for ever, and the opportunity for fallen human beings to lift themselves above the stricken world and to exhibit to each other the spirit of the Master, will be passed for ever. Again we humbly place the challenge—can we, while yet the surging billows of trouble are gathering momentum, and the clouds of trouble darken our very sky, can we as brethren overcome the fleshly imperfections and look at each other as Jesus would have us do, after the spirit?

As we turn the pages of the sacred Scriptures, we see reiterated in the words of the Apostles James, John and Peter, the same theme of brotherly affection that Paul emphasises so much. Like Paul, they are not content to place before their readers inanimate facts, but exhort, nay, they plead with those early Christian brethren to give all heed to putting into practice the principles of the Divine family. The thoughts which the "beloved" Apostle gives expression to in 1 John 3. 14-19, seem to be the pith of this practical love, and he shows how that those who claim to know the truths of the Gospel, must demonstrate it among themselves. What use will a head knowledge of the "presence of our Lord" be, if we have failed to recognise His abiding presence in our midst, the unseen guest in our studies, the unnoticed member of our family circle? Surely the grandest way of expressing our belief in the sharing of the sufferings of Christ is to lay down our little all for our brethren. Indeed, John says that this is how we may perceive the

love of God in our hearts, if we willingly spend our time, talent and possessions for those of like faith. Can we claim to be obeying this precept if we never see our brethren when although we have ample opportunity, we deliberately refuse to fellowship with them.

Finally the unknown writer to the Hebrew Christians gives us an admonition upon which we can, if faithful to our vows of consecration, hardly fail to act. (Hebrews 10. 24 & 25.) Shall it ever be said of us that we come under that class of "as the manner of some is"? The days of cliques and groups in our fellowship must be brought to a close, or may be, those whom we have described as being "in darkness" will yet win the crown by their simple acts of love to their brethren. Let us, brethren, give all diligence to add to our faith, brotherly kindness; let us become used to the company and fellowship of those whom God has been pleased to call "Sons", and thus the old rancour of difference of opinion will fade as harmony is reached in quiet humble research and loving heart to heart conversation regarding godly things. The days of dread and fear are coming upon the earth, and the words of the Master concerning the last days are being fulfilled before our eyes. Shall we even now spare efforts to aid our brethren in making their calling and election sure? Before the "abundant entrance" is reached we must learn to tread the pathway of thorns together, hearts linked

in heavenly union, as joyfully we press forward to the prize of the High Calling.

What a prospect lies before us, "completed union with our beloved Lord"! Soon with all the Sons of Glory we shall dwell with the Father and fellowship with Him and His dear Son, perfectly forever. Fellowship with them is possible now, although limited to our frail nature, but this is enhanced a thousand fold by communion with those who are treading the same pathway, and who have the same goal. Let us look forward in happy anticipation to the complete family Circle in the Divine nature, for "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".

*"Love is the filling from one's own, another's cup.  
Love is a daily laying down and taking up:  
A choosing of the stony path through each new day  
That other feet may tread with ease a smoother way.  
Love is not blind, but looks abroad through other eyes;  
And asks not 'Must I give?' but 'May I sacrifice?'  
Love hides its grief, that other hearts and lips may sing,  
And burdened walks, that other lives may buoyant wing.  
Brother, hast thou a love like this within thy soul?  
'Twill change thy name to saint when thou dost reach thy goal."*

## The Horns of the Altar

Meditation on  
Psalm 118. 27

How delightfully stirring to the fervent Christian soul are the words of this beautiful Psalm. And what deep searching thoughts they provoke! Composed by one of the sweet singers of Israel in the days long gone by, and spoken in such wise that they seem to refer to his own times, yet how much deeper meaning there is in them, when the Holy Spirit illuminates them, in the mouth of our Lord Jesus. "The stone which the builders refused is become the head-stone of the corner."

How much more important they become in His mouth than in the Psalmist's. If these words were written following the return from Babylon, and just after the rebuilding of the Temple, how beautifully descriptive this may be of one particular stone, seemingly out of place everywhere in the temple walls, and thus refused and rejected by the builders, until the temple is all but finished—and lo, when the topmost row is being laid, the ungainly stone

finds a place as the head-stone of one of the corners. Such a state of things might more easily come about when "re-building" a temple, from the piled-up debris of a former structure, than on erecting an original structure.

And then, next in order, after the erection of the Temple would come the dedication and the subsequent sacrifices. "Bind the sacrifice with cords, even to the horns of the Altar"—that would be the language of true devotion, so soon as the Temple had become the Sanctuary and Dwelling-place of the Lord their God.

But the Holy Spirit has made deeper use of these words than that of a mere eye-witness of the rededication services of a rebuilt Temple.

The Word of God shows Jesus to be the Stone, which, rejected by the Jewish polity-builders, will eventually become the Head Stone of the Corner, when the Lord rebuilds the walls of Zion.

After extorting from their own lips God's judgment upon the unfaithful husbandmen (Matt. 21. 41), He asks them "*Did ye never read the Scriptures 'The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner; this is the Lord's doing and it is marvellous in our eyes'?*" (v. 42).

The Apostle Peter gives us valuable aid in identifying both the "Stone" and the rejectors thereof, when he writes "*To whom coming . . . a living stone, disallowed of men, but chosen of God and precious*" (1 Pet. 2. 4).

Jesus was that stone in the primary sense, whom the Jewish builders rejected.

In the secondary and larger sense, it was a Spiritual Messiah (or Christ) over which they stumbled and were disobedient. They looked for a Messiah in the flesh. Unlike Paul, they never came to say "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth know we him no longer" (2 Cor. 5. 16). Paul had once looked for Christ after the flesh—a human Christ—yet henceforth because his eyes had been opened he was now looking for a New Creature Christ—a spiritual Messiah. That Stone of Stumbling, the stone which the builders rejected, was Jesus!

Thus Psalm 118 in its deeper sense is a Psalm descriptive of Jesus as the Christ, and incidentally of all those who are baptised into Him. That gives us our bearings then for applying the binding of the Sacrifice to the horns of the Altar. Behind the earthly sacrifices of bulls and goats or other victims which were laid on the Altar, there is a picture of the better sacrifices, and of the antitypical altar of sacrifice.

Now let us remember, in the first place, that whatsoever was placed on the altar was devoted to God. Either it was to be utterly consumed by fire; or a portion was burnt, and another portion was reserved for the priest; or a third measure, a portion was burnt, and another taken by the priest, and still another taken and consumed by the offerer himself.

The fire consumed God's portion in some cases, the fire and the priest (who was God's representative) did so in others, and when the offerer took a portion it was as the guest of God. Now all these means of disposing of the sacrifice shows how exclusive the claims of the Altar were. "*Behold Israel after the flesh, are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the Altar?*" (1 Cor. 10. 18) which means that that which is devoted to God, and placed on the altar, is no longer to be accounted of common use. Whosoever thereafter partakes thereof, is made holy thereby. It would be accounted sacrilege of the grossest kind, and lay the offender open to the severest penalties, to take of such altar-flesh, and

use it improperly or when unclean. Everything that was devoted to God, whether of necessity, as in sin-offerings, or of free-will, as in thank-offerings was brought in whole, or in part, to the Altar. In placing such sacrifice on the Altar, it was, as it were, placing it in God's hands, which were accounted open and outstretched to take it and to receive it.

"Given to God" was the all-pervading thought in the mind of everyone who brought his "gift" to the Altar.

This aspect of Israel's altar—or rather God's Altar among Israel—shows us how serious and solemn a matter it is to approach and present a gift (or other sacrifice) to the Most High God. It was a unique favour indeed to be permitted to do this. To approach the presence of Majesty and offer a gift worthy of a King is accounted a great honour among men. How much greater honour to approach Eternal Majesty and ask Him to accept and utilise something which poor, imperfect grovellers in human flesh may wish to offer Him, to be used in His service. Many men link themselves up with earthly movements, and count it an honour to do so, if royalty bestows its patronage or approval upon the movement. Now think of God's "movement"—that is, His Plan of the Ages, His Plan of Redemption—and who, with love and charity in his heart for his fellow-men in adversity, but would rejoice to have a part, if only a little part in that great work? Ah, yes! that would be easy if it took place just because of humanitarian impulses—if it were a matter of joining in with God in "doing something spectacular"—of doing something for angels and men to see!

But God's way is not just that way. He is not asking junior members or partners to join His "firm"—He is most certainly seeking "co-workers", but He is not giving them "a seat on the board". They are not invited to be "co-directors" with Him in His programme, but are working with Him, because He works "in them" to "will and to do of His good Pleasure". They do not work with Him "automatically"—that is, non-intelligently—but they have their intelligence, as well as their hands, directed by Him.

God requires the complete surrender of the whole being—heart, mind, soul and strength—to His Sovereign Will—and for this surrender, the Altar is the symbol. The Altar stands for the full consumption and absorption of all placed thereon. Only ash remained when the fire had done its work. In eating the part allotted to him, the priest was only sharing with the Altar. And it is because God interposes the Altar between Himself (and His works) and those who would like to "lend Him a

hand", that so few ever reach the position of being "co-workers" together with Him. Blessings unspeakable and favours innumerable flow to others, through those whom God does accept into "co-worksip", but He bestows His gifts through none who are afraid of, or who "cheat" the Altar. Uplift and humanitarian movements abound in every land, but of what avail are they? They may stoke some poor man's fire a bit brighter, or give a breath of country or sea air to some dweller in slumdom darkness—but praiseworthy though it be—it passes in a moment, and leaves the disease uncured. Probably the worst phase of the disease is in the workers themselves—they want to do the good work in their own way. Plenty of money and of willing hands, and "we'll do it yet"—that is the spirit and attitude of the reformer generally.

Oh! if only men will learn that it is the work of God to heal the broken heart, and ease the burden of suffering; and that there is no other panacea to heal the sin-sick world.

The humiliated attitude of consecration, of waiting God's due time, and doing things in God's way, is accounted by the worldly-wise as "doing nothing". It has not sufficient of the "here and now" spirit about it. And so, the way of God is despised and disesteemed; and so have been, and so still are, all those who are willing to submit to God's way.

"Despised and rejected" was the Man of Sorrows, but that was because He had laid Himself on God's Altar. Had He chosen to "lead the people" He could have become popular and world-famous.

God's Altar is the contrast to the world's pedestal, but He that goes by way of the Altar will reach beyond the stars—and the outcome of his choice will be eternal. If there are times when the consequences of our choice seem to fret and irritate us, and when, because our lives are lived in quiet backwaters, we look on and see our fellows racing to the front amongst men; take the cords of devotion again, and bind the sacrifice more firmly to the horns of the Altar. Make your new cords daily, new resolves, new affirmations, new pledges, and say to the Lord that till His due time you will wait, and will be fully submissive to His Way.

The words "*Not as I will, but Thy Will be done*" make a fine cord. "*Choose Thou my way O Lord; myself I cannot guide*" makes another—and so on.

The sacrifice may not be removed from the Altar; it was given irrevocably once-for-all to God; it must be consumed in submission to His Will.

If it makes life a narrower thing; a restricted environment, remember, there is not much room on the top of the Altar—it is a narrow way, but it leads to the greatest achievements because it is God's own way.

When therefore the flesh struggles for more liberty; or if you feel at any time that things in God's plans are going slow; that expectations are not turning into realisations quickly enough, bind the sacrifice down again. Tie it up to the power (horns) of Him who sanctifies the Altar; and let Him help to hold it where the fires can "eat it up", all that God has graciously condescended to accept from your hands.

## WITH BRETHREN IN GERMANY

*For a considerable time past, Bro. H. Nadal, of the Aldersbrook Church, has been active in the interests of brethren in Germany and a good many offerings of food and clothing from friends here have passed through his hands into that country. This narrative of his recent visits there will be read with interest by those who have concern for our fellow-believers across the North Sea.*

Two visits have been made to the brethren in Germany. In October last, a week was spent in the American Zone, and in December, a fortnight in the British Zone, many classes and brethren being visited. On Friday night, October 15th, the first crossing was made from Harwich to Hook of Holland, where we were met by Brother Alblas of the Hague, and his daughter-in-law. At Rotterdam contact was also made with Brother G. van Halewijn, a dear brother well known to many English brethren. Crossing southern Holland, and

entering Germany at Kaldenkirchen, a scene of much devastation met the eyes. It truly appeared a country of the dead. Particularly was this noticeable at Cologne and Frankfurt. At the latter place we encountered the first German brethren. Alighting from the train we were met by Brothers Fritz Buck and Paul Legere of Frankfurt, and Brother Reinhold Lauster of Stuttgart. What a meeting that was! They all gripped our hand at once, and we stood in one handshake in what seemed an eternity, but which was obviously the deepest joy to us all. We had an hour and a half before the train continued to Stuttgart. In that time the brethren poured out their hearts, not overrating difficulties, but rather giving grateful testimony of the Father's keeping power. As one appreciates what these brethren went through in the twelve years, 1933 to 1945, one marvels and rejoices at their steadfastness.

The time passed. We continued on to Stuttgart in company with Brother Lauster, our host during the stay in Stuttgart. A sincere, deeply spiritual, Christian brother, his one desire is to discuss the truth, God's plan, and learn all possible regarding the British and American brethren. Stuttgart was reached at four o'clock in the early hours of Sunday morning. The first meeting with the Stuttgart brethren was at 2.30 that afternoon. There we met many friends with whom we had had correspondence, and to whom food and clothes had been sent from England. Words will not describe the richness of fellowship that followed. As one dear sister said, "We speak a different language with the tongue, but we speak the same language with the eyes". Having learned something of their sufferings and persecutions for righteousness sake, we were privileged to address them on "*Suffering with Christ*". They listened patiently as the interpreter made plain our words to them. The following day a convention was held, brethren attending from long distances, from Munich, from the French Zone, whilst Sister Norma Schneider travelled all the way from Hamburg.

Tuesday and Wednesday were spent in visiting brethren in their homes. What a pleasure it was! What a Christian welcome we received! Much was learned of their needs, material and spiritual, the great lack of food—fats, meat, milk, sugar, etc.; the shortage of clothes, especially underwear; the need for German Bibles and opportunities to issue fresh publications. On Wednesday evening a final meeting was held at the home of Brother Staiger, a dear brother of sterling character.

Thursday morning saw the return to Frankfurt, where a meeting was held at the home of Brother Legere. Some twenty or thirty brethren who have only re-assembled as a class during the last few months met in real fellowship.

The return to England commenced on Friday, October 22nd, with a short stay at the Hague, to enjoy the hospitality of Brothers Albas, Verschuur and Van Halewijn, and to meet the Hague class.

On November 26th the visit to the British Zone commenced. Crossing northern Holland, the German frontier was passed at Bentheim, and soon greater damage was apparent than had been seen in south Germany. The German people appear apathetic to everything except fear. Only on the faces of brethren one saw a smile—an expression of deep joy.

At Hamburg we were met by Sister Schneider and her three sons, and went on to their home at Pinneberg. They were mindful of our every need. On the Sunday meetings were held at Hamburg and Pinneberg. Here again the fellowship was as before, sincere and true.

Next day saw us at Luneberg, a very old German town, where dwells Brother Burmester. Here again an uplifting meeting was enjoyed with the brethren in the locality. On Tuesday we continued to Uelsen, being met by Brothers Otto and Emil Sadlack, whose experiences are well known to many of us. What these brethren suffered will not be eliminated during their earthly life. Yet there was no word of complaint, only gratitude at the Father's over-ruling care. Here again a rich and sweet fellowship was enjoyed, and endeavours made to learn more of their immediate needs.

On Wednesday we continued to Hannover, a city heavily bombed, and in ruins. Here, in the loving care of Brother Johann Oltmans, his wife and sons, we rejoiced and again rejoiced. Here also we met a very live class of brethren who manifested their love for the Lord and their brethren beyond the sea.

On Saturday, December 4th, in company with Fritz Grove of Peine, we left for Kirchlengern to meet the largest class of brethren in the British Zone. Brother Wilhelm Trippler, an elder of the class, and his son, met us on arrival, and for the next few days poured out their love and care upon us. How much we would like to say of these dear brethren.

In the days that followed many were the sweet contacts made. The classes at Bad Oeyn-hausen, at Minden and Herford maintained the warmth that we had experienced all along the way, and amongst others the sweet fellowship of Brother and Sister Bleckmenn, Brother and Sister Herbusch and Brother and Sister Altenhuis. On Friday, December 10th, we returned to Holland, spending a few enjoyable hours with Brother and Sister van Halewijn. We acknowledge our Father's over-ruling care in all arrangements made, and our gratitude that the object for which the visits were made was achieved.

We realise, more than ever, the material needs of our German brethren. With the British friends' co-operation we will continue to send them all available clothes (especially underwear) and medicines. We found much evidence of the loving work of our American friends in the supply of food parcels. We see our Father's hand in the sympathetic interest now shewn towards the German brethren by the Religious Affairs branch of the British Military Control, to whom we have been able to make some of their wants known. We believe that the hearts of those who belong to the Lord are receptive to the appeals of those they recognise as brethren. Shall we not continue to co-operate and not to be weary of well doing, for as our Lord said, "*By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*"?

## "THE EARTH TREMBLED—AND SHOOK"

A COMMENTARY  
ON CURRENT EVENTS

A man, recently appearing before the magistrates at Birmingham, was accused of "blemishing the peace" by writing to Royalty and other prominent personages warning them of coming Divine judgment on the world. The Act of Parliament of 1381 under which the proceedings were taken cited the offence as causing "annoyance and distress" to the personalities concerned. The defending solicitor added an unconscious touch of humour to the case by urging that the accused was "rational in everything except his belief that the world was drifting to perdition". To the unbiased observer it might well appear that such belief was probably the most rational thing about him. A good many well-known men have been saying the same thing in recent years without being prosecuted for saying it. In this case the offender, who was said to have been making himself a nuisance for a long time, went to prison for three months, but this salutary punishment consequent on insisting upon a fairly obvious fact will not noticeably affect the world's drift toward perdition. Whether or no it causes "annoyance and distress" to men who do not want the present world order disturbed, the fact daily grows more startlingly clear that we are in the end of this dispensation, and the words of the Second Psalm come home with burning intensity: "*Be wise now therefore, ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with reverence, and rejoice with awe. Do obeisance to the Son, lest he be angry and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled*". One is

reminded of Queen Victoria, who is said to have consistently maintained that she wielded the sceptre of England only until such time as the Lord Jesus Christ should return to earth to claim His rightful power to reign, and take the dominion.

\* \* \*

A careful analysis in a recent issue of the "*Scientific Worker*" concludes that of all Government expenditure on scientific research and development over 80 per cent. is devoted to "Defence", i.e., to preparation for war. If the money that is spent by private industrial firms is included in the total, it still remains that over 60 per cent. of the nation's scientific effort is being expended on such preparations. This is no time when men are crying "Peace and safety". Rather are the words of Joel being fulfilled "*Beat your ploughshares into swords and your pruning-hooks into spears*". There can be but one end to this mad race of the nations, each for strength superior to the others; but after that grim climax is over we can look forward to a new world under the rule of the Lord Jesus Christ, in which not 60 per cent., nor yet 80 per cent., but 100 per cent. of all humanity's available resources and powers will be devoted to works of peace and reconstruction. "*They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord; . . . They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain . . . and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands*". (Isa. 65.)

### COVENANT

You see, Beloved, that when you make this covenant that we are talking about, you are making a covenant and you are making an agreement, and a contract with God that is to last beyond these mortal times—something that goes into the beyond, something deep enough to stand the test of the age-end and all its trials; and you are making a covenant, you are surrendering yourself for time and for eternity, and it brings a peace and a rest that God has promised to the soul, and you cannot get it by somebody's writing it out or quoting it to you, or reading it out of a book, or any other way other than the one way of getting it—by really calling for Jesus, a real call for Jesus, and a real obedience to the Word of God—obeying that Word of God by faith. It is a faith step. It is a faith act. It must be by the Word of God finally, or the prayer will bring you finally to the Word of God, and the Word of God will be made living, and real, and vital in your life. ("*Union Guide*.")

### COMMUNION

*Begin the day with God;  
Kneel down to Him in prayer;  
Lift up thy heart to His abode,  
And seek His love to share.*

*Open the Book of God,  
And read a portion there,  
That it may hallow all thy thoughts  
And sweeten all thy care.*

*Go through the day with God,  
Whate'er thy work may be;  
Where'er thou art—at home, abroad,  
He is still near to thee.*

*Lie down at night with God,  
Who gives His servant sleep;  
And when thou tread'st the vale of death  
He will thee guard and keep.*

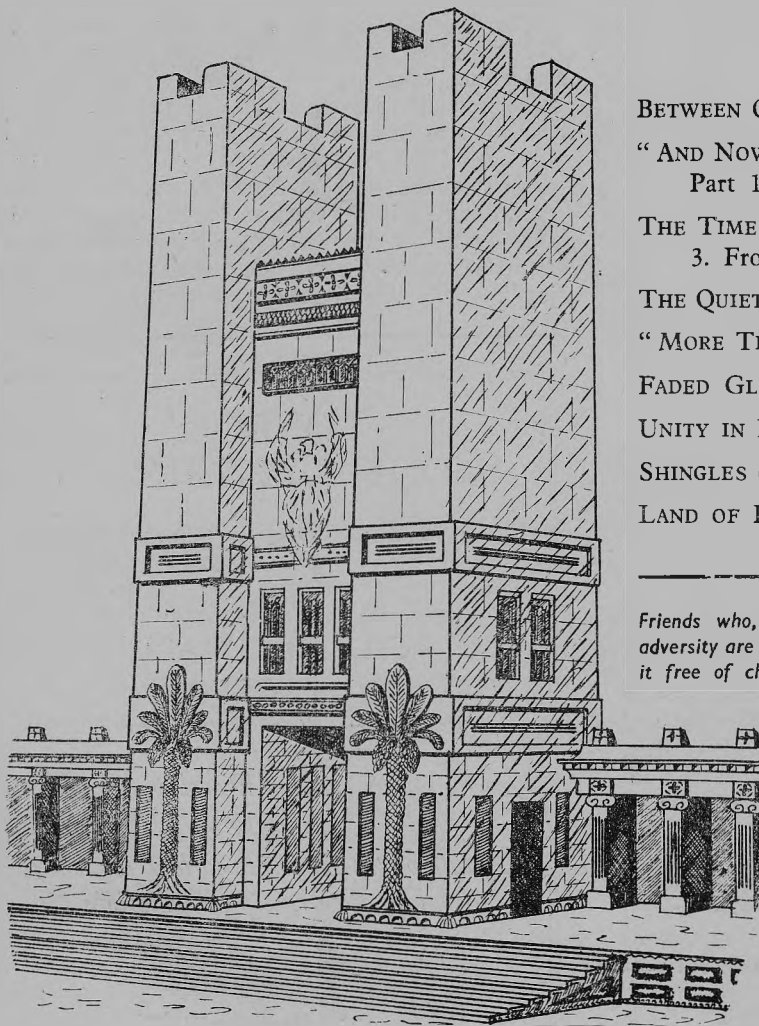


Thou, therefore, endure  
hardness as a good  
soldier of Jesus Christ.

<h1 style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0;">BIBLE STUDENT'S</h1> <h1 style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0;">MONTHLY</h1>				
<small>Joseph hine, madden eap Tahiregetu he com</small>	<small>Elifed au ye wren man mufte perofes you / and flaf falte for let of mud. Jeyne agrefi waf</small>	<small>All bolleys thalbe crafte mountayne and byll layre fo is croked thalbe made th</small>	<small>ye fed of Abramam his fervan Jacob his chofen. * the Lo &amp; our God. hu j</small>	<small>* And * God abal wite waf. All ye fofe thofe thofe ye waf. fofe abaf to the wofe thofe fofe thofe thofe. fofe thofe thofe thofe thofe. fofe thofe thofe thofe</small>

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MARCH, 1949



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Lift up your heads, O ye gates,  
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors,  
And the King of glory shall come in.

## BETWEEN OURSELVES

Those of us who remember and appreciated the ministry of Bro. Paul E. Thompson in this country in 1938 will be glad to learn that (D.V.) he is to pay us a visit this year between August and October. Further details will appear in the May "Monthly".

\* \* \*

The usual Easter Convention is to be held at Warrington and friends are requested to write for accommodation as usual to the Convention Secretary, Bro. C. Spilsbury, 94, Heath Road, Penketh, Warrington.

\* \* \*

A bright and happy atmosphere characterised London Monthly Meeting at Caxton Hall on Saturday, January 22nd last. The hall is a well-furnished and comfortable place of gathering and the friends who attended from various parts of London seemed appreciative of the opportunity thus to meet together. Bro. G. H. Jennings spoke on the significance of present events in the light of prophecy, his words being received with marked attention, and then, after a short adjournment for fellowship, Bro. H. Nadal related some of his experiences with the friends in Germany, bringing home to all present the realities of the situation amongst our brethren over there. (Some of these things appeared in last month's B.S.M.; those who wish to know more or want to assist in any way may write to Bro. H. Nadal, 35, Palace Gardens, Buckhurst Hill, Essex.) The meeting closed with a time of special prayer for our German brethren that they may be given strength and grace to stand fast in all the trials that are their lot at this time.

\* \* \*

A new series of meditations on I Cor. 13, under the title "*And now abideth . . .*" continuing the thoughts taken up in the series "*The Greatest of These*" which appeared last year, commences in this issue. There is always room for thought and discussion on this memorable chapter, and we trust that the labours of the brother who prepared both these series will be repaid by the appreciation of our readers:

\* \* \*

In response to one or two enquiries we would say that we can supply from Welling the hymnal known as "*Songs of Praise*", published by Oxford University Press, words and music, at 10s. 3d. post free.

\* \* \*

Plans are now being made for the annual London Convention, held under the auspices of five London classes, at August Bank Holiday season next, in Conway Hall, London, as on previous occasions.

Further details will be announced in due course, or may be obtained from the Convention Secretary, Bro. G. H. Jennings, Grove House, Roding Lane South, Ilford, Essex. Friends requiring accommodation are requested to notify their needs as early as possible to the Accommodation Secretary, Bro. S. H. French, 4, Woodlands Gardens, Woodford New Road, Walthamstow, London, E.17.

\* \* \*

It is a pleasure to announce that a new booklet for witness work is now ready, consisting of the articles on "*A Glimpse of God's Plan*" which appeared in the October to December issues of the B.S.M. The booklet is attractively printed in blue on white paper and has a space on last page for rubber-stamping local address if desired. Orders may be sent in at once, at 1/8 per dozen copies or 11/- per 100, post free. The booklet traverses the main features of the Plan briefly, but includes everything of importance and it is sincerely hoped that it will become a useful addition to the present available means of spreading "good tidings of great joy".

### LONDON MONTHLY MEETING

Saturday, 19th March, 1949  
6.30—8.30 p.m.

In the Tudor Hall  
CAXTON HALL

Caxton Street, Westminster, S.W.1  
5 mins. St. James Park Station and Victoria Street

*Praise and Worship*  
*Fellowship*

*A talk on the Christian outlook for today  
and an opportunity for questions*  
*A Scriptural address by guest speaker*

Chairman: Bro. L. KINSEY.  
Speakers: Bro. A. O. HUDSON.  
Bro. W. F. FOX.

# “And Now Abideth . . .”

A Series of Studies  
in 1 Cor. 13

## PART I

In a former series of articles some attention was given to the linguistic significance of the two Greek words—*Agape* and *Phileo*—which in many modern versions are translated by our one word “Love”. We therein sought to show that the early Christian Church had had to give to these two words specific definitions of its own. So much new light and understanding of the Heavenly Verities was breaking through into the range of their sanctified consciousness, that the old words had, perforce, to become the burden-bearers of all this wealth of truth, and do service for nobler things and purposes than any they had served before.

To the Early Church the “*Agapee*” was expressive of the unbounded Love of God, that mighty resistless “force” which was putting through the great Redemptive and Restorational Plan for the recovery of man from sin and death. Meantime it was the “Power” which enabled men of different race and temperament to dwell together in “unity”—and to sink themselves and all their varied interests into the present-day preparatory stages of that Plan. It formed the bond of common citizenship in the Heavenly Polity, and the link of present mutual brotherhood in that larger, wider Family Relationship, which, under God, would yet embrace Heaven and earth. When the Love of God was shed abroad in their hearts they accounted it to be a spark from that same ardent flame which, in a coming day, would consume all impurity and unrighteousness, and refine all things that were refinable.

Even the word “*Phileo*” had taken on a wider, deeper meaning than the Greek classics had given it, and had come to stand for a brotherhood no longer circumscribed by blood relationship. Apostolic men cut right through all tribal and patriotic boundaries and gave to every believing man, regardless of his ancestry, the right hand of fellowship and brotherhood in Christ.

But it is the wider, deeper, conception of the “*Agape*” that is to be the theme of this present study.

We also have compared the “*Agape*” with those various “other things” with which Paul contrasted it in the course of his argument—those various other “ways of life” formulated and fostered by the philosophic minds of Greece and of the Orient.

Paul had set the “*Agape*” very deliberately over against the “*Gnosis*” and the “*Musterion*” (the occult knowledge and the cultic mysteries) of Ancient Greece and Babylonia, together with the purifying fires of Mithraism in Medo-Persia, and claimed for “it” that it was by far a much more excellent way of life and happiness. He had also placed the “*Agape*” over against the “*Charismata*” endowments of the infant Church, and claimed for “it” superiority over these—heaven-conferred though they were! To say the least, Paul proclaimed it to be “the better way”—time, at last, will show it to be “the only way”.

This contrast with all these “other things” provides a background for our present survey. When, therefore, we are considering this or that element, of which the *Agape* is composed, we can ask the question openly “What place had this element in the Grecian, the Persian, or the automatic Christian way of life? How would it fit into the living experience of those who pursued these ways of life?”

Next, we can ask what place has this element or that in the Christian way of life—first of all, in God, and then in that of all the saints who have received their spark of *Agape* from Him? In this way we shall be able to place these seemingly simple graces over against the attitudes and posturings of heathen priests, of cultured philosophers, and other privileged rulers of this present evil world, and learn how Heaven evaluates these simple things as of transcendently greater worth than all the thrones and crowns and mitred privileges of which this present evil world can boast.

And more than that, in the universal scale of things, the simple practice of Love, in its many elements, will be found to be of greater potential worth than all the finely-phrased odes and plays of the Greek or any other Age. The simply-phrased, though fervent, exhortation of the Christian minister, beseeching his attentive hearers to “put on” love, will be found, when the full tale is told, to have contributed much more towards the moral cleansing of a sin-steeped world, than all the fine-spun phrases of all the golden pens or silvery tongues the world has ever known. Even if not immediately effective it is a contribution most positive in its nature, and in full conformity with the outlines of the Great Plan of recovery which can never fail.

Coming now to the consideration of our text we read, "*But now abideth faith, hope, love; these three . . .*" "*But now abideth . . .!*" Evidently these three things are to be placed in contrast with certain other things spoken of in the foregoing context. Paul has referred to some things that would not "abide". Of these he says, "they shall be done away . . . they shall cease . . . it shall be done away."

Presumably the "abiding things" are intended to be set in contrast with the things that were to pass away. Because of this the Church's then future witness was to be affected by her growth in grace and not by demonstration of her automatic Charismata. Thus, when these gifts of "prophesying" and of the immediate use of "tongues", etc., were withdrawn the Church's life would begin to express itself more naturally in the development of faith, hope and love, and because of this, those who were drawn to her ranks by their pursuit of the miraculous would tend to fall away, and in this way her ecclesias would be purified, her true children edified and beautified by grace and truth.

Now it ought to be obvious that even though Paul asserted that knowledge (of a kind) would pass away (verse 8) he did not intend his readers to understand that *all* knowledge would pass away, and give place to a state of general ignorance in the Church. Even the very graces which were to abide require knowledge as their foundation-stones. There cannot be "faith" without knowledge, nor any hope. And most certainly there cannot be any "*Agape*" without a knowledge of the Divine Intention to rescue the world from sin and death. Hence though Paul does not specifically mention knowledge of this kind as an abiding thing, it is obvious that it must abide, and abound also, as the groundwork of all "these three".

We must therefore assume, right now, that an increasing measure of Christian knowledge, diligently sought for by intensive study of the Word, is pre-requisite and all-essential to the continuance in faith, hope and love. Actually, in an illustrative sense, knowledge is the soil out of which—in part—the "*Agape*" must grow. That same statement is also true of faith and hope. But as faith and hope, in a certain sense, are both found as constituent elements of the "*Agape*" (see v. 7) it will not be necessary to discuss their outgrowth from the soil of knowledge any further.

As for the all-embracing Master-grace, it is actually knowledge transmuted to maturity and fragrance of character through its relationship to every subordinate grace of which Love is composed. In exactly the same way that no floral fragrance or beauty can exist without the prior existence and use of soil, so also there could be no fragrance of Love

without the existence and right use of sanctifying knowledge. Let us try to work this out.

Every constituent element of Love must express itself in some form of service or activity. They do not stand for mere abstractions or even states of mind alone. And even those which are set out from the negative point of view—"love envieth not"—have a positive aspect the very opposite of that stated in the text. That being so, there must be some act (or series of acts) in which every element of Love finds its suitable expression.

Behind every act accordant with Love, there must be motive and intent. Behind all motive and intent there must be understanding and comprehension of the why and wherefore of the act. That brings us right back to our antecedent state—our knowledge of the need for such an act.

In so far as the "*Agape*" is concerned in a general way, God has stated most explicitly why there is need for IT to act. Man is fallen under sin, and cannot extricate himself from its stranglehold. Because God knows the need for help is great, He has made certain moves to meet that need. Behind all God's kindly acts are His gracious motives and intents; behind these motives and intents is the knowledge of the need. Hence, Redemption's activities is knowledge "plus"—plus many things.

This same reasoning holds true in our own little world, with all its minor happenings. To call forth a kindly act, we must have come to sense a "need"; we do the kindly thing to meet that need, hence our knowledge (or sensing) of that need, becomes the antecedent to the act. Were we to be questioned why we did the kindly thing we would say we knew the need and the opportunity were there. It would be quite enough to say we knew of that need, and how to meet the need.

In our association with the Lord in the things pertaining to His Father's Plan this relationship of prior knowledge to both motive and act holds good all the way. Jesus warned us what to expect from our contemporaries. The course of this present world being antagonistic to our own, would create many needs—which means many opportunities to do the kindly thing. To have been fore-warned means that we have fore-knowledge of what to expect. Hence we are primed in advance, to be on the alert to see or sense another's need.

In God's ordinance of affairs for us it is His desire that we do the kindly thing when we are given to sense its need. There is here a two-fold reason now for our kindly act. First, we know a need exists; next, we know it pleases God for us to meet that need. Now, if we are questioned why we do the deed, we have this two-fold reason to offer in reply.

Then furthermore, inasmuch as we have been taught that each kindly deed would re-act back upon our own hearts and minds and leave behind a deepened impression of the Divine graving-tool thereon, we would find yet another reason for our act. Then as we ponder on a larger truth which we have learned, we should see that our kindly act is a minor victory won for righteousness (and God) in the age-long conflict between right and wrong—evil and good—sin and righteousness, and is thus a tiny contribution to the over-all effort required to overthrow the wrong.

It is because we have come to KNOW that these daily struggles and victories, with their resultant deepening of character are the Divine means of preparing the instruments of mercy and righteousness, by which He has purposed to bring in the *Agape* Way of Life in the Coming Age, that these little happenings take on their measure of importance and value. It is because we have learned of the world's great need, and of the Divine Intention to meet that need in this very particular way that we have been led to consecrate ourselves to the Divine will, and submit ourselves daily to the pressure of the graving-tool in readiness for the day and hour when God will begin to move to meet that need.

Thus each tiny growth in this or that element of the all-comprehensive *Agape* in the heart of any child of God, is a tiny contribution to the diffusion and establishment in the earth of that mighty

motive force with which Almighty God intends to bring in the perfect way of life.

The knowledge we possess is thus the antecedent factor to everything we do and say in our service for the Lord, and this also must abide as the groundwork for our faith and hope and love. Only thus, can faith be faith and not credulity; only thus can hope be hope, not wishful expectation; and only thus can love be love, not mere sentimentality. A knowledge such as this, devoted to such ends, can never become "puffed up", nor inflated with a sense of its own importance. The great universal objective before it is too big to gender pride. Instead, the very immensity of the conflict between Right and Wrong, and of the forces and powers engaged therein, is enough to make us realise that only God is equal to the task and that even *we* need His very constant care to help us in our skirmishing to-day.

It is knowledge such as this that makes us long for the companionship of our Lord Jesus every day, and to find His Resurrection Power working in us all the time. Without this knowledge we would never yearn to share in His sufferings, nor long to participate in that special Resurrection from the dead. Nor could we live in hope that the great Oath-bound Promise would ever be fulfilled, or that the present suffering nations would be blessed.

Our knowledge *must* abide, for out of it our Faith and Hope and Love must grow.

*To be continued.*

## THE TIMES OF THIS IGNORANCE

A Study in  
Divine Purposes

### Chapter 3—From the Deluge to the Exodus

It was after the Flood that men began to reason in their minds, as Paul did before Felix, of "righteousness, temperance and judgment to come" (Acts 24. 25) but their reasoning was crude and immature. There was still no idea of the nature of sin, and no understanding of repentance. Men were making efforts to regulate their lives in an orderly fashion and to establish some standard of justice and right dealing—that much is evident from the records and laws that have come down to us from their times—but there was no realisation at all, outside the very narrow circle of those who did know and worship God, that only by means of a full knowledge of God and a full acceptance of His ways would their problems be solved and their hopes fulfilled. It is not surprising; even in our

own day, five thousand years later, the majority of men have made little progress in that direction.

From the time of God's covenant with Noah, immediately after the Flood, to the call of Abraham, a thousand years after, there is no record of the Divine dealings with man, no indication that any man, even of the line of the chosen "seed" through Shem, was specially notable for his faith and piety. The only occurrences that are noted in all that period are the building of the Tower of Babel and the city building exploits of Nimrod (Gen. 11 and Gen. 10). There is nothing here to afford any idea of the extent to which men had progressed in their knowledge of God. The story of the great Tower certainly indicates a degeneration in the other direction. And the statement of Joshua in his parting

charge to the children of Israel (Josh. 24. 2) is significant. He declares that Abraham's ancestors, down to Terah his father, served *other gods*. Laban, grandson of Abraham's brother Nahor, possessed and worshipped teraphim—images of household deities—so that very evidently the uprightness of Noah and his sons had been lost in the intervening generations and perhaps was only recovered in Abraham.

Although the Bible says very little about this period there is a tremendous store of written records now in the world's museums which were made during this time and from these it is possible to form a very fair idea of the state of men's minds in those days. So far as the ancestors of Abraham, and their fellows, in Ur of the Chaldees and the neighbouring cities in the south country were concerned, the records show them to have been a deeply religious people, but their devotion was not inspired by love or by reverence; it was inspired by fear. Their mythology embraced a great number of gods and goddesses but the incentive to sacrifice and worship was the propitiation of those deities that their anger and wrath might be averted. It was almost as if men realised instinctively that they were in a condition of enmity with God and must find some way of reconciliation with Him, but did not know the way. Dim recollections of a happier past lie embedded in the Chaldean's religion and in their folk-lore and poetry. They wrote and sang of a time when there was no evil on earth and all men dwelt in happiness. They spoke of a Tree of Life and of Water of Life, and in one of their oldest poems, the "*Epic of Gilgamesh*", the hero goes through many harrowing adventures in order to find the Plant of Life only to have it dashed from his fingers by a serpent in the moment of success. The laws of Hammurabi, a king who lived just before the time of Abraham, give evidence of a sincere attempt to administer the realm along lines of justice and right doing, so much so that his "Code" is studied and quoted by men of law even to-day. The people told each other of Oannes, the mysterious being who had come up out of the sea to teach them all the arts of civilisation and the ways of life—a very evident tradition of Noah, who was in fact the author of all that they had and knew. But there was a glimmering of light in those dark minds; some of the hymns to the gods breathe the spirit of repentance and supplication, and in the *Gilgamesh Epic* the hero is told by the immortal being who had, long before, escaped the Great Flood (Noah) that "so long as brethren quarrel and so long as there is hatred in the land, so long will death come to every man". There was at least that realisation in the minds of a people who had nothing but a few dim and distorted recollections

of a nobler past to guide them in such search for truth as they were disposed to undertake.

In the land of Canaan, a thousand miles from Ur of the Chaldees, there lingered in the days of Abraham another worship, that of *El Elyon*, the "Most High God". That worship continued until the days of Joshua and the entrance of Israel into the land, but by then, judging from the written records that have been discovered, it had become hopelessly corrupt. Perhaps in earlier days, long before Abraham, it did represent a tolerably pure and true remembrance of the faith that was in Noah. There is no doubt that the "Most High God" was the same as the God of Shem and of Noah and of Enoch. The Scriptures give one significant glimpse of this worship that was general throughout Canaan for many centuries. When Abraham returned from the defeat of the invading Chedorlaomer and his army (Gen. 14) there met him outside Salem (Jerusalem) Melchizedek, the "Priest of the Most High God". Abraham bowed down before him, acknowledging his authority, and gave him tithes of the spoils. Would Abraham, the father of the faithful, the friend of God, thus do obeisance before this man unless he recognised him to be a servant of the true God, of his own God? Assuredly not. It is clear that Abraham knew the "Most High God" of Canaan to be the same One who had called him out of Ur of the Chaldees and promised him this land as an inheritance.

Melchizedek was a Priest-king, a King of the land as well as its Priest. That is not only declared in both the Old and the New Testaments, it is also confirmed by records discovered by archaeologists. Documentary tablets now exist showing that a line of Priest-kings calling themselves "Priests of the Most High God" and claiming to hold their position by decree of the Most High God, and to be independent of any earthly rulers, ruled in Jerusalem for many centuries right up to the time that the Israelites crossed Jordan. The last of those Priest-kings was Adoni-Zedek, who was slain by Joshua (Josh. 10). By that time the system of worship of which he was the head had become corrupt and idolatrous; there was no true knowledge of God in Canaan. The Priest-kings had long since given a form of allegiance to Egypt, and the life of the Canaanites was such that God, in His wisdom, decreed that they be blotted out from under heaven. Once again had the light failed; once again had it been abundantly demonstrated that man, even with the advantage of a reasonably clear knowledge of God and His ways at the start, is unable by his own unaided strength in his fallen and sinful condition to maintain that standing before God. The men of Canaan, in those early days when they worshipped the Most High God, failed and fell

because they needed a Redeemer, and the due time for the Redeemer was not yet come, and without that Redeemer their knowledge and their piety availed them nothing. Abraham in his day may have found—must have found—much in their worship and much in the ministry of their priest-king Melchizedek with which to sympathise. Joshua, six centuries later, found nothing, nothing but a system of superstition and idolatry with which the worship of Israel's God had nothing in common; and he swept it all away.

But God had called Abraham. Despite the prevailing ignorance and darkness there was a new light in the world. For the first time in human history there was definite outward evidence that God was moving to the fulfilment of His promise and the execution of His purposes. God had called Abraham, and the world now saw a new thing, a fully consecrated man, his life devoted to the Divine service, being led and used as the first of many instruments and agents in the work that is to culminate, at last, in the overthrow of sin and the reconciliation of "whosoever will" to God.

There is no hint in the Bible of any such thing as consecration or dedication to God's purpose and service before Abraham. He was the first, but after him there has never been a time when God has been without his consecrated servants in the earth. The work begun in Abraham has progressed ever since without remission or interruption. And with every fresh development in the outworking plan of God the light of knowledge and understanding grew brighter. In Abraham the downward course of ignorance was checked. From then, although men were still in the Times of Ignorance, they had at least begun the long upward climb which led to Pentecost.

Abraham was an educated citizen of Ur, a city-state which occupied a high place in the scale of world civilisation. Obedient to the Divine call, he went to Canaan, a land whose cities were as elaborate and whose peoples were as civilised as those of the land from which he had come. Scorning the life of a town-dweller, he adopted the simple pastoral mode of living, that he might the better follow God. He knew God as *El Shaddai*—God the Almighty—and that simple fact shows that he was already in advance of the Canaanites, who in their worship of *El Elyon*—the Most High God—did not realise the all power of God as did Abraham. Perhaps this was the starting place of Abraham's faith, that God is not only the Most High, remote, detached from the affairs of ordinary men, but is also All-Powerful, His might stretching unto and bending toward earth that He might do all His good pleasure. The Sumerians and the Canaanites limited the

power of God; to them He, like themselves, had often to suffer the onslaughts of evil forces without being able effectively to repulse or destroy them. Abraham knew better; God was all-powerful and had the whole fate and destiny of all mankind at His own pleasure. Whatever He purposed, that He could most surely perform, for He was *El Shaddai*—God Almighty. Abraham's faith was built on that understanding.

Thus it came about that at the end of the times of the patriarchs, when Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph, had been laid to rest, the world was ready for the next great revelation of God's character and Plan. The great power of God was now understood, the inflexibility of His purpose and the inviolability of His oath. A dim outline of things to come could begin to be discerned; a future day when the faithful would inherit the land and God's favour be with them for evermore. How it could come about did not as yet appear; the consciousness of sin and the necessity for a Redeemer from sin had hardly as yet dawned; but there was at least a hope in God of a resurrection from the dead and a means to regain, at the last, the happy state that had been lost so many long ages ago in Adam.

At the time of the Fall knowledge of God was confined to one pair. At the Flood it was preserved in a family. Now at the time of Israel's bondage and coming deliverance it was spread amongst a nation. At the next great stage it was destined to be proclaimed abroad among all nations. Now, God looked down from heaven, and God heard the groaning of His people in Egypt and knew that it was time to act. He chose for Himself a man and a woman of faith; He cast the mantle of His protection over their child—and thus God called Moses.

*To be continued.*

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## "TIRED" CHRISTIANS

There are *tired* Christians who will work if coaxed to do so. But the tired Christian complains so much that there isn't much joy in it for anyone.

Second, there is the *retired* Christian. He believes that he has done his share and sits idly by, exercising his right to criticise.

Third, there is the *rubber-tyred* Christian. He may go along if the way is clear and the road is smooth.

Finally, there is the *flat-tyred* Christian. He was once active and faithful in service, but he suffered a puncture, and has never recovered his wind.

—(From the *European Christian*.)

## THE QUIET TIME

"My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places."

### DEEDS, NOT WORDS

*They do the least  
Who talk the most,  
Whose good designs,  
Are all their boast ;  
Let words be few.  
They do the most  
Whose lives possess  
The sterling stamp  
Of righteousness ;  
For deeds are true.*

### TRANSFORMED

In the contemplation of all that is lovely as embodied in Christ, of all that is pure and holy and beautiful, we are changed little by little into the same blessed likeness, from glory to glory. Let this good work of sanctification go on until every grace adorns the spotless robe of imputed righteousness given us by our Father through Christ. Let us mark well the love of the Master, His gentleness, His patience, His zeal, His personal integrity, His self-sacrificing spirit. *Mark well ;* then imitate His example.

### " LEARN OF ME "

He who will not be sweetly ruled by the Divine will is penally governed by himself ; and he who casts off the easy yoke and light burden of love, must suffer the intolerable load of self-will. May I breathe under the light burden of love, and be not restrained by slavish fear, nor allured by mercenary desire ; but may I be led by Thy free Spirit, which may witness with my spirit that I am Thy child. For he who walks in the Spirit never remains in one state. His way is not in himself, but as the Spirit dispenses to him according to His good pleasure, now more faintly, now more eagerly, he forgets the things which are behind, and reaches forth to those which are before.

—Bernard of Clairvaux.

### DEPENDENCE

When we depend upon organisations, we get what organisation can do ; when we depend upon education, we get what education can do ; when we depend upon man, we get what man can do ; but **WHEN WE DEPEND UPON PRAYER, WE GET WHAT GOD CAN DO.**

### INCENSE

*The sweetest perfume* that the home circle ever knows arises from the deeds of loving service which its members do for each other. The sweetest perfumes of our homes do not arise from elegant furniture, soft carpets, elegant pictures, or luxurious viands. Many a home, having all these, is pervaded by an atmosphere as tasteless and odourless as bouquets of waxen flowers.

### CONSISTENCY

To follow faithfully one's highest ideals, even when these are at variance with accepted notions and practices, is the way to enter large and true life. There is no other failure comparable with a failure to obey the inner voice.

### HIS YOKE

What is a heavy cross to the old nature is light and easy to the new. Faith willingly takes Christ's yoke and love gladly bears His burden. His service is felt to be no humiliating bondage, but freedom from hard taskmasters. Christ fits the load to the strength and gives more power as He adds weight ; those who bear His yoke and burden are brought near Him, and knowing Him better, love Him more. Love lightens labour. They welcome claims upon their love ; they view their burdens as signs of their Lord's trust and pledges that He is training them for a service of perfect joy and freedom. "My yoke is easy and my burden is light."

### EBENEZER—STONE OF HELP

(1 Sam. 7. 12)

*Not one single moment passes,  
But is laden, as it flies,  
With some precious gift of blessing,  
Which His loving care supplies.  
Not one step, in faith, is taken,  
O'er life's pathway rough and dim,  
But may open out new treasures  
To the soul that trusts in Him.  
Ebenezer ! countless mercies,  
Bid us praise Him more and more,  
Calmly to His wisdom leaving  
What the future has in store.  
Let no faithless thought, arising,  
Hide His presence from our view,  
He will never more forsake us,  
Who has blessed us hitherto.*

## "MORE THAN CONQUEROR"

Some significant pictures of  
the Christian Warfare

The Scripture which has suggested this title is Romans 8. 37 "*Nay in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us*". A conqueror is one who gains a victory, one who after a struggle overcomes and surmounts the difficulties in hand. But the Scripture already quoted contains the Greek word *hypernikas* which does not appear anywhere else in the Bible, and it strictly means "to have more than victory" and is translated "more than conquerors".

What can this mean "more than conqueror"? In Leviticus 16th chapter, valuable details are recorded concerning some of the ancient Tabernacle arrangements, and regarding the "Lord's goat", which was the second sacrifice on the Great Day of Atonement; here can be seen a picture of the "more than conqueror".

The Lord's goat, first taken from the camp, or world condition, was brought to the court of the Tabernacle, and was there, at the door of the Tabernacle, presented before the Lord. Sacrificed after the manner of the bullock, it represents those who are privileged to sacrifice after the manner of Jesus. It represents those who suffer with Him, those who are disesteemed with Him in the course of righteousness.

Our Lord Jesus, during His earthly ministry, went on voluntarily presenting Himself, a living sacrifice in His Father's service. Further, He, the Captain of our salvation, was made perfect—or complete, as a New Creature—through sufferings. In all that Jesus experienced it can be said that He was more than a conqueror. For Him to have been merely a conqueror, according to the generally accepted usage of the word, would have meant that as the perfect Son of God He would have overcome the evil and wickedness of the world; it would have meant gaining victories over evil and adverse circumstances, and a keeping of the perfect law perfectly. Jesus did all this and more. He sought opportunities to serve His Father, and presented His body continually, and wholly, an acceptable sacrifice in that sacred service. From Jordan to Calvary He willingly and gladly poured out His very being unto death, in harmony with His Father's word and will. Jesus was more than a conqueror, and the "more than conqueror" Christian is to overcome and conquer in a special sense, even as He overcame. Just as the spirit of the

Heavenly Father enabled Jesus to become more than conqueror, so the same holy influence enables us, not merely to crucify, to kill the goat-like, stubborn, depraved will, but to follow the footsteps of Jesus, to go without the camp to the utter disregard and destruction of human hopes and ambitions, bearing His reproach.

It is expected of us that we have more than a simple victory. During our Christian warfare, God is for us, and as stated by the Apostle Paul, "who can be against us"? And because we put on the whole armour of God (Eph. 6. 13-18) we are by His grace, successful in our conflict with the world, the flesh, and the adversary. But that is not all—not only is our faith *not* weakened in the struggle and our love *not* diminished, but our faith is *increased*, our love intensified. In fact there is a rich fruitage of the Holy Spirit in every respect—more and more love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and self-control. Our begetting to the Divine nature is not only maintained, but developed. Christ is being formed in us; we are indeed being changed into the same image from glory to glory. All this, is certainly having more than a victory, and throughout this process we are "more than conquerors through Him that loved us".

It is interesting to note that from scenes relating to Abraham and Lot as recorded in the 18th and 19th chapters of Genesis, we can get illustrations of those who overcome in a partial sense, and those who overcome as Jesus overcame; those successful in the one hope of their calling to be members of the body of the Anointed, and those who "fail so to run as to obtain"; those who are willing closely to follow Jesus in fulfilment of their consecration vow, and those who are unwilling to fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ; those who bind the sacrifice with cords unto the horns of the altar, and those whose love and zeal are not sufficient to impel them to perform, for the Lord's sake, the sacrificing they at first agreed to do.

As a preliminary to dealing with some word pictures from Genesis 18th and 19th chapters with a view to illustrating the subject in hand, here are a few general remarks:—Genesis 18th chapter, verses 1-19 describe a scene enacted more than 3,860 years ago. Abraham, then 99 years of age,

was camping at Mamre with his family and household, servants and herdsmen, totalling over one thousand persons. Abraham was resting in the Divine promise "In thee, shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12. 3). A remarkable conviction, Abraham believed God unmistakably, and this "was counted to him for righteousness".

Genesis 19th chapter, verses 1-16, deal with Abraham's nephew Lot, in Sodom. Lot possessed much less faith, and much less rounded out character, than his uncle, Abraham. Lot, nevertheless, would be considered by many as a good man, and 2 Peter tells us that the course of the Sodomites vexed his righteous soul. Yet, Lot evidently was deluded into association with evil influences, for the sake of worldly prosperity. His quest for wealth brought rich material returns, but his wealth and influence in Sodom was at a tremendous cost to himself and family.

*Word Picture No. 1, entitled*

**"THE SCENE WITH ABRAHAM AND LOT."**

(Gen. 18. 1. Gen. 19. 1.)

Lot, who experienced a lack of fellowship with God, was in Sodom on the shore of the Salt Sea, later known as the Dead Sea. The Dead Sea is approached on all sides by a steep descent; it is 1,292 feet below the Mediterranean Sea level, and is said to be the lowest depression on the surface of the earth. This was where Lot was found, on the low-level in Sodom, midst the noise and bustle of the world.

Abraham, who enjoyed fellowship with God, was actually on a high-level, on the high-level plains of Mamre. For us to live with Abraham on the elevated plains of Mamre, means fellowship with God. It implies a knowledge of the Divine purpose; to know Him and His plans, to be acquainted with the truth. To see things afar off, and if once we, from our elevated position, see afar off, we should not be overcharged again with earthly things. We are to be rich in faith, as was Abraham. We are to venture upon our faith; live on the elevated plains of Mamre.

*Word Picture No. 2.*

**THE HEAVENLY VISITORS.**

(Gen. 18. 2. Gen. 19. 1.)

Abraham lifted up his eyes, and lo *three* men stood by him; whereas Lot saw but *two* visitors. Abraham, who was honoured with *three* heavenly visitors, fitly pictures the "more than conquerors", those living on the elevated plains, in fellowship with God. The vision becomes enlarged. Spiritual perception is increased. Such can say with the

Apostle, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with *all spiritual blessings* in heavenly places in Christ". As pictured by Abraham's enlarged vision, so we may have "the eyes of our understanding enlightened"; and blessed are our eyes, for they see.

*Scene No. 3.*

**"THE PLACE OF MEETING."**

(Gen. 18. 1. Gen. 19. 1.)

Abraham was sitting at the door of his tent; Lot was sitting in the gate at Sodom. The scene with Abraham at the tent door is a reminder that our fleshly body is simply a temporary dwelling place, a tent, our permanent house being the spiritual body that God will give us in the glorious resurrection. The Apostle Paul in 2 Cor. 5. 1 refers to this, our earthly temporary house or tabernacle, being dissolved, and of our receiving a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Now Lot illustrated something quite different. He seems to have been earthbound, centred on the low-level in Sodom; his every thought and interest seems to have been there. We are exhorted to mind the things of the Spirit and not the things of the flesh; to walk after the Spirit and to mortify fleshly aims and selfish ambitions. We are not to be centred in Sodom, but on the high-level and at the tent door, on the alert, seeking to know and do God's will, and always ready to move in obedience to the heavenly visitors.

*Scene No. 4.*

**"THE TIME OF VISIT."**

(Gen. 18. 1. Gen. 19. 1.)

Abraham received the visitors at about noon, "in the heat of the day". Lot received them "in the evening". Lot received the heavenly visitors at the close of the day, *after* experiences. If we develop a deep love for the Lord, and are faithful; if our worship is in sincerity and in truth, He will reveal himself to us here and now. We are then bound to recognise him and his requirements, also his leadings on our behalf; we shall then be privileged to find and recognise God's hand and also receive His blessings *early*, and not late, in our experiences, even like Abraham, during the heat of the day.

*Picture No. 5.*

**"THE WELCOME GIVEN TO THE GUESTS."**

(Gen. 18. 2. Gen. 19. 1.)

Abraham (99 years of age) "ran to meet them"; he displayed zeal. Lot "rose up to meet them"; he seemed to be lukewarm. Lukewarmness in the

Christian life is to be partly hot and partly cold, divided between Christ and the world; not willing to give up heavenly hopes, but at the same time clinging closely to earthly ambitions; having too much conscience to cast off the name of Christ, and yet too much love for the world and its approval and applause to take a firm and honest stand entirely on the Lord's side. Revelation 3. 16 . . . "because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth". Verse 19 Diaglott . . . "be zealous therefore and reform." Zeal is pleasing to the Lord, and means closeness to him. Zeal is the measure of our love. Abraham displayed energetic and warmhearted zeal—"he ran to meet them", and it is for us always to manifest an energetic warmhearted zeal towards the Lord and in his service.

Picture No. 6.

"THE DEGREE OF RESPECT."

(Gen. 18. 2. Gen. 19. 1.)

Some commentators have suggested that the verses here picture that Lot rose to meet the guests, and standing, bowed his face to the ground, or simply bowed, but that Abraham showed much reverence and prostrated *himself*, bowed *his body* to the ground. Here is a picture of reverence; a willing yield of respect, the acknowledgment of another's superiority. Reverential worship is required by Jehovah God from all his subjects, particularly those who have come to an advanced knowledge of his righteous character. Jesus *always* revered and honoured His Father in heaven. John 17. 4 "I have glorified (honoured) thee, on the earth". Hebrews 12. 28 "Let us have grace that we may serve God acceptably with *reverence* and godly fear".

Picture No. 7.

"THE RESPONSE TO THE INVITATION."

In other words, how did the heavenly visitors respond to the hospitality offered by these two men, Abraham and Lot? (Gen. 18. 5. Gen. 19. 2.) Abraham's invitation was immediately accepted, but the invitation offered by Lot was not accepted readily. This is not a peculiar illustration because if we live in Sodom it will be difficult for the Lord to fellowship with us. We may often miss the Lord's company, because our conversation and our environment are not right. Abraham was *rich* in faith towards God, whereas Lot had less faith. Lot was more interested in his prospects of a material gain there and then, overcharged with this world's affairs. We are not to be of this

world, not conformed to this world, but transformed. If we open widely the door of our heart to the Lord, he will gladly accept the invitation, and as with Abraham, he will respond immediately. He will *readily* come in, and join us in rich spiritual feasts.

Scene No. 8.

"THE FOOD PROVIDED."

(Gen. 18. 6-8. Gen. 19. 3.)

The Scriptures describe Abraham providing a calf tender and good; fine meal; cakes; cream and milk. Such full details are shown of quite a goodly meal. Concerning Lot and his preparation, we find that the only detail, the only description recorded of the meal, is "unleavened bread". If we are Christians living in Sodom, the only satisfaction maybe that God can see, concerning us, is the robe of righteousness. And maybe that robe is badly spotted; we must keep it clean. Further, we must contribute something, and figuratively speaking, what food can we give the heavenly guest? We must give God our love, our obedience, our will. Abraham, we find, made excellent provision for his visitors. We are to make the best offer we can. Romans 12. 1 . . . "present your bodies a living sacrifice . . ." Ours is to be a complete surrender. Proverbs 23. 26 "My son, give me thine heart . . ."

Scene No. 9.

"THE INTERCOURSE THEY HAVE."

(Gen. 18. 10-19. Gen. 19. 4.)

The record shows that during the heavenly messenger's visit to Abraham themes dearest to his heart were mentioned. The Lord revealed some important truths to Abraham, but the Scriptures depict that Lot had no such pleasant intercourse. Why? The men of the city made it impossible. The uproar of the world stepped in, and spoiled communion. In the days in which we live there is plenty of noise around us, also discontent and selfishness. Discontent and selfishness are some of the influences which are accelerating the overthrow of the present order of things. It is a distracted and stricken world in which we live. With us, faith in God must be maintained. Our duty is to live on the high level, above the discontent of the world. "Godliness with contentment is great gain." (1 Tim. 6. 6.) Godliness, contentment, submission; submission to the Lord's will. His will must be our will, hence there are kindred minds. Thus we, like Abraham, have sweet intercourse; and how our hearts burn within us, as Jesus speaks to us by the way!

Picture No. 10.

"THE END OF VISIT."

(Gen. 18. 16. Gen. 19. 16.)

Abraham *accompanies* his visitors as they leave. He valued their company, and from the lengthy conversation which followed, he seems to have detained his heavenly guests. The attitude of Lot towards his visitors rather suggests that the language of his heart was "get out", not "come in". Lot so loved the city; he was literally dragged out

of that place. Abraham had a different experience; he was not centred in Sodom. He cherished the Lord's company and the Divine promises. Abraham accompanies the heavenly visitors as they leave, and he catches as it were the Lord's spirit. With us, it is our glorious privilege always to enjoy the Lord's holy influence, and to accompany him, as it were, in his thoughts and leadings. Following his thoughts attentively as he teaches us to be, throughout our earthly pilgrimage, more than conquerors; for we are indeed "*more than conquerors through him that loved us*".

## FADED GLORIES—A Thought for the Month

"Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these, for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this." (Eccl. 7. 10.)

How prone we are to look back with longing upon the "old days", those early times in the way of Christ which in retrospect seem as though surrounded by a rosy halo. In contrast with the disappointment and frustration of the present they offer themselves as much more to be desired than the things of to-day, and the fondest hope of quite a few is that in some way or other the interests and activities of long past times may be recaptured. We would fain resurrect those departed glories from the dust of oblivion, dress them up once more in their faded trappings, and seek to regain for ourselves the joys and thrills of our "growing-time" in the way of the Truth.

Now King Solomon tells us that such procedure is exceedingly unwise. He does not even recommend our sparing time to cast so much as a few longing thoughts back upon the irrevocable past. With masterly restraint of language he says "thou doest not enquire wisely concerning this". And how right he is! The successful business man may be understood if he decides to re-visit his native village and look upon the scenes of his boyhood, but should he start to run around in knickerbockers and try to accommodate his portly frame to his old school desk he will only succeed in making himself look ridiculous. And is it so very different for the Christian? We have, surely, progressed greatly in every respect since those early days. Our spiritual stature, the breadth of our theological understanding, the scope of our Christian outlook and activity, will, if we have faithfully used our privileges and opportunities, have expanded out of all likeness to, and beyond all comparison with, the crudities and immature efforts of our babyhood in Christ. Roseate as the backward view may seem,

it has no place for us now, and to achieve the aim of restoring those days and re-establishing those activities would assuredly bring disillusion and disappointment on a greater scale than anything we have ever experienced.

You see, the Christian is not a bit like a steam-roller. He has to keep on going in one direction only. He is the real original inventor of the one-way street. "*Forgetting* the things that are behind" cries Paul "and *reaching forth* unto the things that are before, I press toward the mark." What a good thing it is that our God also forgets the things that are behind! Not many of us but prefer to forget quite a lot of things that happened in those "good old days". None of us there are who, even if they could attain to their desire for a revival of the position of thirty years ago, would wish for their own personal failures and mistakes and shortcomings to come to life again and be repeated. Contrary to the thought sometimes expressed, we Christians are *not* called upon to enquire for the old paths; we are expected to press forward as pilgrims seeing before their mental sight always the vision of a celestial city, thinking never of the past, not much about the present, but a great deal about the future. And if it be a choice between the roseate glow which lingers still about past glories, a glow which is a dying one, anyway, like sunset, and the golden radiance of the everlasting city which is tinging the sky above the distant hills in front of us—well then, how foolish we should be to prefer the fading radiance of the past to the shining brilliance of the future. Let our eyes and hearts and hands, in all our thoughts and words and actions, be turned forever forward, recking nothing of that which is past and can never be recalled, but reaching always to that which is before, hastening ever to higher and farther reaches of endeavour and achievement, until, at the last, we appear triumphantly "*before God in Zion*"!

# UNITY IN EPHESIANS

IMPORTANT TEACHING FROM  
AN IMPORTANT BOOK

There are several references to unity in the epistle to the Ephesians, addressed to Christians covering relationship to Christ, to fellow Christians, to family and to the outside world. Never is it implied that the parties will be unified by becoming exact copies of each other; for that, as is well-known, is uniformity rather than unity. For example, in the sixth chapter advice is given to promote unity between masters and servants, yet it is not suggested by Paul that it can be achieved by abolishing the distinctions of master and servant. Some sociologists might reason that unity could be attained by dropping all thought of these differences and all becoming fellow-workers of equal standing, but not so the Bible. And in the heavenly realms unity prevails though the stars differ in glory. Before proceeding any further we do well to remember all the time that Paul is writing to Christians, though all may profit by his advice. **SERVANTS** (v. 5) are urged to do their part in securing unity by obeying their masters in the flesh in singleness of heart as though they were serving Christ, and at times this admonition will be irksome to Christians whose masters are sharp men of the world. By no means will it be easy at times for the Christian when faced with orders which border on sharp practice to decide what to do. His duty to God is of course the greater obligation; but he will find that as his master gets to know his principles and practice he will honour him. And it is by doing these "good works" for the master (usually unknown to fellow Christians) that the reputation of the servant is enhanced. If on the other hand the Christian fails in his duty of obedience, the master will be the first to judge his religious pretensions. From Paul's words it is clear that the onus is on the servant faithfully to serve, not with a view to securing favours; and yet he has the satisfaction of knowing that obedience to one's earthly master is noted by his Master in heaven. Paul also advises those who happen to be **MASTERS** (v. 9), for unity is best attained by both parties contributing to that end. Whereas servants give loyal service, masters must not be overbearing and must remember that like the servant they have a Master in heaven who deals impartially with all. Often in this world the servant will have a master not in the faith and the master have unbelieving servants; yet nothing in Paul's injunctions allow either party

to act differently when such is the case. Every now and then master and servant will come face to face with some problem which will test their loyalty to Christ their Master, and all of us will hesitate to give advice apart from the Word when particular difficulties occur between them, having been tried ourselves. But in passing we must note that these problems in life give the Christian opportunity to let his light shine before men. Such problems almost invariably are met when one is without the help of other members. Hence faithful service and faithful management receives the heavenly Master's approval, and He who seeth in secret will reward openly. And apart from Christian duty all know that in business, in factory and in field, unity and well-being increase when employers and employees act in accordance with the Apostle's advice, even though neither may know that he had so written.

Also in Eph. 6 we find the basis of unity between **PARENTS** and **CHILDREN**. Here again we find that to achieve unity both parents and children contribute something. All have met those parents who quote "Children, obey your parents" yet do not appear to know the remainder of the sentence or avoid quoting it. Usually it is those parents who have not followed the advice of v. 4. The first step in family unity, as v. 2 says, is that the children honour the parents. All know that where there is little respect for parents, disobedience is rife. Parents will be spared many of these problems if they have "brought them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord". Difficulties increase when either or both the parents are not Christians; or the children, growing up, do not care fully to embrace the faith and "want to live their own lives"; and again all of us will be loth to advise what to do in particular cases. One can but say that Paul's words give the basis upon which we should act, and leave it at that. And all of us thinking over these words of Paul, and reviewing our own lives, will own that we could have done better than we have. Blessed are those parents who having brought up their children in the fear of the Lord, receive the reward of having their children reach manhood and wholeheartedly accepting the faith. Such does not often ensue; and some of the great men of the Bible had sons who did not follow in their footsteps.

In chapter five Paul teaches how unity can be secured between HUSBAND and WIFE, though his teaching is subsidiary to his topic of Christ and the church. In fact the unity of the one is used by him as the picture of the other; and this should always be in mind when we hear the modern world criticising Paul's use of the word "submit" in v. 22. It is usual nowadays to say that his words on family relationships are unsuited to present conditions, though the critics have not propounded a better basis of unity. Even if Paul were only discussing husband and wife, it would be unfair to him not to remember his words in verses 25 and 33. We must not dilate on his advice to wives without mentioning also his words to the husbands, and if we deal with the subject we shall have to admit that the closing words of the section are most reasonable.

Let us not dismiss these practical precepts from the Bible on the ground that our own master, or children, or wife or husband, furnishes a case not covered by this advice. We are all prone to think that our home or business life is exceptional. And some of us may pass over the sundry obligations of the last three chapters of Ephesians because of our liking for the great church truths of the first three. The advice is given in the latter part, because Paul having declared such glorious things realises that we must in all phases of life walk worthy of our calling. How incongruous it would be for those hoping to be unified with their God and their Saviour for eternity, to fail in their associations with their fellow men and their families! Possibly more to our taste is the unity of Christ and the church as revealed by His sacrifice for them in giving himself, and that He might continue his work and sanctify them and cleanse them by the Word, and eventually present them to Himself a glorious church free of all blemish and wrinkle. That achieved there will indeed be unity. Let it be seen straight away that it will result by what He has done for the church and that they have contributed very little. Throughout the N.T. will be found that He has done all, and we accept. And that truth is at the bottom of the word "submit" in Eph. 5. 22. In the relationships of master and servant, parents and children, etc., unity is formed by each doing something to that end; but in the relationship of Christ and his church the work is predominantly His, and we thankfully submit. Without question, without doubt of mind we accept all that He has done and so we become united to Him. Our great sense of debt always remains in our minds and our thanks though inadequate keep us united to Him. In the same sense, if husband and wife feel indebtedness to each other, they will be unified.

Still reviewing the Ephesian points of unity in the reverse order to that they were written, we come to the well-known seven parts of unity (making one whole) mentioned in the 4th chapter. In fact the first sixteen verses deal with the subject, concluding with that perfect picture of unity, that of head and body. The first three verses show how the unity which the Holy Spirit has prompted may be maintained; and the words lowliness, meekness and long-suffering show just what was in Paul's mind. These are the virtues which, if unity is existent in the church, will smooth over those differences of opinion which can so easily disunite any community. All know that the antithesis of these principles make for discord in church and in world. Many of mankind's troubles arise from the lack of forbearance with others. No dictator would ever succeed had he lowliness of mind and meekness, and none will "get on" in the world to-day whose hearts are thus controlled. But in the church they are a contribution we can all make; and possibly because of that Paul mentioned them before the seven points of unity of verses 4-7. For one of the seven links of unity is the "one faith" and immediately we think of that our definition of the faith may not suit other members' opinions. It may not be well to single out one phase and stress it to the detriment of the other six; and it is also inadvisable to say that any of the seven is the most important. All are important and all are links in a chain without a weak link. And that being so, we can dispense with the ancient slogan "*In essentials unity, in doubtful matters liberty and in all things charity*" as being unsuitable for Christian problems. The slogan has, of course, its good points, but the Bible is a better mentor for us all.

The last one the apostle mentions "One God and Father of all, who is above all, through all, and in all" provides us with a great truth towards church unity. And if we can gather all that is meant in the prepositions (above, through and all) we shall see that the other phases of unity, including the one faith, are parts of His purpose. For this God and Father is the one who has formed the one body; from whom the one Spirit emanates; from whom the one hope of our calling has reached our ears; who is the Father of the Lord who died for us; who framed the one true faith, and who has baptised us by the one Spirit into the one body. As we read through Paul's words we begin to see that he is referring to a small and exclusive body within the larger body we loosely speak of as Christendom. And whereas the larger body is not unified (partly because of its size and certainly because it admits of various faiths and hopes) it is possible for a little flock owning but one Master,

animated by one Spirit, and governed by one God and Father to be united even in this world.

In the second chapter Paul writes of a time prior to the First Advent when the favoured people Israel had the promises and blessings of God. During that long period the outside world of Gentiles had no hope in God and were without knowledge of Him and his purposes. So dissimilar was the status of the two that he refers to the one as being nigh to God and the other as far off. This enmity has been changed to unity by the cross of Christ reconciling both to God in one body—the body of Ephesians 4. By the death of Christ such of Israel as accept the atoning work of Christ will be nearer to God than ever they were under the law of Moses and the ministry of the prophets, and the Gentiles will be alongside them and as near to God as them because both will be “in” Christ. Thus unity is made not only by the two parties being united to each other, but both are united to God in twain, in one new man, so making peace. In this truth we see once more that the blessedness we now enjoy in Christ is due to that done for us and to which we have not contributed. But the unity thus made for us we maintain by following the instructions of the fourth chapter.

In the first chapter we have revealed that unity which is the purpose of the ages. There we see (v. 10) the Divine purpose is to unite all earthly peoples and worlds beyond our ken (and it is reasonable to think, worlds yet to be inhabited) under one Head. It is difficult to imagine the glorious outcome of this predetermined plan, but one thing will satisfy the hearts of all Christians—that all things will be united under the Lord Jesus Christ, an honour we all feel is most justly due, for He is before all things and by Him all things consist.

---

He who is habitually suspicious of others is himself untrustworthy; and he who judges another, is guilty of those very faults he condemns.

\* \* \* \*

Conscience is the voice of the soul, as the passions are the voice of the body. No wonder they often contradict each other. *Rousseau.*

\* \* \*

The men who succeed best in public life are those who take the risk of standing by their own convictions.

## SHINGLES OR RED-SUNSET

We may not know that we are painting pictures  
As we thro' life press onward day by day;  
But we are using Artist's paint and brushes,  
To leave behind us scenes which strew our way.  
The Pictures which we paint upon our canvas,  
Betoken principles which in us dwell;  
For all unwittingly we shew to others,  
What life and conduct thus expressed, would tell.  
We each must do a stint of Picture Painting,  
With tools the *Master* gives to me, and you;  
Whether the choice be “Red-sunset” or “Shingles”  
Depends upon the *Pupil's* point of view.  
Thus, if our way lead o'er a stormy ocean,  
With gurgling sea-waves dashing up their foam;  
We can look beyond the angry waters,  
And brush upon our canvas, scenes of Home.  
Or, if thro' fields of quiet resting-places  
We find our feet in pleasant Pastures green,  
We lift our heart to praise our worthy Shepherd,  
And throw a peaceful picture on our screen.  
Let us catch the glow of crimson sunset  
Ere the dusk of night fall on the scene;  
For the time is short, that we are granted,  
To produce our picture in the little while between.  
Some may miss the star-bespangled arches  
Of the Heaven that shines above our head,  
Seeing only the reflection mirrored  
On “The Shingles”—neath the path they tread.  
Look up! and catch the glitter of those beauties—  
They farthest see who upward turn their gaze—  
Leave those to grovel still amid “the Shingles”  
Who never see beyond a misty haze.  
Thus let us keep our heart and mind fixed upward,  
And on our canvas dash the colours rare;  
That others who take up our paint and brushes,  
May in the beauty we saw, have a share.

*So Lord, accept the unseen Paint and Brushes,  
Which we would wield in honour of Thy Name—  
That those who follow when our painting ceases—  
May find the beauty of Thy Works the same.*

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The Manchester Council has made provisional plans for public meetings in the following towns during 1949, to culminate, it is hoped, with an “Assembly for Witness” at Manchester in September: Heywood (March), Runcorn or Widnes (May), Oldham (June), Crewe (July), Bolton (August). The meetings at Heywood and Bolton are being arranged in co-operation with the Bury class. Details of these meetings can be obtained from Bro. F. Musk, 14, South Street, Newchurch, Rossendale, Lancs.

## LAND OF PROMISE

A record of current happenings  
in the Holy Land

Speaking recently in Jerusalem, Dr. Weizmann, President of Israel, made some interesting statements regarding that city. He was talking about the impossibility of creating a truly Jewish State which did not include Jerusalem, and he said, in part:—

“Jerusalem holds a unique place in the heart of every Jew . . . Its restoration symbolises the redemption of Israel . . . To us Jerusalem has both a spiritual and a temporal significance. It is the City of God, the seat of our ancient sanctuary. But it is also the capital of David and Solomon, the City of the Great King, the metropolis of our ancient commonwealth . . . . To the followers of the two other great monotheistic religions, Jerusalem is a site of sacred associations and holy memories. To us it is that and more than that. It is the centre of our ancient national glory. It was our lodestar in all our wanderings. It embodies all that is noblest in our hopes for the future. Jerusalem is the eternal mother of the Jewish people, precious and beloved even in her desolation. When David made Jerusalem the capital of Judea, on that day there began the Jewish Commonwealth. When Titus destroyed it on the 9th of Ab, on that day there ended the Jewish Commonwealth. But even though our Commonwealth was destroyed, we never gave up Jerusalem . . . . To countless generations of Jews in every land of their dispersion the ascent to Jerusalem was the highest that life could offer. In every generation new groups of Jews from one part or another of our far-flung Diaspora came to settle here. For over a hundred years we have formed the majority of its population. And now that, by the will of God, a Jewish Commonwealth has been re-established, is it to be conceived that Jerusalem should be out of it?”

Dr. Weizmann recalled words of Archbishop Temple in the House of Lords, speaking of the impossibility of the Jews forgetting Jerusalem, and quoting the words of the Psalmist “*If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning*”. “They cannot forget Jerusalem”, said the Archbishop, with feeling; and the President echoed his words. “The Archbishop spoke the truth” he said. “We cannot forget Jerusalem.”

So we, the spectators of this great drama which is beginning to be presented before the people of the world, wait, knowing that in God’s own time this people that even in their unbelief cannot forget

Jerusalem, will one day turn from that unbelief and recognise the hand of God in all their experiences, and come to Him in repentance and submission to be taught of Him the mission that they yet have to carry out for the people of this world.

\* \* \*

Modern Jerusalem consists of two parts, the Old City and the New City. The Old City comprises Jerusalem of antiquity, the Biblical Jerusalem, and contains practically all of the so-called “Holy Places”. This Old City is at present held by the Arabs and it is here that so much damage has been done in the recent fighting. The New City is the part that has been built during recent years and is almost altogether Jewish. It is at present held firmly by the Israelis. Israel declares that whilst they will agree to the Old City being placed under international control, they will insist that the New City remains in the State of Israel. Since they are in effective control of the area it may be difficult to avoid accepting that demand. Thus Israel will at least be able to claim that Jerusalem is within the boundaries of their country—but it will not be the Biblical Jerusalem and will not include Mount Moriah, where the Temple stood, nor Mount Zion. And the true capital of the State at present is Tel-Aviv, where the Government of Israel has its seat. Great changes must come before the law of the Lord shall “go forth from Jerusalem”.

\* \* \*

One hundred and thirty thousand immigrants entered Israel during 1948, seven times as many as during the previous year. The figure for 1949 is expected to be still higher. This when the country has been in a state of war, fighting for its very existence, during virtually the whole of the time. If all these immigrants were convinced believers in the promises of God and the prophecies of the patriarchs, events would move much more rapidly in that land than can in fact be the case now; but events are moving and we do well to watch with interest, not expecting too much from the new State, which is, after all, frankly and avowedly one of the “kingdoms of this world”, adopting the standards of this world and relying for its continuance upon the power of the weapons of this world. But who knows how soon the situation may change, and in a swift revulsion of feeling, Israel begin to “look upon Him whom they have pierced”? It will surely come!



Thou, therefore, endure  
hardness as a good  
soldier of Jesus Christ.

BIBLE STUDENTS' MONTHLY

BIBLE STUDENTS' MONTHLY

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BIBLE STUDENTS' MONTHLY

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# BIBLE STUDENTS'

# MONTHLY

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APRIL, 1949

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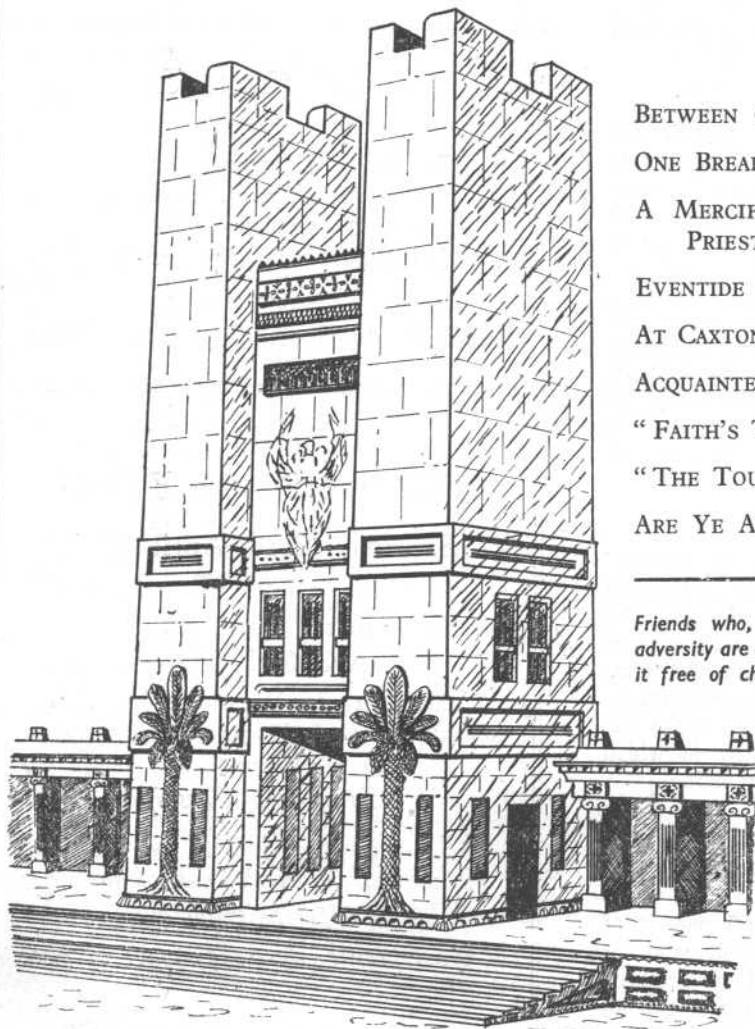
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Lift up your heads, O ye gates,  
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors,  
And the King of glory shall come in.

## BETWEEN OURSELVES

The Memorial will this year be celebrated on the evening of Tuesday, 12th April, at which time brethren everywhere will gather to commemorate our Lord's death and pledge themselves anew to a life of devotion to Him and His service.

\* \* \*

This issue of the "Monthly" is a "Memorial" issue, and in consequence our regular series, "Times of Ignorance", "And now abideth", and "Land of Promise" have been held over in favour of several articles which are of especial significance at this season. It is trusted that all readers will be helped and uplifted by this month's presentation for the Memorial night soon to come.

\* \* \*

Brother Paul Thompson, who last visited this country in 1938, will, it is hoped, and expected, be with us again from the beginning of August to the end of September. Will brethren who desire a visit please write *at once* to Bro. W. R. Walton, 14, Coniston Road, Coventry, giving full details of nights suitable and whether accommodation overnight can be provided. Brother Thompson will minister at the London Convention and afterward visit classes throughout the country. Our brother's visit to this country has been made possible by the Pastoral Bible Institute at the invitation of London brethren and their loving co-operation is much appreciated.

\* \* \*

Friends living in isolated districts in England South of the Thames are invited to write to Pastoral Ministry, 62, Greenway, London, S.W.20, for details of a pastoral visiting plan which is now being worked out. If you would like to receive an occasional visit from a brother on his journey among the isolated ones, please do write and make the request. This new service is one way in which we can "strengthen the things that remain".

\* \* \*

An extract from a report on the German work by Bro. H. Nadal.

"During January we despatched 60 parcels of food, and clothes and medicine. The demand for the latter has continued to grow, and the brethren say that they find much stimulating result from the Halibut Oil Capsules. We are now sending to Kirchlengern alone 5,000 Halibut Oil Capsules and 1,000 A, B, C and D vitamin capsules per month, at a cost of £12, and still the Lord provides."

There are brethren all over the country who knew Brother Deurance and the unparalleled affliction which had been his lot for so many years. Our brother has achieved his heart's desire and has left the suffering and affliction behind for ever. All who knew him or of him cannot but rejoice on his behalf. Sister Smith, who tended him so devotedly for a number of years following the passing of Sister Deurance, does now wish to convey to all the friends everywhere the heartfelt appreciation both of Brother and herself for the many kindnesses shown him by the brethren for so long.

### Gone From Us



Bro. A. W. Deurance (*Blackpool*)  
 Bro. R. W. Stephens (*Eastleigh*)  
 Bro. J. Tobin (*Cumcarn*)  
 Bro. W. Edwards (*Pontypool*)



"Till the day break, and the shadows flee away."

## LONDON MONTHLY MEETING

Saturday, 23rd April, 1949  
 6.30—8.30 p.m.

In the Tudor Hall  
**CAXTON HALL**

Caxton Street, Westminster, S.W.1  
 5 mins. St. James Park Station and Victoria Street

*Praise and Worship*

*Fellowship*

*A talk on the Christian outlook for today  
 and an opportunity for questions  
 A Scriptural address by guest speaker*

Chairman: Bro. L. Smethurst  
 Speakers: Bro. A. J. Lodge  
 Bro. W. Batcheller

# One Bread—One Body

A DOCTRINAL  
ESSAY

*"For we, being many, are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread."*  
(1 Cor. 10. 17.)

In these words, fraught with deep spiritual meaning, the faithful Apostle strengthens his appeal to the Corinthian Christians and through them to us. We, like them, are so prone to idolatry, so easily led into ways which cannot be reconciled with the fellowship that is ours in Christ. "*Wherefore, my dearly beloved*" Paul pleads "*flee from idolatry*" (vs. 14). That was a very real danger in those days, and to those early Corinthian believers, living in the most notoriously depraved and paganised city of the then known world, it was a very necessary exhortation. But it was not merely that Paul would wean them from the worship and service of false deities, "gods many and lords many"; he knew that such service and such worship involved, not only fellowship with pagan men and women, but also common-union, joint participation, with demoniac intelligences behind the veil. He understood only too well the corrupting influence of those debased and debasing ceremonies and sacrifices; that they had nothing in common with the things of Christ; and with all his heart he strove to turn his brethren away from them and toward the infinitely purer and nobler faith of which he was himself a minister.

The whole burden of Paul's message in this chapter is that comparison between the pagan's fellowship with idols and demons and the Christian's fellowship with Christ. Just as the believers' union in worship and offering was not merely an association together for the mutual acknowledgement of God's supremacy, but in deed and in truth a fellowship and communion with the risen Christ beyond the Veil, and the experiencing of an indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God, so was the worship and sacrificing of the pagans an actual fellowship with demons, "spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenlies". "*The things which the Gentiles sacrifice*" he warned them earnestly "*they sacrifice to demons, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with demons*". This danger of being associated with the enemies of Christ was a very real one in the Apostle's mind; doubtless he saw in mental vision the last great conflict at the end of this Age when these same evil powers are arrayed, with all their human dupes, to give battle against the rider on the white horse, coming forth from heaven in

righteousness to judge and make war (Rev. 19. 11). He knew that the saints must not be hesitant in the slightest degree about their allegiance. They may in no wise have any interest in common with these powers of evil which with all their followers will be overthrown and deprived of all power before the Millennial Kingdom is set up, and so in all earnestness he reminds them "*Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of demons: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and the table of demons*".

With what emphasis does this call to utter separation to the fellowship and communion of Christ come to us at this season! Now, more than at any other time during the year, we are mindful of our Master's willing, steadfast consecration to His Father's Will, even unto death. For Him there was no compromise and no hesitancy. Just previously He had "set" His face to go to Jerusalem, knowing that death awaited Him there. The people had flattered Him, had received Him as king; the disciples had pleaded with Him to set up His Kingdom there and then and give the world the blessings it so sadly needed; to all their suggestions He had turned a deaf ear, walking resolutely along that path which, even although it led to suffering and death and the apparent failure of all His work, He knew to be the only one that could end in the consummation for which He had come into the world.

This same consciousness of a mission and this same inflexible resolution in carrying out the terms of that mission is what Paul seeks to impress upon his readers, and now that the season for more than usually earnest thought about these things is upon us we do well to take from his exhortation all that it can give us of inspiration and encouragement.

"Behold Israel after the flesh" he commands, and his command carries a question. "*Are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?*" (vs. 18). Participators with the altar; that is Paul's thought. The priests upon whom fell the obligation to eat of the sacrifices were holy unto the Lord and could never be the same as ordinary men again. In partaking of the sacrifices of the altar they had become holy like the altar and were in a very real sense in fellowship or communion with the altar, and through that with God. And so are we. Because we have eaten of the offering, made it a part of ourselves, we have become identified

with the Altar which is Christ, and have become joint-participants with Him, not only in the power of future blessing for which the altar stands—for more than anything else in the typical Tabernacle the Brazen Altar stood for justification by faith, and only through justification by faith in Christ will man receive blessing in the next Age—but also in the power of present suffering which the same altar symbolises. And it is the power of that present suffering, a suffering in which we participate with our Lord, that is going to mean so much to men redeemed from death by the Ransom given once for all at Calvary nineteen centuries ago.

So the Apostle comes to the central feature of his theme when he takes up this question of suffering. "The bread which we break" he urges, "is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" There is a vital difference between the cup and the bread. "This is my blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26. 28), Jesus had told them on the Memorial night. Remembering that the first Covenant was itself made legal and binding by the shedding of blood (Heb. 9. 18) the disciples must quickly have realised that this New Covenant which was to succeed where the old one had failed was to be made sure by the death of Jesus Himself, by the shed blood of Him who "gave Himself a ransom for all" (1. Tim. 2. 6). His death provided the Ransom and we are redeemed by His blood; the New Testament is positive enough on that central truth. Why such a ransom was necessary; why Divine justice required such an offering before the dead in Adam could be released; in what way Justice is satisfied by the death of Jesus on the Cross; all these are questions which have been asked and answered with varying degrees of spiritual insight throughout the Gospel Age. Independent of all the philosophy and theology that has been built up around the doctrine of the Atonement, the one fact stands out that whether we understand it or not, the death of Jesus was essential to man's salvation, and that without faith in Him and a definite and personal acceptance of His sacrifice made for us there can be no release from sin and no entrance into life. "There is none other name given under heaven, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4. 12.)

It has been well said that the Ransom does not give men everlasting life. It does guarantee to every man a full and fair opportunity to attain everlasting life. That "life for the world" which is symbolised by the "poured-out blood" of Christ is life as Adam enjoyed it before he sinned, a life which would have made it possible for him to enter upon his eternal inheritance provided he

observed the conditions. Much the same is true of mankind in the Millennial Age. All, without a single exception, will come back from the grave, as Jesus foretold (Jno. 5. 28), awaking to conscious life and recollection in bodies free from the effects of inherited sin. Thus will the Ransom become of effect to all men. But unless those awakened ones are persuaded so to order their lives in harmony with Divine principles that they do attain full perfection, morally as well as mentally and physically the blood of Christ will, so far as such are concerned, be of no avail. If under the favourable conditions of that blessed day the heart of any one of the sons of men remains fully set in him to do evil, his blood-bought life can again only end in death, and this time without remedy. "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." Since it is clear that the risen masses will require something more than the gift of conscious life in a new body, great and marvellous as is that gift, it follows that there is another aspect to the doctrine of the Atonement parallel to that which is symbolised by the shed blood.

That aspect is pictured by Jesus as the breaking of His body, a body which, thus broken, becomes food for the life of the world. This eating of the mystic bread which is His body is not the giving of new life, which is symbolised by the blood, the cup, but it is the continued sustenance of a life already given. The blood is poured out once for all; the bread is to be partaken of into eternity. Jesus died on the Cross, once, and that act is never to be repeated. The one act was sufficient to give all men, Church and world alike, new life. But He "ever lives" to sustain men's everlasting lives by that which He gives them, His body. Is that why the people desired Him on one occasion "Lord, evermore give us this bread!" (Jno. 6. 34.)? "The bread that I will give is my flesh" He had said "which I will give for the life of the world" (Jno. 6. 54).

Neither is this bread a free gift in the sense in which the cup is a free gift. The redemption that is in Christ Jesus, the benefits of the ransom, are awarded to all men irrespective of personal merits or personal action. All are to receive freedom from Adamic condemnation and reversal of the Adamic death sentence. All who exercise faith in Christ, whether in this Gospel Age or in the incoming Millennial Age, whether of the Church or the world, will receive the free gift of justification and have their past sin, no matter how heinous, no longer counted against them. All who received life from the first Adam will receive life again from the Second Adam. But in order to maintain that life they must partake of the mystic bread, and that,

translated into plain language, means to live their likes in exactly the same way that Jesus lived His. It means that no man can live everlastingly except he live in full harmony with God's laws and God's ways. He must, as it were, live "in tune" with God, for as Paul said to the Athenians "In him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17. 28). In order that he might learn how to live that life, man must have an example, an exemplar, to show him the way. There has only been one such example, Christ Jesus Himself, who came to earth for that purpose. For three and a half years He was the perfect example of how a man should live, and the consequence of His steadfast setting of that example was that His body was broken. He had to show mankind that perfection is only attained through suffering. "*Himself took our infirmities and bare our sickness*" (Matt. 8. 17). "*For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted*" (Heb. 2. 18). It is the example of that life that will be man's inspiration in the next Age and in that sense they will "eat of the flesh of the Son of Man" and live forever.

In exactly the same way do we, His disciples of this Age, partake of His flesh, this bread. We too, no less than mankind in the Millennial Age, are to order our lives after that perfect example if we would enter into immortality. We too must learn that only by suffering, endurance, the willing laying down of life upon behalf of others, can we ourselves be perfected. "He that loseth his life shall find it." And to us is granted a privilege that can never come to the sons of men in the future Age, for we, who have pledged ourselves to be followers of our Lord to the end of time, who have been "buried with Him by baptism into His death", are privileged to have our own lives

used as examples for the future Age; our own experience and character-development employed in the instruction and conversion of men in that Day. We too are to be made merciful and faithful priests of the future if we are rightly exercised by our experiences in the Christian life now. But the degree of our fitness for holding forth the Word of Life *then*, and in that sense becoming living bread for the world *then*, is entirely dependent upon the degree to which we partake of the living bread ourselves *now*. Unless we eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, we have no life in us; and a lifeless corpse can never become the medium of new life to a resurrected world.

This, then, is our fellowship, a fellowship in Christ which is also a participation with Christ, a common-union with Him. This is why we cannot have fellowship or union with the world and its demons. We have been "baptised for the dead" (1 Cor. 15. 29) and it is only by participation with our risen Lord that we shall make that baptism effective and, in receiving and partaking of the living bread, become the means of giving life to others. "*And the Spirit and the Bride say 'Come'. And let him that heareth say 'Come'. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*" That grand climax to God's dealings with men on the earth can only come to pass when we who are the first-fruits unto God have first entered into our privilege and obligation of renouncing the world and all that is in it, and joined in full communion with Christ our Lord and with each other as a family apart. "*The bread which we eat, is it not the common-union of the body of Christ?*" "Lord, evermore give us that bread!"

### "IN LIKE MANNER"—A Comment

Commenting upon the article "*In like manner*" in the February issue, a reader suggests that "*tropos*" does also have the meaning, according to some lexicons, of turn of mind, habit, disposition, or conversation. Following out the line of thought thus suggested, our contributor goes on to ask if the declaration that our Lord is to come "in like manner" as He went away may not be taken to be "in like disposition" as He had when they saw Him go into heaven. The comfort then would be found not only in the certainty of His return but also in the knowledge of the unchangeableness of His character. The disciples need not fear that it would be a changed Jesus, or a different Jesus, who would return to them, but

"this same Jesus", coming back with the same loving disposition toward them, and the same considerateness for their welfare, as He had for them before He went away. Heb. 13. 5 (*conversation*) and Jude 7 (*in like manner*) are quoted as examples of this use of the word and as bearing out the above thoughts.

It is a pleasure to announce that a new booklet for witness work is now ready, consisting of the articles on "*A Glimpse of God's Plan*" which appeared in the October to December issues of the B.S.M. The booklet is attractively printed in blue on white paper and has a space on last page for rubber-stamping local address if desired. Orders may be sent at once, at 1/8 per dozen copies or 11/- per 100, post free.

# A Merciful and Faithful High Priest

A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

The Book of Hebrews is a book of contrasts. In Hebrews 5. 6-11 we have one of these contrasts in which Christ is set forth as the priest greater than Aaron, a "priest after the order of Melchisedek". This latter is a quotation from Psalm 110, verse 4, which reads "*The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, Thou art a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedek*", following verse 1, "*The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool*". Quite obviously, therefore, this Psalm refers to Christ, after His resurrection and ascension to the Father's right hand. The same period is referred to in Hebrews, Chapter 1, verse 6 "*And let all the angels of God worship Him*". (Psalm 97. 7). We would recall that when Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees, He took the very words of this Psalm and applied them to Himself (Matt. 22. 42-46). "*What think ye of Christ, whose Son is He; they say unto Him, the Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in Spirit call Him Lord, saying 'The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool'?*" The whole of the seventh chapter deals with the contrast between Aaron, the High Priest of the Levitical order, and Christ as the Melchisedek priest; here the writer deals with how Christ qualified to become this great priest and king: Verse 7:—"*Who in the days of His flesh when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared*".

"In the days of His flesh"! This refers to Christ's earthly life when He was here among men, and in particular to that period when His development as the future Priest was in process, between Jordan and Calvary. From beginning to end, His life was one of prayer; He spent all night in prayer, we are told, on many occasions. Prayer is many sided; it is worship and adoration, communion and fellowship, petition and supplication and intercession. Jesus often supplicated the Father on behalf of others, but we have only the one record of supplicating on behalf of Himself, which would suggest that this verse is specially applicable to the agony He was passing through in Gethsemane, when, as it says, "*with strong cryings and tears*" He prayed to the Father that if it were possible this cup might pass from Him. Just how strong

was this crying, we cannot know, but an idea is given when it says that "*His sweat was as it were great drops of blood*". "*Unto Him that was able to save Him from death*"; the Diaglott, Weymouth and the Concordant all render this "out of death", and this seems more understandable, for Christ did not ask the Father to save Him from death. The whole object of His coming to this earth and becoming bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, was that He might go into death, and pay the penalty for sin, and thus release Adam and all His race from the dreadful consequences of sin, namely, death. The fate of the whole human family rested on Him, and the question would arise in His mind, "Have I been faithful in carrying out the Father's will, so that I may be able thus to redeem the race?" According to the Book of Revelation, up till that time no one had been found worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof. Three times we are told by Matthew that He prayed the same words "O my Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt".

Thus before He prayed thus, He spoke to the three disciples, Peter, James and John, saying "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death". So He well knew that death was before Him. Luke, alone of the evangelists, records the dreadful agony that He passed through in the garden of Gethsemane, when the account says "*And being in an agony He prayed the more earnestly, and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground*". None of the Gospels record that He shed tears at this particular time, though it is quite possible and reasonable to think that He did. There are only two recorded instances of Jesus weeping; the one at the grave of Lazarus, and the other when He wept over Jerusalem. Tears as a rule come as a relief when one is in great distress of mind, so if He wept in Gethsemane, it would only be natural.

"*Unto Him who was able to save Him out of death.*" We know that death could not hold Him as it holds the human family, except in the sense that He was the substitute for Adam, for He who knew no sin was made the sin-bearer for Adam and all in him. So He had to commit His cause, and life itself, into the hands of His Father, who alone was able to raise Him out of death. We read in Ephesians 1. 19 that it took the mighty

power of God to raise Christ from the dead and set Him at His own right hand. So on the cross; "When Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said 'Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit'".

*Low in the grave He lay, Jesus my Saviour,  
Waiting the coming day, Jesus my Lord.  
Death cannot keep his prey, Jesus my Saviour,  
God tore the bars away, for Jesus my Lord.  
Up from the grave He arose,  
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes,  
He arose a victor from the dark domain,  
And He lives forever with His saints to reign,  
He arose, He arose, Hallelujah, Christ arose.*

"And was heard in that He feared" or "for His piety" as the margin of the Authorised Version has it. The Diaglott renders "And was heard for his devotion", and Moffatt "He was heard because of His godly fear". There are a number of other different interpretations of this sentence, which makes it rather difficult to explain. That He was heard is evident. Luke alone tells us that "there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him". At the grave of Lazarus, Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me, and I know that Thou hearest me always". It is one thing to have our prayer heard by God, and another thing to have it answered in the way that we desire. The important thing is that, like Jesus, we say from the heart "Not my will, but thine, be done". There was a great deal included in that prayer to His Father. That He was to die He knew, but was death not enough, He might reason, to pay the ransom price, without all the dreadful suffering of mind and body that was attached to such a painful death as that of the cross; was it necessary that He bear all that terrible ignominy, and all that lay between Gethsemane and Calvary, the mocking, the spitting, the crown of thorns so cruel and painful, the nails in His hands and feet, and the spear wound in his side, an exhibition to all who passed by; and besides, the denial of Peter with curses, the forsaking by all the disciples, and the betrayal by one? All these trials must have weighed heavily upon Him, for, being a perfect man, He would feel these things much more than an imperfect individual. If He visualised all He had to go through in His mind, what about His final test on the cross when He cried "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me"? Did He expect this, or did it come as a surprise to Him? To have all His disciples forsake Him was bad enough, but His Father; why? One wonders if He realised that *this* was before Him when He prayed in Gethsemane that the cup might pass from

Him. These were the very words recorded in the 22nd Psalm, verse 1; no doubt Jesus knew that they applied to Himself, as also did many other of the verses of that Psalm.

A lesson we can take to ourselves in this prayer of our Lord is, that like Him, we can say "Father, I know that Thou hearest me always. You may in wisdom not answer my prayer the way I would like, but since Thou knowest what is for my best interest and highest good, I leave the answering or otherwise to Thee". Paul, who thrice asked for the thorn in his flesh to be removed, received the answer "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness". His prayer was answered in a different way from that which might have been expected when he asked.

Another comfort we can take from this verse is that God has promised He will never forsake us. "I will never, never leave thee, I will never, never let go thy hand", as one version puts it. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and they shall not overflow thee".

Verse 8:—"Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered". Weymouth says "Although He were God's Son". The things that He suffered reached their consummation in those experiences He went through in Gethsemane and on the Cross, but besides all that, He endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself, in an unfriendly world, with imperfection all around Him, unbelief amongst his nearest and dearest, and so often misunderstood. To think that these were the people He had come to save! Yes, He suffered in all those ways, but He suffered most as Philippians puts it (Chap. 2. 8) when "He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross".

Verse 9:—"And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him". "And being made perfect"! Have we not just finished saying that He *was* perfect? As a man He was perfect, as Adam was perfect, and like Adam He also was tested. This testing took place during the thirty years of His life before Jordan, and while we have little record given in the Bible of that period of His life, we know that He alone of all men must have kept the Law of God perfectly, and given loyal obedience to all God's commands. We read that He grew in stature and favour with God and man, thus demonstrating that it was within the ability of a perfect man to keep God's Law perfectly.

At thirty, however, He entered upon a different aspect of His life's career. He gave Himself at Jordan in consecration to God to do His will. Had only a ransom been necessary, then God could

have taken His life there and then. More than a ransom was required. The three and a half years of suffering was necessary to fit Him as a priest, one who would have compassion on the ignorant and those who were out of the way. So as a priest He was perfected. "In all points He was tempted like as we (His brethren) are, yet without sin". Matt. 8. 17 declares that "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses". This is supposed to be a quotation from Isaiah 53, but in reading this chapter, it does not suggest that Jesus took our sicknesses. Infirmities, yes, but Jesus was always perfect. Though perfect, that did not mean that He did not feel frailty. When He healed the woman with the issue of blood, He perceived that virtue had gone out from Him and healed her. He was so tired on one occasion that the disciples took Him, as He was, in the boat to the other side of the lake. A night in communion and prayer with His Father, however, was all that was necessary to restore Him. It only needed a word of command to cast out an evil spirit, or many spirits, and when He healed a leper, He did not become a leper,

or in giving sight to the blind, or hearing to the deaf, He did not become deaf or blind. In all these things He was demonstrating His coming power and glory in the Kingdom.

"The author of eternal salvation" is rendered in the Diaglott and the Concordant as "Became the cause of Eonian salvation". It is the duty of a Priest to mediate between two or more who are at enmity with each other, and this is just what Christ qualified to do. He became the author, through His laying down His life daily on behalf of others, and finally gave up life itself to redeem them from death. As the one who purchased mankind by the shedding of His own blood, it is therefore through Him that salvation comes to all. There is, however, an important qualification. He is the author of eternal salvation, not of necessity to all, but to all them that obey Him. God coerces no one. The gift of salvation is freely offered to all, but on condition. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life".

## AS YE HAVE THEREFORE OPPORTUNITY

We are called upon by God to dispense acts of charity and kindness to others as and when opportunity permits. "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6. 10).

The ways in which we can do good are very numerous, but perhaps the most valuable of them all is the instruction we can give to those who have an ear to hear respecting God's will, purpose and plan. We should be careful not to let a chance of talking about the Truth go by us, for as we ourselves grow in the Spirit of God and become more and more in harmony with His plan, we realise that no other work is so grand as to make known to others God's character, and the wideness of His mercy and love. Our constant desire should be to "show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His most marvellous light" (1 Peter 2. 9).

Paul especially states that we are to do this as we have opportunity. We are to be "instant in season, out of season" (2 Tim. 4. 2). We are to consider the interests and convenience of others before our own, and be instant in the Lord's service whether seasonable or unseasonable to ourselves. "... A word spoken in due season, how good it is."

"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." (Prov. 15. 23; 25. 11.)

Our love for the Lord and our eagerness to serve Him to the best of our ability, is to be our chief concern in life, before which everything else must give way.

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

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

(Young Bible Students Messenger)

## Eventide

"So he bringeth them unto their desired haven"



Perhaps this may be said to be the Eventide of all Eventides to us, for it holds precious memories which no other eventide in all the year can hold. We have solemn memories of our own, brought over from the passing years in addition to those sweetly precious "memorials" from so long ago. Often we have asked ourselves, as we gathered to the Table of the Lord "will this be the last time we shall celebrate together these memorials of His death?" And ere another such occasion has come round some dear companion may have completed his course with joy and left the little company one celebrant the less. We may have come together in the Lord for ten, twenty, thirty, forty and in some cases even fifty years to "show the Lord's death till He come", and have always found this to be the night outstanding from all other nights for us. At other times, by means of study or address our minds might range the whole wide field between Paradise Lost and Paradise regained, but on this night, there is but one theme to which we may rightly turn. "As oft as ye eat this bread and drink this Cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come." (1 Cor. 11. 26.) "this do in Remembrance of Me." (Luke 22. 19.)

And so at His request it has come about that pious souls, over the long centuries, have drawn together to "remember Him", and commemorate the act that made His broken body and shed blood available for their needs. Understandings may have differed as to what precisely may have been thus made available, but none have differed as to its need.

'Something' in that Sacrifice has accomplished 'something' for needy men, which nothing else in all creation could have brought about. It is in that 'body' broken for our sakes, and in that 'blood' shed for our sins, that all the satisfying merit has been found. Some may claim to see more of this, others more of that, in that Sacrifice, but however much we may seek to define or apportion this or that result to this or that particular cause, it all comes back to this, that it was His death, His willing sacrifice that made redemption in its every phase a possibility.

Without that death, without that willing sacrifice no redemption, in any phase, would have become

a possibility. Upon that death, upon that willing sacrifice the plan of God, in its every phase, was made to hinge and turn.

And it is that death we have had before us this eventide. Out of very gratitude we can say.

*"Saviour Thy dying Love  
Thou gavest me,  
Nor would I aught withhold  
Dear Lord from Thee.  
In love my soul would bow  
My heart fulfil its vow  
Myself an offering now  
I bring to thee."*

If, as it may chance, we have also seen this opportunity as an occasion to renew our own consecration vows, and to repeat our affirmed desire to be made "dead with Him" to God's Sovereign Will, that simple stanza can be our fervent prayer—"nor would I aught withhold, dear Lord from Thee, In love my soul would bow, My heart fulfil its vow, Myself an offering now, I bring to Thee."

Let us not forget that there is, in some sense, a communion "in the blood of Christ", and also "in the body of Christ" (1 Cor. 10. 16.) which calls for the fullest consecration to the Will of God (as to an Altar. 1 Cor. 10. 18.) and while there is no thought of vicarious merit or of ransom-purchase in the picture here, it calls for the outright surrender and fullest consecration of all we have, and are, and hope to be to the sovereign purposes of Almighty God. And if we see it thus, the drinking of the Cup and breaking of the bread can carry to our hearts the double thought, and we can also say,

*"Jesus, our Mercy Seat, Covering me,  
My grateful heart looks up, Saviour to Thee,  
Help me the news to bear  
Thy wondrous Love declare  
Spread Thy truth everywhere  
Dear Lord for Thee.*

*Give me a faithful heart, Likeness to Thee,  
That each departing day, Thenceforth may see,  
Thy work of love well done,  
Thy praise on earth begun  
Some victory for truth won,  
Some work for Thee.*

*All that I am and have, Thy gifts so free;  
All of my ransomed life, Dear Lord for Thee!  
And when Thy face I see  
Thy sweet 'Well done' shall be  
Through all eternity,  
Enough for me."*

Once more, by the Grace of God, we have been spared to meet together at the Table of the Lord, and partake, with those who love His blessed Name, of those simple emblems that stand for so much to us: we have acknowledged our indebtedness to Him for His redemptive Sacrifice, and have re-affirmed our own desire to be dead with Him. Let us now ask the God of all grace and comfort to help us

in the fulfilling of our vows, that thus our communion with Christ may be complete and entire, and that we may yet the more be "conformed unto His death". Whether His preserving Grace shall keep us through the whole of the coming year, we may not know, but let us in this quiet eventide so resolve to appreciate what we have done that should it be our last, we may be found of Him acceptable and ready to appear before His glorious face.

*What rapturous joy shall then be ours  
Forever Lord, with Thee,  
Clothed with our resurrection powers  
Thine endless praise shall be.*

## AT CAXTON HALL

A friendly company gathered at Caxton Hall on Saturday, 19th February last, for the meeting of worship and fellowship. Brother Thackway spoke first on the theme "Lift up your heads", dwelling upon the present rivalry between East and West as a sign of the times too patent to ignore. In relating current political events to the 15th and 16th chapters of Revelation he drew attention to the predicted drying up of the Euphrates "that the way of the kings of the East may be prepared" and interpreted this symbolically as indicative of the turning of the peoples of earth to the ideals of Communism emanating from the east. He stressed that these thoughts were but suggestions and that we, who now see "as through a glass, darkly" cannot expect finality in Truth while in the flesh; there must always be the opportunity for progress.

The second session was addressed by Brother T. Holmes, of Melton Mowbray, who led the thoughts of the brethren into avenues of pure

devotion, speaking of the sanctuary within each one of us wherein we may worship God. Even although our outward surroundings may not be those of the lofty dome, the white surplice, the diapason of the organ and the chant of choirs—and he emphasised the measure of loss that has been ours in consequence of the nature of our meeting-places—there is something deeper and more fundamental than these outward aids to worship. When we truly appreciate the Father's spirit we can welcome into our midst all who are truly His, our differences of outlook can be overlooked in the knowledge that we are all children of one Father. But if we cast out former conceptions which we now find are not proven we must beware lest we cast out our faith and confidence as well. To "know Him, who is life eternal" is the all-important theme.

On this note the gathering dispersed, in happy expectation of a similar time of uplift next month.

## BACK TO THE CROSS

A flower that stops short at its flowering misses its purpose. We were created for more than our spiritual development: reproduction, not mere development, is the goal of matured being—reproduction in other lives. There is a tendency in some characters running parallel to the high cultivation that spends its whole energy on the production of bloom at the expense of seed. The famed Japanese cherry blossoms at Washington illustrate this, they bring forth a marvellous profusion of blossoms, but they produce no fruit. The flowers that are bent on perfecting themselves by becoming double, end in barrenness, and like barrenness comes to the soul whose interests are all concentrated upon its own spiritual well-being, heedless of the needs of those around. The ideal flower is the one that uses its gifts as means to an end, the brightness and sweetness are not for its own glory, they are but to

attract the bees and butterflies that will fertilize it to make it fruitful. All else may go when that work is done." "It is more blessed to give than to receive." The problem then is, how are we to escape from the self-life that holds us, even after the sin-life has loosed its grasp?

Back to the Cross we must go. Not only from the world of condemnation, and from the world of sinning, does it free us as we accept it, but from the power of outward things, and from the thralldom of self. Not only does death open the door into the world of acquittal, and again into that of holiness, but also into the realm of surrender, and thence into that of sacrifice. For the essential idea of the Cross is a life lost, to be found again in those around. "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it."—Matt. 16. 26.

(*The "Herald of Christ's Kingdom."*)

# ACQUAINTED WITH GRIEF

A MEMORIAL  
MEDITATION

So often, when the suffering and death of Jesus are being considered, the theological aspect receives undue emphasis with a consequent neglect of the practical view-point. Christian schools of thought tend unfortunately to centre their exposition around the cold legal doctrines concerning Christ's ministry rather than explain the need of the "perfecting experiences" through which our Master passed. The reactions of affliction and trial upon His character were such that His sacrifice not only expunged the legal guilt of mankind but prepared Him for the work of re-education and reconciliation of a future age. Meditation upon this side of the subject will enable us more clearly to see why we should follow closely in His steps, that we also might become sympathetic priests who will in due time assist the sin-stricken world back to health and life.

Had the religious and political Jewish leaders contemporary with the First Advent been familiar with all the prophecies relating to the Deliverer of Israel, they would have perceived, and instructed the people in, the knowledge that the Messiah for whom they looked was not to be born into a princely environment of luxury and ease, nor was he to be a mighty general, schooled in the arts of war. Instead they would have realised that their Messiah was to be a humble, peaceful healer, brought into the world amid the poorest circumstances, reared in a peasant home, ministering to the needs of the more contrite souls. Comparatively few of these simple folk would have understood the more intellectual side of His doctrine, but they did know that Israel had been riven by the conflicts of great empires for many generations and now into their midst had appeared One who healed as many as lay within His contact. Jesus of Nazareth, the wonderful physician, trod the rough roads of Palestine, telling forth a message of good-will; preaching of love toward God and fellow man. It was a mission which was seldom undertaken without expense to personal comfort, and often He continued His labours while weary and foot-sore. He stood out even above previous holy men who possessed the gifts of healing and prophecy, and yet for all the good that He did and said for over three years among God's chosen people, His own people, they slew Him as a traitor and criminal.

Rich and poor, pious and publican, young and old had felt the effects of His work of curing the sick and making whole those who had hitherto not

known the joys of vigorous life. Cripples who had begged out their miserable existence at the temple gate for decades were bidden to rise and walk; poor sightless eyes yet without vision of God's universe were able to gaze into the face of the Master; deaf ears heard the voice of Him who spake as yet no man had spoken and speechless tongues were loosed to praise the Creator. Whether stricken by bodily disease or afflicted in mind, their distress was remedied, not by some freakish "cure-all" which lasted an hour or day, but set the captive at liberty to enjoy the freedom of health in physique and brain which the Life-giver had intended.

Where He had obtained the superhuman power they were ignorant, nor did they see in Him the One who had come from Jehovah to turn away ungodliness from Jacob and to bind the broken hearts. They did not recognise the fulfilment of the words of God's holy prophets and realise that of this One it had been said "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him", and they understood not that this was the "Man of Sorrows" who was despised and rejected of men. Blindness of eye was great, loss of spiritual vision was manifestly greater in them. Yet He who could have slain all Judah, yea and the Roman garrison as well, remained calm and submissive to the bitter persecution and cruel death. (Isa. 53. 3-10)

Sin had taken a severe toll of human life during the long ages, and in spite of man's relentless effort to combat disease and pain, the struggle was mostly in vain. Therefore it may seem strange to the casual observer that Jesus of Nazareth, one imbued with a living message and blessed with such curative power should be so wrongfully treated and put to death. There is more however in the story of the Saviour's ministry than merely a wasted life and needless death,—very much more.

"*Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone*" were the words of the Master, sublimely expressing one of the principles of Creation. Thus, the loss of Jesus' life will bring resurrection to all mankind, including peace and health—and most of all promise of reconciliation to God, without which everlasting life would be impossible to man. Harmony with the Creator is an essential part of the happiness of humanity, and it is this work which is assigned to the Christ, Jesus and His Church, for the age of Restitution. It is their blessed task to restore that condition which prevailed in Eden, of which it was written

"So God created man in his own image" (Gen. 1. 27) but before such a reflection can shine from human society, Jesus and those willing to share His training must first be fitted for such a work. Jesus was perfect, when He came to earth, and forever remained so, but it was needful that He should first undergo tests of character on earth. These trials were necessary to prove His love—that tender, compassionate desire to lift a fallen race out of its misery, on to a plane of human perfection.

Within the scope of God's redemptive purpose there lay even further beauties, for He planned that those who gave sufficient evidence of their love for Himself should be given the means whereby their characters would be changed into the likeness of their Lord. What a depth of goodness is here revealed in the mighty Creator, that He should desire to have a family, called from among the sons of men, and that these brethren of Jesus should be associated in the work of restoration. And yet, Divine wisdom is again manifest, for who better could understand the weakness and hopelessness of sinful man than the beloved Redeemer and those who have shared His thorny pathway, while yet in the flesh? Who could more closely sympathise than those who have experienced the barrier between themselves and their Maker?

Sometimes the way with Jesus is difficult and sorrows seem multiplied on every side. It is just at those times when we should lay aside our work awhile, leave the rush and bustle of the day's pressing duties, and enter into communion with Him who trod this way before us. The great tomes of theological learning will give us no comfort in such circumstances, as will the simple gospel story of one who endured unto death, amid the most heart-breaking experiences. Well did the writer to the Hebrews express himself . . . .  
*"Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."*  
 (Chap. 12. 2.) By meditating upon the reactions which He had to sin, we shall see more clearly our own course at every stage along the pilgrim journey.

Can we recall the picture of the tired Master as he provided bread for a hungry audience after discoursing to them all day; or see Him as He tenderly spoke to the Samaritan woman concerning the Word of Life. The centurion's servant was made whole by the Prince of Peace; the widow's son was raised from the dead by Him who was "Heir of all things". Was He ever too weary or too bitter to minister to even one poor soul? Were any too foreign or too humble or too young for His healing touch? Did He ever lose His

temper with that stiff-necked generation of scoffers? No, indeed, His life was a sublime example of the wonderful precepts which He had enunciated on the mountain side in the early part of His ministry. (Matt. 5. 1-12) His words and actions never became hasty even under the intense persecution of His latter days upon the earth, in fact the nearer He came to death, the greater manifest was His love for His brethren and for the world.

But what is all this to us and what does it mean to our hearts and lives? If the word of the Lord is deeply rooted in our minds and if the "first love" for our beloved Lord has been retained through the trial and stress of life's experiences, then slowly but surely the impression of His likeness is being made upon our characters. Beyond all intellectual knowledge, above the gifts of speech or pen, beside every Christian activity, must come this process of sanctification and development within the heart, of a fruitage of love which shall bring life to the nations and joy to all mankind. It is the inward reaction to the buffeting and straining in life's battles that makes or mars the Christian character. Troubles arise within the very church, to which the godly soul must respond, submissively to the Father's will and with affection for our brethren. Intellects differ widely and cause the development of opposing view-points about certain doctrines; personalities having been formed within contrasting environments, clash easily and cause friction among God's people. What is the result upon the church? Do such experiences draw us closer together by the very fact that we have to learn to be patient and care for each other's limitations and weaknesses or does the reverse happen? Do the differences of opinion produce the fruit of the Spirit, within us, drawing us nearer to our God and to each other? What opportunities are ours to practise the qualities needed to attain the standard of association with the great High Priest. The privilege of thus serving each other now is that we might be fitted for the work in the future of serving together. But patience is not developed in a community where everything runs smoothly, where all think the same way upon all points of Christian teaching. Nor is love engendered when those who irritate each other part company, for that abolishes many opportunities to express the joy of "in honour preferring one another".

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples" was the identification which Jesus gave to His followers, "if ye have love one for another." Looking into the future of His church He saw this distinguishing feature from the world, and recognised that while it toiled amid a scornful world, their unity, their constraining love would shine forth as a wonderful witness. Has this been the experience

of His Bride through the ages? Does this illustrate the path of the Narrow Way through the Gospel Era? We leave each one to answer that question, now, but it is sufficient that in looking back over the centuries we take note of the failings of others and endeavour not to stumble as they have done. The world is quick to criticise the weaknesses in Christian communities, especially when internal strife is evident, therefore it is of no avail displaying leaflets and tracts, and becoming noisy about "world events" unless there is a *living witness* within our fellowship shining clearly and purely.

Thus shall we be prepared to go forth into the world, here and now as ministering such blessings and assistance as lie within our scope. If we have humbly wrought good works among our brethren we shall be in a better condition to help our fellow man in the daily routine. It is easy to talk about brotherly love and shut half of God's children outside our walls in cold isolation. It is even easier to explain how we shall "bless all families of the earth", and then fail to bless the few of those families which we contact every day now. It may not be our privilege to labour among men in any healing or social capacity, but every child of God has the opportunity during some part of his life to manifest those qualities which will enable him to share the Kingdom work. As we jostle in the bus queue or shopping market, we are in one of the environments which God has placed us to show forth His glory. God is training men and women now, to be tender, kind-hearted and patient with the human race. The qualities of mercy and wisdom will surely be required of those who have lived amid iniquity and unrighteousness for decades, as they restore to life and re-educate earth's millions. Who better will be trained for such a work than those who have manifested God's love while they have been under the burden of human imperfection and subjected to persecution? Do we rejoice in affliction and revile not again when troubled on every side? Do our workmates, our colleagues, those with whom we have to do, day by day, see the gentle, compassionate side of our nature or the impassioned, ill-tempered brutal aspect, which if allowed to spring up can easily spoil God's workmanship.

"Henceforth know we no man after the flesh" wrote the great Apostle Paul to the Romans—"No man" includes the fellow passengers in the train in which we travel, the man behind the store counter or the brother and sister in the home; most of all, our brother and sister in Christ. The way we act and speak is that which is covered by "after the flesh", for after we have given our all to God, we look through new eyes of love and behold *everything*

from the standpoint of a New Creature. *Everything* now is seen as Jesus would see it, and as a priest of God would see it. Any other attitude toward our associates in life's experience will lead us away from our calling to join with Jesus in restoring the sin-stricken creation.

So as another year of the Christian walk is ending, and we gather again in communion at the Memorial table with our risen Lord and with His brethren, let us have in mind the grand outcome of sharing the bitter experience of "His cup". It is our privilege to come to the Master's table year by year and speak one to another concerning the suffering which He bore for us, and meditate upon the joys we have in following in His steps. As we come again this year in our ones and twos, and in our larger numbers, may we remember we are part of one large family, one large loaf composed of many grains of wheat. But unless the loaf is broken, unless the grapes are crushed, the labour is vain, so may we renew our efforts to spend and be spent in the Master's service. May the year before us give us fresh vitality to assist our brethren in the bonds of Christian love, that we may "bear one another's burdens and thus fulfil the law of Christ".

When the parting hymn is sung, and we take our leave one of another, and commune still further with our beloved Lord who is ever with us, we shall not know what "breaking" and "crushing" experiences lie before us ere we shall sit again to drink the fruit of the vine. Maybe the last of earth's sorrows will vanish before we shall take the cup again and then it will be on heaven's new wine. But let us determine during the solemn hours after supper, that we will make it a year walking nearer to our Father, closer to His Son, that the relationship with them and with our brethren may become more intimately affectionate. Then in going among our fellow man, we shall thus be more kind and gentle to all we see.

There may be many more "memorials of His death" till He come to take us all home, and therefore we may expect tuition in the school of Christ to be more arduous and stringent. Maybe we shall find more than ever before that it is only rare scholars who can graduate in that school, but let us remember too, that God has brought us thus far, not to leave us now. Nor does it require great intellects to qualify for this Royal Priesthood. The patient self-sacrificing soul will be of more use to suffering humanity when clothed with an immortal nature than were such a prize given only to theological scholars.

Suffering with Christ will deepen our union with our Lord and Head (Phil. 4. 10) and it will also give a firmer basis of fellowship with our brethren.

Sharing His cross will also bring the happy experience of sovereignty with Him, and what joys will be ours then; we can only meditate upon now. What was lost in Adam will be regained in that glad day, and we shall have the privilege of spreading leaves of healing among the nations and teaching them the way of peace, health and life-verlasting. What little we suffer now will be more

than outweighed by one glance at our beloved Lord's face, but we shall more than see Him. If we co-labour with Him now, if we commune with Him, share His sorrows and joys *now*, we shall share His life, when we are beyond this vale of tears. May these few thoughts spur us on until we reach our Heavenly home, until we see our Father and our Jesus face to face.

## FAITH'S TOUCH

Look up! dear heart, for in thy pain  
 There's One who knows thy grief.  
 That lowly One, the Nazarene  
 Whose garment hem a woman touched,  
 From Him a healing power went,  
 A virtue which alone was His,  
 To heal the body wracked with pain,  
 And mind, and heart, which needed rest  
 From care and life's anxiety.  
 Faith, too, went with outstretched hand  
 And this it was which clasped His hem,  
 And when again she did withdraw,  
 Faith's hand was filled with healing balm,  
 And health; and peace of mind she knew.  
 For He who hushed the angry sea  
 Had given her health, and she was free.  
 Her eyes no longer filled with tears  
 Because of Satan's work of years—  
 For now, from Him whose power held  
 So many years within his grasp,  
 A life with sickness overcast  
 Was changed to one of praise and song  
 To Him to whom it did belong.  
 But—if He does not heal thy frame,  
 Lose not thy faith in His dear Name,  
 For it has power to give thee life  
 Beyond the span which now is thine;  
 And life eternal thou shalt find  
 If Faith's thy hand which thou dost stretch;  
 And virtue from His life will flow  
 To thee as well, and thou shalt know  
 That this is better far for thee.  
 A Hope of Life—eternally. *W.F.F.*

Plans are now being made for the annual London Convention, held under the auspices of five London classes, at August Bank Holiday season next, in Conway Hall, London, as on previous occasions. Further details will be announced in due course, or may be obtained from the Convention Secretary, Bro. G. H. Jennings, Grove House, Roding Lane South, Ilford, Essex. Friends requiring accommodation are requested to notify their needs as early as possible to the Accommodation Secretary, Bro. S. H. French, 4, Woodlands Gardens, Woodford New Road, Walthamstow, London, E.17.

## THE TOUCH OF LOVE

(*Matt. 8. 15, Mark 1. 30, 31, Luke 4. 38-39*)

"He touched her hand and the fever left her"—  
 So graciously He came  
 And healed that weary fevered soul.  
 JESUS is still the same.

"He touched her hand and the fever left her"—  
 O, ancient touch Divine!  
 Come *now*, with that same power, and heal  
 This fevered heart of mine.

"He touched her hand and the fever left her"—  
 O, come, and let *me* feel  
 The virtue of that healing Touch,  
 While at Thy throne I kneel.

"He touched her hand and the fever left her"—  
 O, blessed Touch of calm.  
 Let my whole life a tribute be  
 To that same healing balm.

"He touched her hand and the fever left her"—  
 That wondrous Touch of Love  
 Has still its ancient power to heal,  
 As we may daily prove. *R.W.*

It is a great moral truth, attested on all hands alike by experience and observation, that any covert alliance with sin makes a man not more, but less lenient to his fellow-sinners, and that if we desire to have a keener sensibility and a stronger sympathy for the sorrows which men by sin have brought upon themselves, the only way to approximate to this end is by separating ourselves more completely from the sin that is in and around us, and cultivating (under God's hand) a higher standard of moral purity. *(Selected.)*

\* \* \*

Only let us have faith in Him who gave us the vision (of victory) and we shall be victorious.

\* \* \*

A conscience void of offence, before God and man, is an inheritance for eternity.

\* \* \*

"God's people never meet for the last time."

## “Are Ye Able?”

A MOMENTOUS  
QUESTION

Some little while prior to the ‘hour’ appointed by God for his decease, Jesus left the scenes of His usual activities in Galilee, and took His disciples along into the reign of Caesarea Philippi—a town in the Northern district of Palestine, near the foot of Mount Hermon. In the quietness of this countryside retreat, Jesus, for the first time, began to tell His followers of His approaching death (Matt. 16. 21. Mark 9. 31). During this period of retirement Jesus passed through His wonderful transfiguration experience in the Holy Mount, during which the chosen ‘three’ disciples saw ‘His Glory’ and heard the other two participants in that ‘Glory scene’ talk with Jesus of the “decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem” (Luke 9. 31). Descending from the ‘high mountain’ to the other waiting disciples, Jesus charged the favoured ‘witnesses’ to tell no man about what they had seen “till the Son of Man be risen again from the dead.” Matt. 17. 9.

From that time on, as Jesus returned to Galilee, and then left for the last time those cities wherein His mightiest works had been done to go up to Jerusalem, reference to His approaching death and resurrection fell much more frequently from His lips (Mark 9. 30-32.) In spite, however of these repeated assertions, though at times they questioned among themselves what it might portend, the disciples failed entirely to comprehend what He meant. These frequent references by Jesus, however, show us that the purpose for which He had come into the world was beginning to lie heavily upon his own heart and mind. The ‘hour’ of His Life’s mission was fast approaching, but, for all the sorrow it might entail, it was in no fearful mood He set out to meet it (Luke 9. 51). A very graphic pen-picture is given by Mark (10. 32) of the bearing and reaction, both of Jesus and His followers, as they set out on the last stage of that fateful journey, to the mighty events that were to befall during the next few eventful days. “And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem, and *Jesus went before them . . . .* and as they followed they were afraid”. Fear made them hesitant, so that they lagged behind their Master,—But He, for whom these moments were so fraught with destiny, “set His face to go up” without hesitation to that ungrateful City which realized not that its own fateful hour also was fast approaching.

The shadow of the Cross lay athwart the life of the Man of Sorrows, from that moment of ‘Glory

on Hermon’s slopes’, till He hung twixt heaven and earth ‘outside the gate’ and gave, meantime, solemn depth to all His words and eager expectation to His consecrated thoughts. Evidently the disciples could feel the force of this deeper solemnity and eager expectation, for Mark says “they were amazed” as Jesus led them in the way.

While in this exalted mood, there came one—a rich young ruler—to ask Jesus by what means he could attain to eternal life. “Cross-bearing” and self-renunciation had been Jesus’ constant theme during all this southward journey from Hermon to Judea. Hence, when this young man, so apparently in earnest, asked so direct a question, Jesus gave him no less direct an answer. “Sell all”—and “surrender all,” said Jesus, who was now on the threshold of giving His “all” in death, that others might live.

The young man turned sorrowfully away, unable to esteem ‘treasure in heaven’ as riches preferable to his great wealth. Inwardly sighing as the young man went his way, Jesus said “How hardly shall they that have riches enter the kingdom of God”—in other words, How difficult it is for any man to make the best of both worlds!

Hearing this remark, Peter says, in effect, “Lord, how does this statement affect our position? We have not hesitated to leave all, and follow Thee—What shall we have therefore, when the Kingdom, which we preach, is established?” To Peter and his brethren, Jesus then makes reply “No man who has left all—father, mother, wife, children, houses and lands, for my sake, shall lose by his sacrifice—he shall get a hundredfold in return, and such an one shall most certainly inherit eternal life! Moreover ye which have followed me, in that day of regeneration, when I, as the Son of Man, sit on the Throne of my Glory, shall also each sit upon his throne judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Then, they, who like the young ruler, have been ‘first’ in this present order, if, entering at all, shall be ‘last’ in the honours of my kingdom, and you that have been ‘last’ (and least) shall then be ‘first’.

This word of assurance must have been very encouraging and comforting to His little band of followers. Here was something they could readily grasp and understand. It was not enigmatic and baffling, like the references to His death and resurrection had been. And presumably they talked this matter over, both among themselves and also more privately. Most likely it was the topic of

an earnest conversation beneath Zebedee's roof, and as James and John told the story of Jesus and the ruler, a fond and doting mother resolved to ask for her sons a place and position they would scarcely have dared to ask for themselves.

Threading her way, one day, through the little group of disciples, accompanied by her two sons, and with some show of respect and deference, she desired the privilege of speaking with Jesus perhaps more privately. "What is your request" asks Jesus. "Grant that these my two sons, may sit, the one on Thy right hand, and the other on the left in Thy kingdom." (Matt. 20. 21.)

Taking the question as the agreed utterance of sons as well as mother, Jesus looks them straight in the face, and through that to the heart, and says, "Ye know not what ye ask! You do not know or realise what is implied or involved in this request! You may have followed me about in Galilee, and in Judea; and you may have left your boats and your employment for my sake, but following me means more than all this! As I have of recent days been telling you of my death, and that I have come not merely to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom, but to die—to suffer at the hands of cruel men; I ask you now, are you prepared to follow me in all this? Are you able to drink of the Cup that I shall drink of? Are you able to be baptised with the baptism that I have already been baptised with? Will you follow me through death and humiliation—and rejection, and be cut off from your people and kindred?"

"We will follow you even there—we are able!" they replied, thus expressing a deep fidelity to Him, and His mission in life. "Ye shall drink indeed of my Cup—ye shall be baptised with my baptism, but even then, I cannot grant your request to sit one on either side of Me—that is not my gift. It is my Father's prerogative to give those positions to those for whom they have been prepared by Him" replied Jesus.

"Will you follow me, not knowing what place or position you will get? Will you drink of my Cup, and leave all else to the Father? Can you step out, not minding what your reward will be, only that as you share my Cup of suffering you will also share my Cup of Joy?"

No more penetrating or illuminating words, prior to the moment of this conversation, had anywhere fallen from the lips of Jesus. Up in the vicinity of Cæsarea Philippi, some short time before, after Peter had made his memorable, God-given confession 'Thou art the Christ' Jesus had gone on to say "If any man will be my disciple, let him take up his cross and follow me" implying that every faithful follower should be accorded the privilege of "cross-bearing", but never before had He linked

His followers with Himself in quite the same close, intimate way. "Are YE able to drink of the Cup that I shall drink of?" Can ye drink, as I am about to drink of a Cup which my Father shall pour?"

There is no mistaking the implication here. Jesus was reaching (and eagerly anticipating) the crucial hour, and the accomplishment of the specific purpose for which He had come into this world. At a later time as the weight of tragedy and sorrow pressed more heavily on His sensitive heart, we hear Him say, in the very shadows of Gethsemane . . . " . . . the cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?" There is no mistaking what He meant in these decisive words (John 18. 11). Not Peter's sword, nor resistance, nor flight was the 'way out' for Him in this 'hour of darkness'. He had come into the world for 'this hour'. He had lived His spotless life, He had faithfully taught the Truth of God and raised the hostility of demons and men—and this was 'their hour and the power of darkness'. But not from them did Jesus accept the issues of that dark hour.

"The Cup which my Father has given me"—that was Jesus' view. There were no secondary causes in His life, either in His ingress or egress from this world. And yet again, when the fuller extent of the shame and humiliation that awaited Him was opening up before Him, in the hour of His sanguinary sweat, we hear the same truth, and the same wholehearted submission to the over-ruling hand of a Fatherly providence. "O Father, if it be possible, let this Cup . . . pass . . . from me, nevertheless . . . not as I will". Here the bitter cup was at His lips—and He was drinking it to its dregs. This was 'the cup that I shall drink'. Jesus had lived in the shadow of this hour more particularly from His transfiguration onward, and under its solemnising power he had come by stages to Jerusalem and Gethsemane.

Knowing then, in His own mind, the ordeal which awaited Him, when His hour should be fully come, we must not fail to note what His question to James and John implies. He had a Cup to drink; which was to be given Him by His Father;—and with the deepening sense of all this experience weighing heavier upon Him, He asks, "Are ye able to drink of the Cup that I shall drink?"

---

We cannot talk of doing the works of God and ignore self-preparation and self-mastery.

\* \* \*

The great power of prayer consists, not in asking, but in learning how to receive.



Thou, therefore, endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

<h1 style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0;">BIBLE STUDENT'S</h1> <h1 style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0;">MONTHLY</h1>				
<small>Joseph here: (1) manan anp top. Tehur-agenti be com</small>	<small>Bible as a whole man would understand and will find out of your (Jesus) approach</small>	<small>All letters will be read and typed and will be sent to the printer in the form of a book</small>	<small>of God of Abraham to Israel Jacob his son. in the L. of a great God. A. A.</small>	<small>I am glad that you are reading this paper and I trust you will find it interesting and profitable and I am sure that you will find it a great help in your study of the Bible</small>

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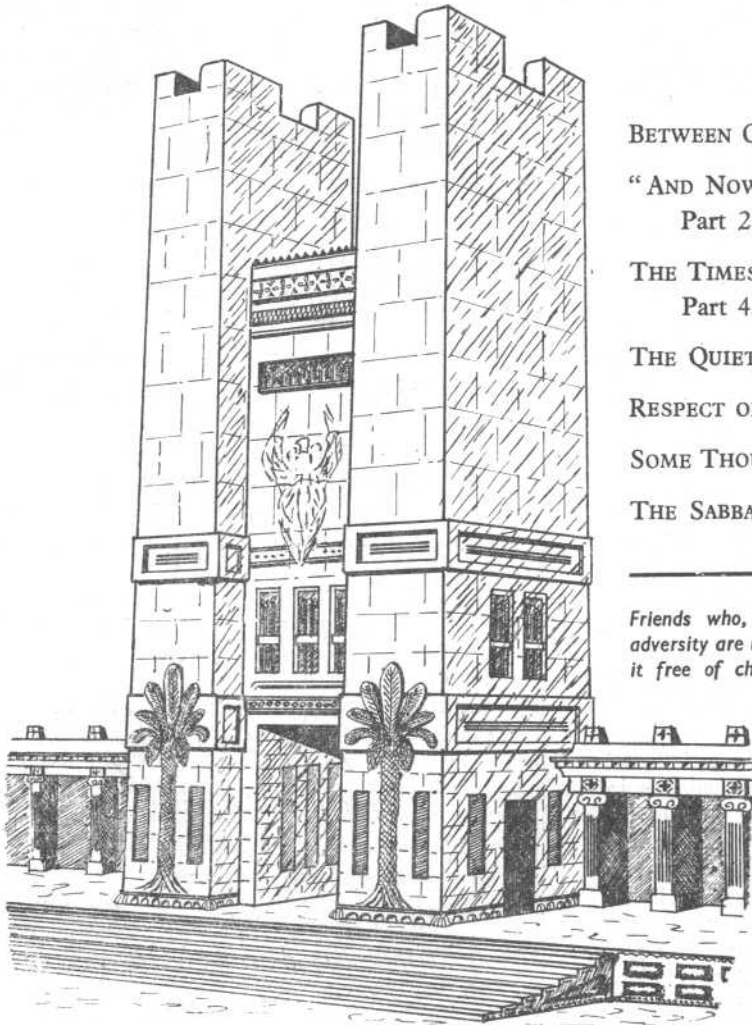
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*Lift up your heads, O ye gates,  
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors,  
And the King of glory shall come in.*

## BETWEEN OURSELVES

Brother Allbon wishes to acknowledge, through these columns, the receipt of an anonymous donation of £5 to the Benevolent Fund, from Bath, and to express the sincere appreciation of the brethren who administer this Fund. Whilst making this acknowledgment, it might also be added that any of our readers are welcome to report any case of need amongst the brethren that may come to their notice, to Bro. E. Allbon, at 20, Sunnymede Drive, Ilford, Essex.

\* \* \*

This account of the March meeting at Caxton Hall has been received from one who was present:

"At the monthly united meeting held in the Caxton Hall on Saturday, the 19th March, there was a good gathering, the highest attendance yet. In the place of Brother Hudson, who was unable to serve, Brother French spoke on '*Glimpses of the Visions of Zechariah*', focussing attention particularly upon the evidence now before our eyes of a returning favour and prosperity to Israel as foretold in some of these visions. Some interesting questions followed and further Scriptural evidence was set forth to the same effect.

"During the interval the brethren enjoyed more personal fellowship one with the other and many were glad to meet others with whom no personal contact had been held for years. Afterwards the concluding address was given by Brother Fox exhorting to a truer worship of the Lord and to a realization that we are sheep of ONE PASTURE as the psalmist declares:—'*O! Come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker for we are His Flock (not flocks) and the sheep of His pasture*'.

"With a song of praise and thanksgiving another happy season of fellowship and worship together came to a close."

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Announcement is made now that a new issue of "*Millennial Message*" will shortly be available to the brethren. The zeal with which the two former issues have been accepted and distributed by the friends has prompted a generous offer whereby supplies of "*Millennial Message No. 3*" will be furnished free of charge to all who will undertake to distribute them in their own districts. We feel sure that brethren in many places will be glad to avail themselves of this opportunity and to play their part in making known these "tidings of great joy". The issue will contain a report of the public lecture in London of last year, an article on "Where are the Dead?" and another on the Kingship of Christ, man's great hope.

In order to help us in arrangements for the despatch of this issue when ready, it will be appreciated if brethren who desire to take part in the distribution will write at once, saying how many they wish to have. The parcels will be sent probably during the middle weeks of May, but it is desirable that we have the names and addresses as soon as possible.

So often is the zeal of the friends circumscribed by their inability to meet the cost of the tracts they could otherwise distribute, and it is the thought of the donor in this case that many will be able to share in this effort who might not be so able if the necessity to purchase remained. This then is a leading of the Lord, an opportunity prompted in the first place by loving desire for His glory, and we look confidently for a response that will in turn proclaim abroad that same glory.

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### Gone from Us

Bro. T. M. Seeck (*Arundel*).

Bro. W. Pritchard (*Pontypool*).

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"Till the day break, and the shadows flee away."

## LONDON MONTHLY MEETING

Saturday, 21st May, 1949

6.30—8.30 p.m.

In the Tudor Hall  
CAXTON HALL

Caxton Street, Westminster, S.W.1  
5 mins. St. James Park Station and Victoria Street

*Praise and Worship*

*Fellowship*

*A talk on the Christian outlook for today  
and an opportunity for questions*

*A Scriptural address by guest speaker*

Chairman: Bro. H. Nadal

Speakers: Bro. A. O. Hudson

Bro. W. R. Walton

# "And Now Abideth . . ."

A Series of Studies  
in 1 Cor. 13

## PART 2

As we turn our attention to the list of minor graces which go to make up the Master-grace of Love, we shall find some of them described in terms which are of a positive nature, "Love is . . ."—while the rest are defined in terms of their opposite—"Love is not . . ." But we must not assume from this that Love is a compound of mere negatives. There were evidently good and sufficient reasons for Paul's adoption of this form of statement to the Corinthian Church for, from the context preceding, we can find proof enough of envy, of vaunting, of pride, and of callous indifference to purity in their midst. Indeed life, with them, was rough and raw, but little removed from heathen ways. Doubtless Paul desired to have them know that these carnal vicious practices were not accordant with the principles of the *Agape*, and would not win them approval in Heaven's sight, nor fit them for that nobler service to which they had been called when once the time for "that which is perfect" to come in had arrived. For men such as these—just as with Israel of old—it was essential to lay emphasis on the negative, and tell them precisely what "thou shalt not do". Such men, as yet, were unready for the fuller deeper liberties of Christ—unready even for the "golden rule" of doing unto others as they would others should do to them.

Under other circumstances it is to our advantage to survey these negatives from their opposite point of view, for as we turn them round about into positive elements, we can then begin to see why the *Agape*—the mighty Love of God—will achieve such wonderful results in the hearts of men in days yet to come, and why they mean so much to the saints to-day. God's upper standard methods are based upon the principle "do this", not upon a "thou shalt not". Hence the "*Agape*" will be assertive, aggressive and positive.

In a world like this, where evil reigns so widely, the impact of these assertive qualities on other lives is bound to have a disturbing influence. They differ very greatly from the many legislative enactments which control and shape the ways of common life. As they impinge upon that life, men are apt to see themselves as targets for the marksmanship of men with a better sort of weapon, and to feel resentment towards the more efficient marksman with his superior advantages. But such disturbance of the muddy waters by the inflow of a purer stream

seems to be God's way of purifying the stagnant reservoirs of human thought.

The impact of Divine Love (with Divine Power in support) upon the universal empire of sin will yet be the greatest disturbing factor the world has known. It will uproot ancient concepts, and overturn age-encrusted institutions as nothing else has ever done.

What therefore this mighty "dynamic" is in its complete "whole", it must also be in all its parts. And as the "whole" is an aggressive thing, so also is every part. For this reason alone, it is well for us to see these parts in their "positive" shape and dress, and to realise that there is deeper intent in their cultivation than mere adornment of character in these present times. Like the truth which Jesus taught (and of which they are a part) they are as a sword (Matt. 10. 34.) sent forth into the earth to assail the strong citadels of sin, though for this present Age, restricted in their assault to outpost skirmishing ere the main attack begins. (See Rev. 19. 15 for this simile.)

We have the same weapon of attack to-day, though by our less skilful use we cannot achieve the same results. But our feeble assaults with Love and Truth are not without some small effect.

Taking now the words of Paul as they stand in the text, we note that Love, on its positive side, suffers long and is kind; it rejoices with truth; . . . it beareth, believeth, hopeth and endureth all things. On its other side it envieth not, it vaunteth not, and is not puffed up. It does not behave itself in unseemly ways; it seeketh not its own; is not provoked, takes no account of evil, does not rejoice in iniquity, nor does it ever fail.

Translating these negatives into the terms of their opposites they would read, in tabulated form:—

- Love envies not . . .*  
but is generous and benevolent,
- Love vaunteth not itself . . .*  
but is modest and decorous,
- Love is not puffed up . . .*  
but is humble and knows its place,
- Love doth not behave unseemly . . .*  
but is courteous and polite,
- Love seeketh not her own . . .*  
but is sacrificing and charitable,

*Love is not provoked . . .*  
 but is evenly minded and good tempered,  
*Love takes no account of evil . . .*  
 but is guileless and pure,  
*Love rejoiceth not in unrighteousness . . .*  
 but is genuine and sincere,  
*Love never fails . . .*  
 but is always a success.

Writing up all these qualities as positive elements they will read: "Love suffers long, and is kind; love is generous and benevolent; is modest and decorous; is humble and knows its place; is courteous and polite; is sacrificing and charitable; is evenly minded and good tempered; is guileless and pure; is genuine and sincere; rejoices with truth; bears all things, believes all things; hopes all things, endures all things. Love always succeeds."

To all appearance this is a list of simple qualities. Having passed the Master-grace through the prism of his own sanctified understanding, it comes out to his pen broken up into its varied constituents, thus enabling us to take note that all have common names, and that they are qualities to which men of "good" faith pay lip service every day. Yet simple though they are, they are too exacting for the common man to observe and practise in the common round of life. It may be granted that some few of the noblest specimens of humanity—nature's gentlemen—have possessed some of them, in proportion as culture or circumstance brought refinement to their lives, but of this we can be sure—as history will attest—the balanced "whole" constitutes a standard of moral character too high for men unassisted by Divine help to reach. Once and once only that balanced "whole" has been exemplified before the eyes of men, and that "once" is the standard for all time. Men have scrutinised and analysed that "Life", but it has stood every test. Even non-believing men have had to confess that He stands alone, separate and apart from all the rest (and best) of men. The lustre of that One incomparable Life is just the measure of the outstanding worth of these simple graces blended and co-ordinated in the balanced "wholeness" of the *Agape*. It is there, in Him, that we see the elements for what they are; it is there we see the balanced "whole" for what it is.

Love is not any one of these elements alone, but a complete synthesis of them all. And, as with the diamond, it is the synthesis that makes it what it is. The sparkling diamond, like the more common graphite, is composed of carbon elements, but it is the way the atoms are arranged and interlocked that makes all the difference between the two. So it is with the *Agape*. It is the blending and interfusing of these elements so that each is permeated and tintured by all the rest that makes Love the unique

thing it is. There is thus no such quality as simple long-suffering or benevolence; it is always long-suffering or benevolence "plus". All that is of the real, the good, the true, goes into each one of them, but shines through this facet or that as the sparkling gem is turned.

From the evidence of Scripture, as well as of human experience, it would seem that this synthesis of Love is an activating power peculiar to this reign of sin and death. Under no other set of circumstance could a synthesis like this be required. This spark from the Divine Flame which has been kindled in our hearts, had its origin, of course, in the Divine Heart of God. In Him it represents His attitude to fallen men. From Him it passed first to His well-beloved Son, and kindled there the ready response to come down to man's relief, regardless of the cost. Now, while we can see the need for God's long-suffering, with members of a fallen race, we cannot see the same need for the exercise of that quality towards those sons of light above who run with willing feet to do His Will. Long-suffering is not called for in His Love for them.

Nor can we see that the self-sacrifice of Jesus in "seeking not His own" was needful in the heavenly courts. "Seeking not one's own" to the point of sacrifice could scarcely be an element of heavenly love. Nor can we see that long-suffering or self-sacrifice would be obligatory on any of these sons of light for another's benefit.

But notwithstanding such a lack those heavenly courts must have their codes of respect and esteem, with love each for each, befitting to such sacred atmosphere. Love, as sons of the same Father there surely must be, but even so, it would seem to be minus some elements of the *Agape*, as that Master-grace has been made manifest towards fallen man, by the great Creator and His Son.

Nor does there seem to be reason or need for the perfect man, Restitution being complete, to show long-suffering to his fellow-man, nor yet present himself in self-sacrifice on his behalf. Nor will any cause for envy abound in that new earth, for all will have enough to make life complete. Nature's perfect gentlemen will surely all have grown mature and beautiful in righteousness and holiness, and brother-love will link them all together in one happy relationship with God as the Father of all.

From considerations such as these it would seem to indicate that the "*Agape*" is Redemption Love, and that the wider range of its elements is peculiar to these present times, on this sad old earth. And more than that, they seem to be the tie that binds the Saint to his Saviour and his God, and that he (the Saint) alone of all the teeming millions of the earth is the honoured casket for those precious

elements of this deeper, fuller Love. In Him it is still Redemption Love, a love that spurs him on to graduate as a co-deliverer of a suffering world. These precious elements, thus exclusive to the Church, constitute the very essence of Christ-likeness, and as none but God's Elect can be conformed to the very image of His Son, so none but these Elect can scale the heights, or plumb the depths of this very special Love.

It will be a great thing indeed for Restitution's gentlemen to take on the perfect Love of that new earth, but it is a greater thing—an infinitely greater thing—for the Saint of God in these present times of sin and death to put on this adornment of Christ, as a co-ordinated and balanced thing, with Satan and his hosts at large on every hand to tempt and harass and oppose. Nothing but the Power of God could accomplish this amazing thing, and nourish into completeness and maturity the "likeness" of His Son.

Thoughts like these should invest our calling with deeper urgency and seriousness every day, for the

opportunity to grow like Christ is flitting by with every setting sun. When once the body of the Elect is complete, the opportunity will not recur again. It is no easy thing to transform conceptions into character, but if it is to be accomplished in any heart, it must be done to-day. These simple elements must be put on, and must interpenetrate and permeate each other in their entirety if the Love that is shed abroad by the Holy Spirit is to reach its maturity in Christ-like character.

The very desires of the white-hot Heart of God must infiltrate into every saintly heart, and fill it with the same burning zeal to live and labour for this groaning world's redemption and deliverance from sin and death. That is the end and purpose of the "Agape"—that is the objective towards which our simple elements must grow.

Never let us think that these graces are an adornment just for to-day—they are the equipment for a great "work" on the grand scale in another better day.

*To be continued*

## "THEY SHALL NOT TASTE OF DEATH"—A Comment

*An article under the above title in our October, 1947, issue, dealing with Mark 9. 1 and the saying of our Lord "There be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they have seen the Kingdom of God come with power" elicited the following comment at the time, from one of our brethren. Unfortunately, the comment was filed away without being published, and having now come to light, is reproduced herewith. The suggestion is interesting and appears worthy of consideration.*

"Is there not a simpler explanation of Mark 9. 1. than that given in your October issue?"

"According to Mark 8. 34. our Lord was addressing not only His disciples but also the crowd. Comparing the three accounts, He seems to refer to the earthly Kingdom. The context shows that He was not referring to the death of the body but of the human will; a death that all must taste if they would have eternal life. Like Him all must surrender their wills to God—put self to death. For what benefit would be gained by temporarily enjoying this present life and accumulating earthly goods if life itself is lost. Such will find, when the resurrection reveals it, they are still without real pleasure and real wealth—life itself. Only those with spiritual faculties can now see this truth but the Kingdom will reveal it to all. Therefore some (perhaps

many) among His listeners, if they would have life (and the enjoyment of the present life is evidence of it), will not appreciate the wisdom of tasting such death until the Kingdom is set up. Then they must taste death if they would live.

"Numerous Scriptures support this view. The theme was developed in our Lord's conversation with the rich young Ruler and in the subsequent explanation to His disciples. St. Paul also has much to say about it."

## LONDON CONVENTION

Plans are now being made for the annual London Convention, held under the auspices of five London classes, at August Bank Holiday season next, in Conway Hall, London, as on previous occasions. Further details will be announced in due course, or may be obtained from the Convention Secretary, Bro. G. H. Jennings, Grove House, Roding Lane South, Ilford, Essex. Friends requiring accommodation are requested to notify their needs as early as possible to the Accommodation Secretary, Bro. S. H. French, 4, Woodlands Gardens, Woodford New Road, Walthamstow, London, E.17.

# THE TIMES OF THIS IGNORANCE

A Study in  
Divine Purposes

## Chapter 4—From Moses to Christ

*"The Lord your God will raise up unto thee a Prophet like unto me. Unto him shall ye hearken: and it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people."* (Deut. 18. 15. Acts 3. 23)

That is one of the most significant utterances of the Scriptures. It tells more of God's purposes than did all that had been revealed to man in all the ages before Moses. For the first time in history the Divine intentions and promises became centred in the person of an individual—"He that shall come"—and for ever afterwards the constant theme of all who thought and spoke and wrote of the ways of God was the "Coming One". In Him would all the fair promises of God for human welfare be fulfilled!

Small wonder that Isaiah should speak so rapturously of the King who one day would rule in righteousness, of the shepherd who would feed His flock, of the Conqueror who would destroy all evil in the winepress of God's wrath. Small wonder that Malachi should speak of the Herald who would announce His advent, and the blessings that would attend the completion of His work. Small wonder, indeed, that the common people, waiting and longing for the promise, should ask John the Baptist, hopefully, "Art thou 'that prophet'?" They had been waiting so long and by then they realised how much they needed His coming and His ministration.

But, of course, back in the days of Moses the people had by no means come to this stage of development. They as yet hardly realised their undone state before God. True, they knew that they were in misery and suffering. Their cry in Egypt had gone up to God in heaven, and He had heard, and had reached down from heaven to deliver them, "with an high hand, and an outstretched arm" (Deut. 26. 8), but once the immediate stress was over and they were safely on the other side of the Red Sea they quickly forgot the Lord their deliverer. It was not until their enthusiasm was engendered by the making of their Covenant at Sinai in the mediation of Moses that their faith returned and they shouted "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient" (Exod. 24. 7).

The making of that covenant was a great event in the history of the Times of Ignorance. Here was God undertaking to teach this whole nation the things concerning Himself and His Plan. For that

Covenant was much more than a mere understanding "If you do *this*, you shall live; if you do *that*, you will die." It was not framed merely to inaugurate and perpetuate a series of rites and ceremonies that might become the ritual form of the nation's worship. It was essentially a covenant of knowledge, a means by which Israel—and others, too, in after days—might be taught the elements of God's Plan and the laws of His universe. We, today, many thousands of years later, still gain valuable instruction in the Divine Plan by consideration of things that the Law Covenant contained, its precepts and principles, its warnings and promises, its types and shadows. The Covenant became to Israel a teacher, a teacher that was intended to lead the sincerely reflective among them to a higher plane in the knowledge and understanding of God—and ultimately to the Saviour. "The law" says Paul "was our *pedagogue* (tutor) to lead us to Christ" (Gal. 3. 24).

The making of the Law Covenant with Israel, then, was by far the greatest advance in the dispelling of man's ignorance of God that had been made since Creation. The standards of God's holiness were now made known in the world, not as reasoned out by man on the basis of things that are seen, but revealed by God from things that are unseen. A new voice was in the world, speaking with authority, the voice of God Himself; when God said at Sinai "*Thou shalt not . . . thou shalt . . .*" there was none that could gainsay.

It has been asserted by scholars anxious to discredit the Divine authority of the Scriptures and the supernatural element in the Exodus story, that the Laws of Moses bear so striking a similarity to the Code of Hammurabi the Sumerian monarch of six hundred years before, that Moses must have taken his commandments from the earlier laws. That there is a great similarity is true, and since the rules of rightdoing and justice are based on the same fundamental principles in all ages it is not surprising that such a similarity does exist. Hammurabi did the best he could with the same motive at heart as had Moses; but when God spoke to Moses He revealed depths of understanding in the regulation of the conduct of fallen man which the Sumerian ruler never plumbed. It is the law of Moses which has survived almost intact to our own day and not the Code of Hammurabi, and the

reason is because the work of Moses was directly of God; that of Hammurabi only indirectly, through generations of fallible and imperfect men.

So Israel pursued her notable career through the centuries, despite many failures and shortcomings continually advancing in the knowledge of God and presenting to the world a constantly deepening and widening view of the principles of His government and His Plan. Men, as a whole, were no more disposed to believe than they had been in the earliest stages of world history, but the opportunities for acquiring knowledge of the way of salvation, and the bases of faith, were much more extensive, and that is an important consideration when the question of responsibility comes to be discussed. Our Lord indicated that much when he spoke of the men of Sodom and of Nineveh rising in the judgment with the men of His own generation (Matt. 12. 41). Greater knowledge, greater light, brings greater responsibility and therefore liability to a greater judgment. The Israelites had light a hundred-fold, a thousand-fold, more than had the antediluvians.

Perhaps in no way is this increase of light on God's character and Plan more strikingly shown than in the Lord's own words to Moses "I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac and unto Jacob by the name of *El Shaddai*—God Almighty—but by my name *Yahweh*—the all-embracing One—was I not known to them" (Gen. 6. 3). What profound truth is hidden in those few words! The patriarchs, knowing God as the Almighty, All powerful One, had advanced tremendously from the position of their ancestors who knew Him only as the Most High; so did Moses and his generation take another great stride forward into the light and come to know God, not merely as the Almighty, One who had all power, but as the Eternal, omniscient both in power and being, the source of all things and the sustainer of all things. "In him we live, and move, and have our being" said Paul to the men of Athens. That is what the name *Yahweh* implies. He embraces all things, and in Him all things consist. There was only one greater height of understanding to be attained, and to reach that highest level of all, men must needs wait for the Coming of One who had dwelt in the bosom of the Father and could therefore in due time interpret Him to man, not as the Most High, not as the Almighty, not even as the All-embracing One, but as—the Father! But men were by no means ready for that in the time of Moses.

The history of Israel was not one of uninterrupted advance in the knowledge of God. There were periods of retrogression. Such an one was the latter part of the period of the Judges, a time when idolatry was rampant and the people were falling

away fast from their covenant. The work of Samuel did much to bring them back to God and the terms of their national standing before Him. Then in the days of the later kings the ugly head of apostasy reared itself again, and this time the people went away into captivity, a captivity in which they learned another and an entirely distinct set of lessons, which brought them back, in the days of Cyrus, a very different nation to that which had gone away under Shalmaneser and Nebuchadnezzar. In the interim the prophets of Israel had arisen with their several messages, so that when there were barely four centuries left to go for the Times of Ignorance to have run their full course there were many in Israel able to look forward with considerable clarity of vision to the God-promised prospect of a world in which sin and death were banished and all men would live in the light of God's countenance and find at His right hand pleasures forevermore.

It was during this period that the *benevolent* aspects of the Divine dealings with man became clearly understood, as they had never been understood before. The old mechanical, ritualistic idea of God, eternally demanding appeasement by blood sacrifices, requiring unyielding obedience to a meaningless jumble of precepts, began to give place to an appreciation of the principles which lay behind those outward forms and ceremonies. "*Hath the Lord as great delight*" cried Samuel to Saul "*in sacrifice and offering as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.*" (I Sam. 15. 22). It was Jonah, one of the earliest prophets, who was taught, and taught in his turn, the great lesson of the mercy of God. "*Should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand?*" (Jon. 4. 11.) Times of Ignorance indeed! The entire population of what was at that time the world's capital city was incapable of the most elementary discernment and God would save them, that an opportunity be granted them to repent, and so come to a knowledge of Him that their ignorance might be swept away. The Gentiles, sunk much more in unbelief than was Israel, were nevertheless just as much objects of Divine care, and although they had been left to make their own way through the fogs of ignorance there were among them from time to time men who showed that the spirit of enquiry and of investigation was not dead. And oft-times there were those who, like the discreet lawyer of the Gospel story, were "not far from the Kingdom of God".

Such an one was Akhnaton, the Egyptian Pharaoh, who not long after the time of Moses sought to wean Egypt away from her many gods and return to

the purity of her ancient worship, that of One God. Akhnaton has been called "the world's greatest dreamer", "the world's first pacifist", and kindred names. He drew all Egypt away from the worship of many gods and set up the worship of one god, restoring Egypt's original monotheism. He could compel respect to his wishes, for he was Pharaoh. He closed the old idolatrous temples and built himself a new capital city, sacred to the cause to which he had devoted his life. That he was a great man and a profound thinker there is admittedly no doubt—but he was no sooner dead than all his reforms were abandoned, his memory vilified, and Egypt went back to her old ways. The monotheism of Moses has borne lasting fruit in the world and given us Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the three great monotheistic faiths; the monotheism of Akhnaton failed to survive his own generation. Moses was led by the Holy Spirit; the Egyptian Pharaoh was not; that is the difference.

So it was with the great philosophers who came in the later centuries, a few hundreds of years before Jesus was born at Bethlehem. The world was growing rapidly in knowledge and experience; explorers were pushing to the ends of the earth and astronomers were scanning the heavens. At the time that Sennacherib took the Ten Tribes captive to Assyria, Zarathrusta, the Persian philosopher, was laying the foundations of a great religion upon his thesis of an eternal conflict between the powers of light and darkness, of good and evil. He had not attained to the truth as it was shortly to be revealed, but he had taken a great step forward. While Nebuchadnezzar was ruling in Babylon and Daniel was his Prime Minister, Confucius, the Chinese philosopher, was teaching men on the other side of the world that human nature is essentially and inherently good; it only requires development to attain to righteousness and perfection. He was right—and yet how short he came of the truth, that only by means of a Redeemer shall man complete that development which alone can result in righteousness and perfection. Whilst Malachi the Hebrew prophet was declaring in impassioned tones that a day must come when God will burn as in an oven all that is evil and corrupt, that the true and good might emerge purified as gold and silver, the Grecian philosopher Socrates—between his cups—was extolling the inherent goodness and rightness of knowledge as all that is necessary to open to man a pathway to the stars; but man had sought for knowledge at the very beginning, had attained knowledge, and it had brought only suffering and death. All that Socrates had to say concerning the virtue and the necessity of knowledge was true, but knowledge of itself cannot save, and that is where the Socratean philosophy fell short and failed. These philosophers,

and many like them, were searching for the truth, and each of them uncovered some fundamental principle that has its place in the great plan whereby men will come into harmony with God and remain in harmony with Him, but they all, without exception, failed to give real illumination to men because they did not know Christ, and had not heard, and failed to realise, that in addition to all that man can find out for himself and all that he can do for himself, he needs the saving power of God, in Christ, as expressed in the knowledge of the Gospel. Without that, and without faith in the only name given under heaven whereby men can be saved, there is no salvation.

So, at last, and in the fulness of time, Paul the Apostle stood upon Mars Hill at Athens and announced, in a tone of authority never before voiced either by prophet or philosopher, and with a knowledge transcending the loftiest heights to which either had in time past attained, that the world's ignorance was now to be dispelled by a plain and authoritative statement of the Divine Plan; the beclouded minds of men were to be illumined by a proclamation and a calling as clear and definite as it was commanding and obligatory. The Times of Ignorance God had "seen beyond"; now that which He had foreseen had come to pass and in the light of the triumphant life and glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ He called upon all men to forsake their former ignorance, to heed His words, and repent.

*To be concluded.*

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The Spirit of God will not teach or lead a child of God in his assembly with God's children unless that one is habitually under the guidance and instruction of the same Spirit in his ordinary life, in his own home, and in his daily occupation. Not only does the Spirit divide to every man in the Church gifts for the edification of the body, as God wills, but it also speaks to us words of comfort as well as words of warning and reproof. Sometimes it speaks to us in our indifferences as a spirit of judgment, convincing us of the wrong way. Sometimes it is a rebuking spirit, making us ashamed of our deficiencies, and humbling us to the dust. At other times it is a spirit of light, when it has become difficult to see one step before us. It enters into our perplexities as the spirit of wisdom, into our ignorance as the spirit of truth, into our fears as the spirit of peace, into our weakness as the spirit of might and spirit of life. As the spirit of grace and supplication it helps us to pray, enabling us to realise our sonship to the Father, for "the spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God".

*(The "Herald of Christ's Kingdom")*

## THE QUIET TIME

*"My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places."*

### LOVE THE GIVER

*Love must be giving, chide her not!  
Love yieldeth all her store;  
Love must be lavish, for reserve  
Is pain and anguish sore,*

*Let her alone, the house is filled  
With perfume sweet and rare;  
For fragrant are the deeds of Love,  
Pervading everywhere:*

*And fragrant to the Saviour's heart,  
How fragrant, who shall guess?  
The labour that the world esteems  
A labour of excess!*

### GROWTH

I wonder if the lack of growth in our lives of the love of God has been due to neglect? Oh, the wonder of that blessed intimacy of heart and mind and thought, that unveiling of the innermost secrets of the soul to the one loved and to the one who loves in return. "He that loveth Me," says Christ, "I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him" —I will unveil to him My very heart. And in our fellowship with the Master our love will grow; the river will deepen.

### WITH HIM

Avoid the spirit of fault-finding, criticism, uncharitableness, and anything inconsistent with His perfect love. Go where He is most likely to be found, either where two or three of his children are gathered, or where the lost sheep is straying. Ask Him to wake you morning by morning for communion and Bible-study. Make other times in the day when you shall get alone with Him, telling Him all things, and reviewing the past under the gentle light that streams from His eyes.

### OPPOSITION

Spiritual life needs opposition to bring out its best development. It flourishes most luxuriantly in adverse circumstances. The hardnesses of our experiences, which seem to us to be more than we can possibly endure, make the very school of life for us in which we learn our best lessons and grow into whatever beauty and Christlikeness of character we attain.

### TRUST

You cannot take into the inmost circle of your heart's friends one who does not fully trust you. Distrust hinders close fellowship. The same is true in friendship with Jesus. There must be perfect trust if we would get near Him. He feels the touch of every hand that rests in faith upon His arm, He hears every sweet breath of confidence that goes up from our lips. Oh for that trust that in every experience of sorrow or joy remains calm and unbroken.

### PRAYER

In all the affairs of life, God is the Expert. He knows all the facts; He has all the wisdom and all the power. And, most of all, He has a wonderful love for you. Is it not better, then, that prayer should be of such nature that we must leave the matter in His expert hands? When you have prayed, you have finished with it; there is no need to ponder and to puzzle and to worry. You have put it into the hands of the Expert. Your heart will now be at peace.

### AFFLICTION

It is remarkable that the Apostle fixes upon affliction as the mark of true sonship, it makes it the family badge. He refers to it as the test of our legitimacy, "What son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? If ye be without discipline then are ye spurious and not sons." Strong language this; and if any but an inspired Apostle used it there would have been outcry against it as absurd and extravagant. Let us take it as it is, he speaks the mind of God. Were this characteristic not to be found on us we should be lacking in one of the proofs of our sonship.

### TRUST

*Thus ever on through life we find  
To trust, O Lord, is best,  
Who serve Thee with a quiet mind  
Find in Thy service rest.*

*Their outward troubles may not cease,  
But this their joy shall be:  
"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace  
Whose mind is stayed on Thee."*

# Respect of Persons

PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN COUNSEL  
FROM JAMES 2. 1-5

The theme of this article is "Respect of persons." Owing to the unequal distribution of wealth and its advantages this evil has always been very common in the world. The social earth, like the physical, is composed of different layers or "strata". The lower classes have deferred to the higher and the higher have despised the lower. We are living now in a great levelling time when, as the Bible has foretold, the valleys are being exalted and the mountains and hills being made low. This has occasioned great social upheavals, symbolic earthquakes, which we know from Scripture will get yet more intense.

This evil, so prevalent in the world, had found entry into the church in the time of James. It has been present in the professing church of Christ ever since, and was one of the main causes of the great apostasy. When the church began to lose her first love she began to pander to the great and to despise the poor. There followed a lowering of spiritual standards and the wheatfield became overrun with tares.

In verses 2 and 3 James calls the attention of the brethren to what was taking place in their midst. He presents a suppositious case which the context shows may well have been founded on fact. "*If there come unto your assembly*" (margin "*Synagogue*") *a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment, and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, sit thou here in a good place, and say to the poor, stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool, are ye not then partial in yourselves and become judges of evil thoughts?*" It is worthy of note in passing that this is the only place in the New Testament where the word "*Synagogue*" is applied to a Christian church. James is writing to Jewish Christians who had been accustomed to meeting in the Synagogue and had carried the name with them into their Christian fellowship. The word "*Synagogue*" means "assembly", while the Christian equivalent, namely, "the church" or "*ecclesia*", means "called out assembly". The distinction is quite significant, as the synagogue or assembly was associated with the natural Seed, whilst the church or called out assembly is associated with the spiritually called out Seed.

The two different characters which James pictures coming into their assembly were evidently visitors, just as we have "strangers" dropping into

our meetings. One is rich and the other poor, and for no other reason than the mere circumstance of outward dress the one is treated with great respect and the other with scant courtesy. What would be the motives behind such conduct? Would it be that the former was at once regarded as an asset to the meeting and the other perhaps a liability? How would we feel in similar circumstances? While none of us would go the length of showing such respect of persons as James pictures here, is it not true that we all have to fight against the almost innate tendency to defer to wealth and worldly position?

In verses 1, 4 and 5 James mentions three considerations which should help to keep us free from the evil of respect of persons. Verse 1. "*My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.*" The New Testament speaks of faith sometimes as a principle like hope and love. It also speaks of faith as the whole system of belief centring in Christ, as when we are exhorted to contend earnestly for the faith. Thus we can have faith in the faith. The brethren to whom James was writing had come out of the Jewish faith, centring in Moses, into the faith of Christ. This faith was wholly incompatible with respect of persons. Had Jesus been born in the palace of kings, consorted with the rich and the great of this world, and died in honour and esteem of all men, then there might be some room for respect of persons. James was the brother of the Lord, there is good reason to believe, and none knew better than he the lowly life of the Son of God. Following the birth in the stable of the overcrowded inn there was the humble peasants' home at Nazareth. Following the long years of patient toil in the carpenter's shop there were the three and a half years of the Lord's ministry. From the very beginning of this ministry, so far as the great and rich and wise were concerned, He was despised and rejected. It was the common people who heard Him gladly. Publicans and sinners were drawn to Him; even His apostles were ignorant and unlearned men. And yet so far from being disappointed Jesus had prayed "*I thank thee O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes.*"

It was not because Jesus was not great that He associated with humble people, but because He was

so great. As the Father, the Lord of Heaven and earth, had chosen the humble, so James reminds us in this verse that Jesus, although the friend of publicans and sinners, was nevertheless the Lord of glory.

Against the background of the example of the Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus how ashamed we should feel of any taint in us of this evil of respect of persons.

In Verse 4 we have another helpful consideration. "Are ye not then partial in yourselves" if you are guilty of such respect of persons "and are become judges of evil thoughts?" Weymouth's translation makes this verse clearer. It reads "Is it not plain that in your hearts you have little faith seeing that you have become judges full of wrong thoughts?" It is a very serious thing to sit in judgment upon anyone, for "with what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged", our Lord declares. If our judgment of others is just and based upon right principles and tempered with mercy it reflects credit on ourselves. If, however, we who are being trained to be the judges of the world are so deficient in discernment that we base our judgment on externals such as differences associated with the possession or otherwise of material things we condemn ourselves as unfit for the position. It indicates that we cannot judge properly because we ourselves do not have the proper sense of true values. As Weymouth says "In our hearts we have little faith". In one of the morning five-minute talks some little time ago the speaker said that we were living in a world of make believe, almost like Alice in Wonderland. The most valueless things fetched the highest prices and the most valuable and precious things were least esteemed and cost the least. Things like worldly fame, power, prestige, riches, learning, were all eagerly sought for and the highest prices paid even to the spending of life itself in their attainment. On the other hand the things that God highly esteems, such as love, peace, kindness, goodness, self control, faithfulness were lightly valued. Surely the representatives of the Heavenly Kingdom should demonstrate what the true values are in this world of make believe.

In Verse 5 James gives us the third consideration why we should beware of respect of persons. "Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?" James feels this danger of respect of persons to be so great that he asks them to "hearken" or "listen" to him further in the matter. He calls them "his beloved brethren" to assure them that he has a deep concern for their spiritual welfare. In this he reminds us of what we may already have noted in the epistles of Paul,

Peter and John. "Hearken my beloved brethren hath not God chosen the poor of this world?" It is not a matter of chance or accident that it is the poor who are attracted to your meetings. This is the result of God's choice in the matter. This principle was expressed by Mary even before Jesus was born. "He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their heart. He hath put down the mighty from their seats and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things and the rich he hath sent empty away." No flesh may glory in God's presence; meekness and humility are essential in those whom He causes to approach unto Himself. It is not, however, that not any great or rich or noble are called, but not many. There are a few, but only a few, and the reason for this is illustrated in the case of the rich young ruler; he went away sadly for he had great possessions, and when he had gone Jesus said "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." In this as in so many other things we see God's compensating grace. He is no respecter of persons choosing the poor simply because they are poor. But it is amongst the common people that there exists those conditions which are most fitted for the development of the essential qualities of faith, meekness and humility. If we are ever tempted to feel envious of those better off than ourselves let us remember that "God has chosen" the poor of this world to be His heirs and there can be no greater honour than this.

To be poor, however, is not the only requisite, for not all the poor are chosen by God. James mentions another qualification. "Hath not God chosen the poor, rich in faith?" Luther is said to have called this epistle of James an epistle of straw because of its emphasis on works. It is very evident, however, that James had a proper realisation of the need for and value of faith. In saying that God has chosen the poor, rich in faith, he does not mean that they were rich in faith before being chosen, for a rich faith can only be produced by the operation of the grace of God. There must have been an initial faith making them prepared like Abraham to leave their own people and their father's house. Richness of faith comes afterwards as a result of God's training. Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. As illustrated in Pilgrim's Progress it is sometimes very dim at first. The Evangelist points Christian to the wicket gate and says "Do you see yon wicket gate?" But Christian cannot see it, only the shining light which is beside it and which he takes as his guide to it. After he enters the way his faith becomes rich as a result of his experiences.

Continuing, James says "*Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love Him*". Paul says the heir, when a child, differs nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all. This is the position with regard to God's heirs. We are waiting for our coming of age, our adoption, as it is put in Romans 8. So great is our inheritance that it embraces *all things*, as Paul declares "All things are yours, whether the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's. Respect of persons arising from existing social inequalities affects us sometimes by inducing in us a feeling of inferiority when in contact with others whose dress, or house, or education or social position is much superior to our own. If we could only realise a fraction of what it means to be heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ how paltry and insignificant these differences would appear to be!

Besides being rich in *faith* the poor must also be rich in *LOVE*. The Kingdom is promised to those that love Him and love for God is inseparable from love for our fellows. In the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats the King says "*Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*". The reason given is because of their Love for Him as expressed in their love for His brethren. If this is true of those who shall inherit the earthly phase of the kingdom, how much more so with the heirs of the spiritual phase! Love is the great leveller. Where it exists there is no room for class distinction or feelings of inferiority and superiority. In the Kingdom of the future in the glory by and by there will be the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of all men. Meantime as heirs and representatives of that kingdom we have a responsibility for demonstrating its principles here and now and this we can do only as the *love* of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which He hath given unto us.

## SOME THOUGHTS ON JACOB'S TROUBLE

*The following extracts are from a book written in 1853 by one William Trotter, and were submitted by a sister in U.S.A. as showing how the "shape of things to come" was discerned at that time, nearly a hundred years ago. They are doubly interesting now when the realities of which that writer saw only the shadows are taking shape before our eyes.*

We have many intimations in Scripture that a portion of the Jews will return to their own land in a state of unbelief; that they will form alliances there with the wicked rulers of the Gentiles; that they will be by them deceived and oppressed; and that thus this tribulation, unequalled even in all their eventful history, will befall them. Isaiah 17 and 18, though in figurative, and what at first sight seems obscure language, bears important testimony on this subject. Chapter 17 commences with the burden of Damascus. In verse 4, the Prophet turns to Israel and God's dealings with that people. The epoch to which the prophecy relates is one at which "the glory of Jacob is to be made thin, and the fatness of his flesh to wax lean". The diminution of the people is so great, that those who survive are compared to "gleaning grapes" or the "two or three berries left in the top of the uppermost bough after the shaking of an olive tree". Those who *thus survive*, are represented as *looking to their*

*Maker* instead of to the altars which their own hands had made—as having respect to the Holy One of Israel, instead of to the groves and images which were the objects of their idolatrous homage. Such is to be the issue of these closing troubles. But then we are led back, as it were, to the troubles themselves, and that which brought them upon the Nation. "And there shall be *desolation*. Because thou hast *forgotten* the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the *Rock* of thy strength, therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants, and shall set it with strange slips: in that day thou shalt make thy seed to *Jehovah*: but the *harvest* shall be a heap in the day of *grief*, and of *desperate sorrow*."

The people are here seen as of old, *depending upon themselves and their own natural resources, forgetting God, and seeking fruitfulness by their own endeavours*. "A harvest of sorrow in the day of desperate sorrow" is all the fruit this husbandry yields.

We then find a passing glance at the instruments of their final distress; and the sudden and overwhelming destruction of these enemies of Israel is foretold. "*Woe* to the multitude of many people, which make a *noise* like the noise of the *seas*, and to the *rushing* of nations that make a rushing like the *rushing* of *mighty* waters! The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters; but God shall

rebuke them, and they shall fall afar off, and be chased as the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing (or thistle-down, see margin) before the whirlwind. And behold at eventide trouble, and before the morning he is not. *This is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us.* How evident from all this that the returned Jews will still be acting in a spirit of self-righteousness and self-dependance, for which they will have to pass through all the desolations caused by the rushing of the nations and peoples, like the rushing of many waters; that in their *extremity of trial*, God will arise to their *deliverance*, and rebuke their enemies, and that the overthrow of these enemies will be *sudden*, that at *eventide* the trouble will be at its *height*—in the *morning* those who will have *caused it* will be nowhere to be found. Such is Chapter 17.

Chapter 18 seems to go over the same ground, entering more into detail. Some *maritime nation*, distinguished as such by the expression "that sendeth ambassadors by the sea" is represented as taking *Israel under the wing of its protection*. Israel is spoken of as a nation "scattered and peeled", "a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled". Now that this alliance is formed between this outcast, exiled race and the maritime power of which this chapter treats, *universal attention* is demanded. *Mighty events* are at hand *when this comes to pass*. "All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye, when He lifted up an ensign on the mountains, when He bloweth a trumpet, hear ye." But *signal* though this be of the commencement of a *crisis* in which all are interested, and to which *all* are summoned to *pay attention*, God Himself does not *openly* interfere. "For so the Lord said unto me, I will take my rest, and I will consider my dwelling place like a *clear heat* upon herbs, and like a *cloud of dew in the heat of harvest*." *Events are not quite ripe for Divine interference*, but they are represented as the *object of Divine attention*. The verse just quoted is somewhat differently rendered by scholars, "For thus saith the Lord unto me, I will sit still, (but I will keep my eye upon my prepared habitation) as the  *parching heat just before lightning*, as the *dewy cloud in the heat of harvest*". The passage suggests the idea of that awful season of deathly stillness and oppressive heat which *precedes the bursting of some dreadful thunder-storm*. Not a gleam of sunshine breaks for a moment through the sullen gloom; not a breath stirs, not a blade of grass is shaken, nature seems to be numbed (*Faber*), all seems at a stand, and in suspense.

It is thus the *spirit of prophecy* has seen good to *portray to us* the short season during which the Jews, aided by some powerful maritime nation, are *resettling in their own land*. The *mass* of them are in a state of *unbelief*, and go through *terrible trials* ere the moment of *deliverance comes*. These *returned Jews* again *suffer*, and that *most severely*, at the hands of the *nations*, whose *rushing* was foretold in the previous chapter. But this is the last, short-lived triumph of the nations over Israel. We have seen how suddenly and utterly they are to be overthrown when God rises up to judgment; and the chapter before us concludes by foretelling that "in that time shall the *present* be brought before the *Lord of Hosts* and of a *people scattered and peeled* and from a *people terrible* from their beginning hitherto, a nation meted out and trodden underfoot, whose land the rivers have spoiled, to the place of the name of the *Lord of Hosts*, the *Mount Zion*". These troubles, caused by their sin, are to usher in their complete deliverance, and in their being brought to *Mount Zion* as a *present* to the *Lord of Hosts*.

"It is the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be delivered out of it." (Isa. 59. 9-21.)

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Let us guard against the negative form of evil-speaking, generally the most thoughtless. Absalom was an example of this. Who could quote any actual evil-speaking against his royal father? Who could charge him with speaking evil of dignities? And yet by insinuations, by his way of putting things, by his very manner, he wrought a thousand-fold more cruel harm than any amount of evil-speaking out could have possibly done. Oh to be watchful as to such omissions to speak well, as amount to speaking evil? Watchful as to the eloquence of even hesitation, watchful as to the forcible language of feature and eye.

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"Warn certain individuals against teaching novelties and studying myths and interminable genealogies; such studies bear upon speculations rather than on the Divine order which belongs to faith. The aim of the Christian discipline is the love that springs from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from a sincere faith. Certain individuals have failed here by turning to empty argument; doctors of the Law is what they want to be, but they have no idea either of the meaning of the words they use or the themes on which they harp."

*Paul's words in 1 Tim. 1; 4-7  
as rendered by Moffatt.*

# The Sabbath a Delight

Thoughts on the  
Keeping of Holyday

*"If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words—I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth."* (Isa. 58. 13-14.)

What profound truth is enshrined in those fervent words of Isaiah! Conscientious and reverent observance of Nature's weekly rest day results in physical and mental wellbeing of an order which cannot be attained in any other way. The believer who spends his Sunday thus will find that he takes up his normal routine on Monday morning feeling, as the common saying has it, "on top of the world". It is good to think that this modern expression is the literal counterpart of the Hebrew idiom which is translated "to ride on the high places of the earth", and the thought which Isaiah tried to express was precisely that which is conveyed by our everyday allusion. It may be fitting, therefore, to suggest a few of the considerations that determine happy and satisfactory sabbath-keeping.

There are three foundation principles which may well be taken into consideration. Sunday is, firstly, a day of *rest*; secondly, a day of *service*, and thirdly, a day of *worship*. Rest, service, worship; these are the essential characteristics of the day which God has ordained for human wellbeing.

It will be noticed how aptly this compares with the Divine commission originally given to man. That also could be summed up in three words—Labour, Service, Worship. *Labour*, to make use of the earth's resources and products for the sustenance and enrichment of human life; *service* in the brotherhood of man, a state of society in which every man is his brother's keeper: *worship*, expressed in the whole-hearted allegiance of every man to God the Father of all, Who has created us to have dominion over this material creation to the glory of His own Name. That ideal will be fully realised when the Divine Plan is complete and evil has been driven from the hearts of men. In that fair land which Isaiah saw in vision, when sorrow and sighing will have fled away, the three-fold commission will be fully observed. Men will labour, serve and worship God six days in the week, and on the seventh they will hold holy convocation

to Him in Sabbaths more glorious than anything the world has ever, as yet, experienced.

The Sunday rest enjoined upon Christians is not merely an arbitrary cessation of labour, an enforced inactivity in a world which was made for activity. The essential characteristic about Sunday is, rather, that there should be a cessation of the daily routine involved in gaining a living. In Israel's days the gathering of manna was suspended during the seventh day. The equivalent of that to-day is the abandonment of the daily struggle to live, and a resting upon that which has been gained during the six days. It is of course often argued that such a course is not practicable under conditions of life to-day. Public services must be maintained; water, electricity, transport, etc., must be provided. Such arguments are often put forward by those who have personal interests militating against the observance of Sunday as a day of rest. There can be no doubt that in a Christian state of society a much higher degree of cessation could be obtained than does exist. The cancellation of unnecessary activities, including those forms of daily labour not essential to the life of the community, such as closing of shops and places of amusement, and the restriction of travel services to that necessary for worship and the saving of life or health, would effect a vast change in the amount of labour which "must be done" on Sunday.

Many years ago Lord Macaulay told the British Parliament "We are not poorer in England, but richer, because we have, through many ages, rested from our labour one day in seven. That day is not lost; while industry is suspended, while the plough lies in the furrows, while the Exchange is silent, while no smoke ascends from the factory, a process is going on quite as important to the wealth of nations as any process which is performed on more busy days. Man, the machine of machinery, the machine compared with which all the contrivances of the Watts and Arkwrights are worthless, is repairing and winding up, so that he returns to his labour on the Monday with clearer intellect, with livelier spirits, with renewed corporal vigour". Unhappily the picture drawn by the noble lord is not true of the England of to-day.

Now how should this time, if thus redeemed from the workaday world, be utilised? Not in sloth and inactivity, for that is quite out of accord with the Divine way. True, the haste and stress of weekdays

can be absent and all actions performed with a leisureliness that is rarely possible on any other day, yet activity of some sort there ought to be. Such activity divides itself naturally into three aspects.

First comes that recuperation which is a necessary component of the weekly rest. As a general principle it may be concluded that any form of activity which is so dissimilar from the normal weekday occupation of the particular individual concerned as to constitute mental and physical relaxation, and to be recuperative in its effect, can be legitimately regarded as a factor making for "sabbath rest". William Wilberforce, the man who did more than any other to abolish slavery, once declared that man's power of mental endurance could only be conserved by this proper treatment of the Sabbath. He had seen men of mighty intellect whose keen minds had failed them prematurely, and he was satisfied that in every such case the cause was neglect of this Divine law. It is good, surely, to give serious thought to this aspect of the subject, and with clear knowledge of all its implications, to include in every Sunday as it comes, that variety of rest, relaxation, recuperation—physical or mental, or both—which is necessary and desirable in the particular case. In this, as in so many things, the needs of individuals will vary, and no man may judge his brother. Sufficient it is if we use our sanctified judgment to do what seem to us to be the acceptable will of God.

The second aspect of "restful activity" is well summed up in the term "good works". Our Lord performed works of healing on the sabbath as on any day; the care with which it is pointed out in several instances that the day concerned was the sabbath seems to indicate that especial attention was desired to be directed to this fact. We are not empowered to work miracles as was Jesus, but we can manifest the same desire to assist suffering humanity and carry out such works of mercy as are within our powers. Thus Sunday becomes peculiarly a day in which we may find time to render services to those in need or in distress. Some may find it possible to visit the sick, some to set their hands to works of kindness which lend opportunity. Further avenues of service lie along the lines of preaching the Gospel to the unconverted, proclaiming the way of the Lord to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. Where there are children a profitable opening lies in taking some part in their welfare and instruction, along lines which will inculcate in them a reverence and love for the day, an acquisition to stand them in good stead in days to come. In these and in other ways which will present themselves in their variety to the sincere Christian it is

possible to devote part of the day of rest to the service of one's fellows, freely giving even as we have freely received.

Last, but by no means least, comes the supreme purpose of the day—corporate worship. It is true that we whose lives are completely and utterly devoted to the Divine service endeavour to maintain the attitude of personal worship and communion with our Heavenly Father throughout all the hours of every day. Nevertheless this privileged condition is largely individual to each one; there is a virtue and power in corporate worship, the joining together with one's fellows in audible praise and united prayer, that is very helpful to the full development of Christian character. Whenever the possibility exists, therefore, there should be an "assembling of yourselves together" and an ascending before God of praise, prayer and thought in company together.

There should really be a difference between the character of Sunday meetings for worship and those weeknight gatherings which are usually devoted to study of the Scriptures. All too often this distinction is ignored and Sunday looked upon as merely a more than usually favourable opportunity for study and discussion. Whilst it is eminently proper to devote part of the day to such purposes, this should surely never be done at the expense of devotional worship! At least one meeting on Sunday might be carefully planned for united praise and prayer, for meditation and exhortation, a joint approaching together before the Throne of God for grace and spiritual strength. Further meetings on Sunday may then well be devoted to the more intellectual aspects of our faith, the consideration of doctrinal matters, etc. It may be that greater attention to our privilege of worshipping God together would avoid many of the causes of difference that do arise between groups of believers. Where there is no opportunity for the joint expression of the higher reverential instincts, and the meetings tend to become theological debates, it is not surprising that the loss of the Spirit is felt. Let there be an earnest attempt, therefore, to restore the spirit and practice of true worship, a time and place in which each true-hearted one may feel himself or herself standing, in company with brethren in Christ, in the very presence of God.

It is a perfectly reasonable, not to say Christian, conclusion that even if, in a given locality, it is found desirable to separate into different groups for orderly study, consequent upon varying doctrinal views, such brethren could profitably come together again for one meeting on Sunday for the offering of united Divine worship in the name of the one Lord, Jesus Christ. Such a practice should

do much to preserve true unity whilst allowing scope for the differing outlooks which render a measure of separation for study purposes desirable.

The radio service is no substitute for corporate worship. For the aged, infirm and isolated unable to reach a place of worship, the radio service is a boon; but no Christian who has any opportunity whatever to meet and worship with others of like faith is justified in choosing the comfort of the home and the armchair instead. Perhaps those who indulge themselves in this manner do not stop to reflect that it is a sign of disrespect to the Almighty and betokens a lack of reverence for Him.

*Rest—Service—Worship.* Let these be the ideals we set before us in our endeavour to discern and do our Father's will, and then in our doing we shall be richly blessed. By these things shall we derive, week by week, rich stores of spiritual strength to serve in good stead when the dark and evil days come down. By these things men live. Let us take to ourselves of the means of life, and find life, richer and more abundant than anything we have ever known in all the years of our sojourning, and in the wonder of that revelation go on from strength to strength, until we shall, each one of us, "*appear before God in Zion*".

## The Shaking of all Nations

A COMMENT ON  
WORDS OF HAGGAI

*"For thus saith the Lord of Hosts; Yet once it is a little while and I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and all the dry land. And I will shake all nations and the desire of all nations shall come."* (Haggai 2. 6, 7.)

In harmony with the Divine Purpose man has for many centuries been allowed to establish his own form of government in the earth. This has led to the rise of many great nations and the present form of civilisation. Because the nations have ignored the laws of God they have not produced peace, justice, liberty, security and those things which are the desire of all peoples. They have been weighed in the balances and found wanting. They have had their day. Soon, the Lord, according to His word, will finally shake all nations. This will mean the removing of all things which can be shaken such as human governments and organisations. These will pass away but the Kingdom of God which cannot be moved will remain. At that time the desire of all nations will come. Then the good things of this earth will be devoted to the glory of God and to the blessing of all mankind. As Christians let us give earnest heed to the word of God:—"Thus saith the Lord—Consider your ways!" (Haggai 1. 5, 7.) "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven. Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the

removing of things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain." (Hebrews 12. 25-28.)

*"Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth . . . it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger."* (Zephaniah 2. 2, 3.)

It is expected that Brother Paul Thompson will arrive in this country on 29th July and remain until the end of October, and that during this period he will be able to visit most of the centres in this country. The arrangements are in the hands of an informal committee representing the Midlands and London brethren who have issued the invitation for our brother's visit, this committee consisting of Bros. S. A. Couling, A. O. Hudson, A. J. Lodge and W. R. Walton. These four brothers count it a privilege thus to serve, and take up their duties in confidence that the financial needs will be met by the love offerings of the friends. But let none refrain from requesting a visit on account of inability to assist with the cost; our brother desires to serve all who will, and our Master will provide the means. If you have not already done so, therefore, please make application to Bro. W. R. Walton, 14, Coniston Road, Coventry, stating most convenient evenings and whether accommodation for the night can be provided.

\* \* \*

Every man has a right to judge one individual only, and that is himself.



## BETWEEN OURSELVES

There will (D.V.) be a baptismal service in connection with the London Convention, and it will be appreciated if any who wish thus to symbolise their consecration on this occasion will advise the Convention Secretary, Bro. G. H. Jennings, Grove House, Roding Lane South, Ilford, Essex, in order that full arrangements may be made.

\* \* \*

The usual good attendance at Caxton Hall on Saturday, 23rd April last, gave marked attention to the discourse by Bro. Lodge on watchfulness—watchfulness for the signs of the times, and for ourselves in the Christian life. The second address, by Bro. Batcheller, on Patient Endurance, was a fitting complement to the earlier talk and was manifestly appreciated. During the interval Bro. Darby, with his usual manifest zeal for the brethren, presented several records on "Truth" themes, including one of Bro. Russell's voice, and on that account of more than usual interest. The time of fellowship and worship together seemed to be much appreciated by all.

\* \* \*

The friends at Hyde have recently had manufactured for their own use a number of "Cross and Crown" brooches. Some of these are surplus to their requirements and they would gladly let them go at cost price to brethren who would like to have them. There are two qualities, viz., gilt on metal at 8/-, and gilt on silver at 11/-, both registered post free. Will friends who desire one of these brooches please apply direct to Miss M. Wilkinson, 28, Mona Street, Hyde, Cheshire.

\* \* \*

Programmes of London Convention are enclosed with this issue and the attention of friends is particularly drawn to the Saturday evening session. The

presentation of films to illustrate the address has been arranged in order to give the brethren an opportunity of judging for themselves as to the usefulness of such means in public witness. The innovation is not to be taken as a precedent but as an experiment and the views of those who attend the session will be welcomed when it is over.

Friends desiring accommodation for the week-end are particularly asked to make their requirements known, at as early a date as possible, to Bro. S. H. French.

### LONDON MONTHLY MEETING

Saturday, 18th June, 1949  
6.30—8.30 p.m.

In the Tudor Hall  
CAXTON HALL

Caxton Street, Westminster, S.W.1  
5 mins. St. James Park Station and Victoria Street

*Praise and Worship*  
*Fellowship*

*A talk on the Christian outlook for today  
and an opportunity for questions*  
*A Scriptural address by guest speaker*

Chairman: Bro. O. Laker  
Speakers: Bro. L. W. Shephard (Cardiff)  
Bro. A. Guy

## FREE SUPPLIES OF MILLENNIAL MESSAGE No. 3

As announced last month, *Millennial Message No. 3* is now ready and by the loving zeal which desires to remain anonymous supplies are available free to all who wish to share in the distribution. A sample copy is enclosed in this issue of the MONTHLY; the tracts must be despatched to the users as quickly as possible, and if therefore you have not yet applied, nevertheless desire to participate, please write at once, stating how many you would like to have. The opportunity will not be open for very long, for the edition will soon be disposed of; therefore do not delay, but write now.

So often is the zeal of the friends circumscribed by their inability to meet the cost of the tracts they could otherwise distribute, and it is the thought of

the donor in this case that many will be able to share in this effort who might not be so able if the necessity to purchase remained. This then is a leading of the Lord, an opportunity prompted in the first place by loving desire for His glory, and we look confidently for a response that will in turn proclaim abroad that same glory.

Previous issues of *Millennial Message* have proved very effective in bringing some into contact with us. In several towns the local brethren have visited enquirers whose interest was aroused by receiving one of these papers, and have reported real interest in the things of the Kingdom and a desire to know more. "Go ye, teach all nations" commanded Jesus. This is just one way in which we can carry out His word.

## THE FIFTIETH PSALM

### AN EXPOSITION

This is a psalm of judgment, a grand yet solemn anthem declaiming God's purpose to execute all His good pleasure among the sons of men and to make an end of sin. Those—and they are many—who see in this noble psalm nothing more than an expression of Divine displeasure upon the formalism of Israel's worship in Old Testament days, and of condemnation upon the irreverent and impious, fail to grasp its essentially prophetic doctrinal teaching. Asaph was a prophet; we know that from 2 Chron. 29, 30, and in his position as chief of the choral services at the Temple in the days of David he must have spoken, as did all the prophets, of the wonders that remained yet unrevealed in the Plan of God.

The key to the interpretation of the psalm lies in verse 5 "*Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice*". The word "saints" really means, literally, "holy ones" in Old Testament times as well as during this Gospel Age; that is undisputed. There were many faithful souls in every generation of Israel from the days of the wilderness wanderings onward. But this fifth verse with its command, following as it does the previous verses which tell of God arising to judgment, does not fit any historical event in Israel except in a poetic sense. Every time that God arose in judgment upon Israel the nation was scattered, and the "holy ones" were not exempt from the troubles that fell upon their more unfaithful fellows. The greatest judgment of all in the time of Christ resulted in a scattering that has not been remedied yet. Nothing of "gathering" here. It is when we look to the work of this Gospel Age that we find a gathering of saints consequent upon an arising of God to judgment. "And he shall send his angels, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matt. 24, 31). Whatever meaning the psalm may have borne to Israel in the days when its words floated upon the wings of music ascending from the Temple courts, therefore, it is this prophetic interpretation that has the deepest lesson for us now.

*"The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof."* (vs. 1.)

The scene is set at Pentecost, when God is about to commence His great work. For fourteen centuries He has been bearing with the weakness, the idolatry, the hardness of heart, of his chosen earthly people, the nation to which He had confined Himself

to the exclusion of all others, and now the end of that order of things had come. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth" He had said, but now He decrees that the word of salvation is to go to all men everywhere without limit of race or colour. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to the whole creation" Jesus had just commanded His disciples, and here in this opening verse of the psalm, Asaph the prophet has seen the same thing in vision. "From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles" another prophet was to declare five hundred years later (Mal. 1, 11) and Asaph had but anticipated that splendid declaration. This first verse, then, pictures the call to repentance and dedication of life to God that went out first of all when Peter stood up with the eleven. In a very real sense it was on that day that God called the earth from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof.

*"Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined"* (vs. 2.)

Mount Zion was the site of the king's palace and, until the Temple was erected, the place where the Ark of the Covenant remained. It early came to symbolise the whole city, and this eloquent verse tells of God being manifested in the visible splendour of His presence in His own city. The effulgent radiance of the *Shekinah* glory has come out from the city to be at once a source of enlightenment and strength to His own people and an agency of terror and judgment to the sinners. God has come down to dwell in His own city and His glory is commencing to be manifest upon the earth. "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great king" (Psa. 48, 2). That tribute is not yet literally completely true, and cannot be until the Millennial Age when evil has been banished and men are walking in the light of the law of the Lord, but it is in process of becoming true inasmuch that we, the consecrated followers of Jesus, have already seen and rejoice in that Divine light which is shining forth from the spiritual Jerusalem. Men may deride and scorn the idea; like the enemies of Israel in the days of Jeremiah they may "pass by and clap their hands at thee; they hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem, saying, 'Is this the city that men call The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth'?" (Lam. 2, 15) but the fire of that judgment and the light of that knowledge will yet

reach all men and all will be compelled to acknowledge that truly there is a God that judgeth in the earth. This shining forth of God from Zion, from Jerusalem, of verse 2, then, well depicts the gradual manifestation of God to men during this Gospel Age, from Pentecost until now. During all that time He has been manifest to the Church by the medium of His Holy Spirit which illuminates and leads and has been manifest to the world through the medium of His Church, His "witnesses" in the earth. The extent to which God has shined into the hearts of the unsanctified during this Age, both for enlightenment and for judgment, is dependent upon the faithfulness of His own sanctified ones in their privilege and responsibility of ambassadorship for Christ. "Now then" says Paul "we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech by us: we pray, in Christ's stead, 'be ye reconciled to God'" (2 Cor. 5. 10).

But although this has been an age of enlightenment, both to Church and world in different ways, and the shining forth out of Zion throughout the age has been one of continuously expanding and brightening day, there is also to be a great blazing forth in judgment at the Age's end. "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thes. 1. 7). This shining out of Zion, proceeding through the Gospel Age, culminates in a fearful revelation of the *Shekinah* glory against all sin and sinful things and sinful men, just as it did in the wilderness when Korah and his companions defied the living God, and the glory of the Lord went out from the Tabernacle and destroyed them. (Num. 16.) "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heaven from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people" (vs. 3-4).

This is Armageddon, the rising up of God at the end of the Age to "avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth" (Rev. 6. 10), and to vindicate His own Name and the honour of His plan. "Our God shall come"—can there be any more thrilling, inspiring certainty? Israel looked for Him to come in person, descending upon the Mount of Olives in visible shape (Zech. 14. 4), striding the two sides of the riven mountain like some gigantic Colossus. "The Lord my God shall come, and all the holy ones with thee" cries Zechariah at the sight, calling to mind the traditional words ascribed to Enoch the patriarch "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince (convict) all that are ungodly among

them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him" (Jude 15). That was Israel's expectation, but then Israel in that day knew nothing of Christ. We know, now, that it is the Lord Jesus Christ who comes as the representative of His Father to reign over the Kingdom in His own right, for "His right it is" (Ezek. 21. 27) and that the light of the glory of His appearing is not one that is seen by the natural eyes or that appeals to the natural senses, but one that is evidenced by the signs of the times, the signs of His presence, a presence that is none the less real because His person is hidden from our sight just as surely as was the glory of the Father hidden behind the literal *Shekinah* that at times of judgment did manifest itself in the sight of men from within the sanctuary.

The expression "judge his people" can be taken in two ways. It can mean that God has come to judge His people for their own misdeeds; on the other hand, that God has come to judge His people's cause, and mete out retribution to their oppressors. The nature of the next two verses appears to indicate the latter as the sense in which the expression is used here. God is calling to the heavens and the earth to witness that He is now about to vindicate His people's faith and to deliver them—here, in these closing years of this Gospel Age. At Pentecost He called the earth; during the intervening centuries He shined forth from Zion; now at the time of judgment in Armageddon He calls to witness what He is going to do. And this is what He declares, this the commandment that He gives forth.

"Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. And the heavens shall declare his righteousness; for God is judge himself" (vs. 5-6).

Who are these "saints"? It is not until the ending of the Gospel Age that any of God's holy ones are "gathered". Until then, in all the long centuries of the reign of sin and death, their history has been one of oppression, persecution and scattering. But now comes a time when they are to be "gathered". Is this a gathering in the flesh or must its fulfilment be found only in the general assembly beyond the veil?

The intimate relation of the command to the coming judgment shows that it must relate in the first place to a gathering taking place on earth. The picture is based upon the inauguration of Israel's nationhood with their covenant at Sinai. The devout Israelite, following the words of the Temple service, would turn his thoughts back to

Moses and the cry of the people "All that the Lord hath spoken will we do, and be obedient" as the Levites intoned this verse about holy ones and a covenant by sacrifice. To the Israelites, the Law under which they came at Sinai was a Covenant by sacrifice and they themselves were God's holy ones, a peculiar people, a chosen nation, a royal priesthood. It was as a united people, separated from the nations of earth, that they faced the hardships of the later wilderness experiences in their journey to the Promised Land. That picture points the doctrinal teaching for us in this verse. The "gathering" is the separation of God's consecrated ones from the affairs and interests of earth to serve the provisions of this "covenant by sacrifice". We who are Christ's have entered into a covenant just so surely as did Israel—not a Law Covenant as was theirs; a Covenant of which the criterion is faith rather than works, but nevertheless a covenant demanding sacrifice in even greater degree than did Israel's. Nothing that is worth having in God's great Plan is attainable without sacrifice, renunciation, endurance.

The gathering, then, takes place on earth and it is a visible evidence to men that Divine judgment has commenced. The signs were very evident in Israel's day in the wilderness. From Sinai onwards the Lord marched before them with power and signs and wonders, and the fame thereof travelled far and wide and struck terror into the hearts of heathen nations. So it is to be again; in these last days the gathering of the saints together—to God, not just into one or another sect or fellowship; "Gather my saints together unto me"—has been proceeding. Those of like mind have come together and have found themselves separated from the world. The union between all such saints may not be readily apparent on earth—differences of policy, of outlook, of doctrine, of service, militate against the attainment of full fellowship between all who are the Lord's saints—but it is completely apparent in heaven. And that unity which is recorded in heaven is reflected back to us on earth so that all who are truly Christ's find themselves in heart oneness with each other even although they may abide in different spheres of normal worship, fellowship or service.

There is a "unity of the spirit" which transcends the boundaries of sect or organisation and it is that unity which is the fulfilment of this command "Gather my saints together unto me".

So we come to the triumphant climax. The heavens shall declare God's righteousness. Is not that an apt description of the work of the Millennial Age? When this gathering of saints has been completed and consummated in their "change" to

spiritual conditions and eternal association with Christ their Lord, the stage is set for the final phase of God's Plan so far as this earth is concerned. Then it will be abundantly demonstrated that God is judge himself. "Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field; and the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever" (Isa. 32. 16-17). "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other; Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven" (Psa. 85. 10-11). This is the glorious outcome of the coming forth of God to judgment, and the devouring fire that went before him will resolve itself into a benignant radiance in the light of which all nations shall come and worship before God, and coming, find the way of peace.

Here the song ends, with a "*Selah*"—an impressive pause in the choral rendering whilst priests and people alike remained silent for a few moments to contemplate the glory of the things about which they had just been singing. When the strain is again taken up, it is on a different subject—it almost seems as if these six verses, in their magnificent imagery, are followed by a practical homily on the immediate faults and shortcomings of Israel and an exhortation to repent and reform in the light of what has just been seen of the future determination of God. There is much in that homily, from verse 7 to the end of Psalm 50, that could afford scope for reflection and instruction to us; but it is the majestic picture of God's purposes in the first six verses, up to that "*Selah*" that should inspire and enthuse us to be more diligent than ever before, that we might be of those who are "gathered together unto Him".

Of our lives a portion vanishes every moment. Our days are more or less three score and ten years. With God our lives are but as the swing of the pendulum. It does not make so much difference, then, just how many years we have lived, or may yet live, as it does how we have spent those years, or to what spiritual ends we intend to apply so much of our life as yet remains to us. Time is a great treasure, but like any other treasure, it may be valued or despised.

"So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto WISDOM". Psalm 90.12

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#### RECIPE FOR JOY

JESUS first

OTHERS second

YOURSELF last.

## Eventide

"So he bringeth them unto their desired haven"



To-morrow! Oh, the bogey of to-morrow, and the unrest it brings into our little day! It needed all the persuasive powers of our beloved Lord to dispel the spirit of disquiet from His disciples' minds and set their hearts at rest. Of course there seemed to be every reason in the world why they should think of their future days—were they not leaving everything to follow Him; to go without purse or scrip or other entangling impediment, with nothing more than a questionable hospitality awaiting them? If an hospitable host accepted them and welcomed them, then let them call down the blessing of the peace of God upon that house, but if no hospitable host awaited them—yes, that was just it! Supposing there was no such host in the whole city or country-side?

Assuring them that all their needs were known, and that He who clothed the lilies could find them clothes, and He who fed the sparrows find them food, the Lord advised them to leave their to-morrows alone. Oh yes! to-morrow would most certainly have its cares and perplexities; its refusals and rejections, but He would have them let to-morrow be anxious for itself. Then (in the lovely words of the New Revised Version) Jesus said "*Let the day's own trouble be sufficient for the day.*" (Matt. 6. 34.)

There was not always an overflowing purse for those first pioneers of our faith; sometimes they would have enough to "abound", at other times they knew what it was to be in "want". Contentment in every state was a lesson that needed to be learnt.

It is a perquisite of man's superior mind that he alone of the whole mundane creation can visualise to-morrow and its needs. The squirrel by inborn instinct may hoard up its nuts—a supply for a later day; but it is not within its power to wonder what will happen when the store is gone.

Strange to say, it is the thrifty careful man who is likely to look through the bars of the morrow. The spendthrift, careless, easy-come-easy-go type of man will often say "to-morrow never comes", or "let us eat and drink to-day, to-morrow we may die"!

Naturally the Christian believer will be of the thrifty rather than the spend-thrift type, and finds

the natural propensities a handicap if not a hindrance to his rest of soul. And while there is no prohibition against a "proper thought" for coming days, it is so easy to exceed the range of "proper thought", and expand it into anxious care. The dividing line between pleasure and pain is very thin; what may have been intended as a love-tap may reach its billet as a hurtful blow. It is all a question of degree. So with the exercise of "proper thought".

With a big D.V. (*Deo Volente*) controlling it, the exercise of "proper thought" enables one to stand up to life's opportunities—and this is as true of Christian work as of the daily round. But without that submission to the "*If God Will*", even the common round of this very day can abound with anxious care, while to-morrow will be full of ghosts and fearsome shapes.

"One day at a time" is the Saviour's rule of life; it is still a "lesson" that must be learned. It reduces itself to a question of "faith" or "little faith"—of "trust" or "little trust", of the child-like dependence (or lack of it) in a loving Father's care. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" Jesus said. Over against that "Sufficient" we should learn to place another: "My grace is sufficient for thee". Sufficient Grace will then cancel out "sufficient" evil.

Perhaps the poet was right when he (or she) said,  
*You're groaning to-day 'neath a burden of care,  
 'Tis more than your sad fainting spirit can bear,  
 Don't seek from the future new trouble to borrow  
 But leave in Christ's hands the keys of to-morrow.  
 Your way may be clouded, your future concealed,  
 And scarcely the present is clearly revealed;  
 'Twill strengthen in weakness and comfort in sorrow  
 To leave in Christ's hands the keys of to-morrow.*

It is a big step forward in the Christian life when we have learned to sing,

*God holds the key of all unknown.  
 And I am glad.  
 If other hands should hold the key,  
 Or if He trusted it to me,  
 I might be sad.*

*What if to-morrow's cares were here,  
Without its rest!  
I'd rather He unlocked the day  
And as the hours swing open say,  
"My Will is best."*

Surely the man who wrote those words was right, don't you think? That is just the prayer we need when the shape of to-morrow looms too soon on

our view. Someone has said "God broke the years into days and hours so that we could take them a bit at a time". Another one said "Night with her train of stars and gift of sleep comes after every day to mark it off for us, and to fit us for the next". Let us not try to move faster than God's Glory-cloud moves in our life—we will be sure to stray on wilderness sands if we do.

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## PURCHASED WITH HIS OWN BLOOD

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*"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20. 28.)*

Paul, on his way to Jerusalem from Greece, had called the elders of the churches in Asia to meet him at the seaport town of Miletus, knowing that after this brief visit they would see his face no more. It was on this occasion that he gave them the parting exhortation which includes this seemingly strange word; "purchased with his own blood". We are so accustomed to thinking of the blood of Jesus as the means by which all men have been redeemed that this apparent identifying of the transaction with God the Father comes strangely. The Church of God, purchased with His *own* blood! What does it mean? Is there, after all, some teaching here of a oneness of person and identity between the Father and the Son which would make it proper to say that God the Creator shed His own blood for the redemption of the human race; that God Himself *died* that man might live? That is the usage that has been made of this text by Christian theologians of the past. We, however, believing that God sent His Son to die for man and afterwards received him to Himself again, know that so crude an interpretation cannot possibly be true. It is unthinkable that the Father could die, that the Author and Sustainer of all creation could relinquish, even for an instant of time, the conscious control and direction of His great creation; and that is what His death, if such a thing can be imagined, would entail. It is evident that there is more in this text than appears at first sight and since it is one that may be—and is—raised in contradiction to our beliefs regarding the relationship between the Father and the Son it is one that will repay a short examination.

The Diaglott translates the Greek literally "through the blood of his own", leaving "son" to

be understood. This is the conclusion of several translators, Weymouth and Rotherham both suggesting that "Son" has been omitted by some very early copyist. This hypothesis is a pure speculation, there being no evidence that the word "son" was ever in the text, but the arrangement of the Greek apparently lends colour to the idea that a word is missing. Ferrar Fenton is so far satisfied on this score that he translates quite boldly "by the blood of His own Son". The opinions of these translators—especially that of Rotherham—should be given some weight.

There are two examples of the same expression in the Book of Hebrews where the reference is quite definitely to the blood of Jesus (Heb. 9. 12 "*Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered*" and Heb. 13. 12 "... *Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood*") but in these the Greek is *dia tou idiou aimatos*, "by his own blood", whereas in Acts 20. 28 it is *dia tou aimatos tou idiou* "by the blood of his own", and this difference gives some justification for the translators' suggestions mentioned above.

After all, the same expression is used by us every day without involving a misunderstanding. A man will speak of his son or daughter as being his own flesh and blood. What he really means, of course, is that they are of close family relationship to him, owing life and form and nature to him. This expression in Acts could be taken in very similar fashion. It is as though, to use a modern expression, God had sacrificed His own flesh and blood to ransom the human race; for Jesus the Redeemer was in truth and in fact His first-born Son. Thus seen, this text is a powerful argument for the separateness of identity combined with one-ness of spirit and disposition which constitutes the Scriptural view of the relationship between the Father and the Son.

# THE TIMES OF THIS IGNORANCE

A Study in  
Divine Purposes

## Chapter 5—"Now Cometh . . ."

The hour had struck! God, during the slow progression of many centuries of human history, had waited, inscrutable in His wisdom, long-suffering in His patience, for this hour. Men had gone head-long down the steep slope of ignorance and degradation into hopelessness; the judgments of God had come upon them, time after time, to cause their heedless minds to reflect. At definite points in the chain of years He had intervened in some marked manner—at the Flood, the call of Abraham, the Exodus, the Babylonian captivity—that men might have opportunity to realise both His almighty power and His overruling providence. Great lights had flared up in the darkness of those slow years, lights that showed how the spirit of man, as yet without God and without hope in the world, was endeavouring to free itself from the encircling shackles of sin and death. Hammurabi in Babylon, Melchizedek in Canaan, Akhnaton in Egypt, stand out in the earlier years as men who knew not the God we know but sought for something better than they had. Zarathrusta and Buddha and Confucius and Socrates, great philosophers all, made contribution, each to his own age, but despite their greatness, ignorance remained. They lived before Christ came and they knew not God. Abraham and Moses and Daniel and a long line of worthy men in Israel had greater influence in the preparation of men's minds for the revelation that was to come because they were men of God and their lives were knowingly devoted wholly to His service. The nation of Israel, a royal priesthood, a separated people, became an example to the world of what God's Kingdom would be when in the fulness of days the Times of Ignorance were past. In spite of stubbornness and unbelief and hardness of heart, Israel was a flaming beacon in the darkness that preceded the dawn, a witness to men that God was not unmindful of their plight, that He was actively planning for their future good and would, in due time, reveal Himself to them.

So, at last, when all men, not only in Israel but in all the Roman world, were in expectation, realising, by what means they knew not, that a great awakening was soon to come, there came the herald, the long-awaited messenger, stirring the hearts and minds of men with his thrilling cry:

*"Repent; Believe the Gospel; The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!"*

The advent of John the Baptist was the signal that the Times of Ignorance had ended; the Light was about to break in upon the world of men. John was not that Light, but he was sent to bear witness of that Light, the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. What glorious hope for all mankind is enshrined in that burning cry! Every man that cometh into the world! Not just those who happen to be born after the advent of Christ. Not only those who may happen to hear the message of Christ in this Age, those who are reached by the missionary zeal of Christ's disciples, a tiny fraction of all earth's millions despite the intensity of that zeal. *Every man that cometh into the world!* From the first unnamed and unknown children of Adam, back there perhaps eight thousands of years ago, to the last heathen savage who is born in some impenetrable jungle and lives his life and dies there without anyone coming to him with the story of the saving power of Jesus. Every man is to be brought to the light, in the day that God has ordained shall follow the Times of Ignorance, the day in which God shall judge the world in righteousness by that one whom He hath ordained, Jesus Christ the Saviour of men.

So it was that "in the fulness of time" (Gal. 4. 4.), when at last men, or at least a "remnant" of men, were ready for the message, Christ came. He came to bring "life and immortality to light through the Gospel" (2 Tim. 1. 10). He came that the people who walked in darkness might see a great light and that upon those who dwelt in the darkness of the shadow of death the light might shine (Isa. 9. 2). He came to reveal God's Plan in all its fulness, to clear away the mystery and doubt and perplexity that had for so long assailed the minds of men, and to point them to the way which God would have them take, the way that leads unto life.

Jesus came to reconcile men to God. There was no possibility of reconciliation before He came, for there was no basis upon which true reconciliation could be made. Man, imperfect, fallen, sinful, could not so much as stand in the presence of Him who is of purer eyes than to behold evil, so the "way into the Holiest of all was not manifest while as the first tabernacle was yet standing." (Heb. 9. 8). Jesus came to open that way. It involved His own

death, a willing sacrifice, the "just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Pet. 3. 18), but that death did open the way for all of earth's millions, "whosoever will", to enter, in due time, into the eternal inheritance God has prepared for them (Matt. 25. 34). The coming of Christ and the death of Christ and the resurrection of Christ was for all men, and upon the day that He ascended triumphantly on high, having led captivity captive (Eph. 4. 18) He began to set in motion the mighty forces which are destined to have spread their energy over the long span of three thousand years before they will have completed the achievement of the Divine purpose, the reconciliation to God of all who will, and the subjection of all things to Christ, that at His Name shall every knee bow, whether of things in heaven, or on earth, or under the earth (Phil. 2. 10).

It was Peter who saw so clearly that the keynote of the new dispensation was repentance. Gone forever were the old archaic ideas that God could be propitiated by sacrifice, or bribed by means of ritualistic observance. God was not a Deity delighting in the suffering and misery of His creatures, neither was He a tyrant demanding abject and grovelling obeisance. He desires not sacrifice and burnt-offering but rather the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving. . . . "a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Psa. 51. 17). Therefore Peter placed, as the first requisite for those who would come to God, repentance. Time after time he hammered out this theme. "Men and brethren, what shall we do? *Repent*, and be baptised" (Acts 2. 37-38). "*Repent* ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3. 19). Jesus commanded His disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation (Mark 16. 15). Peter interpreted that injunction in terms of repentance. The Light had come, the Times of Ignorance were past; all men now could rejoice in the knowledge of the glory of God, if they would. But entrance into that privilege could be gained only in one way—the way of repentance. And so Paul, years later, speaking to the men of Athens, telling them of the passing of those Times of Ignorance, could do naught else but confirm Peter's gospel. "*God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.*"

This did not mean that God was calling all men at that time into the fellowship of the Church. True, the invitation was extended to all, and all who would exercise the faith and devotion necessary to present themselves in whole hearted consecration to God would have been accepted, as indeed some three thousand were accepted in the very first day (Acts 2. 41). But God knew and had provided that for the first two thousand years only a few, relatively

speaking, would in fact come to Him and become His; for the many the more intense work of the third thousand years, the Millennium, would be necessary. That does not affect the fact that on the Day of Pentecost the active work of reconciliation of man to God was begun, that it has progressed without intermission ever since, and that it will progress without break or interruption until all mankind save the incorrigible have accepted the Divine standards and come into harmony with God. The transition from the Gospel Age to the Millennial Age, the onset of the great time of Trouble, the ending of the "Call of the Church" and the going forth of the Law of the Lord from Jerusalem to all people in the world will make no difference to that.

The responsibility and obligation laid on all men, therefore, in these days of the Gospel, is to heed the words of His witnesses and to repent. That is the message that has been going out since Peter stood up with the eleven; it has never changed and it has never been abrogated. And it will not change, and will not cease until the end of the Millennial Age. In our day we are privileged to announce, with that message, the glorious news of the imminence of the Millennial Kingdom. We are also obligated to make known the fact of Divine judgment coming upon the world for its evil, the "day of vengeance of our God" (Isa. 61. 2), the bitter harvest of his own sowing which man must reap. But nothing in this changes the original message. In answer to the oft-repeated question "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" we can only say, as did Peter, "*Repent!*"

In this there is guidance for us in our Christian activity. The suggestion that a time comes in the end of the Age, a time that is now upon us, when it becomes contrary to the Master's will to proclaim His message far and wide, wherever opportunity offers, is not only quite unscriptural but the very negation of the Christian position. The very purpose of our existence is to preach the Gospel. The very object of our earthly lives is to be instructed and trained for a future work of service in which the preaching of the Gospel will play a very important part. God has been working through the ages to develop in man a closer and increasingly accurate knowledge of Himself and His plans. How short-sighted, therefore, to hold that in this crucial time, when one mighty Age is merging into another mighty Age; when the climax of all human history is about to be reached; when God is preparing to take over the sovereignty of the world and put into operation the final stage of His great Plan, the work of witness should be stopped. Shall no voice speak about the wonders that now are so imminent, no warning be given of the stupendous changes so soon

to take place, no injunction to repentance be uttered in face of the momentous nature of the times and the swift entrance of the world into judgment? Has God ever left the world without an opportunity for repentance in the face of disaster before? Never! Has He ever been without His witnesses, His messengers, His ambassadors, in this world in bygone times? Never! Then why should we think He will change His methods now, when all the world is crying out its need of the message that those who know His plan alone are able to give!

Our mission, then, like that of Paul and Peter, is to preach Christ and Him crucified. God will give the increase; it is ours to plant and water. Considerations such as the imminence of the end of the Age, the probability that the Church is almost complete, the very general lack of interest on the part of this generation, should not be allowed to weigh with us. We are, as were the Apostles and as have been all Christians since, ministers of reconciliation, (II Cor. 5. 18) beseeching men in Christ's stead "be ye reconciled to God". Neither is this ministry for our own edification or instruction solely. Too often is it suggested that the preaching of the Gospel is not for the sakes of those who may hear, but for the sake of those who preach, that they may be the more qualified for the future day of world conversion. The work of witness that is going on today and has been going on throughout the Age has a definite place in the Divine Plan—it is the voice of God sounding through all the world His command to repent. The fruitage of that message will be manifest in the next Age when some will be found ready to co-operate in restoring order and peace upon earth, because they heard something of these things in this Age and, although not called into the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus, did nevertheless apply their minds to these things, and believed them, and waited in faith and hope for the coming of the promised Day.

Is this, then, a sowing for the next Age? In a very real sense our preaching must be a sowing for the next Age. It is impossible to give expression to the faith that is in us without sowing for the next Age. That is not at all the same thing as trying to convert all the world in this Age to the exclusion of the next—the mistake into which so many Christians have fallen. "Go ye, teach all nations" said Jesus. That teaching must have its effect upon men in the next Age just as it has its effect upon those who through that teaching become footstep followers of the Lord Jesus during this Age and are ultimately glorified to reign together with Him. So our work for the Lord now is definitely a preparation for the future. We shall take up our activities on the other side of the Veil just where we

leave them on this side, but, thank God, shorn of the weakness and the toil, and continued then in that wondrous power which is to be the eternal possession of the glorified saints.

God hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness. The whole of our message hinges around that one inescapable fact. The long story of sin and death, the misery of man in his darkness and ignorance, the revelation of Divine oversight, first at Sinai, then at Calvary, finally at Armageddon, all goes to show that God has been steadily working towards that great Day. And we stand in the dawning of that Day. The time of its full manifestation cannot be long delayed. The goal toward which we have been pressing is almost immediately before us. Let us, then, with more zeal and more certainty than ever, proclaim with all our heart and all our soul and all our strength the message which has been the Divine call to mankind for nearly twenty centuries, and remains the Divine call still.

*"The time is fulfilled—repent ye, and believe the gospel."*

#### THE END

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#### SERENITY

We all know the almost miraculous effect that one strong poised mind can have over a panic-stricken multitude, how a few calm words and clear authoritative directions will produce an immediate result and reduce confusion to something like order. This influence, which is so obvious on marked occasions, is always felt, and leaves its impress everywhere. In quietness and confidence there is always strength. One poised mind has more effect than many restless, uncontrolled ones.

It is well worth while to spend time in cultivating quietness of spirit. It is not until the peace of God garrisons our hearts and thought that the world and all belonging to it can be seen in their right proportions, and energy needed for co-operation with God in the working out of His plans is set free. Many mysteries remain, problems are unsolved. We cannot see how all things will be made to work together for good, but we feel that God sees, and we have faith instilled into us to leave all things restfully with Him, and let Him unfold His plans little by little, and show us our share in them. We know that "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think."

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Beware how you regard as trifling, faults which appear of but little consequence. You weigh them, and think them nothing; but count them, and you would be frightened at their number.

*St. Augustine.*



## THE QUESTION BOX



Q. *Eph. 4. 3 speaks of the "unity of the Spirit", and vs. 13 of the "unity of the faith". Does unity of the faith come as a later development with unity of the Spirit? Would this be so in view of vs. 12 and 13?*

A. The unity of the Spirit must come first. Without that there can never be any unity of the faith. The picture in Ephesians 4 is that of Christian growth, from the condition of "babes in Christ" to that of full Christian maturity (but, even so, not the perfection of character which is to be ours beyond the Vail. Eph. 4 has to do entirely with this life and not the next.) Right at the outset the immature believers are exhorted to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" and an essential part of this "walking worthy" is the "endeavouring" to "keep the unity of the Spirit". As a help to our efforts in this connection we are reminded that there is "one Body—one Spirit—one hope of our calling—one Lord—one faith—one baptism—one God". In all of these we share equally as brethren, and we all have the same basis upon which to stand. Our abilities may and do differ, and so does our capacity for understanding the deep things of God's Word, and this will in turn affect our understanding of doctrine or modify the viewpoint we take, but "to every one of us is given grace (favour) according to the measure of the gift of Christ". He proportions His gifts according to our capacity for receiving and making use of them and as we are able to make use of more because of our growth in grace so He gives us more. Thus for the instruction and upbuilding of the one-time "babes" He has given, as the Apostle says here, "helps" of all kinds; apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers; in order that these same growing Christians, having attained Christian maturity, should come *into* (margin) the unity of the faith and knowledge of Christ and so become what he calls "a complete man, the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ". Now this "unity of the faith" into which such a mature Christian has entered is not, as so many imagine it to be, merely a unity of assent to various points of doctrine, although an understanding of the great Bible doctrines concerning sin and death, redemption and life, the High Calling and mankind's destiny is a necessary factor in the attainment of that unity. But this "unity of the faith" is really the final fruitage of which the "unity of the spirit" is the original seed. Unity of the Spirit is based upon our fellowship with each other and our belief in Jesus and His words; the unity of the faith is built upon our fellowship with God and our know-

ledge of Him and His laws. The first can be entered into comparatively quickly, so soon as we come into Christ and meet with His people; the second is the result of long years spent in "growing up into Him in all things". The one clearly is therefore a development from the other, but even when we *have* entered into the unity of the faith, and attained the full stature of a man in Christ, we are still like Paul, knowing only in part, seeing as in a glass, darkly; and the day has yet to come—and it will not come this side the Vail—when, especially in matters of doctrine, we attain full perfection of understanding. That need not hinder our unity now; in fact, according to Eph. 4, if our unity now *is* hindered by any such consideration, if we allow ourselves to be carried hither and thither by every "wind of doctrine", never attaining, if we do not play our part in the oneness of the Body, then, implies the Apostle, we are still children. And as such we shall not inherit the Kingdom that we seek.

Q. *Rom. 10. 10 says "with the heart man believeth". Where does the head—the intellect—come in?*

A. The subject of this chapter is the fact that salvation comes after faith in Christ has been exercised and confessed. "With the heart" says Paul "man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation". Paradoxical as it may seem, it is the *head* as much as the *heart* that he is talking about here. The "word of faith, which we preach" (vs. 8) must be received, not only in the heart (emotionally), but also in the head (intellectually), before the believer can say, intelligently, "Lord, I believe—and I repent". Justification by faith is essential to salvation and justification comes in consequence of an intelligent belief in Jesus' sacrifice and an intelligent acceptance of that sacrifice. The head and the heart therefore run parallel with each other in this matter of receiving the "word of faith", and the act is manifested by outward confession in the hearing of others. "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation". The same combination of head and heart is involved in the step which follows justification, consecration of the believer to be "dead with Christ". It must be the impulse of the *heart* which leads one to exclaim "Lo, I come, to do thy will, O God" yet at the same time it is the reflective power of the *head* which "counts the cost" and decides that all things will be well lost if by such a course of action one can "win Christ, and be found in Him".

# “And Now Abideth . . .”

A Series of Studies  
in 1 Cor. 13

## PART 3

Coming now to the consideration of the constituent elements of Love an effort will be made to analyse and define them in harmony with the activities of the only two exalted Beings who possess this Love in its fulness and purity. Only thus can we be sure of our definitions.

The first constituent is long-suffering, for “Love suffers” long. As defined by Scripture, long-suffering is not that fatalistic passive submissiveness so often seen in people subject to the rule of tyrants, dictators, or other autocratic rulers whose domination they are unable to break or remove. True, such peoples may suffer long, but there is no virtue or purpose in their suffering. Since God Himself has shown long-suffering, it must refer to a state where the sufferer has ample power to remove the cause of the suffering, yet chooses not to do so, in order to effect some further end or purpose, in accordance with a plan or campaign.

That this was not an element or characteristic of the heathen priesthoods or monarchies is very patent from the extant records of their history. It was not their practice to suffer-long with recalcitrant or rebellious men who ignored or flouted their varied authorities. Terrible indeed were the curses and punishments which befell the wretch who dared to pit himself against their power. Ruthlessness—severe and speedy ruthlessness—was the watchword of their government, for only thus were their thrones secure.

But has there been long-suffering in God? Here the answer is of quite a different kind. He has always possessed ample power to overcome those rash enough to range themselves as His enemies, yet He has never used His power arbitrarily to crush them, until they have had sufficient opportunity to repent and reform themselves before Him. In the days of Noah He suffered for long years the taunts of wicked men and the perversities of fallen angels ere He brought fitting recompense upon their heads. (1 Pet. 3. 19.) His power was adequate to curb their violence and suppress their rebelliousness, but for His own Name’s sake He bore their presumptuous ways with much long-suffering.

At a later period God waited for a long time till their cup was filled to the brim before meting out

recompense to the wicked Amorites for their blatant iniquity. To afford them sufficient time to fill their measure full, God even kept His own people waiting in Egyptian bondage, as He had told Abraham He would. (Gen. 15. 16.) God waited the allotted period before permitting Israel to interfere in their lives.

Again, with the faithless hosts of Israel God waited and suffered long. “*With vessels of wrath fit only to be destroyed He endured with much long-suffering.*” (Rom. 9. 22.) He could justly have destroyed them for their impieties and sins time and again. Yet He refrained; instead, He pleaded and waited over long centuries, desiring to have them repent and return to His care. Even into Jesus’ day His waiting went on, until that rebellious generation had filled the measure of their sins. (Matt. 23. 32.)

And furthermore, God is long-suffering towards the wayward and venturesome members of His spiritual Family. He is never “slack concerning His promises . . . but is long-suffering to us not wishing that any (taking undue liberties) should perish”. (2 Pet. 3. 9.) His long-suffering attitude makes salvation possible even for the back-slider and trifle (2 Pet. 3. 15).

The special illustration of God’s long-suffering, which also brings in our own long-suffering too, is found in the Lord’s Parable of the Unjust Judge. Annoyed and vexed by the widow’s unceasing importunity the unjust Judge gave judgment at last on her behalf—yet not for her own sake particularly, but lest her unceasing coming should weary him. Basing God’s seeming tardy indifference to His people’s cry upon this illustration the Lord then continues “*Shall not God avenge His elect which cry to Him day and night, and He is long-suffering over them*”. (Luke 18. 7.)

The Elect, because they are God’s elect, are made to suffer by their enemies. But they do not themselves retaliate upon their enemies nor make recompense to them, like for like, again, because they are God’s elect! Instead they have committed their whole interests to God, and wait on Him for the avengement of their wrongs. But even though they suffer most acutely God does not move at once to

their relief. Like the importuning widow they cry oft and persistently, yet God seems not to hear. Thus the Elect suffer long—exactly as long as God's long-suffering lasts. But relief and recompense will come when long-suffering has accomplished its purpose by its seeming tardy policy.

Another illustration of the same principle is found in Rev. 6, 9-11. Souls under the Altar are here heard crying out to God "How long, O Master, (R.V.) the holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood upon them that dwell upon the earth?" Earthly rulers had persecuted to death some who had access to the "Altar"—that is, some who were consecrated to holy things, and their cry goes up "How much longer shall this go on unchecked and unavenged?" They were told to wait and rest a little longer till the persecutors' cup had become filled to the brim by their persecution of still other brethren who would be killed as they had been. Rev. 16, 5-7 depicts the avengement of all these sufferers, when the period of long-suffering was at an end.

God's attitude in all these persecutions of His Saints throughout the Ages has been that of sympathy towards them in their sufferings, but of perfect self-control and self-command over Himself. He has been working to a Plan, and accordingly has not permitted the vast enormities of wicked men to deflect Him from His pre-arranged purposes by so much as one hairs-breadth. Men have dared and defied His government repeatedly, and He has allowed them to go on for a certain length of time unrestrained and unscathed, though inviting them meanwhile to repent of their ways. But, in time, their cup became full, their allotted time expired, and judgment fell upon them. Yet avengement came upon them not one moment prior to the pre-ordained hour. "Long-suffering" waited till the clock of destiny struck the hour; then, and not before, recompense was meted out. Thus, at long last, the Sovereignty of the Will of God asserts itself against the perversity of humanity's mis-directed freedom of will. Surely God has suffered long at each stage of His pre-ordained Plan.

It must be the same with us, as we submit ourselves to His Will. We also must learn to wait till the appointed hour, thus affording time, and still more time, for the transgressor against us to repent. And should repentance not be forthcoming even after waiting for seven times seventy transgressions to transpire it is not for us to retaliate avengingly. Avengement belongs to God, and we must learn to bear and suffer just so long as God forbears to strike. To be thus able to bear and suffer long we need "to be strengthened with all

power . . . unto all patience and long-suffering with joy, giving thanks to the Father . . ." (Col. 1, 11) for His grace to help in this time of need. "Long-suffering" says Trench (*N.T. Synonyms*) "is the restraint which does not hastily retaliate a wrong, the opposite to wrath or revenge."

This is no easy grace to cultivate, and only those who commit themselves to God for the righting of all wrongs can grow therein. Like our beloved Lord we must learn to bear the taunting word and stinging blow and "answer not a word", committing ourselves instead to Him to bide His appointed times of recompense. But while we learn to bear and bide, it is no passive grace we seek to cultivate, for Love not only suffers long but is also kind. God has been the great example of long-suffering, yet while suffering the sting of man's impiety and inhumanity, He has caused His sun to shine and rain to fall, and made the soil to yield its fruitful harvests for one and all. So also with His child. He must suffer long but he also must be kind, for Love is kind.

There is none of this grace in the ancient priest-hoods, for, with them, as with many nations today, kindness was accounted as weakness, to be presumed upon and taken advantage of whenever possible. And we should search the "haystack" to find the proverbial "needle" if we sought royal history for tokens of this grace. But in God there has been much of it. Over and above His gifts in nature, noted above, the salvation and calling of His Saints began in His kindness to men. "*When the kindness of God our Saviour and His Love toward man appeared . . . He saved us . . . that we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*" (Tit. 3, 4-7.) Here is kindness and Love toward all men in that a Saviour is provided for them, but a special kindness to those who made response thereto, and were saved from their bestial life, and called to higher things. This same thought is expressed again by Paul concerning God's appealing attitude towards the ungenerous critic in Rom. 2, 4, ". . . despisest thou the riches of His goodness (this is the same Greek word 'Chrestotes' here) and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance". Even to this harsh censorious critic God will show forbearance and long-suffering for a long, long time, while working with His goodness upon his heart, hoping thereby to induce the much-to-be-desired change in him, that betokens his repentance. God might rightly have judged the critic forthwith, on the ancient principle of an eye for an eye; instead He chose to load the critic's life with goodness and mercy, beseeching him the while to let the blessing sink into his sin-soured heart. If by

these means he came to see that God had forgiven him his debt of ten thousand talents of gold, he might then be prepared to remit his own claim to one hundred pence.

There is yet another instance of Divine goodness in Rom. 11. 22, but in this case it is coupled with the consequences that attend contempt thereof. Hearts that will not melt to kindness must be melted by the heat of wrath. Goodness here stands in sharp contrast to "severity". "Behold then the goodness and the severity of God, to them that fell, severity; but towards thee, goodness." "*Chrestotes*," says Trench (*N.T. Synonyms*) "is a beautiful word, as it is the impression of a beautiful grace . . . it occurs in the New Testament only in the writings of St. Paul, being by him joined to '*philanthropia*' (love of man) in Titus 3. 4, to '*makrothumia*' (longsuffering) and '*anochē*' (forbearance) in Rom. 2. 4; and opposed to '*apotomia*' (severity) in Rom. 11. 22." It is also rendered "good" in Rom. 3. 12, and "gentleness" in Gal. 5. 22.

In the Latin translations it is rendered "benignity", in Gal. 5. 22, and "sweetness" in 2 Cor. 6. 6. These words speak for themselves. Tertullian (an early church writer) says "*Chrestotes*" was so predominantly the character of Christ's ministry that it is nothing wonderful how '*Christus*' became '*Chrestus*', and '*Christiani*' '*Chrestiana*' on the lips of the heathen world", and though used by them with an undertone of contempt, it is a standing tribute to the gracious quality and nature of the early Christian's public life. This grace of kindness is well defined as a "benign sweet-tempered gentleness which is graciously humane and tenderly obliging to all".

It is well represented in the Master's attitude to the outcast woman who had crept in among Simon's guests in order to wash and anoint His feet. In blazing indignation Simon said within himself, "If this man were a prophet—if he was what He pretends to be—He would have perceived who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him". True to his creed, this was the haughty Pharisee! To her Jesus said "Thy sins are forgiven thee"! Of her He said ". . . she loved much"! That was the touch of kindness that healed and comforted in an hour of exquisitely-expressed repentance. It did not spurn the sinner because of its many sins, but graciously welcomed its approach, and its tear-bedewed bequest.

In the Age to come there will be many broken weeping penitents who will require comfort and encouragement along the Way of Holiness, and it well behoves all who hope to have qualified as helpers

and comforters to take every opportunity, day by day, to grow proficient in the gentle art of being kind. It is just the art of seeing the thwarted love in the sinner's art rather than the stigma that attends the sin. "She loved much" had more potent effect on the woman's heart, than Simon's coldly pharisaical phrase "she is a sinner". It is better to be like the Lord than like the Pharisee.

(To be continued)

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## MADE PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERING

When we thank our heavenly Father  
For the blessings of each day;  
For the flowers that are strewn  
O'er the roughness of the way;  
When we thank him for the roses  
That we gather day by day,  
Do we ever see the blessing  
Of the thorns along life's way?

Oft we thank him for the sunshine  
That he sends us from above;  
Do we ever in the shadow  
Recognize his tender love?  
When our feet grow worn and weary,  
And our cross is hard to bear;  
Oft the way seems long and dreary,  
Knowing not his tender care.

If no shadows veiled our pathway,  
And we knew no ill to fear,  
Would we cling so closely to him?  
Would our Father seem so near?  
As when darkness gathers round us,  
And our faith in self is lost,  
We but trust him, and the Saviour  
Gives us strength to bear our cross.

In our path if all were sunshine,  
Would we look to him for light?  
And if all below were brightness,  
Then would heaven seem so bright?  
When we meet beyond the shadows,  
In that land of endless day,  
We will thank our heavenly Father  
For the darkness of the way.

\* \* \*

Only greater love can compete with the love of the world and self, and win!

\* \* \*

"Christ substitutes the greatness of love for the love of greatness."

## LAND OF PROMISE

A record of current happenings  
in the Holy Land

The recognition of the State of Israel by Great Britain marks a great step forward in the outworking of prophecy. Not that this action on the part of our country is foretold anywhere in the Scriptures. Rather it is that the effect of Britain having thus come into line with the United States and with Russia, both of which Powers recognised the new State a considerable time ago, will be to strengthen very considerably those forces which are making for an understanding between Israeli and Arab and so promote some measure of peace and progress in the Holy Land. In other words, the way is now clearing for a time of development and expansion which may very reasonably be expected to result in the prosperity foretold in Ezek. 38 as immediately preceding the final wave of trouble that is to conclude this Age. The fig tree is budding now in very truth; and this is a sign to us that the Kingdom of Heaven is at the doors.

Our booklet "*Jacob's Trouble*", first published in 1942, had this to say in discussing the probable order of events yet future.

"The beginning of this change from the small things of to-day to the great things of to-morrow must await the close of the present world conflict. In the political rearrangement following this war we may well expect to see another step taken on the road which leads to independence in the Near East, just as the settlement of the 1914-18 war delivered the same countries from the Turkish power and set them on the way to modern development. Likewise, we may be able to discern in the commercial rearrangements which will also come about at that time a diversion of trade which will progress side by side with the new political set-up, and reveal to the world the nucleus of a new national power in that place.

"The Promised Land will be freed at last from the curse of the sword, which has lain upon it for so many centuries, and delivered at last from the thralldom of the nations, the Gentiles. Jerusalem will no longer be trodden down of the Gentiles; the new nation will at last enjoy sovereign rights in its own land. . . ."

Seven years have passed and to-day that forecast has come true. What are we going to see in another seven years? Without doubt, increasing evidence that we have not, in all these years, followed a chimera. We have been guided aright; to-day we

see with our eyes the things of which our fathers have told us.

\* \* \*

The trading position of Israel is improving rapidly. We in this country will be gratified to learn that an agreement has been made between Britain and Israel for the supply of citrus fruits during 1949. Palestine oranges have been all too rare here in recent years; they will constitute a welcome sight in the shops. The United States is at the top of the list with offers of trade, but Britain, Australia, South America and several European countries are also busy seeking commerce with Israel. Is this a pointer to the commencement of that predicted prosperity which will eventually make Israel a people that have "*gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land*" (Ezek. 38. 12)? Such a time has to come before the last great onslaught of enemies upon that people and the coming forth of God from His sanctuary for their deliverance. A current comment in the "*Zionist Review*", alluding to the present situation, is apt in this connection. The writer says:—

"*The coming end of the conflict will enable Israel to strengthen her claim to being the commercial nerve-centre of the Middle East. If her people remain as united of purpose and confident of ultimate success as they are now, and her statesmen bring to the new problems of peace the same quiet brilliance with which they have tackled the intricacies of war-time economics, the new state will have every chance of attaining a level of prosperity which, in due course, is bound to benefit its Arab neighbours and add considerably to the stability of the entire Levant.*"

\* \* \*

A quotation from "*J.P.A. News*" of date February 4th, 1949, under the heading "They are Coming".

"*Flying the blue and white flag the boats are steaming into Haifa, from France and Italy, Shanghai, Aden and Cyprus, carrying in their holds the remnants of once flourishing Jewries—D.P.s. and refugees. From the four corners of the earth, an endless stream of humanity is moving towards the shores of Israel. The 'Battle of Defence' is nearing its end, the 'Battle of Creation' has begun.*"

It is impossible to pass over an item such as the foregoing without thinking of the noble words of

Isaiah (60. 8-9) "*Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows? Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he*

*hath glorified thee*". But that really belongs to a later date, when the returning exiles come to Zion with songs of praise to God. They have not got to that stage yet. Pray God they may do so soon, for then is the Kingdom indeed come down to the earth.

## SPIRITUAL STRENGTH

(From the "Herald of Christ's Kingdom".)

The spiritual individuality of every person can be preserved only by his personally receiving and digesting the truths of the Divine Word. This is why our Lord and the Apostles so earnestly exhorted the early Church to search the Scriptures—to make the Truth their own personally, to know and understand its meaning. Thus the Apostle points out that one of the important purposes of an individual understanding of the Truth is that the Lord's people might be given such a comprehension of the Divine will and the principles of righteousness that, having their senses exercised, they might discern both good and evil, and thus experience sanctification by the Truth. The noble Bereans were especially commended because of such personal search of the Scriptures daily to prove whether or not those things were true. Nor does our study of the Truth and our standing fast in the faith signify that we are to contend and stand for innumerable and fanciful interpretations of the parables, symbols, and types of the Bible, which were never designed of the Lord as a basis for the Christian's faith and practice, but were arranged merely as a pictorial method of confirming truths and facts already known and understood. Types should never be used to teach doctrines, but to illustrate those already taught in plain terms. It is on the clear, plain fundamentals of the Christian's faith that all should unite. But upon the theories and speculative views of the figurative expressions of the Scriptures there can

be no satisfactory union. Our motto rather should be, on essentials, unity, on non-essentials, liberty and charity.

In the light of the foregoing we find that accordingly our Lord and the Apostles sought to put the Church on guard against the yielding up of their right and liberty to see the Truth for themselves, and to settle every matter of doctrine and faith each for himself. Hence, the forceful warnings of the New Testament against submitting to any self-appointed leaders, or any person or combination of persons who might attempt to lord it over God's heritage and to take away the liberty of the sheep.

God's people are to be just as much on guard to-day in reference to these matters as at any time in the Church's history. Any organization of professing brethren, therefore, making the claim that they are God's exclusive channel through which truth must flow to the rest of the Church, that they are the custodians of the sheep, that they have been set over the Church as its special authorities and spiritual guides and that they are to decide all matters of faith and service, such organization of brethren is surely to be regarded with apprehension; for such boastful claims, such assumption of authority over the sheep is entirely without any Scriptural warrant. Such leaders would only mislead and enslave the sheep. Jesus says, "My sheep hear My voice, and a stranger will they not follow".

### "THE CHRISTIANS OF TYARI"

"The Christians of Tyari, a small town in Armenia, are in the habit of treating lunatics by burying them alive, with the full Church burial service, but leaving a small hole through which the patient can breathe. After twenty-four hours they disinter the lunatic to find that the nervous shock sometimes has beneficial results.

"In one case which came under my notice" (the Rev. Wigram, an Anglican minister resident in the district) "the man was buried all right and in due time his friends came to disinter him. As soon as the stones were removed he sprang up, crying 'I am risen! I am risen! It is the Last Day!' Then, looking round upon the men who had come to resurrect him, he exclaimed disgustedly, 'But whoever would have expected to see you at the

Resurrection of the Just?'" (Wigram in "The Cradle of Mankind".)

There is a moral to this story. So many of us are inclined to limit the scope of Divine salvation to a narrow circle of fellow-believers, or consign to Divine disfavour those who may not agree with us on the interpretation of the Scriptures or the practice of the Christian life. Maybe our Master sees deeper than do we and does not attach over-much importance to these little eccentricities of ours. But it is good for us to realise that He is quietly choosing His own from every part of the "field", and that we do not well to condemn other earnest souls as unworthy of the Kingdom because in some fashion or another they do not measure up to our own conception of the Divine calling.



Thou, therefore, endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

<h1 style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0;">BIBLE STUDENT'S</h1> <h1 style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0;">MONTHLY</h1>				
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JULY, 1949

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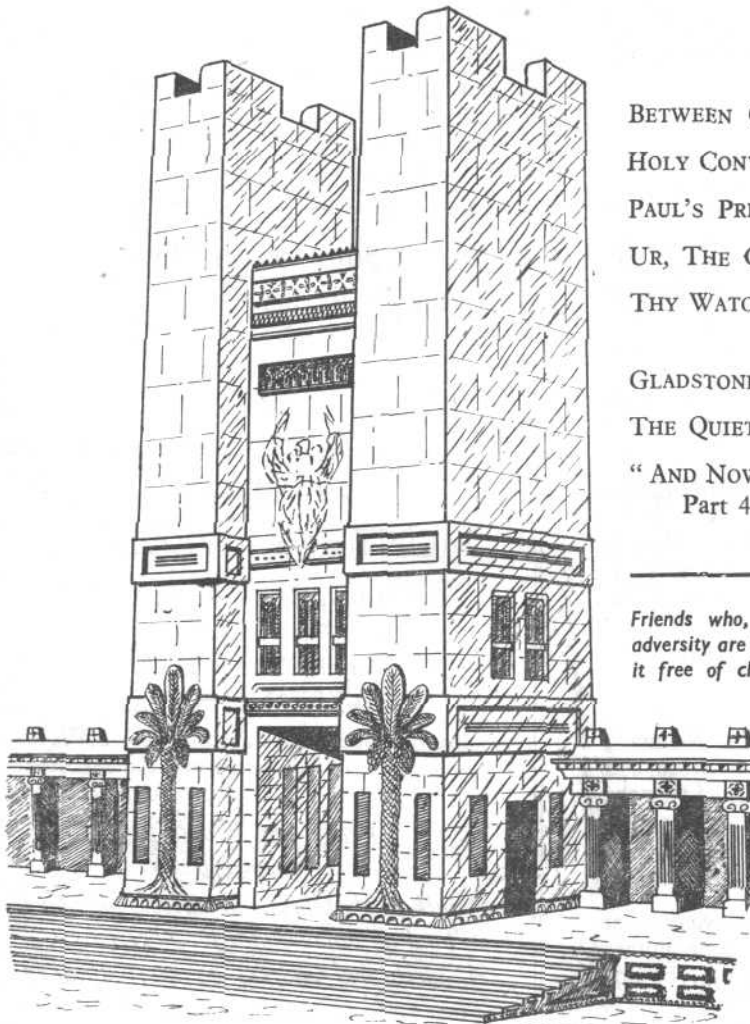
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*Lift up your heads, O ye gates,  
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors,  
And the King of glory shall come in.*

## BETWEEN OURSELVES

Saturday, 21st May, witnessed another good gathering at Caxton Hall, when Bro. A. O. Hudson, speaking on the general theme of the Christian outlook for to-day, drew attention to the general decay of religious faith and belief in the world as a sign of the times foreshadowed in Scripture. Bro. W. R. Walton, of Coventry, followed, holding the attention of the brethren in marked degree as he discoursed on some vital considerations regarding the life of prayer, lifting the meeting to what all felt to be a high spiritual level.

Arrangements are now going forward for a public meeting at Caxton Hall in the autumn, in connection with these Saturday gatherings, and the interest and prayers of the friends for the Divine blessing on this effort will be sincerely appreciated.

\* \* \*

Throughout the war years many were the enquiries concerning the welfare of our brother Carl Luttichau of Denmark, who used to visit this country quite often before the war. It is with considerable pleasure that we are able to announce that our brother hopes to attend the August Convention at Conway Hall and there to resume the fellowship which has been interrupted for so long. Bro. Luttichau's stay in England will be brief, but doubtless many of his friends will be able to meet him at Conway Hall.

\* \* \*

The attention of all brethren interested is drawn to the arrangements for a baptismal service to be held in connection with the August Convention at Conway Hall. Will any friends who wish to symbolise their consecration to the Lord and would like to take advantage of this opportunity please communicate with Bro. G. H. Jennings, Convention Secretary.

\* \* \*

The pocket size "Daily Heavenly Manna", familiar to many readers, is now out of stock and out of print. It is unlikely to be reprinted in the foreseeable future and we are sorry therefore that no further orders for this book can be fulfilled.

\* \* \*

All arrangements for the London Convention at Conway Hall are now complete and programmes have been distributed. Further copies may be obtained upon application to the Convention Secretary, Bro. G. H. Jennings, Grove House, Roding Lane South, Ilford, Essex. Requests for accommodation should be sent in as early as possible to the Accommodation Secretary, Bro. S. H. French, 4, Woodlands Gardens, Woodford New Road, Walthamstow,

London, E.17. Bro. Paul Thompson of Brooklyn, U.S.A., will speak at two of the sessions. Voice amplifying equipment will be installed to make hearing easy for everyone; light meals will be provided between sessions as usual; and it is confidently anticipated that a profitable time will be had by all who attend.

\* \* \*

Friends who read the "People's Paper" published by the Berean Bible Institute of Australia are asked to note that the annual subscription is now 4/6. We are always pleased to receive subscriptions to this magazine, which circulates principally among the Australian brethren, and transmit to the Berean Bible Institute when this is a convenience to their British readers. The "People's Paper" is, of course, sent direct to such readers by post from Australia. We can always furnish sample copies to anyone interested.

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### Gone from Us

Bro. Sidney Smith (*Manchester*).  
Bro. Oscar Laker (*London*).

—\*—

*"Till the day break, and the shadows flee away."*

## LONDON MONTHLY MEETING

Saturday, 16th July, 1949

6.30—8.30 p.m.

In the Tudor Hall  
CAXTON HALL

Caxton Street, Westminster, S.W.1  
5 mins. St. James Park Station and Victoria Street

*Praise and Worship  
Fellowship*

*A talk on the Christian outlook for today  
and an opportunity for questions  
A Scriptural address by guest speaker*

Chairman: Bro. J. Bignell  
Speakers: Bro. R. G. Barrett (Forest Gate)  
Bro. A. Spain (Greenhithe).

# Holy Convocation

*A Thought for Convention Time*

From time to time in the life of Israel there were occasions when the Temple stairs were crowded with happy throngs going up to worship and fellowship. The sweet singer of Israel used to watch them from his privileged position in the Palace near by. His heart leapt to be with them, and so he broke out into the rapturous strain "We went up to the House of God in company, with the multitude of them that kept holy day". *Holyday!* That is the word which we now pronounce "holiday", and it is when we keep holiday, holiday, that we gather together, just as did our spiritual forebears of old, to worship and fellowship. Let that always be the keynote of our gathering in convention assembly. Let us come together on the foundation truth that is our common basis of belief—our acceptance in Christ Jesus. Let us unite together in strains of praise that will fill the heavenly realm with music. Let us join in the voice of prayer that ascends before the Throne of the Most High. "O come, let us worship, and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker". Let such seasons of assembling be holy convocations unto the Lord, times in the which we draw near to God, and He to us.

What should be the aim of our conventions, the ideal before our minds? Sometimes we hear the question "Of what use are conventions; what do they achieve?" It is a rather silly question. Israel of old gathered together from time to time at the command of the Lord, leaving their daily work and usual interests, to join together in an act of worship and homage. In that, and from that, they gained a sense of one-ness with God; fresh strength for the tasks and duties of every day. We, too, are exhorted not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, and in obedience to that injunction we assemble week by week in our local meetings for fellowship, for study and discussion, sometimes for prayer, all too rarely, one fears, for worship. A convention is the logical union together of many such weekly assemblies, at appropriate times in the year, in order that our circle of fellowship may be widened, and our sense of unity deepened. And just because a convention is an expression of our unity in Christ, and an outward witness to our faith, so it ought, more than any other of our meetings, to partake of the spirit of worship. We can learn of the Plan from the printed page, and we do from the magazines and books we read. We can commune with the Father in the privacy of our

own homes, or our own rooms, and we do. But only in the company of our brethren may we join in that corporate worship which is the outward symbol of the unity of the Church in the flesh. So our great aim and ideal in our coming together is Divine worship and spiritual edification. If we can pray together, and worship together, we shall be much better equipped to study together and understand the doctrines together during the year that is before us. So much of our divisions come because we have not fully learned to worship together.

It is an old jibe that if a brother gives a devotional discourse, he is of necessity afraid to commit himself on doctrine; a common assertion that unless a convention announces beforehand its allegiance to certain defined beliefs, it is of necessity uncertain or unsound in the fundamentals of the faith. It does not so follow; our Christian walk requires attention to every aspect of Scriptural teaching, including that phase of interpretation which is commonly called doctrine—sin, redemption, justification, consecration, the covenants, the Second Advent, and so on. But doctrine in this sense is best learned in small gatherings; worship is better offered in large ones.

The aim of our conventions, therefore, should be just that which is defined for us by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 4 "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come, in the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ". That covers everything, and leaves out nothing. These are words with which not one of us can quarrel; a declaration which no one can dispute.

We hold as fundamental to our Christian outlook the view that the only hope for the world is the coming again of Jesus Christ, and the setting up of His Kingdom. Our prayers, our faith, our studies, our activities, our reading, our preaching, all must be directed to that one glorious vision. We pray, as have Christians in all ages "Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven". But we must work for the Kingdom also. And while we pray, and while we work, we must study and discuss these things together, so that our message may be ever up-to-date, and pray and worship together so that it may be vital, living. The Lord has no use for fossilised theology or sterilised wit-

ness. And the world will soon be ready to listen; it always is when disaster comes, and nothing can now avert great disaster.

In our fellowship there is hesitation and doubt, born of the disappointments and disillusionments of the past. But the will to serve is there. And we must rise above the petty things that have obstructed and hindered us in the past, and become what we ought always to have been, a united and rejoicing family, going out in supreme confidence—to do what?—to “tell the whole world these blessed tidings, speak of the time of rest that nears, tell the oppressed of every nation, jubilee lasts a thousand years”.

It is a truism that any Christian group which builds its beliefs and witness around imminent expectations of Divine intervention can never outlive for long the failure of those expectations. We can only survive as a fellowship if to our expectations, so often disappointed, we ally the age-old three-fold Christian call, the Baptist message—“Repent—Believe the Gospel—the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand”. Those first two exhortations are in-

dependent of the time of the Kingdom; we can go on through life in the power of that message, always expecting the Bridegroom, always watching for the Kingdom, never cast down or dismayed if He seem to tarry, and the golden radiance of Millennial Day still do no more than gild the tops of the distant mountains. Do they say “the days are prolonged, and every vision faileth?” Say unto them “thus saith the Lord, the days are at hand, and the effect of every vision”. In the glorious imagery of Zechariah’s fourteenth chapter, the prophet, looking toward the east, toward the sun rising, in faith and expectation, sees the Mount of Olives cleave in twain, and a great valley appear between, and in the distant view thus opened to his eyes he beholds a great sight and cries out in exultation “and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee”. That is our hope, our confidence, our message. It is that we may be built up and strengthened in that faith that we gather in convention, and in the joy of that certainty that we serve and labour together in ministry and fellowship.

## Bro. P. E. THOMPSON

Brother Thompson is expected to land in this country on 29th July and to remain until the end of October. The arrangements for his tour are in the hands of the usual informal committee (Bros. Couling, Hudson, Lodge and Walton), Bro. Walton (14, Coniston Road, Coventry) acting as Treasurer to apply to the expenses of our brother whilst in this country such appreciation-offerings as the friends feel led to make. The arrangements as at present standing are as follows. Further information can be obtained from Brother Walton.

### List of Dates

Jul. 30-31	London Convention
Aug. 1	London Convention
3	Luton
4	Kettering
5-6	Melton Mowbray
7-9	Nottingham
10-11	Dewsbury
12-14	Sheffield
15	Leicester
16	Blaby
17-19	Atherstone
20-22	Coventry
23	Warrington
24	Lymm
26-28	Manchester
29	Lymm
30	Bury
Sep. 2-3	Belfast
4	Bangor
5	Co. Fermanagh
6	Dublin

Sep. 8	Belfast
9-13	Glasgow
14	Edinburgh
15	Dundee
16-17	Gateshead
19-20	Newcastle
21	Darlington
22	Doncaster
23-25	Lincoln
26	Peterborough
27	Downham Market
29	Ipswich
30	Welling
Oct. 2	Forest Gate
5	Central London
6	Putney
7-9	Cardiff
10	Bristol
11	Stroud
14-16	Parkstone
18	Portsmouth
21-24	Rugby

It seems necessary once again to remind some British readers of the “Herald” that it is illegal to send postal orders, or money in any form, to America in correspondence. If intercepted it is liable to be confiscated. All subscriptions to the “Herald” from readers in Great Britain and Northern Ireland must be sent to the British address shown in every issue of the “Herald”. The money is then sent to America under official arrangements which have been made. Will such readers please take careful note of this?

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# PAUL'S PREACHING

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Reflections on the Duties  
of a Minister

In 2 Cor. 4. 5 we have a concise definition of one part of the work of a minister of the gospel. It was a phase of the Lord's work to which Paul was very partial—that of evangelism. Not for him the staying in one parish tending the needs of one flock. He would not despise those duties but he himself was cut out for and was ordained to preach or herald the good news in many cities and countries. In his day much depended upon the integrity of the preacher due to the lack of education and lack of parchments. Blessed were those Bereans who were able to search the Scriptures daily to see if the things proclaimed by the apostles were so; but few had that opportunity and for several centuries believers had to rely on their teachers. Hence the teachers were mostly preachers and they had as in Nehemiah's day "to read in the book of the law of God distinctly, and give the sense, and cause them to understand the reading". Paul's own procedure in similar service is expressed in v. 2 as "*not handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God*". Extra care devolved upon the Apostle, because he was not only an exponent of revealed truth, but due to the abundance of the revelations given him he was called upon to disclose the new truths and hopes consequent upon the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And thus having new and added truths to announce he would choose preaching in many cities as the method for himself. He clearly had a message based upon the word of God and the book of Acts details his activities in all conditions and hazards. We know from Acts 20 that he preached lengthily which presupposes that he had much to say and an audience willing to hear. The preaching of those days would seem inordinately long by modern standards and few nowadays would think Paul's long preaching allowable, even granting that his hearers would see his face no more. We know from 2 Cor. 2. 12 that he went to Troas expressly to preach Christ's gospel and we may assume from 2 Tim. 4. 13 that he was so occupied with his message that he forgot his cloak on departure. He had glorious truths to proclaim and preaching was the Divinely ordained mode of promulgation. To-day Christians seem to prefer short periods of preaching and it is a moot point whether we are better served by it. Possibly they think preaching has served its purpose and now

that mankind is able to read the words of God at home we should have shorter sermons, shorter lectures, shorter expositions and shorter exhortations. But the question will arise—has preaching served its purpose? Does the Bible hint that preaching would be discontinued as a method of circulating the gospel? And, in passing, it should always be remembered that when Christians meet to hear the gospel, at the same time they join in prayer and praise in a way they lack when not assembled together. Whatever be the answer to the question as to length of sermon or address, it is certain that there is a need of good preaching in these days. It is a sign of the times manifest in the speaker and the hearers. Perhaps the worshippers are not so patient as former Christians; perhaps the audience is wiser than its teachers; perhaps the preachers have less to say about the Word; perhaps the meeting wants smooth things; perhaps they do not want to be bothered; perhaps radio supplies an easy substitute which can be switched off if not to taste. Let us be quite sure that we do not hinder the means God has chosen to declare His purposes.

He could have devised another and far-reaching way of spreading the truth, and one that would never be affected by the frailty of human nature. He could have commissioned such as Gabriel, or he could have blazed it across the sky for all to see; and had His plan been the quick conversion of the world some such method may have been chosen. Instead He chose the way which was foolishness to the Greeks; a way which required the listener to give attention to the words of truth and by that means He found only those who had the hearing ear. To-day we have preaching in printed form and though it reaches believers far afield it lacks the personality of the speaker.

We notice also in 2 Cor. 4. 5 that Paul regards himself and his fellow preachers as servants of the Church. He had high rank in the service of His Master but still he is servant of all; and ostensibly all ministers are servants of the flock. They are not servants in the sense that they could be at the beck and call of those they serve, yet they voluntarily spend their powers in the furtherance of the faith. Like the Apostle himself they have at times to fill the role of leader and ruler rather than servant: they have decisions to make for the good of all, often under criticism and when it would be so easy to be free of it all. They serve out of love

for the truth and the church without waiting for instructions from those they serve, and frequently before the flock has realised its needs.

In addition to the way of declaring the truth, Paul was definite as to the message the servants of the church must proclaim. In his parting advice to his successor Timothy he emphasised the preaching of the Word, and to Titus he wrote God had "in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed to me according to the commandment of God our Saviour". He wished these two evangelists and all preachers to follow him in heralding the word of God. For this there is no substitute; and preaching without ample reference to the Bible lacks conviction. Too often the preacher dilates on some trivial happening or anecdote and occupies his time weaving moral teaching upon it, when right before him are the words of life! It is unfortunately true that many ministers would be unfrocked for not preaching the word if such was ecclesiastical rule—and it should be! It will help preachers and listeners if we recall what Paul himself preached, and this we can do by noting his points when he uses the phrase "We preach . . ." They reveal important truth from which we gain assurance and faith in God's purposes for mankind.

A verse which instantly reveals Paul's message is 1 Cor. 1. 23—"We preach Christ crucified . . ." All knew that Christ had been crucified, and the meaning of it all was the apostle's message. He had two opposing parties to convince. The doctrine was a stumbling-block to the Jew, partly because he believed he was covered by the sacrifices of the God-given law of Moses and partly because the Jew had been responsible for the death of Jesus on the cross. The idea that the judicial death of Jesus of Nazareth at the hands of Pilate (though prompted by the Jew) was in fact a sacrifice for sins, and at that, for the sins of the whole world, was indeed a stumbling-block or as some would translate it, an offence. And to the outside world of the Greeks the message of the cross was foolishness; and the truth is foolishness to the wise of to-day and all those who because of superior knowledge and culture think that they are able to work out their own salvation. How did Paul deal with the situation of unbelief and opposition that he encountered? His downright methods are a lesson to us all. Upon receiving back his sight at Damascus he "straightway preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God" (Acts 9. 20). There we have it—straightway he preached! And in 1 Cor. 1. 17 he writes that the preaching of the gospel was his calling rather than baptising. Further, he did not speak with the wisdom of words

lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. Paul could have used wordy argument (at Lystra they called him Mercurius) but he chose direct declaration of truth supported by Scripture as the better way to spread the truth. We are well-advised to follow him—how often have we heard eloquence and the wisdom of this world begot the cross of salvation! Again we have Paul's directness revealed in 1 Cor. 15. 3 "I delivered unto you *first of all*, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures". His opening theme was ransom atonement, the basis of every Bible hope and the kingdom of God. All our hopes are centred in the truth that when man was utterly unable to free himself from sin and death and we were without strength, God sent His Son to be the saviour of the world. The subject is somewhat old-fashioned in the view of some modern speakers, and all will notice that their words lack conviction. But let us also note the words of Paul in 1 Cor. 1. 21 that it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. Thus we have another truth additional to the primary truth that we are saved by the sacrificial death of our Lord. And by these words we may know that not only is preaching the Divinely appointed way of circulating the gospel, but that God actually has pleasure in the method which was foolishness to the Greek and a hindrance to the Jew. And by the apparent foolish method He finds those who in the latter part of the chapter Paul refers to as the weak of this world; and in choosing and ennobling them we have proof of His power and wisdom.

Closely following the truth of Christ's atoning death must come His resurrection. And this also Paul said "We preach" in 1 Cor. 15. 4-11. It is expected, for Paul knows that if Christ be not risen then preaching and faith are vain (v. 14). The remainder of the chapter provides us with one of the grandest portions of Scripture full of sanctified reasoning and giving basis for eternal hope. The hope for this world rests upon the associated truths of the death and resurrection of our Lord, and therefore they must be the foundation of all Christian preaching.

Allied to these points of Paul's gospel we have one which some think to be particular to him, that of faith. This message we find linked to the death and resurrection of Christ in Rom. 10. 8-15. He pointedly explains it as "*the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved*". Note that Paul connects belief in the heart with spoken confession of one's belief. To

him belief in heart is a truer proof of the Christian than belief in the head. If the heart is touched with the two truths that Christ died for our sins and was resurrected to glory to appear in the presence of God for us; and that believer expresses his belief by word of mouth we may be sure that we have found a true Christian. Then Paul follows in his reasoning by emphasizing that this is equally true for Jew and Greek for the same Lord is rich to all that call upon him. But then he propounds some questions—How shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?—How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?—How shall they hear without a preacher?—And how shall they preach except they be sent? And thus he has got back to his topic of preaching and the word of faith.

These are the truths that Paul constantly preached and wrote in his epistles—the death and resurrection of Christ and the word of faith—and as we read we see how loyal he was to the message committed to him. He was loyal and thorough in his mission because he knew that the god of this world had blinded the minds of them which believe not lest the light of the glorious gospel (and to him it was a glorious gospel) should shine unto them. But that God who commanded the light to shine had shined in his heart that he would pass it on to others. This was the treasure he had in an earthen vessel, and none knew better than he that the excellency of the power essential to his service was of God and not of themselves.

Another truth preached by Paul and found in his epistles concerns the Church. This he did so well that whenever we seek information about the church which is His body we promptly refer to him. The Christian church probably owes more to him for his faithful service than any other apostle. In referring to his writing the believing Christian finds

that the promises of God's word reveal that he may be associated with his Lord in the church which is His body. Previously he may have thought that the church is an association of believers. He finds it is much more than that. He learns from Paul that he is now a son of God, that the standing of sonship carries with it heavenly prospects undreamed of when first he heard the gospel. He reads that the promises relative to this calling reach fulfillment at the Second Coming of his Lord, when he and the faithful members of the past will all be eternally united with their Lord and commissioned to direct mankind and dispense God's blessings to them. He finds that his Father's purposes for his sons are described as being a sacred secret, long hidden but now revealed. And he reads that the fluent of speech apostle cannot find words to describe the glories, present and future, of this church of God.

Of the many words of Paul on the subject we select those where the expression "We preach" occurs. Col. 1. 28 closes the fine chapter which speaks of Christ's creative work of long ago; His redemptive and reconciliation works; His resurrection and work for and within the church. We see in verses 23 and 25 that Paul was specially called to preach this mystery among the Gentiles, and he briefly sums it up in the phrase "Christ in you, the hope of glory: whom we preach warning every man, and teaching every man . . ."—Yes, Paul's preaching also included encouragement and warning to his fellow-members in Christ. His was a great responsibility and by the grace of God alone was he able to proclaim the fundamental doctrines of the faith as well as guide the church during her many trials. His words are with us to-day and among his printed preaching we have advice and help for our own trials and doubts. How grateful we should be that heaven raised up such a champion for the gospel!

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## MILLENNIAL MESSAGE No. 3

The response to the invitation to share in distributing "*Millennial Message No. 3*" has been swift and good. Brethren from Canada, the United States and New Zealand hastened to record their wishes as soon as the first announcement was made lest they should be too late, and in this country there has been a very fair response from almost every part. The work of distribution is now, we believe, going on apace. There are still some left and brethren who have not yet applied but would like to have some before the edition is exhausted are desired to write in quickly and will have their applications as promptly satisfied, until the last ones

have gone. It has been a great encouragement to note the zeal of so many in this direction; as we cast minds back it is borne in upon us that there has not been so widespread and general a distribution in this country since the days of the "Kingdom Cards" in 1937-38; surely all who have a desire for the spreading of the glorious gospel of Truth will pray that this distribution might be abundantly blessed of our Master to the hearts and minds of many who receive, and that even though we ourselves may not perceive many visible results, the seed will have been sown, to bear fruitage a hundredfold "in due time".

## UR, THE CITY OF ABRAHAM

A little-known aspect of Abraham's life

*"And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan." (Gen. 11. 31.)*

That is about all the Scriptures have to say about Abraham's native city. The Biblical story of his life really begins when he became a citizen of Canaan, the promised land of his inheritance. Fourteen out of the fifty chapters of Genesis are devoted to the story of Abraham, from his entrance into Canaan at seventy-five years of age to his death at one hundred and sixty, a period of eighty-five years. Of his earlier life, when he was called Abram, a citizen of the great city of Ur, on the lower Euphrates, nothing is known—for the Rabbinic legends of his experiences there are of no value—and all that the Scriptures have to say about those earlier days is contained in a few stray allusions here and there. But by piecing together what is said, and calling to our aid the discoveries of recent times, there can be drawn a reasonable picture of the setting in which this man who afterwards became known as the "Friend of God", the "Father of the Faithful", was born and brought up; the place in which he received the Divine call "get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy Father's house, unto a land that I will show thee" (Gen. 12. 1). This long since vanished city of Ur is forever sanctified in having been the birthplace of the man in whom, and in whose seed, all families of the earth are to be blessed. When, in one of its houses, the child Abraham drew his first breath, a great event in this world's history took place. God looked down from Heaven and placed the seal of His approval upon a fresh development in the outworking of His plan.

Abram was born in Ur when his father Terah was one hundred and thirty years old. That might seem an incredible thing to us to-day, but there is reasonable evidence—outside the Bible account as well as inside—that there was nothing abnormal in such a thing in Abram's day. The Genesis references to the ages and longevity of men and women in the early stages of world history are so interlocked with each other and with the Bible story as a whole that they cannot be disputed without affecting the integrity of the histories. Terah already had other sons; Haran, who was sixty years

old at Abram's birth, and Nahor, probably not much older than Abram. The story opens to us in Gen. 11. 26-30, and already Nahor and Abram are grown up and married; but Haran, the eldest son, is dead, leaving one son, Lot, and two daughters, whose names according to vs. 29 were Milcah and Iscah. But it is asserted by scholars that the second name, Iscah, should rightly be Sarai, that the construction of the word as it appears in the original gives evidence of an incorrect translation into Hebrew from the Babylonian cuneiform script in which these early chapters of Genesis were first written. If this be correct—and the following verse is more understandable if this is indeed so—Nahor and Abram married daughters of their elder brother, a not unusual custom at that time in world history. Further evidence that this might very well be the case is afforded by Abraham's words to Abimelech, king of Gerar (Gen. 20. 12) to the effect that Sarah was his "sister, the daughter of my father, but not of my mother". In Biblical usage Sarai would properly be called the "daughter" of Terah even though one or two generations removed in descent.

The Scriptures give no indication as to how long the family lived in Haran, after leaving Ur. Abram was seventy-five when he departed from Haran: he was already married to Sarai when the family left Ur, but beyond this there is nothing in the text to guide us. It may be, however, that the family's decision to emigrate was due in part to the political troubles that were gathering about their native land, and that God, having nurtured the chosen line of Shem in this southern city for several generations, led them now to leave it before destruction came upon Ur, as come it did, not many years after their departure.

Ur was, even in Abraham's time, an ancient city. Situated near the sea, almost at the mouth of the Euphrates, it was about as far from Babylon in the north as London is from York or New York from Washington. But Ur was centuries older than Babylon. Long before the sons of Shem "journeyed eastward", found this smiling plain in the land of Shinar, and embarked upon their impious attempt to build a city and a tower whose top should reach unto Heaven (Gen. 11), the sons of Ham had built Ur and enriched it with all the magnificence of that art and architecture in which they were so skilled. Along with its neighbour cities, Eridu the holy, in which the Tree of Life was reputed to

have stood, and Erech the high-walled (mentioned in Genesis 10. 10), it was one of the first cities to be built after the Flood. During many years Ur had wielded rulership over the cities of the land and its kings had established peace and exacted tribute, but in the days of Abram those glories had passed away and the city was contending for its very existence against the rival claims of other powers, not least of which was Babylon, soon to reign supreme over all the land. It might well be that Terah saw in the disturbed state of the country and the growing menace of Babylon a leading from God to depart, away from the pomp and glitter of the city, and to take up his abode in the quieter and cleaner surroundings of the West. One fact that is indisputable is that the God of glory appeared to Abram whilst he was still in Ur and bade him depart and go to the land which God would show him. Stephen tells us that, in his speech to the Sanhedrin, although we have no means of knowing from whence he derived his information. (Acts 7. 2.)

Tradition has it that Terah was an idolator. There is no direct statement to that effect in the Scriptures. The words of Joshua to Israel in Josh. 24. 2, "Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood (river—the river Euphrates) in olden time, Terah the father of Abraham and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods" need not demand that Terah in particular did so, rather that Israel's ancestors in general, the progenitors of Abraham and Terah, served other gods. The fact that not only Abraham, but also Nahor, and Lot the son of Haran, in short, the entire family, were devout worshippers of God and remained so all their lives is hardly consistent with their father himself being other than a worshipper of God. At the same time, it is true that Laban the grandson of Nahor possessed *teraphim* (household divinities much in use in Ur) at the time of Jacob's flight with Rachel (Gen. 31. 19). This is an evidence that something of idol worship was mingled with the faith and devotions of that part of the family. If Laban's own testimony is to be accepted, Terah was undoubtedly a servant of the true God, for in the covenant Jacob made with Laban, the latter says, "*The God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us*" (Gen. 31. 53). On the whole it does seem as though this family was one that had kept the true faith alive in the midst of idolatrous Ur.

As dwellers in Ur, Abram and his relatives enjoyed what we would call a high standard of living. The city was the leading trading centre of its time—Babylon was only just coming into prominence—and the canals connecting Ur with the sea brought

ocean-going ships from the coasts of the Persian Gulf, and as far away as India, right up to its quays. The furniture in Terah's house might very well have been made from tropical woods—sandal wood and teak from India and mahogany from Africa. He would possess chairs and tables, strikingly like our modern ones, elaborately carved and ornamented, the work of craftsmen. At night the family took its repose on beds formed of cord networks stretched across wooden frames, covered with cushions and having raised ends decorated with pictures or designs. Specially shaped receptacles of earthenware held clothing and household linen; weaving was a well understood art and was employed for the making of clothes as well as carpets and cushions further to advance the comfort of the home. The majority of household utensils were of pottery or copper; if Terah was a reasonably wealthy man, tableware, such as forks and spoons would be of silver or gold. Knives were made of copper, for the people of Ur, like all the ancients, held the secret, lost for thousands of years afterwards and only rediscovered during this twentieth century, of so tempering copper that it could be used for cutting edges as to-day we use steel. Even razors were made of copper in Abram's day and some of them have been found, in shape something like a tiny curved hatchet, with a miniature metal handle.

It is probable that Terah and his married sons lived together in the same house, that being a common practice in Sumerian cities. The general procedure was to add rooms as the demand arose, and the ruins of some of the dwellings have as many as twenty or thirty rooms. They were not like modern houses. The visitor, passing through the entrance door, found himself in a kind of reception hall, a door on the farther side giving access to an open courtyard, around which was grouped a number of rooms, perhaps eight or ten, in the form of a square. Each one had its own doorway opening from the court, and often, in addition, communicating doors to the adjacent rooms. A gallery, approached by a wooden staircase, ran round the four sides of the court at first floor level and from this gallery the upstairs rooms opened. The roof was made of sundried clay, made watertight with bitumen, fitted over wooden beams which in a house like Terah's might be made of cedars from Lebanon. The roof projected over the gallery but the centre of the court was open to the sky, so that daylight penetrated all the rooms through this central opening. Doors and windows all faced the courtyard so that the outside walls of the house had no breaks save the main entrance. The residential parts of the city must have presented a rather monotonous appearance of sheer brick walls.

As if to make up for this sameness of brickwork in the streets, the public buildings of Ur were ornate and magnificent, often decorated with brightly coloured tiles and enamelled bricks, and coloured representations of lions, bulls and dragons, or flowers and date-palms, in relief. Statues of gold and copper, representing the gods, or commemorating some great military victory, stood here and there, and in the centre of the city the imposing edifice that was the pride alike of Ur and all Southern Babylonia, the Temple of the Moon-god.

Abram and Sarai, in their walks through the city, or as they went about their business or visited their friends, must often have stopped to gaze upon its magnificence. If, as is probable, they were followers of the true God from infancy, it is not likely that they ever set foot in its precincts. But its worship and its ceremonial must have been very familiar to them, and on the great feast days they would have watched their friends and neighbours setting out to join in the services and climb the great Tower that dominated the Temple area. They might even have stood and watched the people thronging the Sacred Road that led up to the double gateway straddling the outer walls, and passing into the outer court. Through that gateway they might perchance catch glimpses of the two sanctuary buildings, both built to the honour of Sin, the Moon-god, both closed, their inward mysteries concealed from the public gaze. On the feast-days the people were not concerned with the priestly ritual and temple service; they pressed through the portals of *Dublal-makh*, the Great Gate, gaining access to the elevated terrace on which stood the "Hill of Heaven", the great brick "tower", two hundred and fifty feet square and seventy feet high, planted on all its terraces with trees and flowers, and at its top, the gleaming gold and silver of the holiest shrine of all. Abram and Sarai, standing well away from the outer wall, would be able to watch the people ascending the three converging stairways that led to the upper terraces of the building.

It was this same temple—the ruins of which exist to-day, the best preserved specimen of such temples in all Mesopotamia—that Cyrus the Persian repaired and rebuilt after he had captured Babylonia in the days of Daniel. At the time of his issuing his famous decree asserting that the God of heaven had charged him to build Him an house at Jerusalem, and giving permission to the captive Jews to return to their own land, he also issued another decree asserting that Sin, the Moon-god of Ur, had given him all the lands of the world to rule, and had commanded him to rebuild the Temple at Ur; that decree, engraved on baked clay

tablets, has survived to our own day just as has the other decree remained on record at the end of the Second Book of Chronicles and the beginning of the Book of Ezra. It would almost seem as if Cyrus was making sure of being on the right side of all the gods! The sister of Belshazzar, the last king of Babylon, was high priestess of the Temple during the last days of Babylon; Daniel himself must have seen it and perhaps trodden its courts on the official business of King Nebuchadnezzar. He could surely never have set foot in the ancient city of Ur without thinking of his forefather Abraham, and of the promise of God which took Abraham out of this place that he might become the father of a great nation by means of which all the families of the earth were to be blessed. He could not have looked upon that two thousand year old Temple—not so magnificent perhaps as in the days of Abram fourteen centuries previously, but a wonderful structure still—without seeing in vision the whole of its glory reduced to dust and mud, as it is now. Abram, looking upon it in his own day, must have reflected in much the same way, and, esteeming the promise of God greater riches than all the treasures of Ur, left them all behind him without regrets.

So the time came when the busy southern city knew the little family no more. With their faces set northward, they began the long journey that for Abram and Sarai was to end in the Promised land. They probably travelled a long way by boat, up the winding Euphrates, past Shuruppak, the city which the legends of the day had it was the residence of Noah and the place where he built the Ark; through Babylon, as yet but a small town, much smaller and less important than Ur commercially; not the "mistress of the nations" as she became in after years, but politically already the leading power in the land. Somewhere in the baggage that the emigrants were taking with them there were packed a few tablets bearing the records of Creation and the early history of Adam's race: among them the story of the Tower of Babel. Now as the boat made its way upstream, Babylon's buildings lining both banks, Abram's gaze must have fallen upon the Tower itself, standing proud and erect by the side of the river, dominating the houses and the palaces, visible evidence of the city's continued rebellion against God.

So, at last, they came to Haran, there to dwell awhile in comparative peace and obscurity until Terah was dead and Abram could undertake the last stage of his journey and see with his own eyes the land which God had promised to him and his seed.

To-day, that land is a hive of activity, fertile and prosperous. The land of Ur is a desert. The

seed of Abraham are pressing into their land in their thousands, making ready the fulfilment of the Divine promise; Ur is a silent desolation, a wilderness of sand and dust. The canals have long since dried up; the trees have withered and died; the buildings are ruined and deserted. The stillness is broken only by an occasional wandering Arab,

the silence by the noise of an occasional train rumbling over the railway that runs from Baghdad to Basra and passes near the ruins. The glory of Ur departed when Abram the friend of God set out from its busy markets and crowded streets to find "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God".

## THY WATCHMEN SHALL SEE EYE TO EYE

A well-known text examined

*"Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion."* (Isa. 52. 8.)

The immediate setting of this text is the promised return from captivity to Babylon. There would be symbolic watchers on the walls of Jerusalem and symbolic heralds hastening over the mountains to announce to the watchers the coming of the returning hosts intent on rebuilding the Temple and city. The long night of captivity is past; the day of Divine favour is come. "I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies. My house shall be built in it, and a line shall be stretched out upon Jerusalem" (Zech. 1. 16). Hence the stirring cry of the watchmen in the seventh verse: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that bringeth good tidings of good, that sayeth unto Zion 'Thy God reigneth'" (Isa. 52. 7).

Then come the words of our text. The rejoicing watchmen sing together because they see, *face to face*, the heralds of good tidings announcing the Lord returning to His sanctuary in Zion.

That is what this expression "eye to eye" means. "Face to face." It only occurs in one other place in the Old Testament, in Num. 14. 14, where it is rendered "For thou, Lord, art seen 'face to face,'" and the thought in Isa. 52 is that the watchmen see clearly, face to face, the heralds of glad tidings announcing the imminent return of their God to His people.

Rotherham's rendering is "Eye to eye shall they look upon Yahweh's return unto Zion", and he further remarks on the meaning as "Probably 'face to face with the event'." Moffatt has it: "They see the Eternal face to face as He returns to Zion". Margolis: "They shall see, eye to eye, the Lord returning to Zion". Ferrar Fenton: "When clearly you see that the Lord comes to Zion". The Septuagint confirms the thought by

having "Eyes shall look to eyes when the Lord shall have mercy upon Zion".

Bible students know that this wonderful imagery was not intended solely for fulfilment in the days of Israel's return from captivity. Paul uses the seventh verse as applicable to the heralds of the Gospel, in Rom. 10. 15. Realising that the return under Cyrus was but a picture, a type, of the greater release from captivity which should come to spiritual Israel at the close of the Gospel Age, and the joy which the imminent Advent of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus, would inspire in the hearts of the Gospel Age "Watchers", we can discern a greater and more glorious application to these glowing words.

The "Watchers" on the walls of the Holy City of this Gospel Age have waited through a long and dreary time during which the people of God have been held captive by an oppressive system which has crushed the Truth to the ground. Only a few of the "poor" have remained to be "vine-dressers and husbandmen", but these have faithfully manned the walls watching for the promised "return". The night is far spent, the day is at hand, but as yet only the first gleams of dawn are perceptible.

Then come the heralds. Hastening over the mountains, pressing toward the Holy City, so long down-trodden and oppressed, they come with glorious news. The KING is on his way. He is returning to Zion with favour. Enlightenment and prosperity is to come with Him. The captive people are loosed—even now they are on their way to commence the great work of rebuilding the Temple of God, and placing within it the golden vessels—the precious truths so long submerged under the defilements of a foreign power.

How eagerly the Watchers fasten their gaze upon the heralds. They haste—therefore the news is good. Did they bring bad news their pace would be slow. They each seek to outvie the others in order to reach the city first. How beautiful the sight, heralds upon the mountains proclaiming the coming King!

So they meet, face to face. No longer any doubt. The news runs round the city. Not all the watchers receive the news at once. Not all hear exactly the same story from the different heralds, all zealous to proclaim the essentials of their message. But one central truth stands out—**THE KING IS AT HAND!** He may be upon the mountain approach; He may even be within the city, and making Himself known to those who have perceived His entrance. There is no lack of love and zeal on the part of those who have not actually seen Him enter the gate, if so be He really is now within the walls. All are united in the one joyous theme—the time has come. “*I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies.*”

That is the story of this closing period of the Gospel Age—a period which is now well advanced. Is the King within the walls? Is He at the gates? Whether the one thing or the other, the important teaching of the text is that we are “face to face with the event”. The Watchers and the Heralds have met, and their united testimony has been given to seekers after the Lord for three generations past. The Temple has been built; Divine Truth, things new and old, has been established in its rightful place. The work is not yet finished; the building must go on; the Temple must be adorned with yet purer and nobler vessels of truth and understanding, that the day may at length come when the great outer doors will be flung open to all mankind and the invitation come to all men to enter and walk in its light.

The importance of a right understanding of this Scripture is great. It calls us to recognise the significance of the times in which we live; that the work begun in Christendom during the nineteenth century continues still in active preparation for the day when our Lord Jesus Christ shall be manifested in His glorious *apokalupsis*—His revelation of Himself to all men, in association with His glorified Church, for man's blessing and salvation. How beautiful upon the mountains . . . the heralds . . . proclaiming “Thy God reigneth” . . . for the time of His Kingdom is come, and the day is not far hence when He shall “reign in Mount Zion, and before His ancients gloriously”.

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Let such as suffer anguish and pain, even if only of a physical nature, take heart, and seek for that comfort which God will bring into the acutest extremity of human weakness—so long as they may have assurance that it is for faithfulness to His Will, “For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.” 2 Cor. 1. 5.

## GLADSTONE ON EVOLUTION

*It has become proverbial to refer to “What Gladstone said in '68”. It is good to remember, however, that the Rt. Hon. W. E. Gladstone, Queen Victoria's Prime Minister from 1868 to 1894, was a staunch and convinced Christian, conducting the nation's affairs with the uprightness and rectitude that became his profession. The following quotation from his writings reveals how firmly settled was his faith in what he himself called “the impregnable rock of Holy Scripture”, and with what disdain he treated the theories of evolution, which themselves had their rise in his own day (1859).*

“I contend that evolution in its highest form has not been a thing heretofore unknown to history, to philosophy, or to theology. I contend that it was before the mind of Paul when he taught that in the fulness of time God sent forth His Son, and of Eusebius when he wrote the ‘Preparation for the Gospel’, and of Augustine when he composed the ‘City of God’; and, beautiful and splendid as are the lessons taught by natural objects, they are, for Christendom at least, infinitely beneath the sublime unfolding of the great drama of human action, in which, through long ages, Greece was making ready a language and an intellectual type, and Rome a framework of order and an idea of law, such that in them were to be shaped and fashioned the destinies of a regenerated world.

“For those who believe that the old foundations are unshaken still, and that the fabric built upon them will look down for ages upon the floating wreck of many a modern and boastful theory, it is difficult to see anything but infatuation in the destructive temperament which leads to the notion that to substitute a blind mechanism for the hand of God in the affairs of life is to enlarge the scope for remedial agency; that to dismiss the highest of all inspirations is to elevate the strain of human thought and life; and that each of us is to rejoice that our several units are to be disintegrated at death into ‘countless millions of organisms’; for such, it seems, is the latest ‘revelation’ delivered from the fragile tripod of a modern Delphi. Assuredly, on the minds of those who believe, or else on the minds of those who after this fashion disbelieve, there lies some deep judicial darkness, a darkness that may be felt. While disbelief in the eyes of faith is a sore calamity, this kind of disbelief, which renounces and repudiates with more than satisfaction what is brightest and best in the inheritance of man, is astounding, and might be deemed incredible.”

(Mr. W. E. Gladstone.)

## THE QUIET TIME

"My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places."

### MISUNDERSTOOD

*Misunderstood! Ah yes! Misunderstood oftimes  
by those*

*We loved the most and strove our best to serve;  
our good intent*

*Construed as evil by life-long and trusted friends.  
Alas!*

*That deepest wounds should come from those we  
hold so dear, so dear.*

*(O God forbid that I ever should thus misunder-  
stand and rudely crush the burdened heart of any  
child of Thine!)*

*And yet, my soul! why dost thou think it strange  
that thou*

*Art thus misunderstood! Six thousand years  
Jehovah God,*

*Creator of the wondrous Universe; all-good, all wise,  
All-loving, merciful, hath been misunderstood; His  
name*

*Blasphemed, His gracious plan ignored, His Holy  
prophets stoned; and He, the Holy, harmless,  
Perfect One, the Christ of God, was perfected  
through sufferings, and not the least of these,  
Methinks, it was to be misunderstood by those for  
whom*

*He laid down life itself! "Take up thy cross and  
follow me"*

*The Master said. Ah! then my soul, how can'st  
thou hope to win*

*Thy Crown by any crossless way? Misunderstood!  
Poor heart,*

*Dost thou forget, there's One who always under-  
stands, who knows*

*Thy faults, thy weaknesses, yet notwithstanding  
loves thee still!*

*Ah! then, my soul, what reckest thou of all the  
world beside!*

### NEARING HOME

As the ship is nearing port there are rocks, shoals and cross currents to contend with, so the pilot comes on board. He knows all these and guides the ship safely into the harbour. So, as we are nearing home now there are greater difficulties than ever before, our Pilot has come to take charge of the ship to guide us home. Let us trust ourselves fully to His care.

### GOD'S HAND

When God stretches forth His hand, it must mean salvation to the individual. In the days of His flesh, our Saviour constantly stretched forth His

hand, and individuals were delivered. They were set free from blindness, from palsy, from leprosy, and from death. If we believe that His touch has still its ancient power, it must mean that His outstretched hand continues to effect salvation.

### WELL DOING

We ought not to be weary of doing little things for the love of God, who regards not the greatness of the work, but the love with which it is performed. We should not wonder if in the beginning we often failed in our endeavours but at last we should gain a habit, which will naturally produce its acts in us, without our care and to our exceeding great delight.

### DIVINE ALCHEMY

It has been stated by Ruskin that the mud in the city streets is composed of an admixture of clay, sand, soot and water, and that if these ingredients of the black mud were separated and passed through certain severe testings of pressure, heat, exposure to sunlight, etc., the clay would become a sapphire, the sand would become an opal, the soot a diamond, and the water would become one of two things; either a glistening dewdrop or, if crystallised, a starry snowflake.

### EXPERIENCE

Christian experience, therefore, is something entirely different from experience as it is known to the unconverted. As a Christian looks back over his life, he can find countless illustrations of the way in which the Lord has caused good to come out of evil, and of the way in which events that were thought at the time to be heralds of misfortune have turned out to be as a door opened in heaven.

### PRESENT TRUTH

What was the great beacon light of Present Truth which flashed into our minds like a new revolution? What was it that kindled our imagination, quickened our pulse and captured our heart? Was it not our discovery of the *progressive dispensational* nature of the "Plan of the Ages," our realization of the stupendous fact that the establishment of the long-hoped-for Kingdom was impending, yes, was even at the doors and might take place even in our own lifetime? Here, we found, was the greatest drama in all history being enacted before our very eyes, one in which we ourselves were invited to have a part, in harmony with the designs of its great Author. A far cry indeed was all this from the "beggarly elements" upon which the hosts of Christendom were trying to satisfy their hunger.

# “And Now Abideth . . .”

A Series of Studies  
in 1 Cor. 13

## PART 4

“Love envieth not”, but is generous, benevolent ! In the Greek we have a word capable of a two-fold definition, the one beneficial, the other harmful, and we have to take care which bias we give to the word. The wrong bias will give us “envy”, for our definition, the right one will give us generosity and benevolence, to a great degree. The Greek original is “*Zeelos*” and its two possible meanings come out as “zeal”, as in John 2. 17, Rom. 10. 2; and 2 Cor. 9. 2; and as jealous (or jealousy) as in Acts 5. 17; Rom. 13. 13; Gal. 5. 20; and James 3. 14. In this latter passage it is quite clear what “*Zeelos*” is intended to mean, because it is qualified by the addition of the word “*pikros*”, which means “bitter”. The Diaglott translates it “bitter rivalry”.

The primary meaning of “*Zeelos*” is “zeal” of course, but that does not inform us to what end the zeal is directed. It is only too easy for zeal and honourable pursuit to degenerate into a much meaner passion, and for two, or more, who together aim at the same objective (and in doing so become competitors) to become open enemies as well, and employ their zeal to promote open enmity. Thayer's Lexicon defines “*zeelos*” (a) as ardour in embracing, pursuing, and defending anything, and (b) as an envious and contentious rivalry, jealousy, which cover, first, the stirrings and motions of the mind, and secondly its outbursts and manifestations.

When “*zeelos*” becomes degenerate it may reveal itself at two distinct levels; that of the mind, and that of the outward act. If opportunity serves, it may make open war upon the good it observes in another person, and try to defile and make it less good than it was; or if the opportunity for the open act does not present itself, there may be only the desire or wish to make the good less good. “*He that is conscious of this wish*” says Trench “*is conscious of no impulse or longing to raise himself to the level of him whom he envies, but only to depress the envied to his own*”.

Contrariwise “*zeelos*” rightly directed works the other way, and would prompt the man of good intent to seek to raise the less good man to the level of himself. Not only does it not manifest jealousy against the other man; it uses all its strength and energy to lift the less good to the standard of the

good. Hence our definition of generosity and benevolence.

There had been much depraved jealousy in the heathen world. Their rival priesthoods and rival ways of life had been replete with jealousy for centuries, causing much blood to flow and much sorrow to many aching hearts.

There had been much of this evil quality in the Corinthian Church to their great detriment, spiritually. The zeal they had, had been directed to wrong ends and purposes, and had thus produced undesirable results.

There has been an intense zeal in God's thoughts and ways, but it has never yet degenerated to a jealousy intent on debasing what is good to the level of the bad. A glowing, burning zeal for Righteousness has led Him to formulate a great Plan for the overthrow of sin and impurity, and for the establishment of righteousness everywhere. All the resources of Omnipotence and Divinity have been brought to the prosecution of this Plan, so that He might recover to Himself the hosts of sinful men, for whose love and loyalty He yearns with all His heart. This is “*zeelos*” as it stands revealed as a constituent of the *Agape*.

Likewise in all possessed by the *Agape*, there must be an ardent zeal, directed like God's own, to the uplift of fallen men. To retain its place as a constituent of the *Agape*, it can never degenerate to rivalry, either in the Church or outside. It can never wish to depress the good, either in the Church, or in a brother's life, to the level of the contentious or the envious. It will not covet another brother's place, nor envy him his natural gifts in the service of the Lord, but will bring the energy and thrust at its own command, to supplement that of his friend. It will never seek to “get and keep” only for itself; its zeal will always be to give and give again.

Nor need there be any rivalry in their running for the “crown”. No one is ever called to compete with his brother for a crown—for a crown has been set apart for every one who runs so as to obtain. There is no envy therefore in Love, but there is a mighty energy of zeal—its better counterpart. It is a mighty flow of generosity to each and all, prompting the least to emulate the best, and all

to emulate the Lord, in the interests of the Great Plan.

"*Love vaunteth not itself*". There is not much help available on this word, either in the Greek classics or the Lexicons. Nor do other Scriptures help, for it occurs but this once. Such help as Greek usage gives indicates that it is used of self-adulation. To "vaunt" is to boast, to brag, to utter self-praise. And in this sense the Diaglott rendering is as good as any, "*Love is not boastful*". No child of God has any ground for boasting, except as he shall make his boast in the Lord. He has brought nothing of value to the structure of the Plan; at his best he is no more than an unprofitable servant.

"Perfect love is humble . . . It does not sound a trumpet before it. Its good deeds are not done to be seen of men, but would be done just the same if no one saw or knew but God only. It is neither boastful of its knowledge or of its graces, but in humility acknowledges that every good and perfect gift cometh from the Father, and it makes return for every mercy to Him. Someone has truly said that Love saves a man from making a fool of himself by consequential conduct, and by thrusting himself into positions which betray his incompetence." (*Reprints* p. 2204.) Modesty and decorousness is the opposite of vaunting, and should characterise every child of God.

Nor is Love "puffed up". Here again is a word for which the Greek classics afford but little help. And it is a noteworthy thing that of its eight occurrences in the New Testament, no less than seven of them are addressed to the Corinthians—six in the first epistle alone. The remaining one is found in Col. 2. 18, in connection with men who, puffed up by their fleshly mind, "hold not the Head". Its primary meaning is to "breathe"—and its Latin equivalent "*inflatio*" gives it its proper sense. "Knowledge (*Gnosis*) puffeth up" said Paul (1 Cor. 8. 1). It was just this factor that had made some of the Corinthians what they were, and had caused much of the trouble amongst them. While knowledge had inflated them with pride, Paul assured them that only the *Agape* could build them up. Not a little mild sarcasm went into that illustration, for all residents near watery places would know of a certain amphibian creature which, to appear more fearsome to its foes, inflated itself with air, increasing its size without increasing its effectiveness. But the *Agape* is as solid masonry, foundations, walls and roof built for usefulness and service.

It is one thing for God to say "I AM that I AM", for that is bedrock truth. If He says "I am the Lord, I change not" it is a statement of abso-

lute fact. Again, if Jesus says "I am" it is also perfectly true. It was a just estimate of His proper place in the Divine scheme of things. To say "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" was not overstating the basic facts of His position before God and man.

It is altogether a different thing for man to say "I am" or "I can". Facts have a way of belying the claim. No man who knows his need for grace to help, and for redemption by Jesus' precious blood can possibly be puffed up or proud. He will never dare to stand up in the sight of God (or man) and say "I can" unless he adds forthwith the words "through Christ which strengtheneth me." If he loves the Lord he will know his "place" is at His feet.

"*Love doth not behave itself unseemly*". The classical Greek writers define this word, "to act unbecomingly", without specifying in what way it is unbecoming. We have to turn to Scripture parallels to ascertain its more precise and definite meaning. A very helpful passage is given in Rev. 16. 15, which reads "Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments lest he walk naked and they see his shame". Here, the removal of the garments exposes the unwatchful to shame. Alongside this Scripture a statement in Rom. 1. 27 may be placed—"men with men worked unseemliness", a statement revealing utter shame. The thought we need seems to be—Love does not prepare disgrace for another soul by removing its garments, thus exposing it to shame. It does not take away its cloak of honour and integrity to leave the frailties of the soul exposed, as a sorry spectacle for foes to gloat upon. Instead of this Love would hide known faults with a mantle of charity, remembering betimes that one's self might also be frail and full of faults.

Knox translates this "love is never insolent" but that is much too negative a thought to state what is needed here. It is the grace which is the opposite of insolence that is wanted as Love's constituent. A more exact thought would be "Love is ever courteous and considerate". In this we have the standards of the Royal Court implied. Though we know that the many politenesses and points of etiquette may be insincere, it is the code of conduct in the presence of royalty—not the insincere pretences of man—which is the substance of our thought. Courteousness requires the strict observance of honour towards all, forbidding any act or word which involves a fellow-courtier in shame.

Among those who have access to the Heavenly Court by faith and prayer, this courteousness is specially appropriate. For any child of God whose

interest is represented in that Court by our beloved Lord, to snatch away the garment of another brother's honour and good name, in order thus to reveal his weakness and expose him to shame would be acting unbecomingly to an infamous degree. The "Agape" would never lead to that, for it has been God's way to hide our weaknesses under a robe of perfect righteousness, and it is never He that strips that robe away. The "Agape" is ever courteous and considerate in the best sense of the word and its code of etiquette is always that of the Heavenly Court.

There will be many weaknesses to cover up in the Coming Age, and only those who learn the lesson good and true in this present Age will be adequate to grapple with the situation of that coming day.

*To be continued.*

### "GO, YE SWIFT MESSENGERS"

Do you remember this Scripture? "... that sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters, saying, Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled..." Now read this extract from a letter that came in the other day:

*"While strolling along the River Usk, which is a tidal river, I noticed a small bottle containing some paper; on retrieving the bottle and extracting the contents, I found it advised whoever found the bottle to write to 24, Darwin Road, Welling, Kent, for free tracts. If same is genuine I would be glad to hear from you, as I am deeply interested..."*

This is the fourth bottle in recent months to have come to land and provoked an enquiry. We could make a pretty shrewd guess as to the identity of the brother who adopts this method of "casting bread upon the waters" and he will, on seeing these lines, be encouraged to know that it is returning "after many days". Why should not the forces of Nature be pressed into service to carry the glad news onward? If, as the Psalmist says, there is "fire, and hail; snow, and vapours; stormy wind fulfilling his word" (Psa. 148. 8) why should not "this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts" (Psa. 104. 25) carry on its surface the messengers of salvation, and play its part in the fulfilment of the promise that the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea? We on our part, shall look forward to dealing with further "bottled enquiries". And, of course, because Nature is designed to operate on the principles of the world to come rather than those of the world that now is, there are no postal charges to pay on messages sent by Nature's postal delivery service!

### SPECIAL NOTICE

Further to the expected visit of Brother Luttichau of Denmark to the London Convention in August, a slight change has been made to the programme arrangements in order to afford our brother an opportunity of addressing the friends for a short time. The Sunday afternoon session will commence at 2.45 instead of 3.0 as announced on the printed programme, and Brother Luttichau will speak at 2.45, followed by Brother Murray at 3.30 p.m. It will be appreciated if friends will make this change known as widely as possible, since there is no other means, now that the programmes have been distributed, of announcing the alteration. Brother Luttichau will be speaking at one or two other places in the London district during the week following the Convention; details may be obtained from Welling.

Who hath despised the day of small things? While the pride of man boasts itself in multitudes and in abundance, it is the small things which God selects to fulfil His purposes. It was but a little oil in a cruse, yet it failed not; a handful of meal in a barrel, yet it wasted not. It was a little cloud arising out of the sea, the size of a man's hand, that prepared Elijah for the abundance of rain his ear of faith had anticipated. Upon Mount Horeb, God spoke, not in the mighty wind, nor the earthquake, nor the fire, but in a still, small voice. For it is "not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, saith the Lord of hosts".

*(Forest Gate Bible Monthly.)*

\* \* \*

A small thing is a great thing if God is in it. His power creates the tiny flower bud, the opening leaf, the blade of grass. He forms the grain of sand, the tiny globule of water, the glittering crystal of the snowflake. And it is these small things that make up the mighty oceans with their sand-girt shores, that clothe the vast forests, the rolling fields, and the snow laden landscape. God uses all His works. The weakest thing has a service of its own. The dewdrop, the little bird upon the tree, the flower of the field, the flitting butterfly, the busy bee. All creatures serve Him, small and great, and He can use us though we be the weakest of them all. *(Forest Gate Bible Monthly.)*

\* \* \*

Spurgeon once said, "We should be as familiar with the Bible as the housewife with her needle, as the merchant with his ledger, as the mariner with his ship".

\* \* \*

The fires of our love must be fed with the fuel of knowledge, or they will die out.

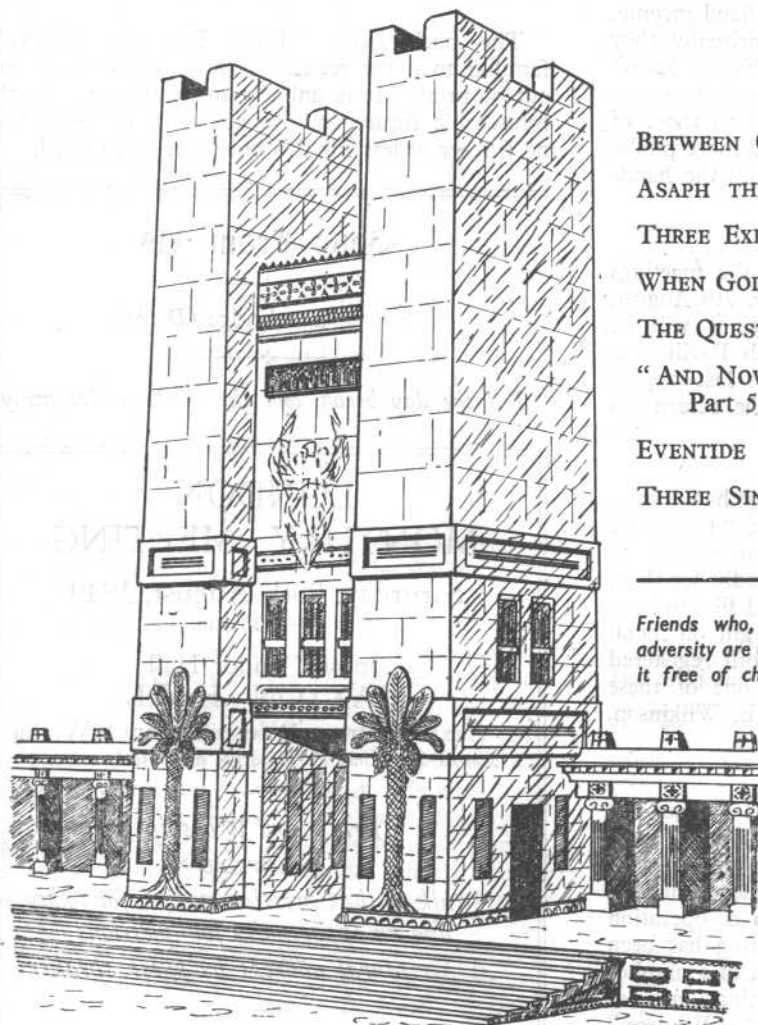


Thou, therefore, endure  
hardness as a good  
soldier of Jesus Christ.

<h1 style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0;">BIBLE STUDENT'S</h1> <h1 style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0;">MONTHLY</h1>				

Vol. 26, No. 8

AUGUST, 1949



Lift up your heads, O ye gates,  
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors,  
And the King of glory shall come in.

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## BETWEEN OURSELVES

The Secretary of the Benevolent Fund, Bro. E. Allbon, has requested that the following extract from a letter be published in the thought that many readers will be interested in this word, quite truly representing the sentiments of so many blessed by this service.

"It would be useless to try and tell you what these gifts mean to us both as a material help, but more so spiritually, words fail to convey all we feel, but our dear Father knows and He can clothe these words with the love and gratitude we feel to Him and the Brethren, in these days of rising and increasing costs of running a home on a fixed income, these little extras mean so much, spiritually they come as a reminder that our dear Father knows and cares and loves us even though we feel so useless at times in His service compared to those of you who are ministering to a larger and more public degree, but it is our privilege to uphold the hands of all our dear Brethren in prayer."

\* \* \*

Bro. Carl Luttichau will speak at the meetings of the Forest Gate Church on Sunday, 7th August, before returning to Denmark. Meetings will be held at the Aldersbrook Bowling Club Pavilion at 11.0, 3.0 and 6.30. This will be the last opportunity of seeing our brother before he returns to Denmark.

\* \* \*

The friends at Hyde have recently had manufactured for their own use a number of "Cross and Crown" brooches. Some of these are surplus to their requirements and they would gladly let them go at cost price to brethren who would like to have them. There are two qualities, viz., gilt on metal at 8/-, and gilt on silver at 11/-, both registered post free. Will friends who desire one of these brooches please apply direct to Miss E. Wilkinson, 28, Mona Street, Hyde, Cheshire.

\* \* \*

The Manchester Bible Students Council is vigorously prosecuting the season's Public Witness programme. Meetings have already been held at Heywood and Widnes, and in consequence of that at Heywood, which was conducted in co-operation with the Bury friends, a weekly meeting has been commenced in Heywood for the benefit of a number of interested people. Further meetings are at Bolton, during August. An "Assembly of Witness" in Manchester on 17th/18th September will conclude the series. The friends report considerable encouragement at the progress of these endeavours to make known the Glad Tidings.

During the course of Bro. Nadal's last visit to Germany it was found that a number of German brethren were strongly desirous of entering into regular correspondence with British friends. For those of our readers who may be able to read and write in German here is an opportunity of service. Will those who are able and willing to enter into such a regular exchange of thought, in the German language, please communicate with Bro. H. E. Nadal, 35, Palace Gardens, Buckhurst Hill, Essex, and they will be put in touch with suitable "pen-friends".

\* \* \*

The pocket size "Daily Heavenly Manna", familiar to many readers, is now out of stock and out of print. It is unlikely to be reprinted in the foreseeable future and we are sorry therefore that no further orders for this book can be fulfilled.

### Gone From Us

Sis. A. Shoebridge (Derby).

"Till the day break, and the shadows flee away."

## LONDON MONTHLY MEETING

Saturday, 20th August, 1949

6.30-8.30 p.m.

In the Tudor Hall  
CAXTON HALL

Caxton Street, Westminster, S.W.1  
5 mins. St. James Park Station and Victoria Street

*Praise and Worship*  
*Fellowship*

*A talk on the Christian outlook for today  
and an opportunity for questions*  
*A Scriptural address by guest speaker*

Chairman: Bro. R. Darby.  
Speakers: Bro. H. E. Panteny.  
Bro. J. H. Murray.

## Asaph the Chief Musician

A man who made melody to the Lord

*"For in the days of David and Asaph of old there were chief of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God."* (Neh. 12. 46.)

Asaph was a great choir-master; so great that his name lingered on for many generations after his death and in all Israel's after history the Temple singers were known as "sons of Asaph". Here was a man whose talents and whole life were consecrated to God and used in one particular direction, in the ministry of sacred song. Who knows how many hearts in Israel were turned more reverently toward the God of Israel, and how many minds to the more sober consideration of the Covenant and their responsibilities as a chosen and separated people to God, in consequence of that ministry? The ascending of praise and thanksgiving to God is a very lovely thing in Divine worship; and it is more than that. The heart's devotion can rise to heaven on the wings of song, and the renewal, the re-affirming, of one's own consecration can be carried to God by the voice of thanksgiving. It is a part of the service in which all can join and express for themselves in their own way the love and gratitude they feel for all His benefits. Sometimes a speaker, anxious to conserve as much of the time allotted to the service as he can for his address, requests that one of the hymns be omitted, or the long ones shortened. He does not well who does so. The Father looks upon the praises and prayers of His people in their gathering together with as much interest and sympathy as He does upon the ministry of the spoken word and, who knows, maybe He gets less weary of listening to the praise and thanksgiving of the congregation than He does of the sometimes over-long perorations delivered in His Name by the minister.

Asaph lived in the days of David. He must have found in that king a very ready sympathiser with his services and a quick readiness to make use of his characteristic talents. David himself in his younger and—who knows—happier days had been a singer and a poet. As a shepherd lad he had whiled away many a pleasant hour on the hillside, while the sun shone warmly down, composing and singing simple songs of praise to God. In later years, when in the service of King Saul, he played the harp and sang the same songs to his own accompaniment. Now, with all the cares of state pressing on his shoulders and the claims of several wives to satisfy he probably had less time for such direct

indulgence in his musical tastes; but when he came to organising the worship of God he remembered the charm that music had always had for him, and realising what it could mean in the worship of Israel, he looked around for a suitable man to place in charge of such things and found a twin soul in Asaph.

It was when King David had brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem after its long sojourn in the house of Obed-edom, following its capture by the Philistines in the days of Eli two generations earlier, that Asaph received his appointment. According to I Chron. 16. 4, David had "*appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the Ark of the Lord, and to record, and to thank and praise the Lord God of Israel: Asaph the chief . . .*" As the account goes on we find that there were players on psalteries and harps, and priests with trumpets, and Asaph himself, in addition to his duty of leading the choir, "*made a sound with cymbals*". It seems evident that this Temple music was by no means a subdued affair; more likely is it that it bore some distinct resemblance to the Salvation Army bands of our own day. But the Lord blessed it; that is the important thing; He blessed it! That is a point to remember when we feel disposed to decry and condemn a form of service which some others are conducting to the Lord's glory but a form which does not appeal to we ourselves. The Lord's arm is not so short—nor His imagination so limited—that He is compelled to confine Himself to just one way of doing His work and although we do tend to flatter ourselves that we are the only ones who understand His Plan and therefore the only ones entitled to work for Him or to speak in His name, there is plenty of evidence to the unbiased observer that the Lord does find use for many of the efforts put forth by Christian disciples of many differing theologies despite the shortcomings of some of them as respects a clear vision of His Plan.

Now Asaph was not only a musician, he was also a prophet. He must have been a very self-effacing one, for there is no mention of the fact during the time of his own life. Perhaps the greater glory of his royal patron obliterated any lesser radiance that might have shone from the Chief Musician. But in the days of Hezekiah, several centuries later, there is a casual reference which goes to show that his prophetic office was remembered equally with

his musical skill. 2 Chron. 29. 30 tells us, in connection with Hezekiah's restoration of the Temple service after the idolatry of Ahaz, that "*Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the Lord with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped.*"

So Asaph was a seer—a prophet! In his musical preoccupation he found time to study the Word of the Lord and to become a fit medium through which the Holy Spirit could speak. What would be the subjects of his prophecy? Without much doubt he would prophesy, as did all the prophets, concerning the King and the Kingdom, and the conditions of entrance into that Kingdom. Like all the prophets, he would speak of Judgment and Restitution, and call the people to repentance and dedication of life to God's service—to consecration. How would he speak to them? Surely through the medium of his sacred office! Not for Asaph the free, unrestricted wandering through the countryside in the manner of Amos the herdsman or Joel the vine-dresser. Not for Asaph the standing in the royal court in the company of princes and politicians of this world, like Isaiah or Daniel. His duties kept him in the place where daily worship was being constantly offered, and it was there, and in the course of that worship and those duties, that his prophecy, if it was to be given at all, must be uttered. And therefore it is that for the prophecies of Asaph we must look into the psalms of Asaph.

They are twelve in number, these psalms which are accredited to David's chief musician. Some have suggested that they might not all actually be from Asaph; that the structure of at least one seems to indicate a composition of a much later date, but there is really little or no evidence to support such hypotheses. These twelve, Psalm 50 and Psalms 73 to 83 inclusive, are entitled "Psalms of Asaph", and there is every reason for concluding that we have here compositions that are the work of this fervent-hearted Levite, set to music and rendered under his direction by the sacred choir in the days of David. And being a prophet, what more natural than that he should incorporate in these songs the understanding that the Holy Spirit had given him?

It would take many pages to exhaust the doctrinal and prophetic teaching left on record in the twelve psalms that enshrine the ministry of Asaph. A few brief allusions must suffice. And no such short survey can start on a more appropriate theme than the one which led Asaph to compose the 73rd Psalm—the Permission of Evil. Not exactly a doctrine, as we understand the term to-day, perhaps, but how vital a foundation for our own orderly and satisfy-

ing appreciation of the Divine mysteries. "*I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked*" he says (Psa. 73. 3) . . . "*they are not in trouble as other men . . . they have more than heart could wish . . . and they say 'how doth God know?' . . . When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; until I went into the sanctuary of God; THEN UNDERSTOOD I THEIR END.*" Ah, yes, that is where we, too, understand why God has permitted evil, and that He will not allow evil and the evil-doer to continue forever. It is in this psalm, too, that Asaph coined a word that has been an inestimable source of encouragement to the disciples of Jesus in all the centuries of this Gospel Age; "*Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.*" (Psa. 73. 24).

It must have been this realisation of God's determination to vindicate the righteous in due time that led Asaph to the train of thought revealed in Psa. 77. "*I have considered the days of old*" he says "*the years of ancient times. I call to remembrance my song in the night; I commune with my own heart; and my spirit made diligent search. Will the Lord cast me off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever . . . hath God forgotten to be gracious?*" Then, in a swift revulsion of feeling "*I will remember the works of the Lord. I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of all thy doings.*" In the study and consideration of the Plan of God as revealed in His past actions Asaph found both consolation and instruction to explain the apparent inactivity of God. "*Thy way, O God, IS IN THE SANCTUARY*" (vs. 13). That was the great lesson and it is so still with us. The teaching of this Psalm is the overruling providence of God and His wise direction of events for the ultimate good of all men. He is leading them through many strange and hard experiences that they might learn at last the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and come willingly and voluntarily in harmony with God's righteousness. "*Thou leddest thy people like a flock*" are the concluding words of the Psalm. To the doctrine of the Permission of Evil therefore we have to add the doctrine of Divine Providence that doeth all things well.

The next theme to which Asaph devoted his talents was that of Divine Judgment, and here two of his Psalms, 82 and 83, share the burden of the song. "*God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods*" is the tremendous opening of Psa. 82. None of all created beings are exempt from God's judgment if so be that sin has entered and found a lodgment. Even though they be called gods, children of the Most High, they

will die like men, and fall like one of the princes, should the contaminating effects of sin so demand. If wicked men take counsel against the people of God, and say (Psa. 83. 4) "*Come, let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance*", He will rise up and cause them to scatter and be no more, as the rolling leaves and dust before the whirlwind, twisting and twirling about in the terrible blast of His anger (vs. 13-15). And Asaph saw clearly—so clearly—that the final effect of Divine judgment is "*that men may know that thou, whose name alone is Jehovah, art the most high over all the earth.*" (vs. 18).

Now Asaph comes to prophecy. In Psa. 78, 79 and 80 he sings of God's chosen people Israel, of His goodness to them and their unfaithfulness to Him. "*Give ear, O my people*" he cries "*to my law. Incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old*" (Psa. 78, 1). Then he sings of the great deeds of old, the victories and triumphs of Israel in the wilderness, the continued faithfulness of God in face of the persistent unfaithfulness of Israel. So, at last, "*he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel; so that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh . . . and delivered strength into captivity*". But when God saw the distress into which his people had fallen, and how the enemies of righteousness exulted over the sorry state of those who despite all their faults and all their failures and all their perversities were still the people of God, then "*the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine, and he smote his enemies, . . . he put them to a perpetual reproach.*" What a wonderful commentary upon the Divine Plan it is to say, as Asaph here says "*so he fed them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.*" (Psa. 78. 72).

The song drops to a lower key. Asaph's prophetic insight showed him that in days yet to come, long after he himself would be sleeping with his fathers, there would be trouble and distress upon Israel because of renewed unfaithfulness. He saw a day in the which fierce Babylonian soldiers would come and despoil the city and the sanctuary, and take all the treasures thereof captive to Babylon. "*O God*" he cries in agony in the opening stanza of Psa. 74 "*why hast thou cast us off for ever? Why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?*" In vision he saw the Temple destroyed and lifted his voice in impassioned protest. "*A man was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees. But now they break down the carved work thereof with axes and hammers . . . they have cast fire into thy sanctuary . . . they have*

*burned up all the synagogues of God in the land*". But it is in this psalm that he rises up to a lofty plea for the fulfilment of God's Plan, a fulfilment which he knows is sadly needed because of the world's sin. "*Have respect unto the covenant*" he urges "*for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty*". Psalms 74 and 75 both reveal Asaph's knowledge that such a time of disaster must come upon Israel, and that it would be followed by judgment upon the nations that oppressed them. "*In the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red . . . the dregs thereof, the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them*" (Psa. 75. 8). So it is that in Psa. 76 he passes on to a brighter view of prophecy and glimpses something of the day of light and gladness that is to follow the overthrow of God's enemies. "*When God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth—surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain*" (Psa. 76. 10). There is his faith in the coming Millennial Day, in those "Times of Restitution" which Peter, long centuries afterward, was to declare had been spoken of by all God's holy prophets. Asaph was one of those prophets.

It was in the 50th Psalm that the great singer attained his loftiest height of vision. In that wonderful pæon of praise and prophecy he traverses briefly the whole of God's later works, succeeding that earlier phase when Israel after the flesh was the only instrument to God's hand. There in Psalm 50 Asaph has taken a mighty stride forward and sees the development of another Israel, gathered to God in another covenant, and in the ecstasy of that revelation he calls "*gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice*" (Psa. 50. 5). Perhaps that last vision of all showed him the majesty and power of God more vividly than anything before. It was at any rate with this train of thought in his mind that he uttered the sublime words that we have used so often ourselves to describe the all-power of our Father and our God: "*For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills*"! "*Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me, and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.*" The vibrant words die away into silence; the melody fades away in the distance. Asaph the singer, the musician of David's choir, is no more. He sleeps with his fellows, awaiting the call to enter that new world about which he so constantly spoke and sang; but his words live on after him, and we, nearly three thousand years later, find strength and encouragement and inspiration because an obscure but zealous and earnest man of God, away in those far-off days, used his talent for music and poetry to sing praises to the God of his salvation.

# THREE EXHORTATIONS

PAUL TO THE  
THESSALONIANS

*"Rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks!"* (I Thess. 5. 16-18.)

The difficulty in these three injunctions is their absoluteness. It is easy to rejoice on occasion, but to rejoice evermore is a different proposition. To pray at times, and regularly, is common, but to pray without ceasing is another matter. It is a pleasant thing to the thankful in spirit to give thanks for benefits received, but to give thanks for everything—is that not expecting just too much?

In this chapter the Apostle Paul gives us twelve brief and pointed rules for Christian conduct. Nine of these have to do with our relations with others. The three just quoted refer to our relations with God. Since our relationship with God is that of children to a Father, these are statements of what He expects of us as His children. Viewed in this light they may be seen to be not only possible, but reasonable and necessary. They represent characteristics pertaining to the home, both natural and spiritual. Let us examine them from this point of view. Stated in terms of the home life, they represent the three common qualities of happiness, fellowship and gratitude.

*"Rejoice evermore."* Every parent wants his child to be happy, so much so that the father cannot be happy if the child is miserable. But it is impossible to be happy to order. Joy can only come as a result of circumstances making for happiness. These may be intermittent and brief, or deep and abiding. Only if they are deep and abiding is happiness possible. All young life is naturally joyful through the exuberance of animal spirits. Added to this a child has special occasions for joy: birthdays, Christmas time, holidays, etc. None of these sources of joy is permanent. They all pass away. In the proper home, however, the child has a deep and abiding source of happiness. This is found in his faith and hope centred in his parents and the assurance of their love. To realise how supremely important these are, think of what it would mean to him to be suddenly bereft of his parents' fond love and care and sent to be brought up in an institution for orphans!

In like manner God wants His children to be happy and is affected by their joy. On one occasion we are told that when the disciples were overjoyed at some experience, Jesus exulted in spirit. This message "rejoice evermore" is a personal one from

God to every one of His children. He gives us many special occasions for joy in the natural blessings with which our cup runs over. Like the natural child, however, the deep and abiding source of our joy is in Him, in our faith and hope in God, and the realisation of His love. Permanent joy can only spring from permanent sources and the three principles which abide, Paul tells us, are faith, hope and love.

The joy of Jesus consisted in the fact that He was so supremely "God conscious". This world was to Him no alien place but a mansion in His Father's house. It was the Father that caused the sun to shine and sent the rain; made the lilies grow and noted the sparrow's fall. How much more then would the Father look after His own children. Enough to them to know "your Father knoweth what things ye have need of". Like Jesus we too may joy in God; joy because of our faith in Him. He will not give us, for bread, a stone; for a fish, a serpent; for an egg, a scorpion. He knows and loves and cares; nothing this truth can dim. We joy in God also because of our hope in Him. Having called us, He will qualify us and perfect that which concerneth us. Under training and discipline now we eagerly anticipate the time of our adoption, our coming of age, when we shall enter fully into our glorious inheritance. But above all we rejoice evermore in the everlasting love of God. *"He that spared not His own Son but delivered Him up to death for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things?"* We rejoice evermore in the love of Christ that passeth knowledge, saying with Paul, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord".

*"Pray without ceasing."* The idea is that of fellowship. This is characteristic of the natural home. The parents want their child's confidence and the child instinctively goes to them with all its joys and sorrows, doubts and fears, plans and perplexities, receiving in return instruction, advice and encouragement. This sense of being in fellowship is continuous, unless there should occur some estrangement which, so long as it lasts, produces a cloud over the lives of both parties. These principles operate in the spiritual life. God wants His children's confidences. Nothing is too small or

trivial to take to Him. "The prayer of the upright is His delight." We cannot go too often to our Heavenly Father, or tarry too long in His presence. But there is also in addition to these specific times of communion a continual sense of being in fellowship with God provided that no estrangement arises to interrupt it. When the conscious mind is occupied by life's necessary duties, the vast region of the sub-conscious can be tuned in to the wave length of the Father's love, and spirit with spirit can meet. This continuous fellowship was so vividly experienced by our Lord throughout the whole of His life and ministry that when it was for a moment interrupted on the cross, it wrung from Him the terrible cry of anguish "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

If we would enjoy a sense of continuous fellowship with the Lord, it is important that we have daily, definite times for direct communion. The mid-week prayer meeting has proved to many of the very greatest help to their prayer life. Both with regard to this meeting and also our daily private devotions, the Word of God should be taken as a basis. Just as we meet in fellowship on the basis of the Divine Word when we gather together as a company of the Lord's people, so when we meet with the Lord in private, or in united seasons of prayer, the Word of God should be basic and central. Samuel Chadwick in his book on "*The path of prayer*" speaks thus of his own experience. "I read through the portion in a prayer spirit again and again, then go over it clause by clause on my knees, turning its statements into prayer and thanksgiving. Before I found this method I used to try to work myself into a praying mood but I lacked resourcefulness, and praying became "prayers" again, and listening a void. Prayer has been an experience of thrilling wonder, creative meditation and real fellowship since it has been instituted, quickened and inspired by the Word of God."

"*In everything give thanks.*" There is progression in these three qualities. Joy leads on to fellowship and fellowship to thankfulness for everything. The child, early in life, learns that though it is his father's desire that he should be happy and that his own happiness is bound up with the happiness of the child, this does not mean that everything is ordered with a view to the child's immediate pleasure. The boy might much prefer play to school, holidays to lessons, idleness to industry, but the discharge of his parental duties makes it necessary for the father to insist on training and discipline. Many things not in themselves easy or pleasant must be experienced and it is a special joy to the parents when the child understands and appreciates the situation, and accepts it, not in a

negative spirit of mere resignation, but in a positive spirit of thankfulness.

So it is with God and His children. This quality of thankfulness is underlined. After saying "In everything give thanks" Paul adds "for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you". It is God's special message conveyed to us by the life and teaching of our Lord. It is His special message because it is so difficult and because the possession of this grace implies a very close walk with God and maturity in fellowship with Him. It is easy and delightful to give thanks for many, many things. "*When all Thy mercies, Oh my God, my rising soul surveys; transported with the view, I'm lost in wonder, love and praise.*" For all things beautiful we thank Him, for days of sunshine bright with praise, when all our life is set fair. But when life's sky becomes clouded and the surges rise and rest delays to come; when youth has gone and health and strength begin to fail; when loved ones are removed and we are left lonely; it is not easy then to give thanks for everything.

Sometimes some of God's people are called upon to experience specially trying conditions. Like Job they are outstanding examples of suffering but, thank God, like Job they can also be outstanding examples of the power and grace of God. Job was a spectacle to angels, as we are, and by his unswerving loyalty and love vindicated God's glory and discredited the Adversary. This too is our great mission, to make God's victory over the Devil moral before it is physical, when the Lord shall take hold of him and bind him. Job's sufferings have been an inspiration to countless numbers of the Lord's people because of his patient endurance. He stands among the great cloud of witnesses urging us forward. So it may be with us if we are called upon to suffer in a special way. Our example may encourage others to take up and bear more bravely the lighter loads that they are carrying and fainting under. As Job because of his special trials got a special vision of God, seeing Him whereas before he had only heard Him, so it will be with us. Paul stands before us as one supremely tried and yet so supremely blessed with the abundance of the revelations that he expresses himself thus "*Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, compared with the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*"

"*In everything give thanks*", for all things work together for good to those who love God. This may not be apparent to us now but sometime we will understand. We are like the tapestry weaver of old with the pattern to work from hung over his head, and working away with the reverse side of the cloth to him. Blindly he works the shuttle back

and forth with the varying colours, dark and bright, unaware of how beautiful is the work he is doing as seen from the other side. So with us. Until our weaving is finished and we get to the other side we shall not see the glorious outcome nor understand the meaning of the many things which perplex

us now. How grand the assurance that working to His pattern the Lord will be able by and by to present us faultless in the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. Let us then rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks, for as His dear children, God expects this from us.

## When God Speaks Twice

A BIBLE STUDY

(Reprinted from an old 'B.S.M.')

The subject is allied to the use in the Scriptures of the figure 2. The Bible uses figures to indicate things; 7, 10, and 12 each give the idea of completeness. 7 days make a complete week, 10 commandments a complete law; 12 tribes a complete nation. So the figure 2 gives the idea firstly of completeness. (Matt. 22. 34-40.) They asked for the great commandment and the Lord said, "there are two". If a man keeps these two he will keep the ten; they constitute complete instruction. The law and the prophets—two again—the revelation of God for Jewish instruction is divided into two. In later times Revelation 11 speaks of two witnesses; two olive trees. The Old and New Testaments are the complete revelation of truth to us, they contain complete advice; although they are two they are one harmonious whole—two witnesses but the same story. The two commandments referred to are not exactly the same yet together they form God's one requirement.

We have now come to another phase in the meaning of the figure 2. We see firstly that it teaches completeness, but we now see also the idea of *unity*. The Old and New Testaments differ but together they are unified into one story. At the beginning of creation God said, "Let us make man in our own image"; two hearts that beat as one. Our Lord said later, "I and my Father are one". Thus we see the thought of unity. Man and Wife is another Scriptural instance of two being one. Evening and morning make one complete day. Two advents of our Lord but they fill one purpose, they are united in the one purpose of God.

The third thought in the use of the figure 2 is a strange one; it is that the second is better than the first. There are, however, limits to this. 1 Cor. 15. 45. Two men, the second superior to the first. Some speak of the Lord as the second Adam, but the Scriptures say the *last* Adam is he who lays down his life for the first Adam; He is the last Adam because there will never be another. The

fact that the Bible speaks of a first *man* and a second implies that there will be other, but there are two Adams only. The second is superior to the first because He redeems him.

Heb. 8. 6-8. The word "better" used here presupposes that there are only two covenants being discussed. The second is superior to the first because under it the words of God, instead of being written on tables of stone will be written on the tables of the heart. (Heb. 10. 8-10.) The second, superior, whether it be the covenant or the offering because it does that which God really intended should be done, the second is the enduring or better phase of God's work. If a man die, shall he live again? Yes, and the second time is the enduring time; the second time brings individual responsibility. Our Lord said, "If I go away, I will come again and receive you unto myself." The second is better than the first for at the Second Coming the Lord receives His own to Himself.

The fourth idea in the usage of the figure 2 is that of *finality*. The second death is final, the Scriptures do not speak of a third. (Isaiah 11. 11.) That will be final. He will gather the outcasts of Israel. The first time He put forth His hand was at the Exodus, but the second time will be final and Israel will be really gathered into their own land. Mankind knows this usage of the figure 2; Paul said his second letter to Timothy was written just before he went before Nero the second time, and he knew it would be his last. He knew he would not be released this second or final time. We see it is difficult to say all that is meant by this figure 2 in a few words, but we realise how important it is, and it is never used haphazardly but always with some definite point in God's mind. So, if anything is spoken twice it is important. When the storm arose on the sea of Galilee while the Lord was asleep, the disciples said, "Master, Master! carest Thou not that we perish?" The matter was urgent. We use this repetition in every day life.

Luke 22. 31-32. You see how the point gains by our Lord saying "Simon, Simon". He would catch Peter's ears by this. In John 21. 15-17 the Lord went beyond the usual practice, He asked Peter if he loved Him more than twice, He asked him the third time, and Peter grieved because He asked him the third time, but by so doing the Lord drove it right home to Peter. On the way to Damascus the voice said "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"

An instance of God speaking twice occurred at a very important time in the history of Israel, as recounted in 1 Sam. 3. Eli and Samuel had gone to rest and the voice spoke to Samuel. The third time Eli woke to the fact that it was the Spirit of God. The voice told Samuel that Eli's house had been judged, and the end of Israel's priests for the time being had come, it broke up the priesthood. Verse 10, "Samuel, Samuel." This repetition of the name was the prelude to a great change in the history of Israel, and you will find that this is so in every instance; Samuel, Samuel; Simon, Simon; Saul, Saul; each marks a very important phase in the history of God's people. When God speaks twice it is most important, something momentous is to occur. The first use of God speaking twice occurs to Abraham. (Gen. 22. 10-17.) Abraham, Abraham, lay not thy hand upon the lad. Isaac was taken away and the ram sacrificed in his place. Isaac was not really Abraham's only son, he was the second, the superior one, so superior that the other one was not mentioned and Isaac is spoken of as the only son. God said, "In blessing I will bless thee." Repetition again, then two examples are given, as the stars and as the sand. How very important is this instance of God speaking twice! First He repeats Abraham's name, then (verse 15) the angel called the second time and affirms the promise. First the promise is given, then He swears. (Heb. 6. 13-18.) God here used a mode of speech to drive the lesson home to His people. He could have said, "I will bless thee," but instead He said, "In blessing I will bless thee." There was no need for God to bind Himself by an oath, His promise was enough, but in order to drive it home to Abraham and his seed He speaks twice.

If God will thus speak to His people that they might believe, we ought, when God speaks twice, to believe more whole-heartedly than we do. When God speaks twice the object in view is that our faith may be strengthened, by God, as it were, repeating Himself. Remember all we saw in the use of the figure 2; Completeness, unity, finality. The next time God speaks twice by repeating a name is Gen. 45. 25 to chapter 46. 4. The brethren told Jacob that Joseph was alive; then God intervenes, repeats his name and the heart of Jacob is strengthened for the rest of the journey. God speaks twice

and the heart is strengthened. The next time God speaks twice was at the burning bush. (Ex. 3. 2-7.) This was another important time; Moses was then commissioned to be Israel's deliverer, and God started him on his journey by calling, "Moses, Moses". These are all the instances of God speaking twice by repetition of name, but in Ex. 3. 7 we read: "I have surely seen the affliction of my people," etc. Acts 7. 34 in recounting this incident says, "I have seen, I have seen the affliction," etc. Exodus says, "I have surely seen"; but the original says, "I have seen, I have seen." This also occurs in other texts. "In the day thou eatest thou shalt surely die," or "dying thou shalt die."

There are other instances of God speaking twice but not by repetition of name. God gave the tables of the law at Sinai and He gave two tables of stone; on these two stones was the complete final instruction for Israel. Moses broke them, but God is very forgiving and He wrote them a second time. In spite of their idolatry He said, "this law is for you," and He gave it them a second time. (Ex. 34. 1-6.) Here is a repetition of God's name. God speaks twice when He gives them the law and repeats His own name. This is an illustration in some respects of the time of the presence of the greater Moses when God will speak anew in the New Covenant. (Hag. 2. 6-9. Heb. 12. 26-28.) The first shaking meant the institution of the law, the second shaking means the breakdown of earthly kingdoms and the establishment of His Kingdom. Not only kingdom promises, but church promises gain by God speaking twice. (Isaiah 26. 3.) Although our version is quite correct in saying "perfect peace", other versions give this verse, "Thou wilt keep him in peace, peace"; and it is so given in the margin. (Heb. 13. 5.) This is literally, "Not, not, will I leave thee, not, even not, will I forsake thee." These words are first given in Josh. 1.5. God said this to Joshua at the end of the Israelites' wilderness journey just as they were about to enter the promised land. The second time these words are used is in Heb. 13. 5. God has cared for his Church through her journey and the promise comes just as we are about to enter the land:—"Not, Not, will I leave thee, not even, will I forsake thee."

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## THE QUESTION BOX



Q. *In the Parable of the Ten Virgins, did the "foolish virgins" take no oil because they thought the journey was short and their light would last the calculated time? Would the fact that all the virgins "slumbered and slept" indicate that the sin was not in the slumbering nor in the known fact of the Bridegroom's presence, known by both wise and foolish, but in the lack of that which would sustain the light? What would this latter be?*

A. It is evident that the foolish virgins in the story had not considered sufficiently the hazards of the way. It might have been that their provision of oil was sufficient for the expected journey, but the bridegroom did not come as soon as was expected, and they had no reserve of oil. There was obviously no fault in "sleeping" whilst the bridegroom tarried; they were awake and alert quickly enough so soon as the call announcing his coming was raised, and probably all the more refreshed because of their sleep; but their oil had run short. That was the fault which revealed their lack of foresight and watchfulness.

Coming to the teaching behind the story, it has often been said that the oil represents the Holy Spirit which is given to each one of us. That is true; not only because the use of olive oil for anointing the High Priest of Israel prefigured the antitypical anointing of Jesus the Head, and the Church which is His Body, with the Holy Spirit of God, at the time of consecration to Him, but also,—and perhaps this is an even more important element of doctrine—because the Holy Spirit is the power by means of which our lives are transformed into lives that are acceptable to God. The oil was the sustaining power of the light. Without it the light must inevitably go out. That light cannot continue to shine unless there is something behind it, constantly renewed so that the supply never fails, something that is the source of the light and gives it its light-giving properties. In like manner we, whose Christian commission it is to light the way of our Lord in this world and to demonstrate to each other as well as to mankind in general the fruits of the Christ life, cannot give out that radiance without putting something in. We cannot reap without sowing and without that which is sown taking root, making increase and coming to fruition. And we cannot "put in" without we have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and moreover have that indwelling constantly renewed. The Holy Spirit is the inspiration of our lives and the illumination of our minds.

The Holy Spirit is the power and strength that enables us to overcome the besetments of the world, the flesh and the devil. The Holy Spirit is our "one-to-stand-alongside" (*Parakletos*—the "comforter" of John 14. 16. The same word is translated "Advocate" in 1 John 2. 1. and applied to our Lord Himself). The Holy Spirit is the power that comes to our aid when in trouble and distress. We need to be constantly "filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5. 18) and in that happy condition need never fear that we shall be of the "foolish virgin" class. In the power of that Spirit, and in the understanding of the Divine Plan thus gained, and the fervent expectation of, and looking for, the promised Bridegroom, and the wedding-feast that is to follow His Coming, and the Kingdom of Light and joy and peace, on earth as well as in heaven, that is to follow *that*, we shall find abundant and satisfying fulfilment of the word of old which said "and they *that were ready* went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut."

\* \* \*

Q. *"If ye abide in me, and my word abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will . . ." (John 15. 7). What is the difference between abiding in Him and His words abiding in us?*

A. Abiding in Christ is a passive condition and to have His words abide in us implies the progress of an active work. We come "in" to Christ when we covenant to lay down our lives in His service, when we are intelligently and voluntarily "baptised into His death" and buried with Him in baptism that we might rise to walk with Him in newness of life. Once we are thus "in" Christ we continue in that condition for the remainder of our Christian lives, but that of itself does not imply that we are making the progress our Lord desires to see. That is where arises the necessity of having His words abide in us. Those words must find lodgment, take root, and bear fruit in our lives. "If ye continue in my word" said Jesus "then are ye my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." There is a progressive work going on here, and it is having His word abiding in us that enables us more and more deeply to know the truth and thus to realise that freedom which the knowledge and the possession of the truth confers. "Whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected."

# “And Now Abideth . . .”

A Series of Studies  
in 1 Cor. 13

## PART 5

“Love . . . seeketh not her own.” This is not an easy passage to comprehend and explain, as may be seen from the wide variations in the translations available. In the Diaglott, the word-for-word sub-linear translation renders it “Love . . . not seeks the things of herself,” but in the translator’s text it reads “Love . . . seeks not that which is not her own”—which, with its double negative, means “Love seeks that which is her own”. The word-for-word translation (as reference to any Greek Lexicon would indicate) is a fairly accurate transcript of the Greek text, but the primary sense and meaning of the phrase seems to have been so uncertain to the translator that he took the liberty of adding the second negative to make the phrase agree with his prior conception of what Love ought to seek. In any case, both original and translation leave the question undecided as to what is meant by the “things of herself”, or “that which is her own.”

Other translators render the phrase,

“Love . . . seeketh not her own.”	R. V.
seeketh not her own things.”	Rotherham.
is not self-seeking.”	Ferrar Fenton.
is not self-seeking.”	Concordant.
is never self-seeking.”	20th Century.
is never selfish.”	Moffatt.
does not insist on its own way.”	New R. V.
does not seek to aggrandise herself.”	Weymouth.
does not claim its rights.”	Knox.

Obviously the precise thought is difficult to define, because the “things of herself” are not specified in particular.

Some of the difficulty arose, perhaps, because certain translators seem to have thought of the individual, and not the Master-Grace itself. Paul is outlining the elements of the *Agape* at their highest level, as they exist in the Love of God, and in the Love of our beloved Lord, and as a consequence, selfish love or self-centred love is ruled out from the start. But some of the translators seem to have taken it to be the much lower level as seen in man, where some self-centred disposition is possible.

Evidently the Corinthian Church furnished some examples of this and it may have been to these that Paul addressed his negative, thus informing them that self-acquisition and self-aggrandisement were not accordant with Love, for Love sought not the things for which they craved.

Now the fact is that Love (the *Agape*) is very much a seeking principle. From its very highest expression in the heart of God, down to the very lowest in the heart of the Saint, it is always seeking its own. In God, this *Agape* was the activating cause in the formulation of His Plan to redeem and recover His erring sons. The Love that He felt for them led Him to seek for the restoration of the love they should feel for Him. He desired the whole universal family to be complete, each part to love and be loved in return. Hence the *Agape* in Him set out most deliberately to seek that which was and is its due—“its own”.

Then that tiny spark of it in the Christian’s heart is most Godlike when it is active on the same quest. The saint also is seeking “its own”. It is this that prompts the ready willing service, even to the point of self-sacrifice, and affords the deepest joy when that service or sacrifice is more exacting and intense.

To accomplish its great ends, it makes great demands. It required God to give His dear Son; it required that dear Son to sacrifice Himself; it requires of the Saints that they follow in His steps. All this is Love’s demand—not the Law’s demand. It is the “*Agape*” that called for all this, but its end in calling for this was the blessing of all the un-blest members of the universe.

Hence in the tiny circle of the Christian’s life in the home, in the mart or in the ecclesia, the tiny spark from the heart of God is a driving, seeking factor, ever working onwards to the destined end, but always at the cost of sacrificing self. Under its urge the child of God can never be self-centred or self-satisfied. It confers no gratification to the flesh, no name, no fame, no pedestal, no wealth, simply because it cannot work just for the interests of one solitary individual. Its motto is “for all—and for all the greatest good”. Thus, Love can seek its own—its own ends and purposes, but in so seeking, it seeks the good of all. Love is thus “not selfish”, “not self-seeking”, “not self-aggrandising” but truly “seeketh not that which is not her

own", which as said before, means "she seeketh only what is her own."

This interpretation meets every requirement of the situation and places the *Agape* not on the mere plane of unselfishness, but on the higher plane of positive self-sacrifice. It is thus a fragment of that redemptive love that first pulsed through the heart of God.

"*Love . . . is not provoked.*" In this phrase the sense is indicated by the particular Greek word employed. It means "to irritate, to rouse to anger". In the Septuagint the same word (in Hebrew thought) also means "to make angry", "to exasperate", "to burn with anger". This provocation must be understood as men usually understand it, and as members of the Corinthian Church understood it, that is, provocation by personal slights, or libels. They appear to have been provoked to anger frequently, and scrupled not to take the offender to law.

The *Agape* can be provoked, but it is to assist good works (Heb. 10. 24.) and acts of kindness. It can also be provoked to indignation (as Jesus was in Matt. 23) but only for the truth's sake and for righteousness, and not for one's own slights and injuries. For His Father's sake (and for the sake of His little ones) Jesus was provoked to intense indignation, but for His own sufferings He uttered not a word.

"*Love . . . thinketh no evil*"—The word translated "thinketh" really means "to take into account; to make account of". In a more strictly calculating sense it could mean "to pass to the transgressor's account the evil he has done". So far as the child of God, in these present times, is concerned, he passes this matter over into the hands of God, and leaves Him to deal with it in His own way. God's way is to deal with it all in Millennial days through His Son, when any unrequited wrong can be dealt with as the sinner finds a consciousness of good overcoming the evil in his heart.

"Love seeks to interpret the conduct of others charitably. If pure and good-intentioned itself, it prefers, and so far as possible endeavours, to view the words and conduct of others from the same standpoint. It does not treasure up animosities or suspicions, nor manufacture a chain of circumstantial proofs of evil-intentions out of trivial affairs—Love makes all possible allowance for errors of judgment, rather than to impugn the motives of the heart." (*Reprints, 2204.*)

"*Love . . . rejoices not with iniquity, but rejoices with the truth.*" These two clauses stand in contrast and show that Love has no pleasure in wrong-

doing anywhere, but rejoices when truth gains its victory. This is true on the universal scale as well as in the individual sense. "My country right or wrong" has too often been the touch-stone of morality for centuries. Reduced to a local setting it would read, "Me first, right or wrong". In this way wrong-doing and iniquity have been made to abound as a cause of rejoicing by the unscrupulous. But the *Agape* finds no rejoicing in this. It finds cause of rejoicing only when truth prevails—the right as against the wrong, the good as against the evil, the pure as against the taint, the holy as against the vile. It rejoices if it sees the truth abound to-day in little things; it rejoices yet more as it looks forward to the coming day when Truth will abound universally.

"*Love . . . beareth all things.*"—The word used here means, in part, "a roof or a covering". An old English equivalent to it would be "to thatch". Love provides a covering for the faults and frailties of a friend, and hides them from the light of day. Hence, in this sense, it can mean "to cover over with silence, or with charity; to keep secret and conceal."

This is exactly God's way with our sins, in this present day. He has provided ample means to cover all our frailties and blemishes. In a very real sense He has made a roof and covering for all our nakedness. He has made ready the same roof and covering for the whole guilty world in its day of "drawing near" also. Placed beneath the over-spreading *Kaphar* (or covering) of Christ's righteousness the whole race of men will find protection from the rigours of exacting Law. Love "covers" a multitude of sins—and sinners too. But there is another side to the word which means "to bear up and sustain". Many translations prefer this meaning to the other given above.

This is also true of God's way with us. His everlasting arms are placed underneath us to bear us up, while with His promises He sustains and cheers us all along the way.

We also should do the same in both senses of the word. We should cover up the frailties of a brother from the common gaze, and sustain him with our love to the best of our ability. Indeed, if that spark of burning fire which we have received from Him is all aglow in our hearts, we can only do to others what He has done for us. It is a case of "like" resembling "like".

"*Love . . . believeth all things.*" This of course can only be taken in the sense of confidence in the other man—as when a man can say of a friend in time of strain and difficulty "well, I believe in him". It bespeaks an attitude of confidence in the

struggling one's integrity, knowing he has it "in him", with help, to "make good".

It is a great thing indeed for our fellow men, struggling under the law of sin and death, for Almighty God to say that He "believes" in them,—that He has shown by His attitude towards them that He knows that there is still that germ of manliness within them, which, with help afforded, and Satan removed, can respond to the magnetic pull of His Love and Fatherhood.

That same thing goes for "hope" too. Though God once subjected the whole race to vanity, of His own Sovereign Will and decree, He did so while entertaining a sure and certain hope in their future responsiveness to Him when, in due time, that "subjection decree" is revoked. (Rom. 8. 20, 21.) When man's opportunity to make free choice is restored, God anticipates, with hopefulness, that man will choose the way of life. And thus Love (in both God and His saints) hopes on, and still believes in man's innate potentialities, spite of the havoc sin has wrought.

This must be the standard for our own hope and confidence also, both as regards our outlook for the world, and for our brethren too. Our confidence for their integrity must encourage all our brethren everywhere, by assuring them that they have the balance of the doubt in every untoward circumstance, and that our hope on their behalf is that they may win through to obtain the great reward.

"Love . . . endureth all things". Here we conclude on a note closely related to that on which our

study of these constituents began. Here we have "patience" enduring unflinchingly to the end. This grace is closely akin to long-suffering, yet there is a difference. Trench says that the Greek word here (*hupomone*) is to be compared to the Latin "*perseverantia*" (perseverance) and "*patientia*" (patience) both in one, or more accurately still to "*tolerantia*" (tolerance). He then goes on to say "Long-suffering will be found to express tolerance in respect of persons, patience in respect of things. The man, who, having to do with *injurious persons* does not suffer himself easily to be provoked by them, or to blaze up in anger concerning them is exhibiting long-suffering, while on the other hand, he who *under a great load of trials* bears up, and does not lose heart of courage is manifesting his patience or endurance".

This has been the attitude of God throughout the long dark reign of sin and rebellion. He has never doubted what the consummation would be, nor has He wavered in His determination to see it through till righteousness is re-established throughout heaven and earth, for the *Agape* can never fail. It is fully competent to accomplish all that it has set out to do, for it is the warm solicitude of the heart of God, backed by the power of His strong right arm reaching down to lead the erring prodigal home again.

We have now untwined the cord and examined every strand, but not one strand in itself is "Love"—for Love is the whole thing—the "amalgam" which embraces every minor grace.

*To be concluded.*

## Eventide

"So he bringeth them unto their desired haven"



"Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask." (Matt. 6. 8.) "Your Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." (Matt. 6. 32.) It was no light thing Jesus undertook when He began to teach His disciples dependence upon God for their needs. A little while before He had called them to leave their ordinary pursuits to follow Him. Of some of them it is said "they straightway left the nets and followed Him". (Matt. 4. 20.) And again "they straightway left the boat and their father and followed him". (v. 22.) Introducing them to their new life's-work Jesus took them with Him on His first evangelistic

tour in Galilee, and as He spake before them in the synagogues, and wrought His works of mercy here, there, and yonder, He brought home to their minds that there was a great work to be done in Israel. People flocked together in crowds after Him from every corner of the land, bringing along with them their ailing friends and relatives—"they brought unto Him all that were sick . . . and He healed them". (Matt. 4. 24.)

This first tour through Galilee was an object lesson to teach them how great the task and how urgent the service to which He had called them. Israel was expectant and hungry. Long had they

been as a flock untended and unfed. And they had sickness other than that of the flesh. His preaching had revived their hopes, and quickened their anticipation. Hence those crowds from Galilee and Decapolis, and Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan. (v. 25.)

Because of this overwhelming response from north and south, from east and west, Jesus invited His disciples aside to teach them the basic principles of Kingdom truth. "He went up into the mountain", and when He had seated Himself, His disciples gathered close around and He taught them.

How illuminating and vital were those contrasts He drew between the "old" and the "new", between what "ye have heard it said" and what "I say unto you"! And how inspiring the assertions that they were "salt" in the earth, and "light" in the world! Down there beyond the mountain's foot was their "earth" and their "world"—those vast crowds that had come to His preaching! And the "salt" must season; the "light" illuminate! They were the "salt"; that crowd was the "earth"! They were the "light", that concourse the "world"! Needs must be that "they" be introduced into "it" if the work is to be done.

Obviously "they" were to be different from "it" else there could be no results. That "world" could pursue its own tasks: that "earth" could seek its own ends. That crowd could sow and reap, could eat and drink: could trade and barter: could pray and give alms in open places—not so could they! Their harvest must be of "men"; their work must be winning souls: their "keep" by the gift of men. They must "sell all", and "give" to the poor—they must give love for hate and stand ready to go the "second" mile.

Renunciation of self-rights, surrender of self-interests, and devotion of self-powers were to be the keynotes of their life. Obviously so if the "salt" was to impart its seasoning; if the "light" was to transmit its beam!

How self-evident the need that Jesus should lead them right back to the Source of things, to the Father who would know all their needs, would know all their moods, would know all their experiences. Was not His the great Cause? was not His to be the "Glory"?—then surely His should be the "Care" and the "Power" and the "Providing". For indeed these humble men were separated and set apart from Israel, almost as exclusively as were its Priests and Levites, yet without the benefit of the "tithe". Apart from the very slender provision that the labourer should be worthy of his hire, no other earthly provision was made for their necessities. No wonder then they had need to be told "your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need

of these things". How well they learned that lesson of implicit trust is obvious from the records of their lives.

"Your Heavenly Father knoweth" is still a promise for our own times. Christian life has no such stringency to-day as for those early pioneers, yet this assurance is a sore need of our otherwise very strenuous days. Bedded in amid the conditions of a very different form of civilisation Christ's disciples are still sent forth as "salt" and "light". There is still the command to impart the preserving savour of the salt, and to shed abroad the illuminating properties of the light, yet, spite of our best attempts, decay grows apace, and darkness more deeply over-spreads society. How do we feel about it from day to day? Do we despair and give up the attempt? Has the salt become savourless, and the light become dim in consequence?

Cheer up, dear soul, your Heavenly Father knoweth all about the weariness and worries of your little day! He knew long years ago what the conditions would be to the end of the Age. The great point with Him is not exactly what you have done as the "salt" and the "light", but what you would do if you could do as you would. It is the spirit of your service that counts! When therefore you have tried to be a grain of salt and failed, or tried to cast a glow of light that waned too soon, try to recall the assuring words,

*"I know my Heavenly Father knows,  
How frail I am to meet my foes,  
But He my soul will e'er defend,  
Uphold and keep me to the end."*

Let the seeming failures of our little day send us inwards unto Him, with our confessions of what we would have done but for the foes around, and the lack of strength within. If you have tried and failed, and tried and failed again, be assured your Heavenly Father knows all about it and has put the frail attempt to your credit and treasure above.

*Precious thought, your Father knoweth,  
Careth for His child,  
Bids you nestle closer to Him  
When the storms beat wild;  
Though your earthly hopes are shattered  
And the tear-drops fall,  
Yet He is Himself your solace  
Yea, your "all-in-all".*

*Oh, to trust Him then more fully!  
Just to simply move  
In the conscious calm enjoyment  
Of the Father's love;  
Knowing that life's chequered pathway  
Leadeth to His rest;  
Satisfied the way He taketh  
Must be always best.*

## THREE SINS

A WARNING  
FROM EDEN

There is a very interesting correspondence between the sin of Eden, the sin of Sodom, and the sin of the world alluded to by the Apostle John in his first epistle. It almost seems as though there is a three-fold principle at work, manifesting itself continually in world history, and illuminated by this three-fold repetition in the Scriptures. In the story of Eden it is said of the woman, at the time of her succumbing to the temptation, that . . .

*"When the woman saw that the tree*

- (a) *Was good for food*
- (b) *And that it was pleasant to the eyes*
- (c) *And a tree to be desired to make one wise—she took of the fruit thereof."* (Gen. 3. 6.)

Note the correspondency in Ezek. 16. 49.

*"This was the sin of thy sister Sodom.*

- (a) *Pride*
  - (b) *Fulness of bread*
  - (c) *Abundance of idleness*
- was in her and in her daughters, therefore I took them away as I saw fit."*

Fulness (sufficiency) of bread is not in itself a sin; evidently the sin was gluttony, the immoderate excess of good living corresponding to the beholding of the Tree, by the woman in Eden, that it was good for food. This does not mean merely that the Tree was satisfying and health-giving, for there is no sin in the appreciation of such a fact, but rather that Eve saw it could be made conducive to excess, abusing in place of using the natural faculties of eating and drinking. Likewise the "abundance of idleness" of Sodom matches up to the fact of the Tree being "pleasant to the eyes"; not that there is any sin in beholding and enjoying beautiful things, but that even this can become a means of diversion from one's duty and commission in life if carried to excess. So that indulgence in that which is pleasant to the eyes can result in an abundance of idleness and a forsaking those activities which are good and necessary in life. The "pride" of Sodom which led the Sodomites to become haughty and commit abomination can very well present the ultimate results of being made "wise" without learning that wisdom in God's way. "Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth" (I Cor. 8. 1) says Paul. The Tree was "one to be desired to make one wise" but it did not bring wisdom in God's way and it was not heavenly wisdom that it brought. The wisdom conferred by the Tree proved to be "earthly, sensual, devilish" (Jas. 3. 15) just like

the pride and haughtiness of the Sodomites. The three manifestations of sin which the Tree of Knowledge began to reveal to—and in—Mother Eve are shown in fuller development in the people of Sodom.

John carries the same theme a step farther.

*"For all that is in the world—*

- (a) *The lust of the flesh*
  - (b) *And the lust of the eye*
  - (c) *And the pride of life,—*
- is not of the Father, but is of the world."*  
(I John 2. 16.)

These are the same three sins, all branded as being not of God, but of the world. The desire of the flesh—that which is good for food, appealing to the physical senses, but carried to excess. The desire of the eyes—that which is good for the mind, the soul, appealing to the aesthetic tastes, but carried to excess again. The pride of life—self-sufficiency, selfishness, the banishment of God from the personal life and the serving of self-interest in preference to the service of one's fellows and of mankind at large; the earthly wisdom which says "self first" "I can do it" "I have no need of God" and is as deadening as the pride and haughtiness of the Sodomites and the wisdom Eve gained from the Tree.

It would appear as though these three principles, which have always characterised human life and human affairs throughout the history of "this present evil world", were enshrined in the story of the fatal tree, as a signpost warning all generations of the way their first parents took, a way themselves should not take. Most people have taken it; the world to-day is still governed by these three cardinal sins. Not until the Millennial Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ is set up will there be a new influence abroad in the land nullifying the dire results of the Tree of Knowledge of Evil and overspreading the earth instead with the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good.

For that must be remembered. It was the Tree of the Knowledge of Good as well as Evil. Men have only tasted of the evil fruit as yet. What of the time when they taste of the good? They ate at the Devil's bidding and have reaped misery and death for many long millenniums of years in consequence. What of when they eat at God's bidding and reap happiness and life instead—and for eternity at that?

In the future ages of glory the Tree will still be good for food, and pleasant to the eyes, and a giver

of wisdom, but it will not bring death to those who partake, for then they will partake in harmony with the ways and will of God, and not in disobedience to His decree as they did in Eden. God has made the earth for man, and man for the earth, so that men might appreciate and enjoy its good foods and its beautiful sights, and increase in wisdom everlastingly in the knowledge and reverence of God.

That still future phase of God's work with man is foreshadowed in the Scriptures under the symbol of a Tree of Life which brings healing and health to the nations. Both Trees, it would appear, offer life and happiness to those who will partake upon the Divine terms; perhaps, rightly understood, there is at the end no essential difference between the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life after all.

## THE JOY OF HARVEST

The distribution of "Millennial Message No. 3" has been taken up with very considerable enthusiasm and we are happy to report that thirty-five thousand copies have been distributed in various parts of the country. This is a casting of bread upon the waters; it may be many days before it returns to us, but that it will return is undoubted. In some cases classes have taken quantities to distribute in an organised fashion; in others isolated brethren have put out the leaflets in their own villages or towns; in yet others invalids and elderly folk have taken "just a few" to send to their friends in correspondence. In all these ways Christ is preached and the glory of His Kingdom extolled in the sight of men, and it is that which gives us the joy of harvest; for this is harvest work indeed.

Of all the tracts and leaflets which are available to-day, "Millennial Message" comes nearest in size

and style to those enormous folders that our more elderly brethren can remember from their earlier days. We have a number of them, kept for interest, here at the office. It seems almost incredible that such large papers were habitually dispensed in what now seems to us to be astronomical quantities. We are now in the "day of small things", but even so we have the joy of knowing that it is our faithfulness in small things now that will enable our Master to say in due time "I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." And so we may truly say that these few weeks' distribution of "Millennial Message No. 3" has indeed been a witness and a part of the work of harvest, and, too, a little more of preparation for the next Age, when the Word of the Lord will go forth in glory and power and the day of small things will be gone forever.

### BRO. PAUL THOMPSON

Jul. 30-31	London Convention	Sep. 7-8	Belfast
Aug. 1	London Convention	9-12	Glasgow
3	Luton	13	Edinburgh
4	Kettering	15	Dundee
5-6	Melton Mowbray	16-18	Gateshead
7-9	Nottingham	19-20	Newcastle
10-11	Dewsbury	21	Darlington
12-14	Sheffield	22	Doncaster
15	Leicester	23-25	Lincoln
17	Blaby	26	Peterborough
18-19	Atherstone	27	Downham Market
20-22	Coventry	29	Ipswich
23	Warrington	30	Welling
24	Shotton	Oct. 2	Forest Gate
26-28	Manchester	3	Windsor
29	Lymm	5	Central London
30	Bury	6	Anerley
Sep. 2-3	Belfast	7-11	Cardiff
4	Bangor	12	Bristol
5	Enniskillen	13-16	Yeovil
6	Dublin	17	Parkstone
		18	Portsmouth
		20	Ilford
		21-24	Rugby



Thou, therefore, endure  
hardness as a good  
soldier of Jesus Christ.

<h1 style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0;">BIBLE STUDENT'S</h1> <h1 style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0;">MONTHLY</h1>				
<small>תורה הנה... משהו את... הוא... יתקן את העולם</small>	<small>בלידתו... זהו... הוא... יתקן את העולם</small>	<small>...הוא... יתקן את העולם</small>	<small>...הוא... יתקן את העולם</small>	<small>...הוא... יתקן את העולם</small>

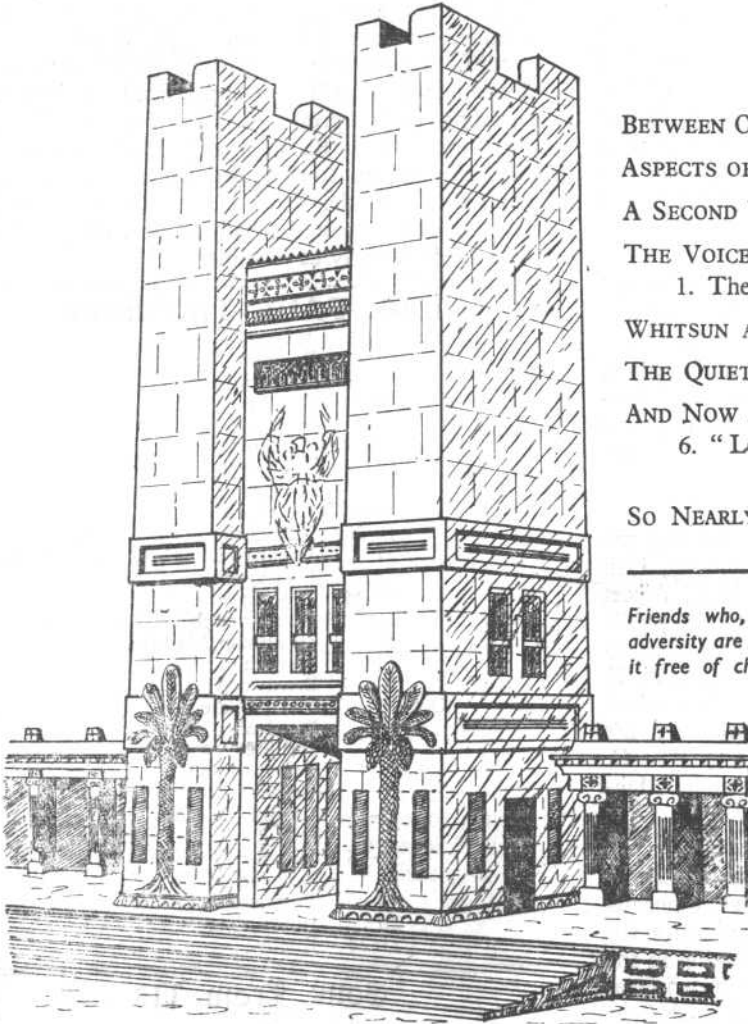
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*Friends who, through old age, infirmity or other adversity are unable to pay for this journal may have it free of charge upon request, renewed annually.*



Lift up your heads, O ye gates,  
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors,  
And the King of glory shall come in.

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## BETWEEN OURSELVES

Special attention is drawn to the announcement of public meetings to be held on 17th September in London and Manchester. In London, Bro. H. C. Thackway is to speak at Caxton Hall on the subject "Will God be Silent Forever?" and in Manchester, Bro. F. H. Guard on "The Kingdom of God is at Hand!" These meetings have been planned to give expression to the faith that is in us and to impart to such as will listen something of our own understanding of the silent working of God for man's ultimate welfare. The brethren who serve in all the various activities and duties connected with these meetings do so in all the zeal and faith that is theirs, but their efforts will be mightily increased and strengthened by the power of united prayer to God for His blessing. Let those who wish these endeavours well remember them in their own times of private meditation and prayer before God, and then again will it be true, as it was in the days of the Early Church, that "so mightily grew the Word of God, and prevailed."

\* \* \*

The Dewsbury friends announce a week-end gathering on Saturday and Sunday, 8th and 9th October, at the Liberal Club, Bond Street, Dewsbury, and extend a warm welcome to all brethren. Meals will be provided free of charge, and programmes and all further details may be obtained on request to Sister (Miss) A Rothery, 139, Westgate, Cleckheaton, Yorks.

\* \* \*

An "Assembly of Witness" is to be held by the Manchester Council on Saturday and Sunday, 17th and 18th September, in the Queens Hall, Albert Square, Manchester, centring around a public meeting on the Saturday evening. Full information and programmes may be obtained from Bro. F. Musk, 14, South Street, Newchurch, Rossendale, Lancs., whilst friends requiring accommodation are requested to apply as soon as possible to Bro. G. Wilson, 22, Cottonfield Road, Withington, Manchester 20 (Telephone: DIDsbury 3472).

\* \* \*

The usual London monthly meeting at Caxton Hall in September is to be varied from the normal routine and will take the form of a meeting for the friends in the afternoon and a public meeting in the evening. At the afternoon session, commencing at 3.0 p.m., Bro. J. A. Jones (Cardiff) will speak first, followed by Bro. A. O. Hudson. There will then be a short interval for tea and fellowship (tea may be obtained at reasonable prices at cafes in the district) after which, at 6.30 p.m., Bro. H. C. Thack-

way will address the advertised meeting on the topic "Will God be Silent Forever?" All our friends are warmly invited to both these meetings.

A series of four "follow-up" meetings has been arranged for the four succeeding Saturdays, at Caxton Hall, and it is hoped that a goodly number will take advantage of the opportunity to be present and to bring their friends and interested acquaintances.

\* \* \*

The Cardiff brethren announce a Home Gathering, at which Bros. Paul Thomson (U.S.A.) and A. J. Lodge (London) will speak, on Saturday and Sunday, 8th and 9th October, at 35, Windsor Place, Cardiff. Lunch and tea will be provided without charge, and it will be appreciated if brethren intending to be present will advise Bro. L. W. Shephard, Bedw Bach House, Llanharan Road, Llanharan, Glam., so that adequate catering arrangements may be made. Friends requiring accommodation are also requested to advise Bro. Shephard of their needs as early as possible.

---

### BRO. PAUL THOMSON

Sep.	2-3	Belfast
	4	Bangor
	5	Enniskillen
	6	Dublin
	7-8	Belfast
	9-12	Glasgow
	13	Edinburgh
	15	Dundee
	16-18	Gateshead
	19-20	Newcastle
	21	Darlington
	22	Doncaster
	23-25	Lincoln
	26	Peterborough
	27	Downham Market
	29	Ipswich
	30	Brentwood
Oct.	2	Forest Gate
	3	Windsor
	4	Welling
	5	Central London
	6	Anerley
	7-11	Cardiff
	12	Bristol
	13-16	Yeovil
	17	Parkstone
	18	Portsmouth
	20	Ilford
	21-24	Rugby

---

### Gone from Us

\*  
Bro. T. W. Jacobs (London) July.

\*  
"Till the day break, and the shadows flee away."

# Aspects of Consecration

A SERIOUS  
EXHORTATION

*This article originally appeared in "Old Paths", to which acknowledgment is here made.*

\* \* \*

*"Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart. I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes always, even unto the end." (Psalm 119, 111-112.)*

Scattered throughout the Old Testament Scriptures there are types, pictures and other deeply helpful lessons upon the subject of consecration and these are rendered wonderfully luminous in the light of the Spirit's teaching in the New Testament.

For example, we read in Exodus 21. 3 *"If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing."* But, according to verse 5, *"If the servant shall plainly say, I love my master . . . I will not go out free. Then his master shall bring him unto the judges . . . and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever."* Note the vital point contained in the free-will expression of the servant *"I love my master"* consequent upon which he determines not to *"go out free"* choosing rather to serve his master for ever.

Another picture rich in detail and instruction is given to us in the consecration of the Priesthood in natural Israel. Indeed, Leviticus chapters 8, 9 and 16 are rightly to be regarded as one complete picture, the different aspects being shown in the respective chapters. Everything depended upon the Priesthood and its entire consecration to the service of God.

David is a type of Christ and in his many experiences may be seen various aspects of consecration as, indeed, suggested by the Book of Psalms generally. Note how at the finish of his course he gave a charge to Solomon in these choice words: *"Thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee."* (1. Chron. 28. 9.)

Turning now to the Book of Psalms, we have copious references to the theme of consecration.

*"What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people."* (Psalm 116. 12-14.) Again, in Psalm 118 the experiences of Christ, Head and Body, are outlined with their privileges. At verse 19 we read *"Open to me the gates of righteousness and I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation"* and then the vision of truth is revealed *"The stone which the builders refused is become the headstone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing, it is marvellous in our eyes."* This in turn gives vision of the future, hence in verse 24 we are told *"This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it"* where the reference is undoubtedly to the Millennial Day, and then in verse 27 we reach the climax *"God is the Lord, which hath showed us light; bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar."* The sacrifice, held by the cords of love, must remain on the altar until fully consumed. In Psalm 61. 4-5 we have similar thoughts *"I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. For thou, O God, hast heard my vows (accepted my consecration): thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name (the unsearchable riches of Christ)."* And with these sentiments in mind let us think of our text *"Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart. I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes always, even unto the end."*

A careful examination of these words, in the light of the context, reveals the method and motives of consecration—the underlying principles leading to the act itself.

## BASIC FEATURES OF CONSECRATION

Firstly, this passage from the Psalms suggests *enlightenment of the mind* by the Word of Truth. In verse 103 we read *"How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"*; what an apt expression of the joy of the Truth as we know it in the fuller light of our day, because as verse 105 declares *"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"* hence the testimonies of the Lord are accepted and His statutes heeded. We in faith believe God and take

Him at His Word. (Later, it will be seen that this enlightenment of the mind not only leads to the act of consecration but guides the entire consecrated life.)

Secondly, this heavenly enlightenment affects the heart which is thenceforth filled with a burning zeal to serve God in accordance with His will revealed to the mind "Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart". Ah! yes, consecration is not a mere theory; it is something real and a power in the life. This is in line with the context at verse 97 "O how love I thy law: it is my meditation all the day"—continually my delight because the attitude of the heart of both Head and members is that of Psalm 40. 8 "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart". This rejoicing of the heart comes through a realisation of fellowship with Him and of Divine approval, for of those who take this step and whose consecration is accepted we read "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus". (Romans 8. 1.)

Thirdly, our text demonstrates that consecration is a course to be pursued throughout life. "I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes always, even unto the end." This is again illustrated in the context at verse 117 "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe: and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually." The same thought is to be found in Isaiah 50. 5 which applies primarily to our Lord but is true in principle of those who follow in His steps "The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back." On the contrary, He went faithfully on, for "therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed" (verse 7).

Our text, then, shows the underlying principles of consecration which are three (1) enlightenment of the mind which leads (2) to control of the heart's affections, leading (3) to the making of a covenant by sacrifice of a permanent, lasting nature.

On this basis, it is possible to consider certain aspects of the consecrated life, but notice as a connecting link the forceful words of the Psalmist in Psalm 65. 4 "Blessed is the man who thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple".

#### THE MAN WHOM THOU CHOOSEST

Let us note the important features of this text. God chooses, even as Jesus said "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (John 6. 64) and it is He who thus causes us

to hear His testimonies. He draws us from the Camp (world) into the Court (justified condition) then into the Holy (spirit-begotten condition) and finally into the Most Holy (heaven itself). This continual progress is dependent upon the ready extent to which it is true of us to say "I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes always, even unto the end" whereupon we shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever to be "satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple".

Little wonder is it that David explained in Psalm 132 "I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob." He had in mind the zeal and effort required for the building of a literal temple, but all this was prophetic of the heart devotion of the consecrated life of this Age to qualify to be part of the temple of the living God—the "greater and more perfect tabernacle". May we have that same earnest longing so aptly expressed in the words "I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids until" the course has been finished. Let us now examine, on this basis, four aspects of

#### THE CONSECRATED LIFE

The consecrated life can, of course, be studied from many points of view, but for the present our text suggests the following aspects, namely:—

1. The guiding force of His Spirit.
2. The effects of its revelation on both heart and mind.
3. Evidence of maturity.
4. The Kingdom glory.

#### POINT NO. 1. THE GUIDING FORCE OF HIS SPIRIT

It is by means of His Spirit that we are transformed into character likeness of our Lord, for this Spirit gives us our power of perception. Does not the prophet say "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord"?

This is seen in the Tabernacle figure, for the golden candlestick was the only light of the Holy and without the Spirit's illumination we should certainly be in darkness—the gross darkness of the worldly minded.

The Spirit is the mighty power of God Himself and to receive the Spirit means, therefore, that we have God with us. The Spirit reveals the Father's Plan, His character, and His purposes, hence as the Apostle says "Through him we both have access by one spirit unto the Father". (Eph. 2. 18.) The more we are filled with the Spirit, the stronger do

we become as new creatures to perform His will "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind; that ye put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." (Eph. 4. 23-24.)

We could not understand the significance of our text as it relates to the Gospel Age without the Spirit, for it reveals to us the "testimonies" of the Lord and also His "statutes". The Spirit is needed at the beginning, as already noted, and all along the way in the course of which increasing measures are granted to those who earnestly seek for greater spiritual power.

#### POINT NO. 2. EFFECTS OF THE SPIRIT'S REVELATION

To those who are rightly exercised, the revelations of the Spirit produce true consecration, once we take the Lord's testimonies as our heritage, whereby they rejoice the heart so that we simultaneously incline the heart to the performance of His statutes, but that is only the *basis*. Upon that is built the consecrated life in terms of Romans 12. 2 "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God".

The Spirit's revelations beget a desire to serve God fully out of *love* for Him and His gracious provisions on our behalf. Such a life can be used by God to His praise. This, of course, illustrates the importance of the truth—His testimonies and statutes—for it is by the things we know—matters revealed to the mind—that the heart is continually inclined to God with *determination* to serve Him. Knowledge is power and knowledge of God impels us to serve Him in full consecration to His will.

The Psalmist records "Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart" and a corresponding New Testament Scripture would be "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature" for they are our glorious "heritage for ever". The heart and mind thus become determined to serve Him and that service in the consecrated life takes several forms—

(a) *Spiritual growth*. The truth revealed should purify our souls. All the moral qualities should be rightly developed—honesty, sincerity, mercy, zeal, love. Over and above these there must be a spiritual development which involves also the development of moral qualities on the higher Divine plane. Our acquired spiritual outlook thus makes for oneness with Him and the whole transformation is contemplated by the Apostle in Col. 3. 12 "Put on mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness,

longsuffering . . . and above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness".

The effect of performing God's will should be to make us God-like in all our thoughts, words and deeds. The new creature is thus developed and perfected in both strength and beauty, for to faith must be added virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience—the strong qualities—and also godliness, brotherly kindness, love—the beautiful qualities. This is the thought of the Apostle when he exhorts that we put off the "old man" and instead "put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col. 3. 10). The consecrated have the ability to do this by the power of the Spirit with which they are filled.

(b) *Service for others*. The consecrated life is concerned not only with the mastery of self but also with service for others, as illustrated in the washing of the disciples' feet by the Master Himself. We are told to do good to all, but especially to the household of faith. It is not wrong to help those around us of the world, but they should not be the burden of our efforts; we should not go out of our way to find needy ones in the world, but we should seek out the Lord's people with a zeal that knows no limits. Our text in the Old Testament language says "I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes" and in the New Testament this principle may be read in the injunction under this heading of "Feed my sheep". The Lord's people need much care in this day, in order to protect their faith from all the wiles of the Adversary. Let not the golden opportunities of this Harvest-time slip by unheeded.

(c) *Increasing desire to be faithful*. Another effect of the Spirit's revelation on the heart and mind is to increase our desire and determination to prove faithful. We come gradually to understand more of the Father's character; we see in course of time His over-ruling providence outworked in the life; and so we long for the Kingdom to come in the sense of our glorification. As the poet writes:—

*A little while, O blessed expectation:*

*For strength to run with patience, Lord we cry;  
Our hearts upleap in fond anticipation;*

*Our union with the Bridegroom draweth nigh.*

This outlook inevitably attunes the heart and mind more closely to heed His statutes and walk after His testimonies so that faith should lay hold more and more upon His revealed purposes as part of our eternal heritage.

#### 3. EVIDENCES OF MATURITY

In the beginning of the way, it can reasonably be expected that there will not be such great faith and balance on the part of the consecrated as towards

the end of the course. That is why the Apostle writes "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might . . . take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." (Eph. 6. 13.)

We must surely reach that stage of conscious Divine approval, for, "I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes alway, even unto the end". The Apostle had this in mind when he testified "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith". (2. Tim. 4. 7.) The two classes—immature and mature—are drawn to our attention in 1 Cor. 13., 11 "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things". Again, "Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil". (Heb. 5., 14.) This is another evidence of maturity, namely, *discernment* for "Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way". Maturity is summed up in Matthew 5. 48 "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect".

#### 4. THE KINGDOM GLORY

This is yet another feature of the consecrated life, namely, the hope of Kingdom glory, which purifies the soul, followed by its realisation in the

Kingdom itself. From this standpoint, the consecrated see the present merely as an earnest of the future glory. This is a *mighty force* in the consecrated life. It was the "joy" set before Jesus and, in like manner, the Apostle was enabled to write—"We faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory". (2 Cor. 4. 16-17.)

This assists us not to look at the things seen because temporal but to perceive and steadfastly to gaze upon the unseen which are eternal. In this way we are surely kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

#### CONCLUSION

Our course below is a blessed one, for it has Divine approval and all the heavenly hosts are enlisted on our behalf, while in the keeping of the Lord's commandments—His testimonies and statutes—there is great reward. Let us, then, determine to make the "testimonies of the Lord" our own by rejoicing in our privileges as new creatures in Christ Jesus, begotten by the Word of Truth as a kind of first fruits, unto God of His creatures. May we also incline the heart, in true devotion, to the performance of His statutes, His holy will, not only in the past, and now in the present, but also "alway, even unto the end".

## THE BIBLE

The Bible's horizon is eternity. In its growth it has been the Light of God in the history of Grace, and will continue so to be until the perfect Day. The history of Creation, man's trial and fall by sin, the sentence of death; the promises and covenants of God, embracing the full scope of the Divine Purpose for the world's salvation, are therein disclosed. THE LAWS—moral, ceremonial and sacrificial, are made known and form the foundation of subsequent purposes revealed in the Book.

GOD'S revelation to the prophets was partial. He has since spoken by His Son—His last mouth-piece, the final Prophet, His only Apostle, the Messenger of the New Covenant that is everlasting. Combining both Testaments we have the Alpha and Omega of God's Word, and in these sixty-six books we have a wonderful unity of spirit. There are many chapters, but one book; many petals, but one flower; all the fruit of one Mind. Their message

is chiefly concerning THE CHRIST, and but for HIM the sacred Volume would not have been written. They are joined together by a spiritual bond and none can put them asunder. Their testimony will not have ceased until their pages are known and understood by both the living and the dead (Rev. 20. 12). Written by Historians, Law-givers, Judges, Kings, Poets, Prophets, and Apostles, each moved and inspired by the Spirit of God, their one supreme theme was the MESSIAH, the PROMISED SEED, the SECOND ADAM, the ONE MEDIATOR, the ADVOCATE and REDEEMER of all men. He is the top Stone of the entire PLAN of God, because it was in the interest of every soul that "HE by the grace of God tasted death for every man" (Heb. 2. 9).

All the most urgent problems that confront men, such as the prevalence of evil, of disease and death,  
(Continued on page 143)

## A Second Visit to Germany

*The following report of a ministry in Germany will be read with interest by many of our readers who are familiar with the circumstances. We do ask all who read these lines to remember before the Throne of Grace the interests of our fellow-Christians in that war-torn land and to pray the more earnestly for the coming of the Kingdom and the establishment of peace on earth and goodwill amongst men.*

\* \* \*

Early in the present year, invitations reached Bros. Nadal and Holmes from the German brethren to attend and address the proposed Convention to be held over Whitsuntide at a convenient place near Kirchlengern in Westphalia, in the British Zone of Germany. This location was apparently selected by our German friends because a large proportion of the brethren live in the near vicinity, a factor which has some bearing on the question of accommodation for visiting friends.

Soon after reaching the landing-place on Dutch soil, we made early-morning contact with Bros. Alblas and Van Halewijn, with whom we exchanged words of greeting for some forty minutes ere our train steamed away eastwards towards Germany. Some twelve hours travel brought us at last to the battered city of Hamburg, where we had a further glimpse of the desolation caused by war. The first sight of this devastation has a most chilling effect upon one's sensibilities and leaves one longing intensely for the time when war will be made to cease in all the earth.

Arriving at Hamburg we were welcomed by some half-dozen local brethren, with whom we exchanged our first words of greeting. Our first meeting was held the next evening when some 25 to 30 brethren were present. Good interest was shown in the address after which a little interchange of thought took place. A most happy experience, as a beginning for us.

The next day we were escorted to Kiel, where two meetings had been arranged. We both addressed the brethren, having the services of a most efficient translator, who carried our thoughts over into the German tongue most effectively. A testimony meeting preceded the Evening Address, at which our main regret was that we could not understand all that was said, though we could not escape the inspiration of the spirit in which those testimonies were made.

Whitsunday morning found us gathered in the great Convention Hall, in which some 750 brethren

(mainly from Central and Northern Germany) were assembled. A few had come from the South—from Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Bavaria and elsewhere. We were soon made aware of a most hearty welcome, and through the efficient voluntary services of a very dear friend were soon in touch with little groups of brethren, all expressing their joy and delight at our presence in their midst.

Each day's services was divided into two long sessions—9 a.m. to 12 noon, and 2 p.m. to 6—with short 15 minutes breaks for refreshment or conversation.

Three discourses were scheduled for each morning, though for certain reasons the plan had to be slightly re-arranged on the Sunday morning. The translation of one talk was somewhat delayed in preparation, causing that talk to be postponed till the afternoon. This alteration afforded a more fitting opportunity for the conveyance of the British greetings with which from every quarter of the British Isles we had been charged.

It was to us an inspiration to see (and feel) the deep fervent interest with which these greetings were received. Everywhere, smiling happy faces (and sometimes tear-filled eyes) told us what these greetings meant to brethren so long cut off from contact with others of like precious faith. Not only was it "voices" from across the sea, but heart reaching out to heart with mutual love in the Lord that made this occasion so impressive to our eyes. Truly it was good to be in such an atmosphere; we shall long remember it as a sure token of a tie that binds believing hearts in Christian Love.

To follow every talk throughout this large Convention would be too lengthy for this report, but we think we can truly say they were all uplifting and strengthening in their character and directed towards promoting a deeper unity in Christ. A noteworthy feature of the gathering was the superb singing of the Kirchlengern Choir. This is a means of holding the interest of many young brethren and sisters, and of keeping them together in their service for the Lord. Here we saw an indication of the true Germany, the Germany that could give to the world a Bach, a Beethoven, a Mozart and a host of other masters of creative harmony. Knowing somewhat of this former Germany we entered into these chorales and songs with all our hearts, knowing that thereby these dear souls, long-fettered under restrictive laws, were singing these songs and chorales as the true expression of their

own deliverance from an oppressive bondage, now, at length, happily broken.

A fine rendering of Gounod's "*By Babylon's wave*" told to any who had ears to hear with what gratitude these dear souls thanked God for all He had done. "The Lord hath done great things for them, whereof they were glad."

One of the high peaks of our happy days came during the mid-day interval on the second day when, in an ante-room, we were afforded the opportunity to speak to the young brethren and sisters present at the Convention. We told them of the present activities of our own young brethren in England; of their production and distribution of their own little periodical, and of their offer to send a copy of every issue to any young brother or sister present who could read English. A special greeting had been sent by our own young brethren to these German brethren, which was communicated to them at this little gathering. The response was immediate. A number of them immediately withdrew, but soon returned with a written greeting, signed by many names, for their English friends. This we gladly promised to convey to the young brethren in England.

During the last session of the Convention several brethren addressed closing words of exhortation to their departing brethren, and to us, to which we were able to make some short response. The Convention greeting to all the home classes and to all British friends was voiced in the words of Eph. 3. 16-19; words which bespoke their deepest feelings for each other and for all brethren everywhere.

Then followed an old-time Love Feast, some ten or twelve brethren (including ourselves) each holding a plate of bread, cut into small cubes, from which the whole assembly, passing by, took a piece, to indicate that we are all members of the one Body in Christ, meantime shaking hands, and speaking some word of encouragement and blessing each to each. Here the warmth of our welcome reached a high pitch as row after row filed past to shake our hands in farewell. This closing session was brought to an end by the prayer of an old brother of 85 years, whose heart was as happy as that of a young child—a fitting climax to a most inspiring assembly of saints.

After a call at Welzen we went on to Hanover, where a company approximating fifty brethren assembled for an evening meeting, at which we had the services of a most accomplished young translator. Only once before had this young brother had the privilege of conversing with an Englishman in the English tongue, but notwithstanding that, his translation was clean, clear and instantaneous, and in the opinion of another elderly

brother who knew English well, an accurate translation of what we both had said. That was very gratifying to us, for some of the professional translators will stumble at a word or phrase, and often spoil the sense.

The next morning saw us off again to Luneberg for an afternoon meeting, where a little company of fifteen were awaiting us, whom we both addressed with some brevity. Numbers here were few by comparison, but the spirit was the same—the same eager desire to learn; the same warm love to all. God has some dear saints in Germany, with whom our fellowship was sweet.

Four p.m. saw us on our way to Hamburg where we were met and taken to the home where the evening meeting was to be held. Here again was a company we had met once before on this tour, but which met us just as eagerly at our first meeting. Again a fervent address inspired a warm response, and here, as everywhere, our meeting closed with "God be with you till we meet again". This farewell hymn, together with "Blest be the tie that binds", was sung at almost every meeting, and assured us that the love of German brethren for their English and American friends is deep and sincere.

So ended our trip—the next morning saw us boarding the Scandinavian express for the Hook of Holland, and for home. We broke our journey at Rotterdam, to share another hour with our brethren there. As throughout Germany, so here, the query was "When can you come again". Everywhere the cry was as that from Macedonia—"come over and help us".

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The satisfaction of material needs among the German brethren has heretofore occupied the thoughts and the time of the two brethren who made the trip recorded above. Now the question of satisfying a spiritual need is coming to the front. Very few German brethren understand or can read English; the printing of suitable Scriptural literature in their own language is impossible to them because of the high cost and other obstacles which need not be elaborated here; the sending of money to them to finance printing in Germany is not permissible under existing regulations. The only practical possibility is the printing in Britain of German literature and sending it in bulk to our German brethren for their use. This could be done if the Master shows it to be His will by providing the means—the criterion by which we must judge these things. If there are brethren interested in this possibility it will be a pleasure to hear from them. Please address such letters to Bro. A. O. Hudson, 24, Darwin Road, Welling, Kent.

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# The Voice of the Monuments

## 1. The Rosetta Stone

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The tremendous flood of illumination that has been shed upon Bible records from the inscriptions and relics of ancient nations is little more than a century old. One after another, discoveries are announced to-day shedding further light upon the Scriptures and confirming to an increasing degree the truth of their statements. It is not that Christians need any such confirmation to buttress their faith; our confidence in the Word of God is rooted in experience, experience of the Father's care and His faithfulness, experience of the power of the Holy Spirit and the loving shepherd-guidance of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; experience of the adequacy of the Divine Word both in the affairs of daily life and that "the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work". We do not need further confirmation for ourselves. But we do find use for this additional testimony when it comes to expounding the grand old Book to others. And much of what is being discovered to-day does illuminate and explain the historical portions of the Bible in a manner that would be impossible otherwise. The labours of archaeologists and historians are really of great value to us and we do well to hold them in esteem for their works' sake and to make use of what is discovered, to our own progress in knowledge.

For these reasons some brief outline of such matters will be given in a series of articles and it is hoped that the information thus imparted will be interesting to all readers and of especial value to those students who, loving to delve into "ancient lore", have not the necessary facilities and books at their immediate command.

The history of modern archaeological research in its relation to the Bible may very fairly be said to have commenced with the discovery of the "Rosetta Stone" in 1798. In the end of that year the French Emperor Napoleon was campaigning in Egypt, having just been defeated by the British Fleet under Nelson. There was nothing very creditable in Napoleon's presence there; he was unashamedly out for conquest, and he failed. But the wrath of man was made to praise God in a very remarkable way. One of Napoleon's artillery officers, named Bousard, was stationed at a place called Rosetta, near one of the western

mouths of the Nile. Whilst there he discovered an inscribed slab of black basalt nearly four feet long by more than two feet wide, bearing an inscription in three languages. The attention of Napoleon was directed to this "find". Now Napoleon, unlike many of his modern emulators, possessed a healthy respect for scientific research and knowledge. He had the inscription copied and the copies sent to various universities and learned societies in Europe. The scholars got busy.

One of the languages on the tablet was already well known and understood—it was Greek. Another was known as the everyday language of Egypt in olden times, the "demotic" or popular writing of the people. But the third was written in the mysterious hieroglyphics of ancient Egypt, the language in which so many records had already been discovered and could not be interpreted because no man living understood the characters in which that language was written. The last writers of hieroglyphic lived in the reign of the Roman emperor Diocletian, about A.D. 290, and soon after the end of the third A.D. century the last man who knew how to read that strange writing of pictures and symbols, of crowns and little birds and mystic signs, had gone to be with his fathers and the secret was lost to mankind.

The fact that this one stone bore a three-fold inscription, in three languages, at once inspired the thought that the record might be the same in all three; that it was in fact a "tri-lingual" inscription. The first task was to translate the Greek text, a matter of no difficulty, and which was accomplished by several experts during the next few years, working more or less independently. It was found that the inscription was the record of a decree issued by priests of Egypt about two hundred years before Christ to commemorate the accession to the throne of Ptolemy V Epiphanes. It now remained to apply this translation to the hitherto incomprehensible hieroglyphics with the object of discovering the meaning of each different sign and so constructing an alphabet, the first step to achieving an understanding of the language. This was a work of great difficulty and it was not until about twenty years later that Prof. Young in England and Prof. Champollion in France succeeded in deciphering

the majority of the signs and so laying the foundation of modern Egyptology.

The new knowledge thus gained almost immediately gave indirect testimony to the truth of the Scriptures. It was found, as years passed by, that the *Book of Genesis and the other books of Moses* abounded in Egyptian words, allusions and phrases, this fact helping to refute the assertion increasingly being made by the Higher Criticism that these books had not been written until the time of the Babylonian Captivity. The expressions used are such as would naturally be employed by a man brought up and living a great part of his life in

Egyptian surroundings, as was Moses. The science of chronology, also, was greatly illuminated by the deciphering of the hieroglyphics of the Rosetta stone; it became possible to read what are known as the Turin Papyrus and the Abydos Tablets, *records of Egypt's Pharaohs from the earliest times*, and for the first time the names of various Pharaohs of Egypt familiar to Bible readers had their historic character revealed from sources outside the Bible. In a very real sense, therefore, the discovery of this unique tablet at Rosetta in 1798 has made its contribution to our knowledge of God's ways in ancient time.

## Whitsun at Birmingham

Brethren from all parts of the land attended the annual convention of the Midlands classes in the familiar buildings of the Digbeth Institute, Birmingham, at Whitsun. The congenial surroundings and well ordered catering and ushering services comfortably provided for the needs of the friends. There was a high spiritual standard of fellowship at the Convention, elevated by five edifying and encouraging discourses. Several loving messages were received from brethren near and far—as far in fact as greetings wired from a similar Convention in Germany.

After a few warm words of welcome from Brother S. A. Couling, as chairman of the Convention, Brother A. O. Hudson (Welling) gave a stimulating message entitled "*Fading light*", drawing attention to several Bible characters in whom the light of the Lord had faded after a zealous and moving commencing to shine. Applying this to our day, it was shown that unprejudiced re-searching of the Scriptures was needed, in order fully to reflect the light of the Gospel in our lives.

Tea followed, and then Brother L. F. Shephard (Cardiff) graphically described the perilous days in which we live. Referring to the experiences of Daniel's three companions, it was seen how God had preserved His people of old, and that He would bring the Church through the present storms of trouble which afflicted the world.

While another goodly number of brethren assembled on Sunday morning, a praise and devotional service assisted in uniting and uplifting their minds before God. Brother J. H. Murray (Grays) then addressed the brethren upon "*An inheritance incorruptible which fadeth not away*". It was a fine correlation of Scriptures concerning the riches of God's grace in Christ Jesus for us. Particular reference was made to choice passages of Paul's

letters to Ephesus and Phillipi, which were shown to be part of our heavenly treasure available to the saints on earth.

Just prior to the afternoon address a question meeting provided a lively and informative three-quarters of an hour. Questions were asked upon Revelation, Hebrews 1. 9, 10, types of meetings which were most profitable, and public witness. Brother G. H. Jennings (Ilford) exhorted the brethren along the comforting theme "*Therefore will not we fear*", using the first verses of Psalms 27 and 46. Again, the trouble of the last days was brought to the attention, with particular reference to Revelation, and interwoven with this theme were the sure promises of God, who never fails His children in affliction.

Finally, the Convention drew to a close, and after another brief prelude of praise, Brother F. H. Guard spoke on three parables of the Kingdom. There was a plea for simplicity of interpretation and that which followed clearly illustrated this point. Using the "*Wheat and tares*", "*That servant*" and "*The ten virgins*", the lesson of each story was beautifully emphasised in practical language. The central theme was watchfulness—watchfulness of self as well as of the signs in the world to-day, that our characters might be the more Christlike.

So ended another gathering of the saints, sad at the temporary parting, yet strengthened for the future pilgrimage and more determined than ever to follow the Master faithfully. Often during the addresses stress was laid upon the nearness of the kingdom, and the preceding trouble, but the brethren were repeatedly reminded of God's loving care. Many times, too, were those assembled in Birmingham reminded by the Conventions in other parts of the land and world, of the tie that binds Christian hearts together, everywhere.

## THE QUIET TIME

*"My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places."*

### FAITH'S DOWER

*"Ye that have faith to look with fearless eyes  
Beyond the tragedy of a world of strife,  
And know that out of death and might shall rise  
The dawn of ampler life,  
Rejoice, whatever anguish rend the heart,  
That God has given you a priceless dower.  
To live in these great times and have a part  
In Freedom's crowning hour,  
That ye might tell your sons who see the light  
High in the heavens—their heritage to take—  
'I saw the powers of Darkness put to flight,  
I saw the Morning break'."*

### WELLS

That pilgrim of old, David, passed through the valley of weeping, and there, he says, he made a well, and the pools thereof were filled with water (Psa. 84. 6). In that valley "his tears had been his meat day and night". But he found God's gifts in the valley. And many a pilgrim since has seen the footmarks of this valiant saint, and drunk deep of those wells of refreshment which he dug for fellow-pilgrims.

### HIS LOVE

It is sweet to realise the common love flowing out of our Father's bosom to the whole happy household of His children, but it is no less sweet, especially in the day of trial, to dwell upon the personal love He bears so peculiarly to each. It is blessed to identify ourselves with such a family who are each joying in the sunshine of paternal love but it is as blessed at times to isolate oneself and realise the individual love which is our peculiar heritage. "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine."

### HE IS ABLE

There is increasing need that we should ponder the confident assertion of the prophet Isaiah, who assures us that "the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save, neither is His ear heavy that it cannot hear". We are living in an age when too much emphasis is being placed upon what man can and must do, and we are in danger of overlooking that the One who sits upon the throne is omnipotent, and is able to make all grace abound unto His people.

### PRIESTS AND KINGS

If we are to be the judges of the world in the next age, how shall we be fitted for this position if we do not learn now how to take the proper viewpoint, the Lord's viewpoint, in our estimates of our brethren? If our love and our esteem for them is gauged by trifles, yea, by matters even unworthy of notice in the eyes of the Lord, are we developing the qualities of character which will fit us to be judges of the incoming age? How are we growing up into Christ in all things? Let us judge ourselves rigidly along these lines, that we may indeed become like the Master and win His final approval.

### KNOWN OF HIM

God has various names for His saints. Various and expressive as are these well known names they are still imperfect; they describe as it were only the outer circles, each name a circle of its own, but the inner circle they do not touch upon. It is the well known word, the magic name of family which alone can express all that God sees, all that is kind and tender, loving and lovable in the Church of Christ, into which He is pouring His love, through which He delights to see that love circulate unhindered and out of which He expects that love to flow abroad.

### OUR GOD

*Holy and Infinite! Viewless, Eternal!*

*Veiled in the glory that none can sustain,  
None comprehendeth Thy being supernal,  
Nor can the heaven of heavens contain.*

*Holy and Infinite! limitless, boundless,  
All Thy perfections, and power, and praise!  
Ocean of mystery! awful and soundless  
All Thine unsearchable judgments and ways.*

*Therefore archangels and angels adore Thee,  
Cherubim wonder, and seraphs admire;  
Therefore we praise Thee, rejoicing before Thee,  
Joining in rapture the heavenly choir.*

*Glorious in holiness, fearful in praises,  
Who shall not fear Thee, and who shall not laud,  
Anthems of glory Thy universe raises,  
Holy and Infinite! Father and God.*

# “And Now Abideth . . .”

A Series of Studies  
in 1 Cor. 13

## 6. “Love . . . the Soil and the Fragrance”

In our consideration of the supreme Master-grace each one of its constituent elements has been passed in review, some briefly, others at greater length. It has already been stated that Love is not any of these elements alone, but a synthesised compound, in which each and every element is present in balanced equilibrium. It is this very synthesis that makes Love so hard a thing to define. It is composed of parts, each of which has its own special characteristics, but because of its blended and interfused qualities, it is not only a greater thing than any of its parts, it is also a different thing. It might be compared (though inadequately) with a wheel, complete with all its constituent parts, hub, spokes, felloes and rim, etc., and thus a different and more serviceable thing than any of its parts alone.

It has been styled by some “the greatest thing in the world”—the “*summum bonum*” of all things. That is scarcely enough to say about it in the ultimate sense. That is as though it were one of several things—all great, but of which the *Agape* is the greatest. But this distinction is only permissible in the distinctions noted in these present times. Love is a greater thing than either faith or hope when these things are viewed as parts of our present heritage in Christ; but inasmuch as faith and hope are also listed as constituents of the greater thing, it leaves the Master-grace to occupy the whole field alone, without any other of the great things to challenge comparison with it, and thus becomes the *only* moral good. It becomes not merely the greatest thing, but the altogether incomparable thing—a thing unique. It is therefore more than the “*summum bonum*”—it is the “*solum bonum*”.

But we must not forget that we are speaking of the perfect thing as seen in God and in our beloved Lord, towards which the followers of our beloved Lord have to grow and mature. It is that dynamic thing which alone of the moral forces of the world is competent and adequate to win an erring world from sin, and to acquire that competence the pilgrim on the narrow way has to grow up in stature to full manhood in Christ—a persistent life-long development into a likeness to Christ.

In this, the final section of our survey, it is that growth and development which will claim attention.

The quality of Love which must grow and develop in the saint is a sacred dowry from God, given to those who become “joined to” His Son by baptism unto death and resurrection into a new life. It is “shed abroad” by the Holy Spirit as a heavenly gift. It has previously been likened to a spark from the Divine Flame. Let us never forget that it is a gift from God, a sign-token that He has already called and justified us in Christ, and that in this gift He has graciously commenced the process of “glorifying” us—of transforming us into the image of His Son. In the depths of His intuition and foreknowledge of our hearts He has adjudged us capable of taking on that image-likeness, which, in other words, means that He is fully satisfied, that with His help and that of our beloved Lord, we can grow up into the full stature of perfect Love, even here this side the veil, needing only our “House from heaven” to replace this present tenement (2. Cor. 5. 1-5) to make the New Creature complete and entire.

At an earlier stage of this discussion Love was compared to a fragrant garden of floral gems. That same thing of beauty and delight will now be used again to illustrate our growth and development into full maturity in Christ.

Another thought recalled from former pages is that our knowledge must abide, and constitute the soil out of which our love must grow. It was shown that knowledge, of the right kind, was the antecedent factor behind every motive and every act of our Christian life, and that it is by constant repetition of the gracious act that Love, in its elements, must grow. Tracing this chain of sequences back from the finished product—the matured Christ-like love—the Love grows mature out of ten thousand (and more) kindly actions, and these from motives just as numerous, and all these motives from our knowledge of His Word and His purposes. This illustration now begins with the soil and the plant (or the many plants).

Our knowledge of the Divine Word and its revealed purposes as the antecedent to every motive and every act is as the soil out of which the graces grow. The motive may be likened to the root anchored and tethered to the ground. The “act” may be likened to the upper growth—the stem, the branch, the leaf and flower.

Each floral gem will have its own distinctive shape and form, but all alike must exhibit form, texture, colour, and aroma. These are the things every horticulturalist will desire. Perfection in form, intensity of colour, delicacy in texture, and exquisiteness in fragrance is his constant goal. These desirable qualities can only be achieved when adequate supplies of the right kinds of food, in their right proportions, are present in the soil. Lack of these supplies can mar every feature of the plant. Form can grow faulty, colour pallid, texture coarse, and fragrance scant or lacking altogether.

These same things can be true in the Christian life. The Christian rooted and established in grace, has a plenshed storehouse of nutritional precepts and promises. From this God-provided source he can absorb and ingest such nutriment and food as he may need. But he must send his rootlets deep into this heavenly soil, and take therefrom the moisture and the minerals he requires. The tiny rootlets must delve and spread, otherwise the store of promises may remain unabsorbed.

But every plant needs more than "root" supplies. There will be need for sun and air and rain and cosmic rays. These are of less density than soil, but quite as necessary for growth.

The Christian also needs things from heavenly sources, new and varied every day—supplies of grace from spiritual sources suited to each day and hour. To implement the succour from the promises and precepts of the Word, the Christian needs the sun and air and rain and ray of Divine Providence to reach him every day. It is from the ingestion of this double store of nutriment that form and colour and texture and aroma must eventuate. Absorption of much nutriment means true development and growth; contrariwise, absorption of little nutriment means imperfect development and stunted growth.

Of course, no plant can provide its stores of nutriment. That is the cultivator's responsibility. But in the Christian life there is no lack on the Cultivator's part. God has promised ample nutriment in His Holy Word, while His daily oversight and Providence are in abundant evidence.

But even with these rich supplies available, and with every circumstance overruled for good, a failure to develop may ensue. If our rootlets fail to go down into His precepts and promises, and our leaves to open up to His sun and air and ray, we shall starve, and wilt and fade away. The Cultivator cannot do this thing for us. Absorption and ingestion dwell in the plant, and must constitute the plant's own contribution to the desired growth and development. It is just the same with

us. There can be no growth in Love and Christ-like character if there is scant assimilation of the precepts of the Word, or of the influences of the daily Providence.

And sometimes, even after sound growth has begun, an alien factor may intrude and mar the development. A canker or a blight, an insect or a spore—intrusive deadly enemies—may appear on the plant, and the whole thing become spoiled thereby. Form, colour, texture and fragrance may all be lost and all its former growth be in vain. Something like this may happen in the Christian life, and lead to the sickly undeveloped New Creature becoming a castaway.

The child of God, developing in Love, is not just as one single plant—he is as a whole plot of floral gems, amidst which, as we walk its winding path, we now draw nearer to the rose; then to the snow-white lily; next to the musk or the forget-me-not, and by reason of the close proximity inhale its fragrance more easily than all the rest, yet not so strongly as to obscure them altogether. So in the Christian life—today it may be long-suffering that may stand out, tomorrow humility, another day the courteousness—and perhaps a different element with each passing day. And yet there will always be the back-ground scent, in addition to the outstanding odour. There will always be all the remaining elements of Love to support the one under test. The long-suffering is never under strain alone. Nor is the generosity, nor yet the patience ever tested by itself. Actually it is the "Love" that is being tried and proved, and though the strain may lie more acutely upon this or that, all the remaining elements will lend support throughout the test. Kindness, humility, faith, hope, will be there to help long-suffering to suffer long.

It is this interfusing and inter-play of love's elements that causes God's child to resemble a whole garden in bloom. Today he is as the lily in its stateliness, tomorrow, as the honeysuckle in its daintiness, again, as the rose in its appealing charm—these and a thousand more—all grown and thrown together into one delightful ensemble; plants for both sun and shade, plants for December and June, each in its season lading the air with its charm, and the whole, withal, as elusive as Love to define.

No illustration can go all the way in the growth and development of likeness to Christ. The plant has no knowledge or perception of its identity. Its existence springs from natural determinations and chemical affinities. But the child of God is aware of his identity. To him, this knowledge is a vital thing, to which everything that attends his growth is an added factor. He knows he was called of God

and placed on probation for joint-heirship with Christ. He knows he will receive help from God, if he will take what is offered him. He knows that all those things which are as sun and air and rain and soil and husbandman care, are provided to meet his needs, but such knowledge is unavailing unless there is, in his heart, the determination to grow thereby. He must be determined to absorb and ingest all these things, and by keeping-on keeping-on in this way grow up into that "Something" which is at once the sum and substance of them all.

The 'Agape', as it is seen in God, is working to a Plan. That same 'Agape' transplanted to our hearts, enables us also to work to that Plan. Without its restraining influence amidst this sad world's woes, we may be unable to wait—and still wait—till the suffering sinner's lesson has been learned. The very sight of earth's sufferings could predispose us to plunge right in today to seek to ease and heal her many breaking hearts. But that would not be evidence of the 'Agape'—it would be only philanthropy! God knows all about the world's sufferings, yet, in Him, the 'Agape' waits its appointed hour. He has seen the earth's woes for centuries, yet He has waited on and on knowing always what is best.

We also must learn to bide our time through a whole lifetime's contact with sin and suffering, though looking forward hopefully to the better day when Love will inaugurate its great campaign for restoring man to health and peace and life.

It is just this ability to 'wait' that differentiates the *Agape* from philanthropy. God purposes to have the lesson of man's contact with sin learned once for all, and is thus prepared to wait until He "is inquired of" (see Ezek. 36. 37.) to do the

releasing and restoring work for them. Indeed, He "waits to be gracious" (Isa. 30. 18.) till the hearts of men have come to know their sense of need. It is when "at their wits end" they call upon Him, that He comes to their relief and succour. (Psa. 107. 27-30.)

But the waiting days are not lost. The dynamic power of the *Agape* is building up a great Redemption potential. Out of the tiny episodes of saintly life a mighty current of love is being built up. Every saintly life, yea every kindly act, every courteous gesture, every long-suffering groan done in His Name, adds to the voltage of that mighty surge that will sweep unrighteousness away and set men free from sin.

Some better day God will throw in the switch, and Love will come into its own. It will begin and consummate all that 'It' has long purposed to do. That which is perfect will come, and Love's magnetic sway will draw all the wanderers home to God.

Beloved in the Lord, these are our apprentice days. We are learning the 'feel' and 'use' of the mighty tools that can reshape human hearts, and remodel broken lives. We may call them minor graces if we will—but combined together into their Christ-like wholeness, they constitute the greatest handiwork of God for time and eternity. Thereby He will make "The Universal Homestead" complete.

It is our present privilege to try out our apprentice skill with these potent tools. May God guide our hands and hearts to His Praise, both now and forevermore.

THE END.

## HE THAT OVERCOMETH

The victory of the Church lies enshrined in its present experience. All that will live godly in Christ Jesus must endure persecution. And when, as in our own day, that persecution is as likely as not to come from the State which demands unquestioning obedience to its own decrees, the position of the Church approximates more closely than at any other time to the primitive Church—that Church which had to meet the most dangerous of all its external enemies, the State that will brook no limit to its own sovereignty in things Divine as well as human, the State that will, if it can, fetter men in their thoughts and consciences, as well as their actions, the State that aims at an absolute autocracy, the State that we speak of today as the totalitarian State. The great visions of the Apocalypse are the

tremendous imagery of that struggle. The Church could live only if it were willing and able to be faithful unto death.

But that was not the only danger confronting the Christians of Asia. What Paul had written earlier of one of his own experiences was now true on a greater scale. "Without were fightings, within were fears." John in Patmos knew that all was not well with the inner life of the churches. Failures in love, readiness to listen to false teaching, low standards of conduct and character, lukewarmness and self-complacency—such were the fallings away from the true marks of their high calling in Christ Jesus of which he had to write. The first century was no golden age; nor was the Church then a Church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. The

Church militant has never been a Church without fault. It has been a tempted Church, a struggling Church, a Church that has fallen again and again; and yet through it all a Church that learns how to conquer, how to overcome. For, then and always, what is needed in the Church is the spirit of the victor. The true Christian spirit is not that of mere endurance and resignation; it is the spirit of victory. And so it is that although the story has to tell of disappointments, shortcomings, of compromises with the world, of faltering, of unworthy discipleship, and of evil in high places, the torch of victory has never burnt itself out. From generation to generation of the Church's life it has been passed on, and there have always been some to receive it. The kingdoms of the world come and go; they may play their part in the development of civilisation, but they possess not the power to never grow old. The Gospel of Christ is ever renewing the freshness and triumphs of days that may seem far off, but are linked by an unbroken chain to the Church of today. There is far more of permanent victory in Augustine landing in the Isle of Thanet than in Julius Caesar disembarking his forces near to the cliffs of Dover, and a Christian village in Africa or India is a truer symbol of the eternal things that cannot be shaken than the earth-shaking armies of the greatest of this world's conquerors from Nebuchadnezzar to Napoleon. In those armies of destruction we find but the witness to some man who strives to be a superman; in the peaceful village we find a living testimony to the victorious power of God.

But it is not till we think of each individual Christian man and woman as God would have each one to be, that we come within sight of the wonderful range of this word and promise, "He that overcometh." It is there in this one or that who has not allowed the pressure of the world to prevail, who has not let the salt of a consecrated personality lose its savour, or the light of a steady witness to Christ grow dim, who has used the God-given talents, be they ten or five, or even only one, as God would have them used, that the answer to the message of the risen Christ is given. (*Selected.*)

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"THE BIBLE"—continued from page 134

of inequalities and injustices, and the problem of how to change and bring to an end such a condition of things—the problem of death itself, what it is, and what future hope, if any, there is for those who have died; the problem of better things to come—these questions which baffle human wisdom, are answered completely and to the entire satisfaction of heart and mind, in this inspired

## So Nearly Home

*Sister Laura Poole, of Powell River, Canada, the author of many poems and also of the children's story books so well known to many of our readers, "The Ten Camels" and "The Son of the Highest," passed away suddenly a few months ago. The beautiful poem which appears hereunder was her last work. Sister Poole had contributed many words of help and spiritual comfort to various "Truth" publications and we feel that all who read these lines will remember, before the Heavenly Throne, her husband and daughter, Bro. Herbert Poole and Sister Lynn Poole, who remain to await the reunion.*

So nearly Home! Lift up thine eyes and see  
How thin the veil between thy Lord and thee.  
Through fading scenes of earth so dull and grey  
A wondrous glory steals, to light thy way;  
While on thine eager spirit's yearning ears  
Falls faint, sweet music from celestial spheres.

So nearly Home! Well may thy heart rejoice;  
Soon thou shalt hear the Saviour's gentle voice;  
Soon feast thine eyes upon celestial scenes  
And rest thy weary feet by crystal streams.  
The Heavenly portals shall swing wide to greet thee,  
And hosts of loved ones gather there to meet thee.

So nearly Home! Thy glad free spirit strains  
Against the weakening bars of fleshly chains.  
It struggles to be free from all restraint,  
To try its newfound wings. Earth's scenes grow faint.  
The ladder between Heaven and earth is growing  
As, one by one, His chosen saints are going.

So nearly Home! Death's veil is tinged with gold  
And flushed with heavenly colours manifold.  
Like sunset glories over stormclouds spread  
O weary child of God, lift up thy head.  
Rejoice, for thy deliverance is near.  
His sweet "Well done!" awaits thy listening ear.

---

Word of God. Both the origin and the destiny of man are there disclosed, and we see clearly that while "weeping may endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning". (Psa. 30. 5.) A comparison of the opening pages of the Bible with the closing pages, will reveal by contrast that in its outworking, God's glorious Plan of Redemption will completely reverse the evil effects of the Fall, and fully emancipate mankind from the thralldom of sin and death.

(*Forest Gate Bible Monthly.*)

## “How beautiful upon the mountains . . . .”

### An important announcement concerning free literature.

The demand for “*Millennial Message No. 3*” has been so great that it has become necessary to order a reprint. The work of distribution is apparently not yet to cease; more people are to be reached with this particular contribution to the message of the Kingdom.

This is a source of encouragement and joy to those responsible for making the free issue of this number possible. It is realised that our Master is always overruling the affairs and activities of those who love Him in sincerity so that by means of their joint efforts His work is done. To Him be all the praise.

The spontaneous and genuinely wide-spread response to this offer of free “*Millennial Message*” has prompted some thought and consideration at the office of the “*Monthly*”; it would seem as though there is an indication here that there should be a stepping out in faith, by abandoning the present practice of imposing a charge to meet the cost of tracts, and offering all available tract literature free of charge to whosoever will undertake to make good use of it, and then to look for the Lord’s approval of this course by His providing the means to continue the supply. It is felt that this will enable all

who will to take advantage of the opportunities of service that are ours to-day, and for those who can, and who feel so led, to assist with the cost.

As from the appearance of this announcement, therefore, all “tract literature” published by the Bible Fellowship Union will be available to all our brethren free and without cost, upon request. If you can send postage with your request, that will be appreciated. If you can make donations toward the “Tract Fund” that, too, will be appreciated; but the tracts are free.

Donations will always be promptly and appreciatively acknowledged, and annual balance sheets will be sent to all donors showing details of receipts and expenses relating to the Tract Fund, together with a report of what has been achieved.

A list of all tracts at present available appears below. This list will appear in each issue of the “*Bible Students Monthly*” and will show just what items can be requested at any time. The scope of the work will be determined entirely by the Lord’s provision as it is made from time to time; if the provision ceases, so does the work, for we are His servants, appointed to labour as He directs.

## FREE TRACT FUND

The following tracts are supplied free on request, stating quantity that can usefully be distributed. The Tract Fund is supported entirely by voluntary offerings and an annual balance sheet is sent to donors. Please order by number.

**Millennial Message** 4-page, 11½in. x 8½in. when folded. This is an illustrated “Truth” newspaper, each issue containing articles on current events and daily news in the light of the coming Kingdom, and upon Biblical subjects calculated to interest the public.

No. 3 **Divine Intervention.**  
Where are the Dead?  
Christ—A King.

### 12-page pamphlets.

No. 11 Thy Kingdom Come.  
12 Will there be Wars for Ever?  
13 The Immortality of the Soul.  
14 The Mystery of the Trinity.  
15 The World’s Extremity God’s Opportunity.  
16 The Bible a Sure Guide.  
17 Heaven’s Pacific Charter.  
18 When the Morning Cometh.  
19 Why does God permit Evil?  
20 Evolution and the Scriptures.

**Two-minute Tracts.** 4-page tract 4in. x 2½in. Short statements on each of the important Bible doctrinal and dispensational truths.

101 Times of Restitution.	109 Creation of Man.
102 Call of the Church.	110 The Second Advent.
103 Day of Judgment.	111 Armageddon.
104 Where are the Dead?	112 Restoration of Israel.
105 What is the Soul?	113 The Three Worlds.
106 The Bible Hell.	114 Times of Gentiles.
107 The Son of God.	115 Satan.
108 The Holy Spirit.	116 Angels that Sinned.

**Illustrated folders.** 6-page, 7½in. x 3½in. when folded (supplied folded). These are attractively designed folders printed in green and black on good paper, illustrated with line engravings and photographic reproductions pertaining to the subject.

No. 201 The Bible—the Book for To-day.  
202 The Dawn of a New Era.  
203 Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand.  
204 Sure Word of Prophecy.



Thou, therefore, endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

<b>BIBLE STUDENT'S MONTHLY</b>				
<small>Joseph being preserved in the pit by the angels.</small>	<small>Joseph was preserved in the pit by the angels.</small>	<small>All things which shall be done in the world shall be done in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.</small>	<small>Lord of Abraham his servant Jacob his brother.</small>	<small>A good man shall be as a tree that bears fruit.</small>

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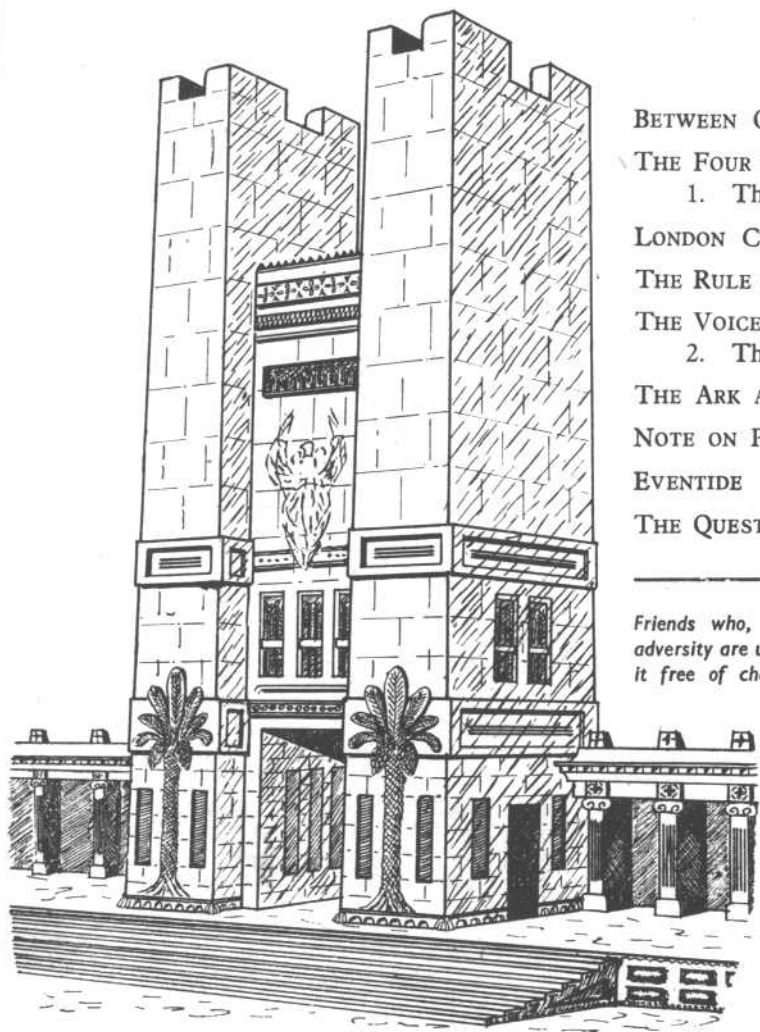
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Lift up your heads, O ye gates,  
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors,  
And the King of glory shall come in.

## BETWEEN OURSELVES

There commences in this month's issue a short series of notes on that portion of the Book of Revelation dealing with the breaking of the first four seals on the scroll which is opened by the slain Lamb. The Book of Revelation has been the subject of more study and exposition—measured by quantity—than perhaps any other book of the Bible, for centuries past. Explanations innumerable have been written and published. To some extent the inevitable differences of interpretation that exist have cast a shade of disrepute over the book. This should not be; the sublime visions of John were recorded for a purpose; it is our privilege to work towards an understanding of that purpose, albeit without giving the subject more than its due meed of attention in the manifold interests which go to make up our field of Christian faith. This present exposition, then, is published, not because the "Monthly" necessarily endorses every detail of interpretation put forward therein, but because it does seem, as a whole, to be a composition reasonable in treatment, restrained in expression, and in harmony with the principles of the Divine Plan as we conceive them to be generally understood among our readers. It is by the wish of the "Monthly" that, in view of the nature of the subject, the author's initials are indicated, contrary to our usual practice.

\* \* \*

Following the decision announced in last month's issue whereby all our "tract" literature is now available free of cost to brethren who will distribute, while the Lord provides, word has come to the "Monthly" from Pastoral Ministry to the effect that if brethren in the provinces feel they can supplement their tract work with public meetings, large or small, but are uncertain as to their own ability to undertake such form of witness, then Pastoral Ministry will count it a privilege to assist. It comes down to this: will brethren anywhere who are desirous—and who is not?—of having the Good News preached more effectively in their own locality, and would welcome outside help, please write to the Secretary, Pastoral Ministry, 62, Greenway, London, S.W.20, just saying they would appreciate public witness in their own district and would do what they could to help. The brethren of Pastoral Ministry will reply promptly outlining their suggestions and what they in their turn will do to bring about the desired end.

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The Cardiff brethren announce a Home Gathering, at which Bro. Paul Thomson (U.S.A.) and A. J. Lodge (London) will speak, on Saturday and

Sunday, 8th and 9th October, at 35, Windsor Place, Cardiff. Lunch and tea will be provided without charge, and it will be appreciated if brethren intending to be present will advise Bro. L. W. Shephard, Bedw Bach House, Llanharan Road, Llanharan, Glam., so that adequate catering arrangements may be made. Friends requiring accommodation are also requested to advise Bro. Shephard of their needs as early as possible.

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The Dewsbury friends announce a week-end gathering on Saturday and Sunday, 8th and 9th October, at the Liberal Club, Bond Street, Dewsbury, and extend a warm welcome to all brethren. Meals will be provided free of charge, and programmes and all further details may be obtained on request to Sister (Miss) A. Rothery, 139, Westgate, Cleckheaton, Yorks.

### BRO. PAUL THOMSON

Oct. 1-2	Forest Gate
3	Windsor
4	Welling
5	Central London
6	Anerley
7-11	Cardiff
12	Bristol
13-16	Yeovil
17	Parkstone
18	Portsmouth
20	Ilford
21-24	Rugby

## LONDON MONTHLY MEETING

Saturday, 15th October, 1949

6.30 - 8.30 p.m.

In the Tudor Hall  
CAXTON HALL

Caxton Street, Westminster, S.W.1  
5 mins. St. James Park Station and Victoria Street

*Praise and Worship*  
*Fellowship*

*A talk on the Christian outlook for today  
and an opportunity for questions*  
*A Scriptural address by guest speaker*

Chairman: Bro. R. MacFarlane.  
Speakers: Bro. S. A. Couling (Rugby).  
Bro. F. Oakley.

# The Four Horses of the Apocalypse (PART I)

H.H. (Manchester)

The background of the seals is formed by the two visions of chaps. 4 & 5. The first of these is a vision of Jehovah God upon His Throne—the Throne of the Universe—showing Him in His glory as the great Creator and Ruler of all things. The vision is a fundamental and comprehensive one—a vision of “things which are” (chap. 1. 19), and covers the period from Creation to a point of time shortly before Calvary; note well that Christ does not appear in this vision, and that in it God is praised, not for redemption, but only for Himself and for His great works of creation.

The second vision begins where the first one ceases—towards the end of the Jewish age, and extends forward through the next two ages, the Gospel and the Millennial. The two pictures together thus cover the entire history of man, from Creation to the end of the Millennial age. They are complement and supplement; that is, each, though a complete and beautiful picture in itself—Jehovah God upon His Throne, and the Lamb in the Throne—yet needs the other to make the perfect whole—the complete Divine Plan for the human race.

For four thousand years after the creation of man, the Plan of God, with its great basic feature of the Permission of Evil, moved slowly but surely forward. Just prior to the end of the Jewish age, however, a point was reached when the Plan could go no further until certain most important things had been fulfilled. The Divine purposes for fleshly Israel were important enough, true; but His purposes for the next age—the call and development of spiritual Israel, a heavenly and immortal class—were vastly more important, and these purposes could not be carried out until *after* the death and resurrection and exaltation of Jesus Christ had taken place. The Ransom Sacrifice, and the great Offering for Sin, *must* be made before the transition from the age of Types and Shadows to the age of Realities could be effected. This highly important fact, well known to students of the Bible, is clearly shown in the opening verses of chapter 5. The Book or Scroll held in the right hand of God, not seen in chapter 4, represents His vital and hitherto closely hidden purposes concerning the present age (and may be also the next); and it is only the risen and exalted Christ—the Lamb as it had been slain, in the midst of the Throne—who is

worthy to take the book and to open its seals: i.e., both to cause the great purposes of God for the present age to be made known, and, still more important, to cause those purposes to be brought to pass.

This, then, is the general setting for the opening of the seals. Every detail of the vision of chapter 5, like every detail of the vision of chapter 4, is beautiful and worthy of consideration; but to examine them now is not our present object. We leave the vision at verse 7, at which point the vision of chapter 6 begins.

Keeping clearly in mind (1) that the events of the seals are something vitally connected with the Divine purposes for the present age, and (2) that, since they could not go into effect until after the death, resurrection and exaltation of Christ, they were something that only He was worthy to reveal and to set into motion, we may rightly conclude (a) that those events are events of great importance, and (b) that the so called historic fulfilments of the seals—which, after all, are only comparatively small and more or less local events—*cannot* be the true explanation of the visions. The events of the seals *must* be events of wide significance and of major importance in the outworking of the Divine purposes for this age. The seals, please note, take precedence of the trumpets and vials: a fact which yet further emphasises their vital place and importance in the Divine Plan so far as the Gospel age is concerned.

By historic fulfilments we mean those interpretations which suggest that the seals (especially the first four) refer to certain specific events occurring at some definite limited time: such as (a) the destruction of Jerusalem and the wasting of Judea by the Romans (*Weymouth*, and others); (b) events relative to the Roman Empire in the second and third centuries (*Barnes*, and others); (c) events in the Church relative to the usurpation of power by the bishops and the development of Papacy (*Streeter*, and others). Other interpreters would make the seals refer only to events of our own day; while still others suggest that the events of the seals are yet future. All these interpretations fail to conform to the logical deductions that we have already made; and none of them in any way explain the horses of the vision.

A general view of the vision of the four horses

shows us that whereas the horses are seen to go forth, they are not seen to return. Please note this well. From it we may deduce the fact that the first four seals represent events which are of continuous action throughout the age; and from this, we may easily deduce the further fact that the events of these four seals, once begun, continue in operation together. As the meaning of each seal is understood, we shall see that all these deductions are quite correct.

Passing now from general facts and principles to the details of the vision, we must notice first the incorrect translation of the words uttered by the living creatures, in verses 1, 3, 5 and 7, as given in the A.V. The words "and see" are not found in the R.V. or in any other of the modern and reliable versions of the Scriptures; they are not in the ancient MSS., and are spurious. The command is not "Come and see", but simply "Come" (as in most modern versions), or "Go" (as in Rotherham). This fact is important, as it shows most clearly that the command is not addressed to John, but to the horses and their riders. Note this well. (See Footnote.)

Into the interpretation of the living creatures we need not enter here; they are dealt with under chap. 4, and it is sufficient for the present if we note from verse 6 of that chapter the very close association between the living creatures and the throne, which symbolises the Divine rulership of the Universe. When one of the living creatures speaks, his voice represents the authority of Almighty God. And the fact that the horses and their riders only come forth at the command of the living creatures shows very positively the absolute control of God over the horses and their activities. Note this well. And indeed, since the living creatures do not utter their command until Christ has broken each seal, we might properly regard the horses as being under double control.

*It is a good plan, when once it is seen that words are spurious and that their retention quite alters the meaning of a passage, to run your pencil through them and to never read them again. This prevents the constant misleading of the mind whenever the passage is read. Similar examples of spurious words, to be treated in this way, are the "us" in chap. 5. 9, 10, and the "openly" of Matt. 6. 4, 6. A further correction earnestly advised in regard to chaps. 5, 6 and 7 is the replacement of the word "beast" by the much better expression "living creature". All modern versions make this change. The word "beast" is best kept for use in reference to the Gentile kingdoms (as in Dan. chap. 7) and the great false religious systems (as in Revel. chap. 13).*

It is a sound rule in Bible study, if the meaning of any passage is not clear to us, to look for its explanation in some other part of Scripture; and this is an especially important rule in regard to the Revelation, since all the symbols of this Book are taken from elsewhere in the Divine Word. So, for an interpretation of the horses, we must turn to the prophecy of Zechariah, chap. 6, where four comparable horses are seen by Zechariah in vision, and where, in verse 5, the angel who talked with the Prophet gave him their explanation: "These are the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth". The marginal rendering for spirits is "winds", as used in the R.V. text. The Hebrew word is *ruwach* (pronounced roo-akh), indicating clearly that these spirits are not spirit beings or angels, but *impersonal powers and forces*: powers or forces which, though impersonal in themselves, yet act frequently or usually through personal agencies. Asking ourselves what four such spirits or powers have particularly characterised the Gospel age and which are appropriately symbolised by the four horses of our vision, we answer as follows:—

#### THE FIRST SEAL.

*The Spirit of Truth.* This, promised by the Lord in John 14. 17, 15. 26 and 16. 13, went forth at Pentecost—see Acts 2. 1, 2, 33. Very much might be said about the work of this Spirit during the present age, for the N.T. Scriptures are full of references to it, and to its work in us, and for us, and through us. Into these matters, however, we need scarcely go just now. The main point for the present is to bear in mind the primary purpose of the going forth of the Spirit of Truth during the present age, viz., not the conversion of the world of mankind, but the call and development of the Church of Christ; and to remember also that that work has progressed steadily and surely during the nineteen centuries of this age, until it is now, we believe, almost completed. The Adversary has sought to hinder and prevent the work of that Spirit in every possible way, as the following seals and many other visions of the Revelation show; but though he has wrought much evil and harm in both small matters and in great, nevertheless, as shown in the two visions of chapter 7 and in the first vision of chapter 14, he has not been able to prevent the accomplishment of the sure purposes of God concerning the Church.

All those who realise this will agree with the truth of the words of our vision, that this first horse and its rider went forth conquering and to conquer: conquering in the smaller battles of the war, and to conquer finally concerning the campaign as a whole; conquering as the centuries have

rolled slowly along, and to conquer finally at the end of the age; conquering in the sure accomplishment of the Divine work of grace in the heart and mind of each child of God who has co-operated faithfully with Him in the daily doing of His will, and to conquer finally and completely when the Church as a whole shall be presented "faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24).

Nothing indeed is more certain than the "conquering and to conquer" on the part of the first horse and its rider; for behind them is the infinite power of the Almighty God, delegated to Christ, to whom "all power" has been given in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28. 18).

The bow of the rider represents warfare—warfare, in this case, against the enemies of truth and against the enemies of Christ and His Church. The arrows, not mentioned in the vision, but which would surely accompany the bow (for what use would the latter be without the former?) are the arrows of truth, "sharp in the heart of the king's enemies". (Psalm 45. 5; 144. 6.)

The crown represents either kingship or victory, or both, and shows again the absolute certainty of conquest on the part of the rider of the horse.

The rider would represent primarily Christ, and secondarily also all those who have co-operated with

Him in the work of the Spirit of Truth during the present age, from the apostles at the beginning of the age down to the last or "feet" members of the Body in our own time.

Very much indeed, therefore, is represented by this first seal. The primary and great purpose of God for the present all important age (and no words can exaggerate the seriousness and importance of the work this age—the formation by God of His New Creation), its great means of accomplishment, and its sure fulfilment throughout the long centuries of time down to our own day: all these truly great and momentous things are depicted in this comparatively simple vision of the going forth, at the command of God, of a white horse—the Spirit of Truth—and its rider, with his bow and his crown, conquering and to conquer.

The comprehensiveness of this single verse matches that of the final exhortation of our Lord to His disciples in Matt. 28. 19, 20; each of them takes in the evangelistic work of the entire Gospel age.

In Hebrew phraseology, *Selah!*, i.e., pause and consider: pause and consider the simpleness, the comprehensiveness, and the greatness of the vision of this one verse.

*To be continued*

## LONDON CONVENTION, 1949.

Great was the anticipation of the London Convention, which was held during August Bank Holiday week-end. With hearts warmed by earnest prayer and by the preparations that had been made, friends from all parts of the country, with several from over-seas, united again in worship and praise to enjoy a rich spiritual gathering. Conway Hall is conveniently situated in the City, and very satisfactorily provided a meeting place for the several hundred brethren who gathered there. Attractive in its simplicity, the auditorium was bereft of ostentatious adornment and only four artistically appointed texts relieved the panelled walls.

Facilities for catering were again impeded by lack of space but the many willing hands rapidly overcame the problems and the brethren found a plenteous supply of various foods to sustain their physique. The comfort of the brethren was well attended to in respect of ushering and cloakroom service, while the bookstall contained an adequate assortment of literature. Patient operation of the amplifying unit provided a great benefit for the deaf brethren. The happy faces of those who

undertook these tasks proved that they were no burden, as young and old mingled in happy service. But the smooth outworking of these plans was due solely to having sought the Lord's strength and wisdom by those who organised and laboured.

The gathering opened with a warm welcome by Brother Lodge on behalf of the Convention Committee. He thanked the friends for making the effort to be present. It was encouraging to know that so many of God's children desired to worship together in a world so selfish and pleasure loving.

The first address, entitled "*Pisgah's Mountain*" given by Brother A. O. Hudson (*Welling*), brought glimpses of the approaching Kingdom to the spiritual vision. The signs of the world indicated that we had at last reached the borders of the "Promised Land", and that we had every reason to lift up our heads as the evidence became more abundant. The brethren's gaze was directed from the heights on which they stood to a few of the glories of that great era. But it was something more than a land of "milk and honey", for the whole race, steeped in sin, awaited conversion, and

to that end we were being trained. Meanwhile our lives and message should exemplify the righteous principles of that golden age.

As a prelude to the semi-public meeting, a number of junior brethren sang in characteristic manner the hymn "*Consider the Lilies*". The appreciative audience, of which a goodly number was strangers, then saw two films depicting progress in the Holy Land since the return of the Jews. They illustrated the civilisation which the Jews are building and the problems created by repeated clashes with the Arab races. Following the "movie commentator's voice", came the more familiar tones of Brother S. H. French (*Forest Gate*) lecturing upon the Bible aspect of the rehabilitation of Palestine. He showed from the prophecies that the enigmas and conflicts of that dreaded land would result, by God's intervention, in Israel's prosperity and the ultimate blessing of all mankind through His people.

Sunday opened with praise and devotion centred in the Manna text—1 Cor. 3. 13. An address by Brother Reid Sharp (*Newcastle*) followed, entitled "*Prophecy and To-day*". It was a thought-provoking talk along the lines of the Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel dreams and their fulfilment. Later he surveyed the world situation showing the great divergence of the ideologies and advising the friends to be cautious in judging communist states.

In the afternoon the brethren had the privilege of listening to our Brother Luttichau (*Copenhagen*) delivering messages of warm love from the brethren in Denmark. The aged and matured pilgrim, in an elevating thirty minutes, exhorted the brethren to seek diligently the companionship of Christ, that by knowing Him we might grow into His likeness and eventually dwell with Him.

In familiar tones Brother Murray (*Grays*) discoursed upon a further edifying theme—"Your calling and election", bringing to mind the words in 2 Peter 1. The epistles to the Churches at Ephesus and Philippi had in part a similar character and these letters illuminated the text with great beauty. Having accepted the calling to be sons of God, the brethren were urged faithfully to endure till the "over-comers' crown" was won.

Brother Paul Thomson (*Brooklyn*) spoke in the evening upon "*Conditions of discipleship*". Eleven years previously his ministry among the British brethren had endeared him to their hearts. Therefore the welcome was warm and the beloved pilgrim did not disappoint his audience although his searching strains may have tinged their consciences more

than once concerning faithfulness to the Master. The practical lessons were of great value, and the stimulating expression supported by many Scriptural citations inspired each heart present to renewed determination to follow the Lord.

In a somewhat different strain, Brother Thomson continued his ministry on Monday morning; yet it still contained the essential elements of submission to the Father's will and seeking only his honour and glory, for only by so doing could we, like our Redeemer, find "*Enduring Fame*". To this topic was the brethren's attention drawn, clearly illustrated by the lives of Israel's worthies who won their place in Scripture by exalting God in their hearts and before men. In this way alone could we hope to attain, by His grace, the inheritance of the Kingdom.

While the friends were making an early assembly for the last session the Junior brethren rendered three further choral pieces. An interesting report by Brother T. Holmes (*Melton Mowbray*) of his recent visit to the German brethren with Brother H. A. Nadal (*Aldersbrook*) was given. He spoke of the stricken condition of these brethren, emphasising their high spiritual progress during their times of tribulation. The needs of these dear ones was brought to the attention of the friends in a forceful manner.

Deputising for Brother G. A. Ford (*Luton*) who through ill-health was unable to address the final session, Brother T. W. Watson (*Aldersbrook*) took the subject on the programme and delivered a very interesting and enlightening talk on the "*True Vine*". The distinction given to the original vine, its cutting off, and the grafting in of the new branches was first clearly aligned with reference to Isaiah 5. Considerable emphasis was laid upon our Lord's words—"The little foxes that spoil the vines", and some useful lessons were drawn regarding carefulness over the small things of the Christian way which so easily ruin the workmanship of God. Finally a few thoughts on the fruitage of the Spirit concluded a fine discourse.

The brethren seemed loath to part, many more than usual staying for a final meal together. It had indeed been a rich and profitable season of fellowship—a holy convocation and an earnest of that glad time, not long hence we believe, when as the first born children of God, we shall unite in heaven. The gathering is but a memory now, placed alongside so many similar occasions. Many of the loved ones we shall not see for several months, maybe not for another year—maybe not until we "*take communion on Heaven's New Wine*".

## The Rule of the Iron Rod

A scripture very familiar to the Bible reader who looks for the coming reign of Christ is that one in the Second Psalm "*Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel*" and even the most gentle of disciples has felt a thrill run through his being as he pictures a day in which all opposition to the Kingdom of righteousness is relentlessly crushed. Many have solaced themselves in present distress by anticipation of a coming day in which the tables will be turned on those who set themselves against the Lord's Anointed, and the proud and mighty of this world are compelled to lick the dust at the feet of earth's rightful Sovereign.

A number of Scriptures, mostly in the Books of Psalms and Revelation, are habitually cited to buttress this idea of an all-powerful Dictator ruthlessly crushing all opposition and setting up His rule of absolute righteousness and justice by the exercise of brute force. The end is considered to justify the means, and the Scriptural assurance that as a result of the Millennial reign all humanity will come into heart harmony with the Divine law of selflessness and love is held to stamp the means employed with the hall-mark of Divine approval.

But the whole tenor of Christ's teaching discourages the use of coercion or force. He Himself resolutely refused to employ any other agency but love. Even although He faced death, the death for which He had come into the world, He refused to call upon the twelve legions of angels to come to His aid, and trod the winepress alone. When in surprise and mystification Pilate queried "Thou art a King then?" Jesus uttered those memorable words which have resounded down the ages, "My kingdom is not of this world (*kosmos*) ELSE WOULD MY SERVANTS FIGHT". Not for Him the standards of kingship by which this world measures kings. And it was in the passive and yet overpowering force of love that the early Church went forth conquering—and conquered.

But if the teaching of Christ at His First Advent definitely repudiated the use of force as a means of accomplishing the work of His Kingdom, how shall statements of so definite a nature as Psalm 2. 9 and Revelation 2. 27 be understood? Certain it is that as students of the Divine Word we can neither afford to ignore them nor to wrest them to mean the opposite of their plain implication.

We can only approach them, armed first with a clear knowledge of the principles upon which Christ will deal with man in the future Age and then look at these Scriptures in the light of their local meaning—the significance they had for the Israelite who lived in the day in which they were uttered—and so deduce that prophetic indication which is there given in the guise of a familiar reference to some everyday incident or custom.

It is generally agreed that the work of the Millennial Age is portrayed in miniature and in principle by the life of Jesus Christ, by His words, actions, miracles, and so on. It is equally definite that He preached the overcoming of hate by love, of greed by selflessness, of force by persuasion, of self-centredness by service for others. This then is the law of the Kingdom, and however the rule of the iron rod is to be understood it must in no sense do violation to the principles which underlie the teaching of Jesus. In a very real sense it must represent fairly and accurately the law of the Kingdom of God on earth.

What then is this rod of iron?

The figure, like so many in the Psalms, is a pastoral one. The shepherds of David's day—as both before and after, in the unchanging East—went about their occupation provided with two implements, the pastoral staff and the iron club. The iron club was the shepherd's weapon of defence, not only for himself, but also for his sheep; for the Palestinian shepherd follows his calling under very different circumstances to those associated in our Western minds with the care of the flock. The pastures were often found in mountainous and desolate places, and whilst roving bands of robbers threatened danger to the shepherd, wild beasts such as hyenas, jackals, bears, leopards and lions were liable to attack the flock, and the safety of the defenceless sheep depended entirely upon the watchfulness and strength of the shepherd.

A number of Scriptures attest the familiarity of Israel with the fact of wild beasts in their midst—as for example, I Sam. 17, 34-36, I Kings 13. 24, Jer. 5. 6; and to realise this aspect of the shepherd's work is to understand more clearly the import of our Lord's own words in John 10. 11-17 "*I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep. He that is a hireling, and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not,*

*beholdeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth, and the wolf snatcheth them and scattereth them*".

The rod of iron (Hebrew—"Shebet") was the shepherd's iron club, his weapon of defence and his means of defending the sheep. But since in the ordinary course of events the shepherd's care for his sheep transcended all thought for himself, the iron club became in a very special sense associated with the protection of his flock from every kind of danger. This is borne out by the Scripture in a very remarkable manner. The quotation in Rev. 2. 27 "He shall rule them with a rod of iron" employs a Greek word (*poimaino*) which has the significance of "shepherding" in the sense of "feeding"; and the phrase would be more correctly translated "He shall shepherd them with the shepherd's club". In addition to its use for defence against robbers and wild beasts, the club was used for beating a way through jungle or undergrowth in the search for fresh pastures, and so its association with feeding as well as defence became obvious.

The same word is translated "feed" in John 21. 16 ("Feed my sheep") I Pet. 5. 2 ("Feed the flock of God") Rev. 7. 17 ("The Lamb which is in the midst of them shall feed them") and in several other instances. In the Old Testament the same allusion occurs in Micah 7. 14 "Feed thy people with thy rod", where "rod" again is translated from "shebet".

In the same connection also is the word of the Lord to the Israelites of Ezekiel's day "I will cause you to pass under the rod (*shebet*) and I will bring you unto the bond of the covenant" (Ezek. 20. 37). "He will smite the earth" says Isaiah "with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked." (Isa. 11. 4.) This "iron rod" is in very truth a means of sustenance and defence to those who are the "children of the Kingdom" and who stand in need of that which the Kingdom is designed to provide.

But what is the significance of that parallel expression in Psalm 2. 9 "He shall break them in pieces like a potter's vessel" and its companion text in Rev. 2. 27 "As the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers". Another Eastern custom of every day is alluded to here. A very common occupation in the East was the making of "homrah", broken pottery reduced to very fine powder by constant grinding with heavy stones, and used in the manufacture of cement. The common use of earthenware vessels of all kinds rendered an abundant supply of broken pottery continually available, and with painstaking care the makers of "homrah" squatted upon the ground with a little

pile of potsherds between their feet and rolled the heavy boulder to and fro until the fragments were reduced to the finest of dust. Not until then was the "homrah" ready for the next stage in the making of cement for use in lining their water cisterns and aqueducts, and for many other purposes.

Here then is afforded an eloquent picture of the disintegrating forces which break down and scatter not only the kingdoms of this world but all that is lifted up in defiance against Christ. The vivid picture drawn by Daniel when he expounded to King Nebuchadnezzar his dream of the great image is on the same line—the image broken to the ground and pulverised to dust by the "Stone" Kingdom—(Dan. 2. 34-35).

This disintegration is not of individuals, but of institutions, governments and organisations of man. "Everything that can be shaken will be shaken" says the writer to the Hebrews (12. 27) and every student is thoroughly familiar with the many lines of Scriptural reasoning which indicate that at the time when the reign of Christ begins it is the institutions of man which crash to destruction that every individual member of the human race may be given the opportunity of walking up the "Highway of Holiness" to perfection of life.

With this destruction of every man-made institution the individuals comprising them are set free to be built into that new and universal organisation which is the New Jerusalem come down from heaven to earth—just as the broken potsherds were ground into dust in order that that same dust might be welded together in a new and indestructible cement that should endure forever. The broken potsherds, having outlived their usefulness and like a "garment, waxing old, ready to vanish away" (Heb. 8. 13) are converted into a new and imperishable structure which shall serve the needs of man for all time. Could there be in all the range of Scripture allegory a more perfect picture of that "Stone" Kingdom, which "shall break in pieces and devour all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever".

Thus the entire picture is one of the beneficent reign of Christ under which evil will be restrained and the "flock" defended from those wild beasts of iniquity and sin which would otherwise still lie in wait and dog their footsteps; and the willing ones led by the "green pastures and still waters" of the Twenty-third Psalm, where they may in perfect confidence and security "obtain joy and salvation" whilst "sorrow and sighing will flee away" (Isa. 35. 10). In the meantime the enlightening influences of this day will have played their part in bringing about that "time of trouble

such as was not since there was a nation" (Dan. 12. 1; Matt. 24. 21) in the course of which all the broken posterds of human government will be reduced to the dust—and upon their ruins will arise the fair edifice of that "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" for which Abraham looked so many long years ago (Heb. 11. 10). The "iron rod" is a guarantee of Divine protection and sustenance to all mankind. The

"breaking as a potter's vessel" predicts the final collapse of the power of man and the reconstruction work of the Millennial Age—founded upon love, peace, persuasion to good things, that the words of Isaiah so many centuries ago may at last come into a rich fulfilment—

*"And the work of righteousness shall be peace;  
and the effect of righteousness quietness and  
assurance for ever."*

## The Voice of the Monuments

### 2. The Behistun Inscription.

The traveller, going eastward from Bagdad (near ancient Babylon) into Persia, is confronted at one stage of his journey by a stupendous precipice of rock, four thousand feet high—the blunt end of a range of hills. The rock is called Behistun, a name which means in the native tongue "the place of God" and from time immemorial it has been accounted holy. Babylonian, Persian and Greek armies have passed and repassed that sheer cliff on their missions of conquest or in hasty retreat. Merchants from days when the world was young have pitched their camps at its foot. And about five hundred years before Christ the great Persian king Darius—the one who gave permission for the Temple building operations to be resumed in the days of the return from Babylon (Ezra. 5. 1-17) caused a long inscription recounting his military victories to be chiselled upon the smooth face of the rock a hundred feet above the ground. He had the work executed with great care, for he wanted his inscription to endure for many years. The rock was carefully smoothed and polished, the lines of writing and the curving sculptures done by skilled craftsmen; then the finished work was painted over with a varnish so hard and enduring that it has protected the greater part of the inscription for over two thousand years, unto this day.

It was in the year 1835 that Henry Rawlinson, a political assistant of the Governor of Kermanshah, a Persian town not far from Behistun, set to work to copy the inscription. The young enthusiast was destined to become one of the world's greatest archaeologists in after days, but the service he rendered the world in this, his first great achievement, is one of the most momentous in all the history of research in Eastern lands. Having

climbed to the inscription, a matter of some difficulty, he found that it was written in three languages, like the Rosetta stone which had been discovered forty years earlier, but whereas that stone had been written in Greek and Egyptian and became the means of unlocking the secrets of Egyptian hieroglyphics to the modern world, this inscription at Behistun was written in Persian, Median and Babylonian. In 1835 only Persian was understood and that very imperfectly. The Babylonian inscriptions and tablets which were being found in such profusion in all the lands of the East were still completely unreadable; it was Rawlinson's work on that day that afforded the clues necessary to an understanding of the Babylonian cuneiform alphabet and symbols and so made possible the facility with which those tablets are read to-day.

By the year 1847 the task of decipherment was complete and from then on the knowledge gained was applied to thousands of cuneiform tablets already existing in the world's museums and the collections of scholars. Progress was slow; the correct translation of many signs and terms has been arrived at only in quite recent years; but for a full century now it has been possible to read of the lives and achievements of the fellow citizens of Shem, of Abraham, of Moses and of Daniel, for Babylonian cuneiform was the written language of all Western Asia for a span of three thousand years and the histories of the times were written down in those queer little wedge-shaped characters. It is certain that much of the early part of the book of Genesis was thus written, and when Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees he would assuredly have taken many such tablets with him.

Rawlinson had to copy the inscription by hand, for photography had not been invented in his day.

In 1904 two twentieth century archæologists, R. Campbell Thompson and L. W. King, of the British Museum, climbed the rock and photographed the writing. They found remarkably few errors in Rawlinson's work of sixty years previously. In 1946 an American expedition revisited the place but added no further information to that already known. The Behistun inscription had done its work in making it possible for men to read the voluminous written records of Assyria and Babylonia which, recovered from the burning sands and ruined cities of Mesopotamia, have done so much to make the Bible a living book to us.

To-day we have the Babylonian stories of the Flood and of the Creation; the Assyrian record of Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem in the days of Hezekiah, the invasion of Canaan by Joshua and the Israelites; Nebuchadnezzar's building of great Babylon, and many others, indelibly impressed on imperishable clay tablets, safely reposing in the world's museums and colleges, giving their testimony to the truth of the Bible story. And the Bible accounts stand out as purer, nobler, and more

exact and accurate, by contrast. Our knowledge of earth's history has been immeasurably extended until we can now trace the movements of the sons of Shem and Ham back to within a few centuries of the Flood. We can appreciate more vividly the atmosphere in which the lives of Abram, Daniel, Ezekiel, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther were spent. And this knowledge that has come to us had its beginning a hundred years ago when young Rawlinson scaled that cliff out in Persia and copied the writing that had defied the wind and rain of twenty-four centuries.

Small wonder then that a nineteenth century writer, Dr. Samuel Kinns, in 1891 wrote "There cannot be the least doubt that Sir Henry Rawlinson was raised up by the Almighty to be the pioneer in this great and glorious work, and was specially endowed with courage and wisdom for the undertaking, combined as they were with a belief that the Bible is a revelation from God to man". That is an important point. Rawlinson was a Christian; what he did, he did to the glory of God, knowing that his work would make the Bible better understood, and God blessed his endeavours.

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## THE ARK AND MOUNT ARARAT

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A recent demonstration of interest in Mount Ararat on the part of the daily Press has perhaps been the cause of more than one question addressed to the Editor of the "Monthly"; it may well be that an abstract of notes collected over many years past will be informative. The question of the continued existence or otherwise of Noah's Ark has fascinated many minds for centuries past, but the present writer feels that the explorers who at time of writing are so enthusiastically climbing Ararat are literally barking up the wrong tree—there is no real evidence that the Ark of Noah was ever near Mount Ararat at all!

Ever since Berosus, that meticulous old priest in the Temple of Bel at Babylon, two hundred years before Christ, placed on record the belief current in his day that the Ark still remained in the fastnesses of the Gordyeen (now the Hakkiari) mountains, in the south of Armenia (and two hundred miles from Ararat), and that pilgrims went up to see it and to take away pieces of the bitumen covering to make charms and amulets, the tale of travellers who claimed to have made the ascent and viewed it has continued. Josephus, the Jewish his-

torian of the time of Christ, repeated Berosus' statement and averred that the Ark was still there in his own day. Other classical writers repeated the story, and in the early centuries of the Christian era it was generally believed that the particular mountain in the Gordyeen range upon which the venerable vessel lay was that now known as Judi Dagh, on the east side of the Tigris a few miles from the present town of Jesiret-ibn-Omar and about a hundred miles north of Mosul. Among others, the Roman emperor Heraclius (round about A.D. 600) ascended the mountain to view the famous relic for himself and upon his descent built and endowed a monastery in the vicinity, which monastery remained until A.D. 776 when it was destroyed by lightning. It was also related by Arabic writers that the Caliph Omar, at the time when the Moslem hosts were overrunning the country, built a mosque at Judi Dagh from the woodwork of the now ancient Ark. (This was the Omar who captured Jerusalem in A.D. 638 and built the Mosque of Omar and the Dome of the Rock at Jerusalem—the "abomination of desolation" of Daniel 11.) Three hundred years before

this, Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis and a great theologian, according to his own account had ascended Judi Dagh and viewed the remains of the Ark. From time to time during following centuries traces of the old belief are met with in the writings of travellers; one of the most definite is that of the Spanish Jew, Benjamin of Tudela, who passed by Judi Dagh in A.D. 1129, mentioning in his famous "diary" that here was the site of the Ark's landing, and spoke of a local annual festival which commemorated the event, still observed at the time he visited the place. (It is interesting to note that Wigram, a clergyman resident in Kurdistan for many years, in his book published a few years ago described this same festival as still being held to-day, and that it is "of unknown antiquity"). Twenty years after Benjamin, Rabbi Pethakiah went the same way and confirmed his predecessor's statements.

It was the Moslem invasion and control of Syria and Mesopotamia that gradually drove out the Christians and sent them northward into Armenia proper, where they settled to become the ancestors of the Christian Armenians of modern times. This was how the legend became transferred to Mount Ararat. ("Ararat" in Genesis 8 is in the Hebrew "*Urartu*", the ancient name for all Armenia, and of itself is no proof that the mountain now known by that name is the one meant; any mountain in Armenia might equally well be the one intended by the Genesis account, and in ancient times the Gordyeen range in which Judi Dagh lies was part of Armenia, as it properly is to-day.) The Koran, in its reference to Noah and the Flood, names Judi Dagh as the mountain concerned, a further evidence that this was the understanding in the days that the Koran was written.

With the transfer of the legend to Ararat, however, it was inevitable that pilgrimages to that mountain to find the Ark should become the vogue. The pious St. Jacob, who founded the monastery of St. Jacob at the foot of Ararat (destroyed in 1840 by an avalanche) was perhaps the first. Every time he got halfway up the mountain he fell asleep and the angels carried him back to the bottom. After he had given up in despair, an angel brought him a piece of wood from the Ark as consolation, which piece of wood became the prize showpiece in the monastery and suffered destruction with it. At least, that is the story. The proverbial conservatism of English scholars was, however, apparently slow to admit the claims of Ararat for as late as 1737 William Whiston's monumental work on the Flood gave the Gordyeen mountains as being the site of the descent.

However, on 27th September, 1829, Dr.

Frederick Parrott, with three Armenians and two Russians, set out to prove the truth of the story for good and all. They reached the summit of Ararat, but found no Ark. In 1834 Spassky Aftonomet essayed to make the discovery but he too reached the top with no greater success. He was followed in 1845 by Dr. Abich, and he in turn during July and August of the year 1850 by a large party under the Russian General Chodzko, who stayed at the summit for three days in connection with a survey of TransCaucasia. In 1856 an English expedition went up and then on 11th September, 1876, the mountain was tackled by the explorer who has left the best account extant, the Englishman Lord James Bryce. The noble lord did find, at the 13,000 feet level, a log of wood four feet long bearing signs of having been shaped by a tool and he brought a piece away with him but the utmost he would say was that it would be difficult for anyone to prove that it had not been a piece of the Ark! None of these explorers claimed to have found the Ark.

In 1883 came the first modern report of the Ark having been "spotted". A Turkish party, the newspapers stated, accompanied by an Englishman, investigating earthquakes in the vicinity, came upon the Ark protruding from a glacier. They got inside and found that it was built in three stories, divided into rooms fifteen feet high. Said the reporter "The Englishman had read his Bible and saw at a glance that the Ark was built of the gopher wood which, *as everybody knows* (italics ours, Ed.) grows only on the banks of the Euphrates". Since no one has ever found out what was meant by the Genesis description of "gopher" wood, and since moreover the Euphrates plains have never in all antiquity grown any tree save the date palm, which is quite unsuited for shipbuilding, one must suspect this account of having been at least subject to a little "writing up". No more was heard until in 1892 the Western world was startled by the appearance in America of an Eastern ecclesiastical dignitary, Dr. John Joseph Nouri, D.D., who asserted that he had himself ascended Mount Ararat and seen the ruins of the Ark. The "*San Francisco Examiner*" ran a series of articles on the subject and plans were made for an expedition to accompany the venerable cleric to the spot; this expedition never set out.

There the matter rested for the time and no further ascents of the mountain were recorded. In 1928 an expedition under one James Strong, an engineer, was planned in Chicago; application was made to the Turkish government for facilities, but nothing came of it. Mr. Strong, confident of finding the Ark, had intended taking it to America and

placing it on exhibition.

During the last war an apocryphal story was circulated and copied by many Christian periodicals concerning a Russian airman who was alleged to have flown over Mount Ararat in 1917 and seen the Ark resting on the shores of a lake on the summit. William Whiston, previously mentioned (a pupil of Sir Isaac Newton and a writer of some note—he first translated the works of Josephus) has a similar story in his "*Theory of the Earth*" first published in 1696, concerning a fully-rigged sailing ship discovered at the bottom of a coal-mine in Switzerland, which, he says, was accepted as a proof of the truth of the Flood! The story of the Russian airman is so carelessly put together and full of palpable errors that it cannot be taken seriously.

Now in 1949 there is a sudden and altogether unlooked-for revival of interest in the ancient mountain and its not-so-ancient legend. Three expeditions, one American, one British and one Dutch, are planning to investigate the locality thoroughly. The Turkish government, at first a little dubious since Mount Ararat is on the Russian border, has given permission, and at time of writing these notes the American expedition has already set out; by the time these same notes appear in print the result of their search, if any, may be known to the world. The Soviet government, perhaps not unnaturally somewhat sceptical at this sudden and somewhat

unwonted concern for Biblical lore on the part of the Western nations, has suggested that the scientists' interest lies more in the direction of a survey of Russia's southern frontiers from that exalted height (Ararat is over 17,000 feet high, one of the highest mountains in the world) in readiness for a future world cataclysm, rather than a search for evidence of a past world cataclysm. One can hardly blame them for feeling that way about it; the evidence for there being anything of the Ark on this particular mountain is so slender, and suggested entirely by legends less than eight hundred years old, that one would hardly expect serious investigators of this twentieth century to give time or money to such a quest.

The ancient Babylonian story of the Flood, dating back to some twenty-five centuries before Christ, named Mount Nisir—or more properly, the mountain of the land of Nisir—as the scene of the Ark's landing. This mountain is believed to be one now known as Algurd, 12,000 feet high, also in the Gordyeen range, near Rowandiz and about one hundred miles east of Mosul. All the evidence goes to point that so far as history and tradition can say, in harmony with the Bible account, the Ark came to rest somewhere in that range of heights that fringes the northern side of the Mesopotamian plain, the natural locality in which, drifting from the south, it might be expected to become stranded, and probably never came within two hundred miles of Mount Ararat.

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## A Note on the Parable of the Virgins.

*From a reader*

The comments on the "*Ten Virgins*" in your August issue suggest a possible explanation of this difficult parable.

Our Lord followed His great prophecy with parables, of which this is one, to emphasise the need, in those who would enter the Kingdom, of continual watchfulness and self-examination. This one exhorts them to "keep awake." He said that the uncertain termination of the present age made such vigilance necessary.

Many students regard it as a prophecy concerning the end of the Gospel Age; but there must have been both classes of virgins from its beginning. All these parables seem to apply to the next age after the Church (the wise ones) have been selected and separated; and our Lord describes present conditions as they will then be seen. Weymouth's translation bears out this thought in the words: "*Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be found to*

*be like.*" It is impossible in the present age to say who are the wise and who the foolish. Both classes are undefiled virgins who profess not to belong to the world but to "go out" to meet (the requirements of) the Bridegroom. Both are anxious for the Kingdom. The wise accept the purposes of God and set aside their own wills as did their Lord. They have a sufficient supply of the light of the Holy Spirit (spiritual insight) to understand the position and prepare themselves for the coming Kingdom. The less wise (the foolish) have only a limited supply of light and cannot see afar off. Possibly they are those ardent ones who hope, by their own efforts, to bring in the Kingdom by "Christianising" the world.

Uneventful times would produce a sense of security and there would be nothing to distinguish them; both "slumber and sleep". But dark times of danger and uncertainty (midnight) come along

and rouse them. Demands are made upon their holiness and call them to look upon (behold) the Master for comfort and help. The wise examine themselves and follow Him more closely—"go out" further to "meet Him"—and are comforted. Not so the foolish. Their reserve of "oil" is exhausted. They can see no further and are distressed.

The conversation between the wise and foolish would not in fact take place, but shews how they were "speaking" by their actions. The wise are too humble to claim wisdom. The foolish too unwise to see their folly. The latter however feel their lack and admire the calmness of the wise. The wise, by their attitude, declare that their peace cannot be transferred or be had for the asking, but

must be purchased at the cost of self. Similarly the cry of the foolish at the end of the parable and the answer of the Bridegroom, represent the impressions they will receive when they find themselves shut out of the Kingdom. They will accept the situation as the Master's decision and conclude they never belonged to Him.

Not until the chosen ones are revealed in the next age can these truths be seen. *Then*, looking back, the kingdom of Heaven will be found to be "like" the picture drawn by our Lord in this parable; which teaches that only those trained in the principles of holiness will be acceptable to Him.

*By constantly "beholding" Him we are transformed from one degree of radiant holiness to another.*

## Eventide

"So he bringeth them unto their desired haven"



"... and they told Him all things, whatsoever they had done and whatsoever they had taught" (Mark 6. 30). It was the "twelve" of whom Mark wrote these familiar words, the twelve who had now returned, two by two, from the mission on which they had been sent to the cities and villages of Israel. What stories they would have to tell as they reported back to Him who had sent them forth!

Jesus Himself had been out on public witness work, having been round about the villages teaching. (Mark 6. 6.) He had returned "into His own country" (v.1.) after visiting the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, and with the twelve in attendance upon Him, began to teach and preach in their synagogue. But the ministry fell on callous hearts and unheeding ears. They claimed to know Him who He was and whence He came. They found cause of offence in Him (v.3.) and set His words at naught. Because of that "He could do there no mighty work, save that He laid His hands upon a few sick folk and healed them" (v.5).

It was into an atmosphere charged thus with contempt and scorn that Jesus sent His followers, two by two, to preach that men should repent. (v.12.) To assist them in their ministry He had equipped them with great powers—power to cast out the unclean spirits which afflicted the populace. "They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many that were sick and healed them." (v.13.)

Witness work in Israel was no gala-day experience. Even He who spake as never man spake found the atmosphere of unbelief too frigid for success. The flow of healing power was checked and hindered in the midst of such frozen apathy, where but a "few" could receive His bounteous gift. Could the disciples hope to have success where the Master failed? Could they thaw the frozen hearts with words of warmth greater than the Master spake?

That they had some success seems evident, for they did cast out some demons, and heal some of the sick—and now they had returned to tell the Master about all they had said and all they had done!

This had been an almost invaluable experience for them, for nothing can test the fibre of the witness-bearing soul like an atmosphere of indifference and apathy. When the words rebound as from the bastion rock they can have one of two effects. Either they can daunt and stifle the warm enthusiasm of the witness-bearer himself or they can react and feed the flames of that enthusiasm to whiter heat by awaking sympathy for deluded men.

With Jesus that indifferent response led to a deepening of His sympathy towards His unresponsive audience. When men to whom He spake of God's benevolence and love could not heed and accept what He had to say He knew there were

sometimes factors other than human choice at work, and for these men His compassion began to flow. Cold callous indifference aroused and intensified in His heart that High Priestly quality that could bear gently with ignorant and erring men, and made Him more resolutely determined to see His mission through.

As Jesus sat and listened to the stories of these twelve, we can be sure He knew how to turn this experience to good effect so that they should not be too elated with their meagre success. "Rejoice not because demons are subject unto you, but rejoice because your names are written in heaven above", He found need to say to them at another time.

Hence while they had some small success there was another better side. They, along with Him, were Heaven's evangelists—God had sent Him—He had sent them, and success or no success, they were linked with God in a witness-bearing to a demon-ridden world. It is that that counts.

We also find ourselves sharing the like experience. The testimony of the Most High has never yet been withdrawn—nor can it be till sin has been eliminated from the earth. But in this callous world God has not promised us much success. The product of this entire Age is but a "little flock"—"there's but one here and there." It is the reaction back into our own heart that counts. When after great rebuff we can say with compassionate sympathy "poor deluded suffering world, your day has yet to come" the value of our witness is not lost, it has returned to us with added interest. There has been gain to us, even if to none besides.

But there is something more we can do to bring these desirable effects home to our souls. It is to

do as the disciples did. Review the day's experience for the Master's ear in the quiet eventide. Tell Him humbly what we have tried to say and do in His dear Name—it is there that the temperature of heart and soul will reveal itself. You will tell Him only what you have sincerely sought to do and say, and as you speak, if only in the deeper chambers of the heart, the fires of devotion to His cause will begin to glow and send out their heat and warmth and you will find your sense of serving Him intensified. You will then say,

"One more day's work for Jesus  
One less of life for me!

But Heaven is nearer  
And Christ is dearer,

Than yesterday to me,  
His love and light

Fill all my soul tonight."

"O blessed work for Jesus

O rest at Jesus' feet,

There toil seems pleasure

Fatigue seems leisure,

And pain for Him is sweet!

Lord, if I may

I'll serve another day."

If then, this day your voice has rebounded as from the bastion rock; if that little conversation did not turn or end as you desired; if that little tract was later found mud-stained upon the road, never mind: Go and tell Jesus about it all. The witness is not irretrievably lost: it will re-appear in the after years, sometime, somewhere, when an enlightened consciousness counts up the opportunities lost. Seeming defeat with God today can never fail; it is a sure contribution to the final overthrow of the wrong and the untrue.



## THE QUESTION BOX



Q. "Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better." (Phil. 1.23.) Is not this an indication that Paul expected to be in heaven with his Lord immediately after death?

A. Paul was in a strait betwixt two things, knowing not which of the two he would choose, if he had the choice. On the one hand it was desirable for the sake of his converts that he remain in the flesh to give them that instruction which they needed; on the other hand he had an earnest desire to be finished with this earthly life with all its trials and persecutions, and to attain his promised

resurrection inheritance. But there is nothing in the verse to demand that Paul expected that promised "being with Christ" to follow immediately upon his death. It was the contrasting appeals of life with the needs of his converts and death with its cessation of labour that stood before his mind. The word "depart" in this verse is the key. It is correctly rendered "unloosed" or "set free" and refers to the being released from the thralldom of the flesh without any reference to the time feature of the matter. The word is derived from the loosing of a vessel's mooring ropes from the quay-

side preparatory to setting out upon a voyage and is applied to the dissolving of an object into separate parts such as the rendering of a piece of cloth into its constituent threads by unravelling the weaving. From this it has the thought of the dissolution of the earthly frame in death and the return of the spirit to "God who gave it". Paul uses the same word in 2 Cor. 5.1 "We know if our earthly house be dissolved we have a building of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens", and Peter, when speaking of the dissolution of "this present evil world" says "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be" (2 Pet. 3.11). The idea of release or freedom is contained in the use of the same word by Jesus when he said (Luke 13. 12) "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity".

The Diaglott renders the verse "I have an earnest desire for the returning and the being with Christ, which is far better" thus making Paul contrast his remaining in life with his desire for a then far future event, the Second Advent of his Lord, the consummation of all his hopes. This overcomes the difficulty suggested by the question but is hardly a correct rendering. The word is rendered "returned" in 2 Macc. 8. 25 (*Apocrypha*) when, speaking of the Jews' pursuit of their enemies, it is said "but lacking time they returned, for it was the day before the sabbath". In that instance the word has the idea of the pursuers being "loosed" or "released" from their pursuit, as though we would say they "let go" or "desisted", and that is not the same thing as the return of Christ from the heavens. On the whole therefore it does seem that Paul was quite definitely speaking of his anticipated release from the flesh, from this present life, because such a "loosing" implied that his next conscious experience, even though it must be at the end of the Gospel Age, was the "being with Christ", "which is far better".

Q. With respect to Saul's visit to the witch of Endor, and the request that she call up the spirit of Samuel; does this not imply a belief in Israel at that time that the dead are conscious, in heaven or elsewhere?

A. No. The Hebrew belief in the time of Saul was that all the dead, without exception, go to *sheol*, the hidden state, the grave. At a much later time, not long before the coming of Christ, the idea of a limited amount of life and consciousness in *sheol* did begin to filter into Jewish thought from Greek philosophy, the theories of Plato and others, but in Saul's time there was no doubt in the minds of men that death is a state of sleep, of

unconsciousness. The well-known scriptures in Ecclesiastes define that plainly enough "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom of any kind in the grave whither thou goest". (Eccl. 9.10.) There are many such Scriptures and they are mostly well known.

Saul's intention was to have Samuel awakened out of his sleep and to be brought back to earth to commune with him. He well knew that according to the belief of his times this could only be done with the aid of evil spirits; he was under no illusion on that score. He said himself that God had departed from him, and so he knowingly and deliberately turned to the powers of darkness to help him in his plight. The expression put into the mouth of the supposed Samuel, "why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up?" shows clearly enough what was in Saul's mind. He was not expecting Samuel to be brought down from heaven in the manner of the angelic visitors who had brought God's messages to his ancestors in days gone by. He expected Samuel to be brought up, from *sheol*, from the depth of the earth, and return there to resume his interrupted sleep when the conversation was over.

The story does reveal a vivid sidelight on the activities of the evil spirits in Saul's day. It is evident that they had the power—not unknown in more modern times—of effecting "materialisations", and deceiving living men and women into thinking that they were actually conversing with their loved lost ones. The difference between now and then is that whereas to-day the pretence is that the departed one has been brought down from life in heaven to converse with the enquirer, in Saul's day it was that the departed one was awakened and brought up from *sheol*. In either case, of course, the evil spirits impersonate the deceased, who himself remains asleep in the grave, all the time, waiting the resurrection, as did Samuel on that dark night when King Saul heard his doom pronounced.

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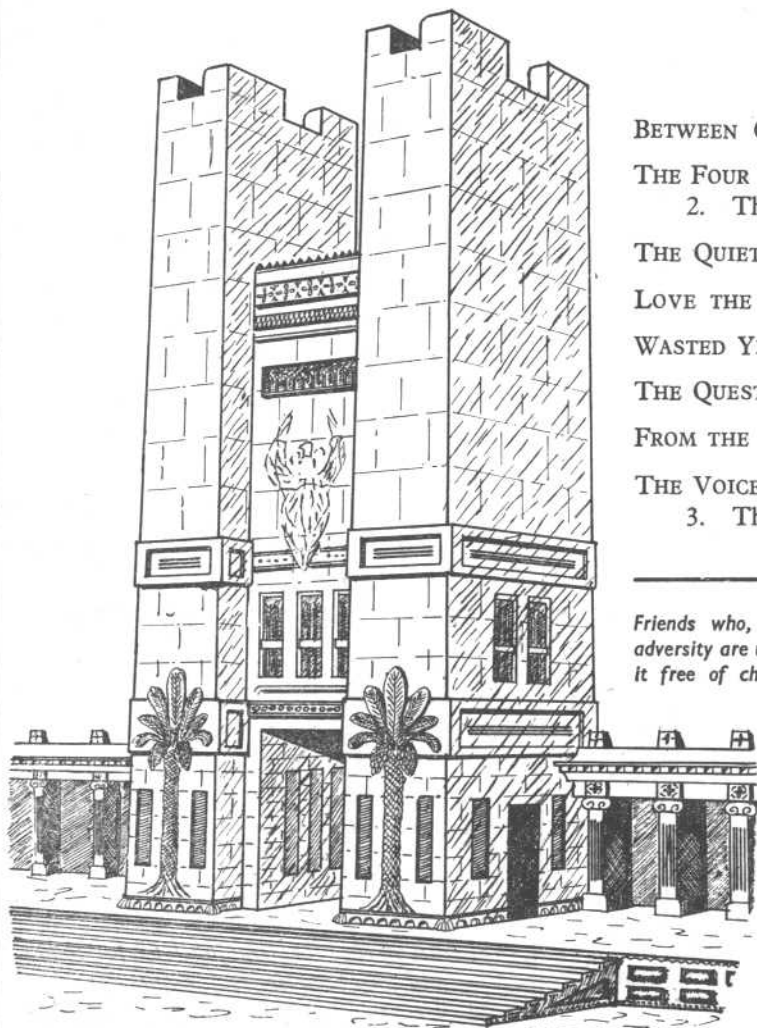
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Lift up your heads, O ye gates,  
 And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors,  
 And the King of glory shall come in.

## BETWEEN OURSELVES

Special attention is requested to be drawn to the fact that the November meeting at Caxton Hall is to be in the Kent Hall at 7.0 p.m. instead of the Tudor Hall at 6.30 as is usual. The Kent Hall is on the same floor; merely turn left at top of stairway instead of to right.

\* \* \*

Special meetings were held at Caxton Hall on 17th September last, the afternoon gathering being for the friends and the evening being devoted to a public meeting. Bro. J. A. Jones (*Cardiff*) spoke first in the afternoon on the theme "*Seeing that all these things shall be dissolved*" and touching upon the evident dissolution of the elements of this world now so manifest, pointing to the coming in of the Kingdom as a very definite imminent event. After questions arising from the discourse had been answered, Bro. A. O. Hudson gave the devotional talk on the subject "*Treasure in Heaven*". The friends adjourned for tea, coming together again to join with a good attendance of interested people to hear Bro. H. C. Thackway address them on the advertised topic "*Will God be Silent Forever?*". Much interest was shown and follow-up meetings for the four ensuing Saturdays were announced. At the time of writing these notes the first of these follow-ups has been held and an attendance of seventeen persons interested from the first meeting reported.

\* \* \*

The friends at Manchester report a happy and uplifting time at the "Assembly of Witness" held in that city on 17th-18th September. The public meeting associated with the assembly was addressed by Bro. F. H. Guard on the topic "*The Kingdom of God is at Hand*". A report of the gathering will appear in our December issue.

\* \* \*

Bro. F. Lardent is able to supply his well-known Christian Art Calendar with monthly tear-off sheets and coloured Scripture pictures, similar to previous years, as usual. The price inclusive of purchase tax and postage is 2/9. Please send orders direct to Bro. F. Lardent, 174, Forest Hill Road, London, S.E.23.

\* \* \*

The Benevolent Fund is now in the care of Bro. E. Allbon, 20, Sunnymede Drive, Ilford, Essex, assisted by a representative panel comprising Bros. G. Absalom (*Beeston*), A. Boyce (*Dewsbury*), and G. A. Ford (*Luton*). Donations intended for the Fund, and all other correspondence in connection with the same, should be sent to Bro. Allbon. Our friends need no reminder as to the excellent work that has been performed by this Fund through the years.

Further to the notice in the previous column, the meetings held each Saturday following the public meeting at Caxton Hall have now all been held. At each of the "follow-ups" between 17 and 20 interested people were present, and genuine interest on the part of some of these has led to their continued attendance at the regular Caxton Hall meeting held on 15th October, when Bro. S. A. Couling (*Rugby*) gave an exhortation to "*Watch always*" and Bro. F. Oakley (*Forest Gate*) a discourse on "*The Lamb of God*".

The outcome of this series of public meetings has been so encouraging that a further one has been arranged for Monday, 5th December, in the York Hall, Caxton Hall, in the expectation that this week-night meeting will appeal to City workers. The brethren are asked to remember the interests of this further effort in their prayers; it is realised that "except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it". The method of advertising adopted (posters on London's "Underground" stations) although much more expensive than the usual methods, seems to be much more effective.

---

### Gone From Us

—\*—

Sis. E. A. Randle (*Forest Hill*).

—\*—

"Till the day break, and the shadows flee away."

LONDON  
MONTHLY MEETING  
Saturday, 19th November, 1949

7.0—9.0 p.m.

In the Kent Hall  
CAXTON HALL

Caxton Street, Westminster, S.W.1  
5 mins. St. James Park Station and Victoria Street

Praise and Worship  
Fellowship

A talk on the Christian outlook for today  
and an opportunity for questions  
A Scriptural address by guest speaker

Chairman: Bro. D. Nadal.  
Speakers: Bro. G. H. Jennings.  
Bro. F. H. Guard.

# The Four Horses of the Apocalypse (PART 2)

The Second Seal

H.H. (Manchester)

## THE SECOND SEAL

The second horse is *The Spirit of Enmity*. Its going forth is a fulfilment of Gen. 3. 15—"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed". This enmity began in the time of Cain and Abel, and has never ceased; the well known passage in Hebrews 11 (verses 35-38) describes some of its results in the Jewish age, between Satan's seed and the natural seed of Abraham. But Abraham, as we know, was to have also a spiritual seed, to be developed during the present age through the power of the Truth as it is in Christ; and the enmity between Satan's seed and this spiritual seed of Abraham, the Church class, has been very much greater than that manifested in the Jewish age, because of the greater importance of the spiritual seed than that of the merely natural. It is this increased and special degree of enmity and bitterness manifested by Satan's seed during the Gospel age that is represented by the second horse.

The death of Christ on Calvary—the supreme example and result of the enmity foretold in Genesis—occupies a very special place in the Plan of God, as shown by the vision of chapter 5; and it should not prevent us from understanding the going forth of this second horse *after* that great event. If we remember that the seals were opened by the Lamb in the Throne, i.e., by the risen and exalted Christ, and that they must therefore depict events *after* His death and resurrection, we shall be able to view the matter with perfect clarity.

The second horse went forth very soon after the first: how soon is shown by such passages as Acts 4. 21 and 5. 17, 18. In Acts 7 is described for us the death of Stephen—the first member of the Church of Christ to suffer death as the result of the going forth of the second horse. In this connection, note the words of Jesus in John 8. 44—"Ye are of your father the devil". He was speaking of the religious leaders of His day—to those who claimed to represent God, and who indeed ought to have so done. Instead, they were agents of Satan; they were Satan's seed, and it was the enmity between them and the early members of the spiritual seed of Abraham that led to Stephen's death.

In Acts 8. 1, 3 and 9. 1 we see the spirit of enmity operating actively in Saul; after his conversion, the same spirit operated *against* him continuously and severely, as witness his words in 2 Cor. 4. 8-10, 6. 4, 5 and 11. 23-25.

Jesus foretold this enmity in the well known words of Matt. 10. 17, 21, 22: "But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues. And the brother shall deliver up brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake".

In the later part of the same chapter (ver. 34), He said, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I come not to send peace, but a sword". He was not speaking of political strife and warfare, but rather of strife and discord in the religious sphere of life; and how true His words have been. The sword that He spoke of was the sword of persecution (note the next two verses), and is, it is suggested, the same sword that was seen by John in this vision of the second seal. Frequently and mightily has this sword been used by Satan and his agents during the present age; and as in our Lord's day, so throughout the succeeding centuries, only too often has it been those who claimed to belong to God who have used the sword against the followers of Christ. Witness the persecutions of Protestants by Catholics and of Catholics by Protestants in England in the sixteenth century, during the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth. Those were the days when burnings at the stake were comparatively frequent events (remember Ridley, Latimer and Cranmer, who suffered in this way), and when imprisonment and executions for religious reasons were yet more common. This was the period of the Reformation, when the Church in England broke away from the Church of Rome, and the "Established" Church of England came into being.

Earlier in the age, the sword of persecution was wielded fiercely by the Roman Emperors, the enmity reaching its height during the early part of the fourth century in the reign of Diocletian. An account of the severe sufferings of Christians

at this time is given in McClintock and Strong's Encyclopedia, where it is stated that 140,000 Christians died by violence, besides 700,000 that died through the fatigues of banishment or of the public works to which they were condemned.

Later, in the middle part of the age, the sword was used in a shocking manner by the Inquisition, an institution attached to the Roman Catholic Church and much used by the latter in an attempt to suppress heresy (as they thought), and to bring all believers into their own way of doctrine and worship. The horrible and dreadful work of the Inquisition is known to most of us. Foxe's Book of Martyrs contains the record of many who suffered at its hands, and very painful reading do these accounts make.

In many cases, the sword of persecution has been used not against individuals only, but against groups of people, or even whole communities, such as the Albigenses and the Waldenses in the 12th and subsequent centuries. In the massacre of Beziers in 1209, it is estimated that 60,000 Albigenses perished in one day. Other massacres, such as those of Merindol and Orange (the latter in 1562), were directed against the Waldenses, and again caused great loss of life. In 1572, the massacre of St. Bartholomew was directed against the Huguenots; from 5,000 to 10,000 people perished in Paris, and thousands of others were put to death in other parts of France, the total slain being estimated as about 50,000.

The Reformation period in England, in the 16th century, has already been referred to, with its attendant persecutions and sufferings. Later, when the Established or Conformed Church had been brought into being, there came the persecution of the various non-conformist bodies—the Baptists, the Wesleyans, the Quakers, and so on—each of which had much to endure in the process of its rise and development. In the 17th century, during the reigns of Charles II and James II, much suffering again was caused by the persecution of the Scotch Covenanters.

Many and dark indeed have been the stains upon the pages of history caused by these various persecutions, all the result of the going forth of the second horse of the Apocalyptic vision.

Innumerable books have been written, describing the lives of individual Christians, and each such work shows in varying degrees the use of the sword of persecution against the follower of Christ. Foxe's Book of Martyrs has already been mentioned. "Pilgrim's Progress" was written by Bunyan when in prison, in the 17th century, as a preacher in the Baptist faith. Another book, known to many

of us, is the Life of Madame Guyon, a French lady who lived from 1648 to 1717; she suffered imprisonment several times for declaring the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. Through this, and through every similar book, the operations of the second horse and its rider can surely be traced; and generally speaking, it can be said that the more prominent the personage concerned, the more actively and bitterly was the work of persecution carried on against him, or her, as the case may be.

In many of Zangwill's interesting books are described the severe sufferings endured by Jews who had been enlightened concerning Christ and who had the courage to confess their faith. Such converts were usually entirely cut off by their relatives and friends, the spirit of bitterness being very actively displayed toward them. There was no doubt whatever about the use of the sharp sword of our vision in their lives.

The intense bitterness shown for many centuries by the followers of Mahomet against the followers of Christ, with all its attendant cruelties and sufferings, is but another outworking of the spirit of enmity of this vision.

The red colour of the horse might represent sinfulness—see Isaiah 1. 18; in support of which we remember the description by Paul of himself as the chief of sinners, because he had been guilty of persecuting God's true people (1 Tim. 1. 13, 15). But it may also represent (and probably this is the more correct thought) the bloodshed and the sacrifice of life which the sword has caused: in which connection, note the fifth seal, where the outcome of the persecuting work is described—"I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held".

The rider of the horse represents the seed of the serpent class—all those who have hated the Truth as it is in Christ, and who have manifested their hatred and bitterness against those who have held the truth, and borne witness for it, during the present age.

It would be well for us to remember here the absolute control exercised by God over the activities of the horse and its rider, and to realise, therefore, that not a single bit of enmity, and not the smallest act of persecution, has been manifested against the children of God without *His* knowledge and *His* permission. These things are shown in the vision both by the fact (noted previously in our examination of the seals as a whole) that the horse and its rider go forth only at the Divine command, and also by the words in verse 4 "and power was given to him"—"and there was given to him a great

sword". Except the authority and the sword had been given to the rider, he could have accomplished nothing, and the going forth of the horse would have been without effect. Compare the words of Jesus in John 19. 11, "Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above".

Every century, then, at this age, and every land where the Gospel of Christ has gone, has seen the operations of the second horse and its rider, just as surely as they saw the work of the first. The words of Paul in 2 Tim. 3. 12 have been true throughout the age, and are still true to-day: "He that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution". Also, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him" (2 Tim. 2. 12). The use of the sword, it may be noted, does not always result in physical persecution, especially in these later days of the age; the sufferings may be mental only, from the use of sharp, bitter and cruel words, and such sufferings can be just as keen as the physical.

Slander and evil speaking are assassinations of the character of another; and be it noted that whereas when physical life is gone, the sufferings are over, in the case of character assassination the sufferings may continue for years, for the remainder of natural life.

The fulfilment of the vision of the second horse, then, has been age-long, just as in the case of the first horse; and it would be impossible to put into words the sum total of suffering that the going forth of this horse and its rider has produced. From the viewpoint of the vision of the first horse, the present age is rightly called the Gospel age; from the viewpoint of the vision of the second horse, the age can properly be called the persecution age, or the age of suffering.

The comprehensiveness of verse 4 thus matches that of verse 2. It contains the history of the persecution and sufferings of all God's true people for nineteen centuries.

Again, in Hebrew phrase, *SELAH!*

## GATHERED GRAIN

We must not betray the reputation of the "Good News" by puerile mistakes we ought never to make, or by palpable errors which a little reading would prevent. Even when he scorned "enticing words of man's wisdom" in his preaching, as he did at Corinth (1 Cor. 2. 4), Paul's hearers knew that they were listening to an intelligent, educated man. That impression undoubtedly prepared a way for the message. The same thing is at least desirable, if not increasingly essential in those who seek to sow and cherish the seed of the Word in the intellectual climate of our times.

\* \* \*

Yonder, beneath us, is a fair meadow, through which the pure River of the Water of Life is winding its way; on either side of it stands the Tree of Life, with its twelve manner of fruits and its beautiful leaves for the healing of the nations. And in the distance, high on the summit of the Everlasting Hills, the city, all of God, bathed in light and quivering with glory—the New Jerusalem; its walls are of jasper, its foundations of precious stones, its angel-guarded gates of pearl—the city that needs no sun, no moon, "for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof".

\* \* \*

The saintly Dr. George Matheson once said, "Devotion must be a child of reflection; it may rise on wings, but they must be wings of thought."

Scripture is most explicit that we are called to "follow in His Steps". But Jesus never stepped out of sinfulness into sinlessness, hence, till our sinful estate has been ended by a full and complete acquittal, we cannot even begin to follow in His Steps.

\* \* \*

Would you have fellowship with the Father? You will be sure to find Him within the precincts of His holy house.

\* \* \*

He comes in power and great glory, which His faithful people will share. He reigns a thousand years, and they shall reign with Him. He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and the saints shall have dominion with Him, all kings shall fall down before Him, all nations shall serve Him, and the saints shall sit with Him in His throne. His name shall be exalted above every name that is named. At His name every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess to the glory of God and His name shall be in our foreheads, "the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, and My new name". Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty. His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face, and they shall reign for ever and ever. "For the marriage of the Lamb is come and His wife hath made herself ready." (*Forest Gate Bible Monthly.*)

## THE QUIET TIME

*"My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places."*

### OUR DAY

*"We are living, we are dwelling,  
In a grand and awful time.  
In an age on ages telling,  
To be living is sublime.  
Hark! the rumbling of the nations,  
Iron crumbling with the clay:  
Hark! what soundeth? 'Tis creation  
Groaning for a better day."*

*"Scoffers scorning, Heaven beholding,  
Thou hast but an hour to fight.  
See prophetic truth unfolding!  
Watch! and keep thy garments white,  
Oh, let all the soul within you  
For the truth's sake go abroad!  
Strike! let every nerve and sinew  
Tell on ages—tell for God!"*

### HE KNOWS

The Master has Himself served, and knows all the difficulties of the service. It gives a master great power over his workmen when they know he is not a mere amateur in the thing itself; not merely master because he has money enough to employ them, but is a master who has done the work well and thoroughly, and joins them in the work, saying, "Come and work with me; what you do not know, I will show you". It is such a Master whom we serve.

### HE HEARS

In ancient Crete there was the image of a god without ears. It was intended as a reminder to passers-by that the god in question was too busy and too preoccupied to be bothered with the prayers of needy people. How different is the revelation of our God and Father which we find in the pages of Holy Scripture! His ear is ever open unto our cry. He hearkens to the prayers of His people. God is never too busy and never too preoccupied to attend to our beseechings.

### OUR LIFE

The whole substance of religion is faith, hope and charity—by the practice of which we become united to the will of God; all beside is indifferent and to be used as a means that we may arrive at our end and be swallowed up therein by faith and charity.

### TRUST

They who have learned to accept the way as His way, and take His yoke upon them, find rest to their souls, and gather that gentle herb, heart-sease. Thus did the pilgrim family, as they penetrated into the defiles of the valley, through the quiet air catch the strains of the song of the shepherd boy there in tranquillity keeping the sheep:—

*He that is down need fear no fall;  
He that is low no pride:  
He that is humble ever shall  
Have God to be his Guide.*

### STRENGTH

Our word *strength* comes from a word signifying twisted together. "The Lord is the strength of my life" "God is the strength of my soul" then my life is twisted together with the Lord. God and my soul are as two strands twisted together. One may have no strength at all, but while twisted together with one that is infinite, the weakest shall not fail. Then with what confidence we may say, "The Lord is the strength of my salvation".

### REALISATION

*All the gifts that here are given,  
All the faith for which we've striven,  
We must lose, when heaven we gain,  
As is lost in the sea the rain.*

*Light that on our path below,  
Seems like the summer sunbeam's glow,  
Then shall fade and pale away,  
E'en as the stars flee from the day.*

*We have loved the Saviour here,  
Loved our fellow travellers dear.  
At our home, that love shall be,  
Lost, like time in eternity.*

*Travelling homeward through the gloom,  
Through the shadows of the tomb,  
Far too weak are these poor eyes  
To view unveiled the heavenly prize.*

*What a waking! What a dawn!  
When the veil shall be withdrawn.  
Heart and mind and nature be  
Made fit to dwell eternally.*

# Love, the Fulfilling of the Law

## A PRACTICAL SELF-EXAMINATION

It seems impossible to describe Love, this wonderful quality without which nothing is acceptable in the sight of God! The Apostle does not attempt to define Love, but contents himself with giving us some of its manifestations. Those who possess a love with such characteristics are able to appreciate it, but not able otherwise to explain it. The fact is that Love, like life and light, is difficult to define; and our best endeavours to comprehend it are along the lines of its effects. It is of God; it is God-likeness in the heart, in the tongue, in the hands, in the thoughts—supervising all the human attributes and seeking to control them. Where Love is lacking, the results are more or less evil; where Love is present, the results differ according to the degree of Love, and are proportionately good.

In the Christian an outward manifestation of amiability, meekness, gentleness, patience is not sufficient. These graces must be produced by the spirit of Love, filling and expanding within his own heart. Many of the graces of the Spirit are recognised by the unregenerate and are imitated as marks of good breeding, and in many cases are successfully worn as a cloak or mask, covering hearts and sentiments wholly antagonistic to the spirit of Love.

The measure of our appreciation of Divine Love will be the measure of our zeal in conforming our characters to the Divine pattern. A naturally rough, uncouth, depraved disposition may require a long time, after the grace of Divine Love enters the heart, before that grace is manifest in all the thoughts and words and acts of the outward man. Others, on the contrary, of more gentle birth and cultured training, may, without the grace of God within, have many of the outward refinements. None but Him who reads the heart is competent, therefore, to judge as to who have and who have not received this grace, and of the degree of its development in their hearts; but each one may judge for himself, and each one begotten of the Holy Spirit should seek to let its light so shine out, through all the avenues of communication with his fellow-creatures, so as to glorify his Father in Heaven and "*show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light*". (I Pet. 2. 9.)

Among the "gifts" of early Apostolic times, prophecy, or oratory, was one highly commended. Knowledge of the mysteries of God was also highly commended, and large faith was reckoned as being among the chief of Christian requirements; yet the Apostle declares that if he possessed all of these in their fullest measure, and Love were absent, he would be nothing—a mere cipher—not a member of the New Creation at all, since Love is the very spirit of the begetting of the new nature.

What a wonderful test this is! The Apostle Paul counsels, "*Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves*". Let us apply the test. Whether I am something or nothing in God's estimation is to be measured by my love for Him, for His brethren, for His cause, for the world in general, and even for my enemies, rather than by my knowledge, or fame or oratory!

Yet we are not to understand that one could have a knowledge of the deep mysteries of God without having been begotten by the Holy Spirit of Love; for the deep things of God knoweth no man, but by the Spirit of God; but one might lose the spirit before losing the knowledge it brought him. In the measure of character, therefore, we are to put Love first, and to consider it the chief test of our nearness to and acceptance with the Lord.

Having given us such a conception of the importance of Love, the Apostle proceeds to describe what it is and what it is not—how it operates and how it does not operate, or conduct itself. Let each make a practical application of this matter to himself and inquire within:

"Have I such a love, especially for the household of faith, as leads me to suffer considerably and for a long time and yet to be kind? Am I patient with the weaknesses and imperfections of those who give evidence of good intentions? Am I patient even with those who are out of the way, realising that the great Adversary blinds the minds of the masses and remembering that this manifestation of Love was very prominent in our Lord Jesus, who was patient with His opponents?

"Am I kind in my methods, seeking to guard my manner and my tones, knowing that they have much to do with every affair of life? Have I this mark of Love pervading my actions and words

and thoughts? Do I think of and am I considerate of others? Do I feel and manifest kindness toward them in word, in look and act? A Christian, above all others, should be kind, courteous, gentle in the home, in his place of business, in the Church—everywhere. In proportion as perfect Love is attained the constant effort of the heart will be to have every word and act, like the thought which prompts them, full of patience and kindness. With the child of God these qualities are not to be mere outward adornments. On the contrary, they are fruits of the Spirit—growths from or results of having come into fellowship with God, having learned of Him, received of His Spirit of holiness, of Love.

“Have I the Love that ‘envieth not’, the Love that is generous, so that I can see others prosper and rejoice in their prosperity, even if, for a time, my own affairs be not so prosperous? This is true generosity, the very reverse of jealousy and envy which spring from a perverted nature. The root of envy is selfishness. Envy will not grow upon the root of Love. Love rejoices with them that rejoice, in the prosperity of every good word and work, and in the advancement of Christian grace and in the Divine service of all who are actuated by the Divine Spirit.

“Have I the Love that is humble, that ‘vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up’, the love that tends to modesty, that is not boastful, not lifted up? Have I the Love that would prompt to good deeds, not to be seen of men, but that would do the same if no one saw or knew but God only, that boasts neither of its knowledge nor of its graces, but in humility acknowledges that every good and perfect gift comes from the Father? And do I make return to Him in Love and service for every mercy? Boasting and self-esteem has led many a man not only into folly, but sometimes into gross sins in his endeavour to make good his boasts. The Spirit of the Lord is the spirit of a sound mind, which not only seeks generously to esteem others, but also soberly to estimate one’s self, and not to think too highly of his character and attainments.

“Have I the Love which is courteous, ‘doth not behave itself unseemly’? Pride is the root out of which grows much of the unseemly conduct, impoliteness, so common to those who think themselves ‘somebody’, either intellectually or financially. Politeness has been defined as Love in trifles, courtesy as Love in little things. The secret of politeness is either surface polishing or love in the heart. As Christians we are to have the heart-love which will prompt us to acts of kindness and courtesy, not only in the household of faith, but in our homes and in our dealings with the world.

“Have I the Love which is unselfish, which ‘seeketh not her own’ interests exclusively, which might even be willing to let some of her own rights be sacrificed in the interests of others, or have I, on the contrary, the selfishness which not only demands my own rights on every occasion, but which demands those rights regardless of the conveniences, comfort and rights of others? To have Love in this particular means that we will be on guard against taking any unjust advantage of others, and will prefer rather to suffer a wrong than to do a wrong; to suffer an injustice than to do an injustice.”

Nothing in this signifies that one should neglect the caring for and providing in every way for those dependent upon him by the ties of nature, in order that he may do good to others. In every sense, “Love begins at home”. The proper thought is that men and women, possessed of the spirit of perfect Love, would not think exclusively of their own interests in any of the affairs of life. Put into exercise, *this* element of Love would have a great influence upon all the affairs of life, inside as well as outside the home and family.

“Have I the Love which is good tempered, ‘not easily provoked’ to anger—Love that enables me to see both sides of a question, that gives me the spirit of a sound mind, which enables me to perceive that exasperation and violent anger are not only unbecoming but, worse than that, injurious to those toward whom they may be directed, and also injurious in their effect upon my own heart and body?”

There may be times when Love will need to be firm, almost to sternness and inflexibility, where principles are involved, where valuable lessons are to be inculcated; and this might come under the head of anger, using that word in a proper sense, in regard to a righteous indignation, exercised for a loving purpose, for doing good; but it should be exercised then only for a time. If justly angry we should see to it that we sin not either with our lips, or in our hearts, in which, at no time, may we entertain any but loving and generous sentiments towards those who are our enemies, or toward those of our friends whom we would assist or instruct or correct.

To be easily provoked is to have a bad temper, fretfulness, bad humour, touchiness, quickness to take offence. This is wholly contrary to the spirit of Love; and whoever is on the Lord’s side and seeking to be pleasing to Him and to attain to an overcomer’s position should jealously guard himself against this general besetment of our day. To whatever extent this disposition is fostered, or willingly harboured, or not fought against, it becomes

an evidence of a deficiency and imperfection of our development in the Holy Spirit of our Father, and of deficiency of likeness to our Lord Jesus, our Pattern.

Very few of the evidences of a wrong spirit receive from one's self as much kindness and as many excuses for their continuance as this one. But however much natural depravity and heredity and nervous disorders may tend toward this spirit of fretfulness, taciturnity and touchiness, every heart filled with the Lord's Spirit must oppose this disposition to evil in his flesh, and must wage a good warfare against it.

It will not do to say, "It is my way", for all the "ways" of the fallen nature are bad; and it is the business of the New Creature to overcome the old nature in this as well as other works of the flesh and the Devil. In few ways can we show to our friends and households more than in this the power of the grace of Love. This grace, as it grows, should make every child of God sweet-tempered. In no way can we better show forth the praises of Him who hath called us than by the exhibition of the spirit of Love in the daily affairs of life.

"Have I the spirit of Love which 'thinketh no evil', which is guileless, not suspicious of evil or looking for faults in others, not attributing to them evil motives? Have I the Love which seeks always to interpret the conduct of others charitably, to make all possible allowance for errors in judgment rather than to impugn the motives of the heart? Perfect Love is good intentioned itself; it prefers and, so far as possible, endeavours to view the words and conduct of others from the same standpoint. It does not treasure up animosities and suspicions, nor manufacture a chain of circumstantial proofs of evil intentions out of trivial affairs. 'Faults are thick where Love is thin' is a very wise proverb."

But where Love passes over offences and takes no account of them, holding no grudges, this does not mean that Love would treat evil-doers in precisely the same manner that it would treat its friends. It might be proper or even necessary to take some notice of the offences to the extent of not manifesting the same cordiality as before, but no hatred, malice or strife should be manifested—nothing but kindness and gentleness, leaving the door of opportunity open for a full reconciliation as soon as possible, doing all that could be done to promote a reconciliation and evincing a willingness to forgive and forget the wrong.

"Have I the Love that is sincere, that 'rejoiceth not in iniquity (*in-equity*), but rejoiceth in the

Truth'? Are the principles of right and wrong so firmly fixed in my mind, and am I so thoroughly in accord with right, and so out of harmony with the wrong, that I am grieved with evils wherever encountered and sympathise with all who fall into evil or who are beset with temptations? Am I so opposed to the wrong that I would not encourage it even if it brought advantage to me? Am I so in accord with right, with Truth, that I could not avoid rejoicing in the Truth and in its prosperity, even to the upsetting of some of my preconceived opinions, or to the disadvantage of some of my earthly interests?"

Every one who is seeking to develop in his heart perfect Love, should guard carefully this point of sincerity of motive as well as uprightness of conduct. The least suggestion of rejoicing at the fall of any person or thing that in any degree represents righteousness or goodness is to be deplored and overcome. Perfect Love "rejoiceth not in iniquity" under any circumstances or conditions and would have no sympathy but only sorrow in the fall of another, even if it should mean his own advancement.

The Love of God, which the Apostle here describes as the spirit of the Lord's people, is a love which is far above all selfishness and is based upon fixed principles which should, day by day, be more distinctly discerned and always firmly adhered to at any cost. However profitable error might be, Love could take no part in it and could not desire the reward of evil. But it does take pleasure in the Truth—truth upon every subject, and especially in the Truth of Divine revelation, however unpopular the Truth may be; however much persecution its advocacy may involve; however much it may cost the loss of the friendship of this world and of those who are blinded by the god of this world. The spirit of Love has such an affinity for the Truth that it rejoices to share loss, persecution, distress or whatever may come against the Truth or its servants. In the Lord's estimate it is all the same whether we are ashamed of Him or ashamed of His Word; and of all such He declares that He will be ashamed when He comes to be glorified in His saints.

"Have I the Love that 'beareth all things', that is impregnable against the assaults of evil, that resists evil, impurity, sin and everything that is contrary to Love, that is both able and willing to endure for the cause of God, reproaches, reproofs, insults, losses, misrepresentations and even death? "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith"—the very life and centre of which faith is the spirit of Love for the Lord

and for those that are His and, sympathetically, for the world. Perfect Love can bear up under all circumstances and, by God's grace, bring us off conquerors and "more than conquerors through Him that loved us". (1 John 5. 4; Rom. 8. 37.)

"Have I the Love that 'believeth all things', that is unwilling to impute evil to another unless forced so to do by indisputable evidence, that would rather believe good than evil about anybody, that would take no pleasure in hearing evil, but would be disposed to resent it? Perfect Love is not suspicious, but is, on the contrary, disposed to be trustful. It acts on the principle that it is better, if necessary, to be deceived a hundred times than to go through life soured by a suspicious mind—far better than to accuse or suspect even one person unjustly. This is the merciful disposition, as applied to thoughts; of which the Master said, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy". (Matt. 5. 7.) The unmerciful, evil-thinking mind is father to unmerciful conduct toward others.

"Have I the Love that 'hopeth all things', that perseveres under unfavourable conditions, and continues to hope for and to labour for those who need my assistance? Have I the Love that 'endureth all things', that continues to hope for the best in

regard to all and to strive for the best, and that with perseverance?" Perfect Love is not easily discouraged. This is the secret of Love's perseverance: having learned of God, and having become a partaker in His holiness, it trusts in Him and hopes undismayed for the fulfilment of His gracious Covenant, however dark the immediate surroundings.

This hopeful element of Love is one of the striking features in the perseverance of the saints, enabling them to endure hardness as good soldiers. Its hopeful quality hinders it from being easily offended, or easily stopped in the work of the Lord. Where others would be discouraged or put to flight, the spirit of Love gives endurance, that we may war a good warfare, and please the Captain of our salvation. *Love's hopefulness knows no despair, for its anchorage enters into that which is beyond the veil, and is firmly fastened to the Rock of Ages.*

Let us, beloved, with all our getting get Love—not merely in word but in deed and in truth—the Love whose roots are in the new heart, begotten in us by our Heavenly Father's Love, and exemplified in the words and deeds of our dear Redeemer. All else sought and gained will be but loss and dross unless, with all, *we secure Love!*

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## THE "THREE WORLDS"

*Here is an interesting extract showing how the Scriptural thesis of the "three worlds" was understood and propounded as far back as the year 1806.*

Francis Lambert, a Roman Catholic ecclesiastic of some eminence, was born in France about the beginning of the eighteenth century. He was the author of a work on the prophecies, which was first published in Paris, 1806, and which, contrary to the doctrines of his Church, contains a striking testimony in favour of Millennial views. On the phrase, "end of the world," he writes: "In order that we might rightly understand what the Holy Scriptures announce concerning the destruction of the ungodly, and the punishments which are to fall upon apostate Gentiles, we must distinguish three great judgments of God, which are the consummation of three periods which the Scriptures call worlds. The first of these worlds commenced at the Creation, and was ended by the Deluge, which is the first universal judgment pronounced by the Creator against all flesh. Peter calls this first world 'the world that then was', or the old world. The second world commenced when Noah left the ark with his family to re-people the earth. It comprehends the time from Noah to Moses, before the Law—from Moses

and the giving of the Law to the Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that which shall elapse from thence till the reprobation of the Gentiles, and the return of the Jewish people—that is, the time which shall intervene between the First and Second Advents of our Lord. This second period, or rather the last portion of it, is often called by the sacred writers 'the last times'—the last days. It was in reference to this corrupted world (or age) our Lord said to Pilate: 'My kingdom is not of this world.' In fact, it will not be until the third world, or 'the world to come', as Paul calls it, that the kingdom of the Messiah, so often spoken of in the Scriptures, will be established. This second world, which still continues, will be ended by a judgment which is called by Malachi 'the great and terrible day of the Lord'. Then the Lord will 'shake the heavens and the earth',—or, as it is immediately explained, 'will overthrow the throne of kingdoms'. (Hag. 2. 21.) In fine, the third world, which is yet future, is that which the Apostle calls 'the world to come'; or (Gr.) 'the habitable earth to come'. (Heb. 2.5.)"

(*"Reign of Christ on Earth"* p. 284.)

## WASTED YEARS

An ancient story with  
a modern application.

*"And the ill-favoured and lean-fleshed kine did eat up the seven well-favoured and fat kine . . . and the thin ears swallowed up the seven rank and full ears." (Gen. 41. 4-7.)*

Away back there, when the world was young, a mighty king of Egypt had a dream, so much out of the ordinary that the king's wise men and magicians were unable to interpret it. The spirit of disappointment was settling down upon the royal Court, when one of Pharaoh's responsible servants bethought himself of a similar experience that had come to him some while before. He had been in prison, with another offending servant, and to both of them came startling dreams. With them in the prison was another young man, a Hebrew, and this young Hebrew offered an interpretation of these dreams which came true. The forgetful courtier called all this to mind now, as the royal attendants became more and more perturbed, and at last told it all to Pharaoh. The young Hebrew was sent for and appeared in the presence of the royal dreamer.

Pharaoh told Joseph the outstanding particulars of his night-visions—for indeed he had dreamed twice, and there seemed the same purport behind both dreams. Seven fat kine had come up out of Egypt's famous river, followed by seven lean kine which ate up the fat ones, but were not improved in appearance thereby. Falling asleep again, the King saw seven fat, well-laden ears of corn come up on one stalk, and then seven thin ears, blasted by the east wind, sprang up after them and devoured them. The understanding of the dream came quick and clear to Joseph—for the Lord, his God was with him, and was even now in all this, working out his Providences. From his lips Pharaoh heard an outline of things which were to follow hard on the heels of the dream. Seven plentiful years of harvest, followed by seven lean years of famine, which would consume all the abundance of the prosperous years! Let Pharaoh prepare during the years of plenty for the years of hardship to follow. Such was the interpretation of the dreams, and such was the advice the clear-visioned young Hebrew gave to his royal auditor. Even here in a strange land, caged up within the walls of a prison, the God of his fathers was with him, and was opening for him, not only the prison doors, but also the door to a great opportunity.

There are many lessons which we could draw from this short piece of Bible history, did time and space permit, but for the time being we wish to ponder a little on the fat and lean kine, and the good and parched corn. This dream of the Egyptian king may contain a parable for us to-day—and perhaps a warning also.

By the goodness of God those among us who have had the Truth for any length of time, and into whose hearts there has come the joy of the Truth can testify to the fact that there has been a time of vigorous growth and active extension of knowledge and understanding of the way of the Lord. After the days of our early leanness in spiritual things, when our famished hearts had only the husks of denominational text-books to feed upon there came into our lives a veritable abundance of spiritual things—things new and old, from the table of the Blessed Master. A wonderful harmonising of His truths of Ransom and of a High Calling to follow Jesus, through death to immortal life, came to us and filled our hearts and minds with joy and gladness, and our hands with a willing service. A new song was put into our mouths, and a new, fervent, deep love was born in our hearts, for our God and Father, and our Lord Jesus. There was a freshness, a thrill, a beauty about it all, as the sweet story of His love flooded our souls, and awakened every tuneful chord within us to sing His praises. The burden of trying to save a lost world was gone, the difficulty of trying to solve the insoluble problem of Free Grace and Election was dispelled—the nightmare of trying to think of God as implacable and unrelenting (save as Jesus should intercede) was ended, and instead came the clear orderly light of His Plan of the Ages—so clear, so logical, so satisfying and so Godlike. And out of the acceptance of all this came the desire to co-operate with, and serve such a loving God and Father. It was then we gave Him our hearts in full consecration—our very selves—that His will might be done in us, and we stepped out, in faith, into the Way that leadeth unto Life. We accepted the assurance of His Word that our consecration was verily a burial "into His death", a "being planted together with Him" really and truly a "suffering with Him". There came a new "power" into our lives, the power that wrought His resurrection and exaltation, to help us to wage

successful warfare upon the meannesses and pettinesses of our little lives, to transform and change them into miniatures of His great life and to bring all our thoughts into captivity to the Spirit of Christ within us; and to garrison and to keep our hearts in peace and quietness before the Lord. Ah yes, they were the years of the fat kine, and the good ears!—the years of abundance and plenty, the years when we had to extend our barns and storehouses to enable us to hold all that the Lord our God was giving us, the years of busy husbandry, when the services of hand and heart yielded great harvests, as the “wheaten” grains were gathered.

But where are we to-day? Has the scorching east wind blown upon us, and caused the later years to consume all the benefits and fulness of the earlier years? Is the truth of those days no longer to us the truth of to-day? Have the joys and delights of that New Song vanished from our hearts and lips? And have we grown old and lean and withered, as the lean years have eaten up our store of love and grace and ready response to God. Is our love grown cold?—have the lean years eaten that up too? And the readiness to serve the Lord and the brethren—have the lean years quenched this too? Happy indeed are we, if the lean years

have not touched us, nor the east wind scorched our souls—yea rather, let us say, happy are we, if the good and the plenteous years have not ceased, and we are still enjoying the great abundance, and our years are still of the fat kine and the good ears! They need not be years of leanness, for the same Lord is still our provider and source of supply.

If, haply, any upon whom the scorching east wind has blown should read these words, let them go humbly to the Ruler of the Land, and tell Him of their plight, and from His great storehouse He will supply all their need, according to the riches of His grace.

How sad it will be, for all the benefits of the seven years of great abundance to be wasted and swallowed up in these other years of famine and poverty and wretchedness! Wasted years! After years of such abundance too! Now to be shrivelled, and parched and wasted—no joy—no service—no fellowship—nothing to show out of all we have received—oh, the tragedy of it all, to have received the grace of the Lord “in vain”, to have had the transforming influence of those days, but to no purpose!

*May God keep our hearts humbly before Him so that our “years of plenty” shall reach right on unto the years of immortal fulness.*



## THE QUESTION BOX



*Q. I Cor. 12. 13 “By one Spirit we are all baptised into one body . . . and have been all made to drink into one Spirit”. What does this mean?*

*A. The best manuscripts have it “and have all been made to drink one Spirit”. The Diaglott renders “and all one Spirit were made to drink”. But what does it mean to “drink” the Spirit? The thought is that of being, as it were, saturated with the Spirit in every fibre of one’s being, in much the same way as a plant, being watered, takes up the water into every part, into stem and leaf and flowers. In fact the same word (*potizo*) here rendered “drink” is rendered “watered” in “I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase” (I Cor. 3. 6). Again in I Cor. 3. 2 it is rendered “fed”—“I have fed you with milk and not with meat”. Having received of the Holy Spirit to the extent of our ability, we have become, as the Apostle exhorts us in Eph. 5. 18 “filled with the Spirit”. The thought of drinking in the Spirit must have been in Paul’s mind when he exhorted “Be not drunk with wine, wherein is*

excess, but be ye filled with the Spirit”. With this thought in mind it would seem that the best translation of this expression “all made to drink into one Spirit” is that of Moffatt and the Twentieth Century translations, both of which have it “we have all been imbued with one Spirit”. It is by the power of the Holy Spirit that we have all been baptised into one body, and now, being one body, we all, individually, are filled, “saturated” with that Spirit, and so all have become in our bodies temples of the living God.

Where can we find this Throne of Grace? Is it in some far-away place, beyond the reach of time and sense? Is it in regions beyond the skies? Is the way thereto strewn with penances, and fastings? Nay indeed. “It is nigh thee in thy heart.” True, Jesus, as our Great High Priest passed through the heavens, to appear in God’s presence for us, but, into whatsoever heart the Spirit and presence of God has come to dwell, there indeed it is Heaven below—and there the enthroned Grace of God has come to rule. In every such heart sits Grace enthroned!

## FROM THE WALLS OF THE CITY

A look-out on  
signs of the times.

In a very interesting article entitled "Christ's offer of Freedom", the July issue of the "Herald of Christ's Kingdom" offers a very sensible comment upon the attitude that we as Christian believers should manifest toward the statesmen who at present rule the world. Too often is there a tendency unduly to criticise and condemn them with more than a hint of self-righteousness in our conviction that only the Kingdom of Christ will solve their problems—even although we know that to be a fact. Speaking of the past pronouncements of British and American politicians regarding the hoped-for "New world" which they expected to bring about by their efforts—and still expect—the "Herald" says:—

"Unfortunately details as to how this 'new moral order' is to be secured and the 'four freedoms' established do not appear in either speech. Nor are we ourselves able to furnish these details, much as we can and do sympathise with their objectives. We know only that God has, indeed, promised such a world as these statesmen hope to see—one even better than they hope, and that his promise is certain of fulfilment. Meantime we are determined not to *think* or *speak* or *do* anything that might tend to discourage in the slightest degree, those who, in high places, are filled with such ideals and who are labouring to accomplish them in the earth. On the contrary let us pray for such and to the extent of our ability co-operate with them to those ends.—1 Tim. 2. 1-3."

There speaks the spirit of Christ, the hall-mark of the true Christian, "in the world, but not of the world", "using the world as not abusing it", strangers and pilgrims indeed and yet aware of a lively sympathy with the world's problems and a burning desire to see them righted.

\* \* \*

The Prime Minister of Israel, Mr. David Ben-Gurion, speaking in the Israeli Parliament some time ago, said that the principle "Love thy neighbour as thyself" is a fundamental law of Judaism and must be the basis of the Jewish State. It is, he went on, an active principle which should operate in daily life, not just an abstract idea which is only nominally accepted. There is, of course, nothing new in this: what is unique about it is the fact that no other Prime Minister of the present

day has made such a statement in his official capacity. The last statesman to do so was our own George Lansbury when leader of the Labour Party: but he was dismissed contemptuously by his followers in favour of exponents of a more orthodox conception of statesmanship. But George Lansbury will be vindicated—in that day when Israel shall have its blindness turned away and the pious hope of Mr. Ben-Gurion become a reality. And that day is probably not very far away. "I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication, and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn. . . ." (Zech. 12. 10.)

\* \* \*

"When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" Sir Geoffrey Layton, naval Commander-in-Chief at Portsmouth, some while ago made public the result of enquiries into the religious knowledge of youths now joining the Navy. He found that only 83 per cent. knew why Christmas Day was celebrated, 65 per cent. Good Friday, 45 per cent. Easter, and 25 per cent. Whitsun. One-third of the lads could not say who Christ was, and of those who did answer that question, two-thirds did not know where He had been born. One is tempted to ask of what use it is to preach the message of the coming Kingdom to a generation that is so ignorant of the basic facts upon which that message is founded. Is there not first the need to find a means by which the first principles of Christianity may be inculcated and accepted?

\* \* \*

Dr. Weizmann, arriving in U.S.A. in April, stated that Israel is "at present fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy of converting swords into ploughshares". "The state will absorb one million newcomers within two years" he declared. It is no reflection on the Israeli President's sincerity to point out that the same prophecy goes on to say "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more". Israel's application for admission to U.N. and her notable progress in military power is a demonstration that Isaiah's prophecy is *not* yet being fulfilled. The beating of swords into ploughshares will commence when the nation has renounced war and placed its trust in God, not because, like Nehemiah's men of old, they are going to work with a trowel in one hand and a sword in the other.

# The Voice of the Monuments

## 3. The Tel-el-Amarna Tablets.

In 1887 an old Egyptian peasant woman was working in the fields of Tel-el-Amarna, two hundred miles south of Cairo, when she turned up some inscribed clay tablets that lay buried in the soil. The first ones were disposed of to local antique dealers for a few coins, but it was not long before the scholarly world became aware of the importance of the discovery and systematic excavations began at Tel-el-Amarna. The old woman had unwittingly brought to light the official records of the Egyptian government of the time that Joshua was leading Israel into the Promised Land, and the tablets included letters from the kings and governors of the Canaanitish cities appealing to Egypt for help against the invading Israelites.

The archæologists were chiefly interested because this discovery afforded them an opportunity of reading the actual official government correspondence which passed between the kings of Babylon, Assyria, Mesopotamia and Syria on the one hand and Egypt on the other, during the reigns of two Pharaohs, Amenhetep III, who reigned while Israel was in the wilderness and for a few years after they entered Canaan, and Amenhetep IV (Akhnaten, the renowned "pacifist" Pharaoh) who reigned while they were subduing the Canaanites and dividing the land. The student of Scripture finds his interest in the latter fact, that this "Tel-el-Amarna correspondence", as it is called, gives the story of Israel's entry into the Promised Land under Joshua from the standpoint of the other parties, the Canaanites. Canaan was, at that time, an Egyptian province. When Moses looked from the top of Mount Pisgah and viewed the land that stretched from Dan to Beer-sheba, from the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean, the goodly land that God had promised to give His people, he looked upon a land that had for many centuries given political allegiance to the Pharaohs. Egyptian governors resided in many of its cities. Canaanite kings in others paid regular tribute. When Jordan was "driven back", and the hosts of Israel surrounded Jericho, it was an Egyptian garrison town that they stormed and destroyed. In harmony with this, much of this "Tel-el-Amarna correspondence" consists of letters from various notabilities telling Pharaoh of the progress of the in-

vading Israelites, and imploring his help for their defence, a help that never came. Egypt was beset with other enemies at that time and Pharaoh preferred to let his possessions in Canaan slip out of his grasp rather than risk sending soldiers for their defence.

That is the scholars' view. There is also the possibility that Amenhetep III remembered only too well the disasters that had come upon his country only forty years previously when his grandfather had said to Moses "I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go". Perhaps Pharaoh considered it politic to turn a deaf ear to the entreaties of his apprehensive subjects in Canaan. The God of Israel had already shown that He was not a God to be trifled with. That may conceivably explain why so many letters now lie in more than one of the world's museums—some in the British Museum in London—from Zimrida of Lachish, and Yapakhi of Gaza, and above all from Abdi-Khiba of Jerusalem, pleading for the help that was never to come.

One letter reports the destruction of Hazor; the Book of Joshua, chap. 11, vs. 10-14, tells of the same event from the Israelites' standpoint. In another the name of Joshua appears; it is strongly presumed that the great leader of the hosts of Israel is referred to in that letter. The fall of Zelah (Josh. 18. 28) is the burden of another letter; time and time again there occur these references to incidents which are recorded in the Book of Joshua, a wonderful independent testimony to the veracity of that wonderful book.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the Tel-el-Amarna tablets is the correspondence from Abdi-Khiba, King of Jerusalem. Many times, in writing to Pharaoh, he mentions the fact that he does not hold his office by virtue of Pharaoh's permission, like the other kings around him, but by decree of the Most High. Neither by his father or his mother, nor by Pharaoh, but by the Most High, he is priest and king of Jerusalem. The mind goes back to Melchisedek, who, six centuries previously, held office in this same city as Priest and King of the Most High God, having neither father nor mother, but abiding a priest continually. Discoveries made in 1929 at Ras Shamra on the Syrian coast have shown that at the time of the Exodus

the worship of the "Most High God" prevailed extensively in Canaan; it might well be that Abdi-Khiba was the last of a long line of priest-kings of which Melchisedek may have been the first, or at least an early representative.

Joshua 10 relates how the children of Israel captured and killed Adoni-zedek, king of Jerusalem. The likeness of the name Adoni-zedek (Lord of righteousness) to Melchi-zedek (King of righteousness) is worth noting in passing; if Adoni-zedek of the Book of Joshua and Abdi-Khiba of the Tel-el-Amarna tablets are not one and the same person the latter must have succeeded upon the death of the former and then in turn been slain. It is more likely perhaps that they are one and the same, and that the frantic appeals recorded on those little clay tablets now safely reposing in glass cases came to an abrupt end when the forces of Joshua overtook the five royal fugitives and put an end to the life of Jerusalem's last Priest-King.

Here are a few extracts from some of Abdi-Khiba's letters to Pharaoh. They show to what extremity of fear the native Canaanites were reduced when Joshua was laying waste their land.

"To the king my lord; thus speaks Abdi-Khiba thy servant. . . . The country of the king is being destroyed, all of it. Hostilities are being carried on against me as far as the mountains of Seir and the city of Gath-Carmel" (See Josh. 25. 10 and 55). "The Hebrews are capturing the fortresses of the king. Not a single governor remains among them

to the king my lord; all have perished. Behold, Turbazu has fallen in the great gate of the city of Zelah" (See Josh. 18. 28) . . . "If no troops come this year, all the countries of the king my lord will be utterly destroyed. . . . No provinces remain unto the king; the Hebrews have wasted all the provinces of the king."

These letters also illustrate the origin of the name of Jerusalem. That the word means "city of peace" is well known. Frequently in the Tel-el-Amarna letters it is referred to as the city of the god Salim—and Salim was the Babylonian god of peace. The city at that time had both a strong fortress and a temple. Nothing is mentioned in the Scriptures regarding the temple; it would of course have been a temple to the "Most High God" but the Israelites probably viewed it as an idolatrous building and made short work of it so soon as they had the opportunity. It was many years later that they really occupied Jerusalem; in the meantime it was held by the Jebusites for a while and in Josh. 18. 16 and 28 it is called Jebusi. Perhaps the saddest feature of the Tel-el-Amarna letters is the revelation they make that the noble worship of the "Most High God" in Abraham's time, when Melchisedek was Priest and King, a "priest upon his throne"; had degenerated in the time of Joshua to an idolatrous faith which retained nothing of its former glory but the name. Abraham paid tithes to the first "Priest of the Most High God"; Joshua slew the last.

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Thou, therefore, endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

BIBLE STUDENT'S MONTHLY

BIBLE STUDENT'S MONTHLY

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BIBLE STUDENT'S MONTHLY

BIBLE STUDENT'S MONTHLY

# BIBLE STUDENT'S

# MONTHLY

Bible is the word of God

Bible is the word of God

Bible is the word of God

Bible is the word of God

Bible is the word of God

Vol. 26, No. 12

DECEMBER, 1949

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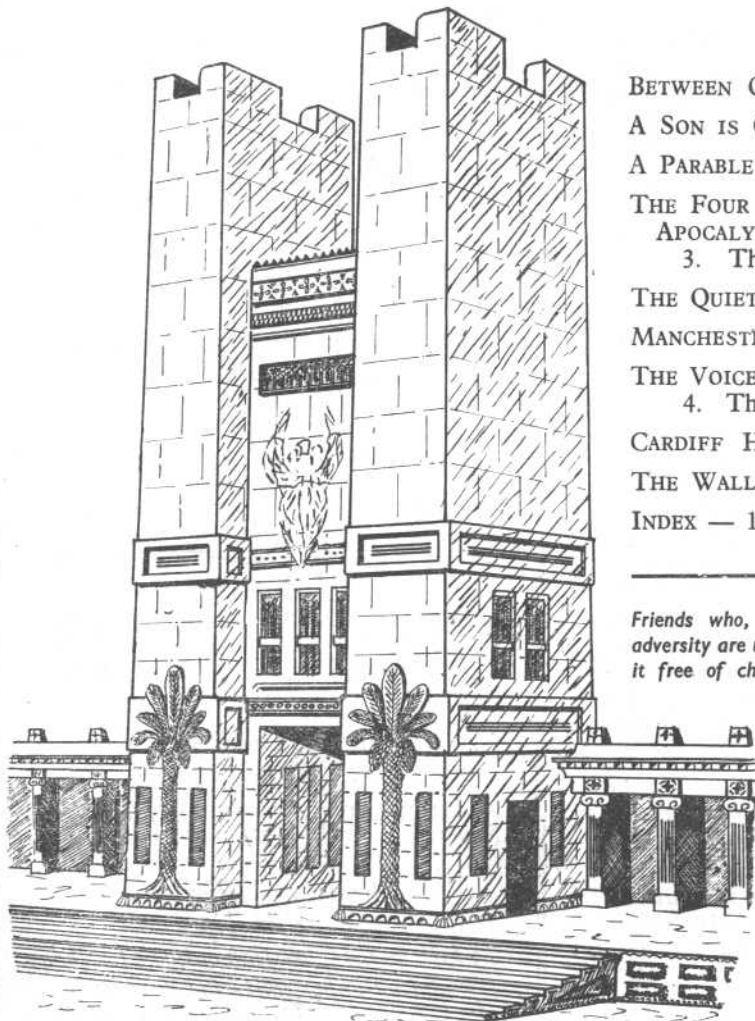
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 Melbourne, Australia.



Lift up your heads, O ye gates,  
 And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors,  
 And the King of glory shall come in.

## BETWEEN OURSELVES

The brethren who administer the Benevolent Fund are always more than usually busy at this season of the year, for a little Christmas gift of "things needful" does help to brighten the festival for those on whom the stress of the times is bearing more heavily. The Benevolent Committee would like to make known its appreciation of the loving aid rendered its labours by so many of our readers and to express its confidence that the work will be enabled to continue. Communications relative to this Fund should be addressed direct to Bro. E. Allbon, 20, Sunnymede Drive, Ilford, Essex.

\* \* \*

The October meeting at Caxton Hall was addressed by Bro. S. A. Couling (*Rugby*) on the subject "Watch", our brother relating this exhortation to the signs given in our Lord's great prophecy on Olivet, the immediate application to the days in which we live being very real. He was followed by Bro. F. Oakley (*Forest Gate*), on the subject "The Lamb of God", a theme which gave much food for thought and was very clearly a real spiritual discourse.

Arrangements are now complete for a series of three public meetings, all at 6.30, the first only at Caxton Hall. The first, on 5th December, in the York Hall, will be addressed by Bro. Lodge on the topic that commenced the last series, viz., "Will God be Silent Forever?". The second, on 12th December, in Conway Hall, will be taken by Bro. Thackway, using the title "Where are the Dead? Is the human soul immortal?" and the third, on 19th December, also in Conway Hall, by Bro. Hudson, with the subject "God's Fulfilling Purpose". It is earnestly desired that all who can will attend these meetings and that all will remember them in prayer before the Heavenly Throne, for we all realise that "except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain who build it" and it is by prayer that the will of the Lord is revealed.

\* \* \*

Bro. F. Lardent is able to supply his well-known Christian Art Calendar with monthly tear-off sheets and coloured Scripture pictures, similar to previous years, as usual. The price inclusive of purchase tax and postage is 2/9. Please send orders direct to Bro. F. Lardent, 174, Forest Hill Road, London, S.E.23.

\* \* \*

A sister from a provincial city writes: "The generous offer of free tracts is an indication that there is a work to be done. Never has there been a greater need to give the message of the coming Kingdom to people. The opportunity so to do may

not be possible in the near future. I feel the old method of distribution of tracts—going from house to house putting them through the letter box is not a good way because by so doing many might be wasted. I find it more satisfactory when going from door to door, to knock, and introduce the tract by saying 'I am bringing round these free leaflets explaining the trend of present-day events, how they are leading up to a climax at which time God will intervene and set up His Kingdom'. Quite a number say 'Thank you, I'll read it'. I feel it is better to give a smaller number out with the assurance they will be read than to give out a larger number without introduction and probably many wasted. . . ."

This sister's experience may be of help and encouragement to others. In any case, of course, brethren are free to distribute in whatever way seems good to them and appears to them to produce the best results in their own district. It may well be that the reaping will produce only a grain of wheat here and there, but if there is but one grain to gather, surely we will want to play our part in bringing that one to the Lord.

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### Gone From Us

—\*—  
Bro. B. Thatcher (*Leicester*).  
—\*—

"Till the day break, and the shadows flee away."

### LONDON MONTHLY MEETING

Saturday, 17th December, 1949

6.30—8.30 p.m.

In the Tudor Hall  
CAXTON HALL

Caxton Street, Westminster, S.W.1  
5 mins. St. James Park Station and Victoria Street

Praise and Worship  
Fellowship

A talk on the Christian outlook for today  
and an opportunity for questions  
A Scriptural address by guest speaker

Chairman: Bro. K. Guard.  
Speakers: Bro. H. C. Thackway.  
Bro. T. Watson.

# A SON IS GIVEN

## A CHRISTMAS DISCOURSE

*"For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder."* (Isa. 9.6.)

Long centuries before Jesus was born, and Christmas became a Christian festival, the peoples of Bible lands—Assyria, Babylonia, Canaan—made the end of December a time of celebration and rejoicing. It marked the change of shortening days and the turning of the sun to climb higher in the heavens; it gave promise of ripening crops and the joys of harvest. The ancient Babylonians used to drag their Yule logs into their homes on what corresponds to our Christmas Eve and consume them by fire; the following morning they decked with gifts the Tree of Life which they pretended in symbol had grown from the ashes of the dead log—the prototype of our "Christmas tree"—thus, said they, would life come out of death, in due time, by the favour of the gods.

Where did they get that tradition from, tradition so strangely true to fact? Was there some lingering memory of the true faith once held and taught by their common father Noah, their racial ancestors Shem, Ham and Japheth, the patriarchs of their families like Peleg and Heber? It would almost seem so! For it is true that out of the ashes of death will come new life; that after the destruction of the dead wood of this world there will arise a Tree of Life whose fruit shall be for food to mankind and whose leaves shall be for the healing of the nations, rich gifts indeed for the sons of men, in that greatest of all Christmas festivals when the Kingdom of light and life has succeeded upon the ending of this world of darkness and death.

Isaiah had something of this in mind when he saw the vision of the Great Light. Like so many of the prophets' revelations, he viewed this representation of things to come against the background of his own day. There is a temptation to read the thrilling passage "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given," as though it were a completely disjointed piece of revelation sandwiched unthinkingly into a passage dealing with the local troubles of Israel in the prophet's own day having nothing to do with the subject of the Kingdom. That is not so; chapters 7 to 12 of Isaiah's prophecy comprise one complete and harmonious presentation of Millennial truth in which the vision of the Everlasting Father finds its proper place. And in order to

understand the full harmony that exists between these wonderful chapters we must endeavour to put ourselves in the prophet's place and look at them through his eyes.

The story starts with Isaiah's seventh chapter. Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, King of Israel the "ten-tribe" kingdom, have joined together to attack Judah, the "two-tribe" kingdom of which Ahaz was the apostate king. They have besieged Jerusalem, but the Lord has not as yet suffered them to take it. The people of Judah are nevertheless greatly afraid, for they have long since abandoned their faith in God and they know not where to turn for help.

This is Isaiah's opportunity. At the bidding of the Lord he goes forth to meet Ahaz and give him an assurance that the Lord is going to defend Jerusalem—for His own name's sake; certainly not on account of any piety or faith on the part of the wicked king. It is in the Lord's plan that very shortly the ten tribes shall be taken into captivity. But Ahaz does not believe; he does not want to believe. "If ye will not believe," says Isaiah, "surely ye shall not be established." Therefore a second word came to Ahaz. "Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God," commands Isaiah. But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, neither will I prove the Lord". His rebellion is deliberate and calculated; it cannot be excused. Therefore the message of condemnation, already given to the ten-tribe kingdom, is given also to the two-tribe kingdom. A young woman shall bear a son, and call his name Immanuel. That son is the sign; before that child has grown to youthful maturity, Assyria shall have desolated Samaria and ravaged Judah. Ten-tribes, and some from among the two-tribes, shall have gone into captivity for their sins. The seventh and eighth chapters trace the sad history of that terrible time of disaster which culminated in the complete triumph of the invading Assyrian hosts; the people, said Isaiah, would finally look into the earth, "and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness".

Now these were not just empty words, spoken by the prophet after the manner of a gramophone record. Isaiah, inspired as he was by the Holy Spirit, was seeing these things, future though they were, and he described what he saw. His prophetic vision showed him the grim Assyrian warriors marching through the land, and fleeing multitudes

pressing on brokenly before them. He saw the deeds of violence, the slaughter of helpless captives, the brutal treatment of women and children, the burning villages, the desolated vineyards and pastures, the clear Judean skies clouded and darkened by drifting smoke. As he gazed upon that dread scene his prophetic vision sharpened, and in the spirit of his mind he was carried over nigh on three thousand years of time, to see the events which this Assyrian invasion in the days of Ahaz and Hezekiah pictured. He saw the last great onslaught of the forces of darkness, the hosts of the north which we call the armies of Gog and Magog, descending upon God's ancient people at the end of this age. Isaiah still beheld Assyrian soldiers, he still identified the people and the villages and the scenery of the land he knew, but with that mysterious certainty that is sometimes our own experience in dreams he knew that he was looking now at a scene representing the end of this Age and the time of the greatest deliverance of all; and as he looked, straining to see into the murky blackness which all but shrouded the vagueness of the moving figures, men, women and children writhing under the terror that had come upon them, he saw something else, something which caused him to look up and break into the tremendous declaration that commences at verse 2 of chapter 9.

*"The people that walk in darkness,"* he cried in exultation, *"have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."*

Away there on the horizon, beyond the tops of the eastern mountains, above the darkness of the present terror, the glorious radiance of coming day was racing up the sky. The time of light, the time of life, was come, and the darkness would soon be overpast. The Lord was coming as it were from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran, his glory covering the heavens, and his brightness as the light of day, as the sun. Isaiah saw the Assyrian soldiers cower and flee before that terrible radiance, the arrows of Heaven's artillery raining upon them, and all their armies put to flight. The Lord had risen up to the defence and deliverance of his people, and from behind the hills there came into sight the rising of the Sun of righteousness, with healing in his wings. And the people, so lately bound in darkness and in the shadow of death, rejoiced in this great appearance which had delivered them from the kingdom of darkness and brought them forth into the kingdom of light. That is what Isaiah saw, and for the moment all thought of his countrymen's present troubles and dangers was forgotten, the while his eyes drank in their full of those resplendent glories symbolising earth's Millennial day.

This is the Christmas vision indeed, the turning of the old, darksome, dying year into the new, lightening, living age of light and life for all men. Here is at hand the time of promise and of gifts unto men, the prospect of harvest and all the joys that come with harvest; the toil of ploughing and harrowing but a memory. Here in very truth is the day for which Isaiah so long had looked, and concerning which he was yet to preach and teach persistently and consistently through many dark years. But for the present the vision was leading him onward into a glory of revelation.

*"Thou hast multiplied the nation; thou hast increased the joy."* So the Margolis version has it, and Rotherham confirms with *"Thou hast increased the exultation; thou hast made great the joy."* (The "not" in verse 3 of the A.V. is an incorrect rendering.) *"They joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil."* Here is a picture of mankind, freed at last from the fear of evil things and evil men, from death and all that death implies, "multiplied" upon the fair Millennial earth, destined to be the home of resurrected hosts. Isaiah sees here the beginning of the Millennial kingdom; perhaps he saw, or thought he saw, the promised multiplication of his own nation, Abraham's seed, "as the sands by the seashore" but it is just as correct to apply his prophetic outburst to the greater increase of all men, the entire human family, in that day. He had just seen the great light burst upon a world of evil and put the darkness to flight; now he sees the consequent increase of men and the increase of their joy. "It shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God. We have waited for him, and he will save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for him. We will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

Why do they thus rejoice? The next verse supplies the answer. *"For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian."* The rout of the Midianites in the days of Gideon was one of Israel's greatest victories. The brave three hundred, having nothing but lights concealed in earthen pitchers, by that means and that alone defeated the enemy host. Did the Holy Spirit suggest that defeat of Midian to Isaiah with set intent? Is it not true that this coming greater defeat of the powers of greater evil at the end of this Age is going to be because another "three hundred" will have had their inner light revealed by the breaking of their earthen pitchers? *"Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father!"*

*"For every boot stamped with fierceness, and every cloak rolled in blood, shall even be for*

burning, for fuel of fire." Thus runs the Margolis rendering, and other translators agree with the thought, not easily discernible in the Authorised Version, that the rejoicing is on account of the implements of warfare, the armour and clothing of the soldiery, and the grim relics of war, being all consumed in the fire. "He maketh wars to cease unto the ends of the earth." War is no more; the time of peace has come, and the devouring fire has consumed all the institutions of unrighteousness.

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder." Was it that Isaiah heard, eight hundred years before it floated over Judea's quiet fields, the angel's song of Bethlehem? Did the Holy Spirit in some wonderful manner convey to his attentive mind those strains that later fell upon the ears of the shepherds? It reads almost like a song. "Unto us a child is born . . . unto us a son is given . . ." Mysterious, sweet cadences, rising and falling on the calmness that has succeeded the vision of slaughter. "Unto us a child is born . . . a child is born!". That surely must be the fulfilment of Divine promise, the birth of earth's new King, come to rule in righteousness. "Unto us a son is given!" The truest son of Israel that Israel would ever know, a prophet like unto Moses, a king like unto David, a priest like unto—Melchisedek; yes, a priest upon his throne. "A child is born! . . . a son is given!" So the music must have gone on as Isaiah listened "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. . . . Unto us a child is born . . . a son is given . . . and the government shall be upon his shoulder!"

The heavenly song fades away—perhaps the vision passes from his sight also, but the inspiration of the Spirit is strong upon Isaiah and he opens his mouth, only partially comprehending the significance of his words, yet knowing that they had to do with that coming Day for which he looks.

"His name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor." The comma ought not to be there. The expression is a combined one. The word for "wonderful" possesses the meaning of exceptionally singular or unique, something as it were beyond the understanding of mere man. When Manoah asked his celestial guest his name, and the angel told him it was "secret" the same word is used (Jud. 12. 18). The word "counsellor" is one that is used of royalty's closest confidants and advisers (as King David's counsellor in 2 Sam. 13. 12). Our coming King is, then, in the first place, the Wonderful Counsellor. Of whom is he the confidant? Surely of His Father and our

Father, Who will do nothing without revealing His purposes to the beloved Son in Whom His plans are centred and by Whom they are executed. In the visions of Revelation one like unto a slain Lamb takes the sealed book from the hand of the Deity upon the Throne and reveals what is therein written. We do not know, we cannot visualise, the intimacy of fellowship and oneness of understanding that must exist between the Father and the Son, giving such depth of meaning to Jesus' own words, during His earthly life, "I and my Father are one". Surely He indeed is the One who "was by Him, as one brought up with Him; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before him" (Prov. 8. 30). Yea, indeed, His name is "Wonderful Counsellor".

But it is also "the mighty God". Not *El Elyon*—"The Most High". Not "*El Shaddai*"—"The Almighty". Not "*Jehovah*"—"The Eternal One". The Hebrew is "*Gibbor El*". *Gibbor* is the word for giantlike, powerful, mighty, and the giants and mighty men of the Old Testament are "*gibborim*" (the plural form of *gibbor*). But *El* itself means "mighty one". The plural form, *elohim*, refers to God Himself or to the heathen gods, or to angelic or supernatural beings, or even to mighty men, as in Psa. 82. 7 ("I have said, ye are gods, and all of you children of the Most High") so this name "the mighty God" really means "the mightiest mighty one". Is not that a fitting name for the One to whom is committed all power in heaven and earth? Is not that a fitting name for the One to whom every knee in heaven as well as on earth, is to bow, and every tongue, angelic and earthly, confess? I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore; and have the keys of hell and of death." There is a wonderful passage in the Apocryphal "*Gospel of Nicodemus*" in which the risen Lord is pictured as storming the gates of hell and rescuing its hopeless inhabitants. "When the prince of hell heard" (that Jesus was coming) "he said" (to Satan) "I adjure thee by the powers which belong to thee and me that thou bring him not to me. For when I heard of the power of his word, I trembled for fear, and all my impious company were disturbed . . . And while Satan and the prince of hell were discoursing thus to each other, on a sudden there was a voice as of thunder and the rushing of winds, saying, . . . Lift up your gates, O ye princes: and be ye lifted up, ye gates of hell, and the King of Glory will enter in . . . And the mighty Lord appeared in the form of a man, and enlightened those places which had ever before been in darkness; and broke asunder the fetters which before could not be broken; and with his invincible power visited those who sat in the deep darkness by

iniquity, and the shadow of death by sin." This is assuredly our Mighty One, to Whom has been given all power in heaven and in earth, and will exercise that power to overcome death and all evil and establish the reign of everlasting righteousness.

What then of His third title—the *Everlasting Father*? Does He here usurp the prerogative of the One upon the Throne of Creation, the God and Father of us all? We know at the outset that such a thing can never be. At the close of the Millennial Age, when Christ the King will have subdued evil and vanquished death, when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and all power that opposes His benevolent and life-giving sway (I Cor. 15. 24), when mankind are, at long length, reconciled to God, and in full perfection of life will have entered upon their eternal inheritance, "then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." (I Cor. 15. 28.) The thought in this title is that given by Rotherham; the "*Father of Futurity*" or the Father of the Coming Age. It is Jesus who has redeemed and purchased the entire human race by means of His own death on the cross; it is Jesus who receives them back to life in the Millennial Age soon to begin, and becomes their Mediator—the Mediator between God and man during the remaining period of man's insufficiency. It is Jesus who gives them life; who by means of His priestly and kingly work will so influence the hearts and minds of men that all in whom is any possibility of reclamation will eventually repent, and be converted, and come to Jesus, the Lord of life, that they might have life. He will be the world's great Life-giver, the world's Father, during that age. He is the Father of the Coming Age and the life that men will receive they will receive at His hands. As it is in Adam that men die, so it is in Christ that men will be made alive. (I Cor. 15. 22.)

In so many ways He will be a father to redeemed humanity. "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd" sings Isaiah "and gently lead those that are with young." There will be such infinite patience and understanding in that day. No longer will there be the hard, unyielding iron of the law, demanding its "pound of flesh", its demands against the sinners. There will be instead the wise, loving, albeit firm discipline of the understanding parent, and a growing up into true maturity, "whosoever will", under that paternal rule. The wilful sinner, if he will not repent, must remain a sinner still, but at the end he finds himself shut out of the Holy City, for he has rejected life, and without life he cannot enter (Rev. 21. 27). But he that overcometh will be presented at the end before the Father Himself and experience the glorious liberty of the Sons of God.

*The Prince of Peace!* There is no mistaking the meaning of that name! It brings to the mind at once all that is fondest in the dreams of men, in the hopes and beliefs of those who to-day are the Lord's disciples. "Peace on earth; goodwill to men." So many have given up hope that it will come; but we know differently. "In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." (Psa. 72. 7-8.) "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven." (Psa. 85. 10-11.) "And the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." (Isa. 32. 18.)

Not only is He the Prince of that peace which is to be man's inward possession, peace of heart, of mind, of soul, that peace with God which is the result of justification in his sight ("Therefore being justified by faith, we have *peace with God*" Rom. 5. 1), that peace which comes with the realisation of human perfection and possession of everlasting life. He is also the Prince of that outward peace which will be characteristic of human society in that blessed day. The same passage in Isa. 32 tells of that. "My people shall dwell in a *peaceable* habitation, and in *sure* dwellings, and in *quiet* resting-places" (vs. 18). What a contrast to this present day of distress and trouble, strife and tumult! "They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid." (Micah 4. 4.) In every picture of the future day that we have, this thought of peace is prominent and predominant. "I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the nations like a flowing stream."

This is our King! This is earth's King, disesteemed as yet by those who will, one day, many of them and most of them, become His devoted and adoring subjects. "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice even for ever." Daniel in vision saw this same Son of Man come near before the Ancient of Days, and saw Him given dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him. His dominion, said Daniel, is to be an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. (Dan. 7. 14.) They all saw something of this, all the prophets of old, and they all said something about it, gave some vivid description of its characteristics, some life-like pen-picture for the instruc-

tion and encouragement of those who followed them. They were quite sure about it. "*The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this*" cried Isaiah as the glowing words came to an end. He must needs go on to see and to talk of darker themes, but he had seen the vision of the Son that should be given and he knew that the word of God and the power of God stood pledged to bring this thing to pass. "*The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this.*" "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not

thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud . . . so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth ; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

"*For unto us . . . a child is born . . . unto us . . . a son is given . . . and the government shall be upon his shoulder !*"

Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly.

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## A PARABLE IN STONE

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Buried in the jungles of Yucatan, Central America, men have found a marvellous feat of engineering skill; a road, thirty-two feet wide and between two and eight feet in height above the level of the surrounding country, built of great blocks of stone, dressed and cemented together, and running straight as a die for a distance of fifty miles.

Mile after mile it traverses the hot, steamy bush, passing groups of ruins here and there, until at last it enters the ancient city of Chichen-Itza, straight to the temple in the centre of the city, and down into a vast cavern to end on the shores of a deep subterranean lake.

Fourteen hundred years ago the country now covered with impenetrable jungle was a wide expanse of smiling maize fields studded with towns and villages, and every town with its temple; for religious observances played a great part in the life of the people. That great causeway was a ceremonial road for sacrifice. From time to time there passed by that way processions, youths and maidens who had given themselves to the service of the god they worshipped, and now on their way to the sacred city, there to plunge into the dark waters of that underground lake in full assurance that by so doing they would at once enter into eternal bliss in the presence of the god. With that fervent expectation they pressed along the way, forgetting the things that lay behind, thinking only of that which was before. The labourers in the fields by the roadside stopped their work to watch their passing; dwellers in the towns on the route ceased from their manifold activities to see the strange sight; but the pilgrims heeded them not. Neither the beauty of the world around them nor the entreaties of their friends, the loves and desires

and attractions of their day could draw them from their purpose; as men and women seeing something which is not of this earth they toiled on their way, mile after mile, day after day, until at length the sacred city appeared in sight.

Then with renewed energy they hastened their flagging steps. The great Temple, goal of their hopes, opened its gates before them. Down into the blackness of the gloomy cavern, a pause on the brink of that still dark water, a plunge; and they had come to the end of the way.

To-day their temples and their cities are in ruins. Their gods and their religions have perished. Fertile fields have yielded to the all-devouring jungle, and the people of the land are seen no more. *Only the road remains*, straight and true as in the days when the first pilgrims passed along its course.

So with our High Calling in Christ Jesus. The road is straight and true; it will lead us surely into the deep waters of death but beyond those waters there is "joy exceeding and full of glory". Dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, our Father waits for the home-coming of His children. Year after year, century after century, have they followed each other along that road, caring nothing for the attractions of the world through which they have passed. Now in our day that world is shaken to its foundations, the cities are crumbling into ruins, the old comforts of life are vanishing, the fair lands are becoming desolate, *but still the road remains*. Still does it lead straight to the city of God, still does it call us to the last act of faith, the losing of one's self in full confidence that our God is on the other side, waiting to receive the stalwart pilgrim who has come to the end of the way.

# The Four Horses of the Apocalypse

(PART 3)  
The Third Seal

H.H. (Manchester)

## THE THIRD SEAL

The third horse depicts the *Spirit of Darkness*: another powerful force which has been allowed by God to operate in special degree during the present age. Paul recognised the workings of this spirit when he wrote in Eph. 6. 12, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world". Satan, unable by the method of persecution to prevent the Spirit of Truth from doing its work, has sought to do so in another way—by the use of the spirit of darkness. He has darkened the Truth itself by multitudinous forms of error, and he has darkened the hearts and minds of men: 2. Cor. 4. 4, "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not". In almost countless ways the Adversary has deceived the nations (Rev. 20. 3), until at the end of the age the prophetic statement of Is. 60. 2 is well and truly fulfilled: "darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people".

It is interesting to note, if only briefly, some of the ways in which the power of darkness has been wielded by the Adversary. In the early part of the age, he caused to be introduced into the Christian Church three altogether unscriptural doctrines—those of the Trinity, the immortality of the soul, and eternal torment: by means of which he has deceived millions concerning God and His purpose, and still so deceives to-day. Later, he had much to do with the development of Roman Catholicism, and it would be impossible to estimate the vast number of people who have been, and who still are deceived thereby. A little later, in the 7th century, the Adversary caused the false prophet Mahomet to arise and the Koran to be written, and in this way again countless millions of people have been, and still are, deceived. Probably by these two systems alone (Roman Catholicism and Mohammedanism) almost a quarter of the inhabitants of the world to-day are held in the power of darkness; and they (these two systems) may well be described as Satan's masterpieces of deception of the present age.

Another agency used by the Adversary to deceive millions of people is philosophy, in its many forms; and marvellous indeed is the power of philosophy to darken the human mind concerning the truth as

it is in Christ. Science is another weapon of the power of darkness; not true science, but false science, such as the Darwinian theory, Astrology, etc.; though even true science, by its attractiveness, can overflow the heart and mind and so leave no room for the Bible and its great message. Higher Criticism has been another potent weapon in the Adversary's hands; by it he has led astray very many who ought to have been teachers of Christian truth, and who in consequence have led their flocks, not into the light of faith, but into the darkness of disbelief in the Divine Word.

Considering the foregoing, and other forms of error too numerous to mention, we are bound to admit that the Spirit of Darkness has indeed been a most powerful force during the present age. Not only individuals, but whole nations, have come under its influence. Where will you find the light of Truth to-day, for example, in Italy, in Spain, in Russia, in India, and so on? Probably not one person in a million in these countries know the truth concerning God and His real purposes in Christ, as students of the Bible have been privileged to know it during the past seventy years; all the rest lie completely in the power of darkness, owing to the forceful and effective operations of the third horse and its rider. It is safe to say that it would be impossible to exaggerate the serious effects of the going forth of this third horse—the Spirit of Darkness.

The colour of the horse, black, corresponds exactly to the symbolism of the horse; and its rider would fittingly represent all those who have co-operated with Satan in using the power of darkness during the present age. The balances in the rider's hand represent the control which has been granted to the Adversary by God in the conflict between Light and Darkness (compare the granting of power to Satan in the case of Job). The superior power and control of the Almighty in the matter, however, are shown not only (as in each of the first four seals) by the voice which summons the horse and its rider forth, but also by the message from the midst of the four living creatures—i.e., from God Himself—"A measure of wheat for a penny and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine". As in the case of Job, Satan could do much, but beyond certain limits he could not go.

Weymouth translates these words "A quart of wheat for a shilling, and three quarts of barley for a shilling", and says in a footnote that some such rendering as "A shilling for a penny loaf, and a shilling for three dough cakes" would bring home to the English reader the famine prices which are here indicated. The well known commentator Barnes says that the prices stated are eight times as high as the normal ones, and agrees with all other commentators that scarcity or famine is here indicated.

This conclusion is well supported by two O.T. passages of Scripture, Lev. 26. 26 and Ezek. 4. 16, from both of which we learn that to eat bread by weight indicated famine conditions. These passages are interesting, by the way, in reference to our own time, showing that we live to-day in a state of famine, and that bread rationing was known to the Almighty long before we ever thought of it. It was, indeed, one of the experiences of Egypt in the time of Joseph, if you will remember.

The wheat and bread of our vision, however, are not literal, but symbolic, and represent spiritual food or truth—food for the mind—the truth as it is in Christ: John 6. 48-51. Wheat would represent truth of a very good kind—the pure truth of the Scriptures—truth which will always be found to be in full harmony with the real purposes and the true character of God, as shown to us in the Divine Plan of the Ages; whereas barley would represent truth of an inferior kind—the kind which is served out in the various nominal systems for the sustenance and blessing of their members.

The vision shows us that, as the result of Satan's constant opposition to, and obscuring of, the Light, spiritual food or truth, instead of being abundant, everywhere in evidence, easy to find, and easy to obtain, is in the reverse position; it is scanty, difficult to find, and hard to obtain. Instead of being, like the milk of Isa. 55. 1, so abundant that it could be had "without money and without price", the wheat and the barley have been scarce, and the price to be paid for them has been high. The price, like the wheat and the barley, is symbolic, and does not refer to literal money. It means that those who have wished to obtain spiritual food in the present age have only been able to do so at the cost of effort and difficulty—of much searching, weariness, and often of sacrifice. Did not our Lord Himself intimate this at the very opening of the age, when He told us that we would have to knock, to ask, and to seek, if we would receive truth, the bread of life? The symbolic price of truth in the present age has been high.

Note that the oil and the wine, however, were not to be hurt. These represent the Holy Spirit

on the one hand, and the joy of the Truth and of fellowship with Christ, on the other. These were put by God beyond the power of harm from the Adversary. Whatever the latter might do to make wheat and barley scarce, both for God's people and for mankind as a whole (and this third seal, in its work and effects, takes in all wheresoever the Gospel has gone), he has never been able to interfere with the deeper phases of Christian life—with the true believer's relationship with God and with his joy in Christ. The statement of Paul in Rom. 8. 38, 39 bears this fact out: nothing, he says, can separate the true Christian from the love of God in Christ, and all that that implies.

The third seal thus pictures the age-long work of the power of darkness. As in the case of the second seal, this vision does not mean that the power of darkness was never used on the earth prior to the time covered by the vision. There is plenty of evidence that it was so used; remember indeed the words of our Lord in reference to His own day, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness" (Lu. 22. 53). But the going forth of this third horse *after* the death and resurrection and exaltation of Christ shows the special operation of the power of darkness during this very special age, the Gospel age.

Throughout this age there has been an intense conflict between Light and Darkness, Truth and Error. Our vision shows that this struggle was foreknown to God—its being in the seven sealed scroll is proof of this; that it has taken place by His special permission and authority—as shown by the command to the horse and its rider, "Come"; and that it has been very particularly under His supervision and control—as shown by the authoritative message from the throne, "A measure of wheat for a penny, ——— and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine". The Adversary, the great deceiver of the nations, using the spirit or power of darkness in any and every possible way, has not accomplished anything outside the knowledge of God, or more than the wisdom and the power of God have seen fit to permit. The whole of the work of the power of darkness has been under the Divine control, from beginning to end.

Once more, *SELAH!*

(*To be continued*)

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To say that doctrinal teaching is unnecessary or at the most, unimportant, is to deny the obvious experience of the Church through the centuries. Every great religious reform has been founded upon one or another great doctrinal truth and has taken its impetus therefrom.

## THE QUIET TIME

*"My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places."*

### SPARROWS

*I watched the sparrows flitting here and there,  
In quest of food about the miry street;  
Such nameless fare as seems to sparrows sweet  
They sought with greedy clamour everywhere.*

*Yet 'mid their strife I noted with what care  
They held their fluttering pinions fleet.  
They trod the mire with soiled and grimy feet,  
But kept their wings unsullied in the air.*

*I, too, like thee, O sparrow, toil to gain,  
My scanty portion from life's sordid ways.  
God grant I too, may have the grace,  
To keep my soul's uplifted wings from stain.*

### QUESTION

There will be a day when the Master will look upon us with eyes that pierce through to the naked soul and will say "I gave you a marvellous opportunity. I gave you an understanding of my message such as millions of earth's multitudes never received. I gave you a knowledge of my Truth such as many of my first disciples never had. I gave you the key to every problem which distressed mankind in your day, and I gave you the privilege of being heralds of my Kingdom. I gave you the opportunity which my followers in every century since Pentecost dreamed of and prayed for. What have you done with it?"

### GRATITUDE

How grateful we should be to God for those who have been used to give us the many Bible helps, translations, concordances, etc., in these days, at prices within the reach of almost all. What would not John Bunyan have given for such advantages to his study of God's word. He sought a whole year for a certain passage of Scripture; he writes "thus I continued above a year and could not find the place . . . I looked, but I found it not; then I did ask first this good man, and then another if they knew where it was, but they knew not the place, but I doubted not but it was in holy scripture; but at last I found it"

### SPIRIT-FILLED

Filled with the Spirit, we shall be a blessing to others, and rivers—not a mere stream—of blessing will flow out from us to refresh the dry and thirsty wilderness of this world. Great Britain would be frozen up each winter, but for the warm waters of the Gulf Stream that flow from the Gulf of Mexico right across the mighty Atlantic Ocean and wash these shores of ours, and so make Great Britain the most pleasant country in the world. This is a parable of the Holy Spirit, the Gulf Stream of the love of God. There is no end to the possibility of a Spirit-filled life, for there is an abundant provision. "Everything shall live whithersoever the river cometh" (see Ezek. 47).

### PRAYER

It is in prayer that God shows His face to His children, that they have visions of His beauty and glory, that the sweet things of His love come down as gifts into their hearts, and that they are transformed into His likeness. If you would be blessed, get many seasons of prayer into your busy, harassed, tempted, struggling life. It is in these quiet moments that you really grow. Somewhere in every vexed, feverish day get a little "silent time" for prayer. It will bring heaven down into your heart and make you strong for service.

### HOPE

*'Tis better to hope, though the clouds hang low,  
And to keep the eyes uplifted;  
For the bright blue sky will soon peep through  
When the ominous clouds are rifted.  
There was never a night without a day  
Or an evening without a morning;  
And the darkest hour, as the proverb says,  
Is the hour before the dawning.*

*Seek, then, to weave in the web of life  
A bright and golden filling,  
And to do God's will with a gladsome heart  
And hands that are ready and willing;  
For the sunny soul is full of hope,  
And whose trust in God ne'er faileth,  
Knows "God is love" and "God is light",  
Though at times the storm prevaileth.*

## Assembly of Witness at Manchester

The Assembly arranged by the Manchester Council on the 17th and 18th September was richly blessed by the Lord. Each speaker had a timely and helpful message. After words of welcome by Bro. Wilson, the Chairman, Bro. Drinkwater spoke on "*Philippians 1. 27*". Dealing with the origin of the Philippian Church (Acts 16. 6-15) and how this began the work in Europe, Bro. Drinkwater showed how wonderfully the Apostle Paul was led by the Holy Spirit. Later when in bonds at Rome he wrote to inquire of their affairs. His desire was that they should stand fast in one spirit and with one mind to strive together for the faith of the Gospel. We must not only stand fast, we must strive for the defence of the Gospel. We must see that we stand firm in the faith and have the life of activity defending the faith.

"*That they all may be one*" was the title of Bro. Guy's address. He reminded the brethren that these words were spoken in the Lord's prayer at the end of His ministry. This great intercessory prayer was presented to the Father in the presence of His disciples. He spoke of His work as now having been finished. He had kept those whom the Father had given Him; now He asked the Father to keep them, that they might be *one*. The Lord took great pains in this matter of unity. He did not have in mind one great organised body such as the Papacy, with its boast of being the one true Church. There is uniformity, not unity. He was speaking of the unity of the Spirit in the one true Church known only to God—enrolled in Heaven. We must give earnest heed to the Word of God. As we meet together we must have Jesus in our midst—we must be ever mindful of what He has said and what He has done for us. If we sit around our pet ideas we shall go home from our studies distressed and disappointed because Jesus is not there. We must endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit so beautifully shown in Psalm 133.

Bro. Musk spoke of our Calling and its relationship to the purpose of God. We are called according to His purpose and kept by His mighty power as shown in Eph. 1. 3-21; 2 Tim. 1, 9, 10; and 1 Pet. 1. 3-5. We must serve Him according to His purpose, therefore it is important that we know the purpose of God, not only in its broad outline and ultimate outcome, but also what feature is working out in our day. The prophet Haggai spoke of the great events to take place in our day (chap. 2. 6-9). His prophecy served an important purpose in his

own day. It moved the people of God to go forward in the purpose for which the Lord had brought them out of Babylon—to build the House of the Lord at Jerusalem. Prophecy serves the same purpose to-day. Whilst the great "shaking" goes on, the Lord's temple must be built. The Lord's temple class must be built up, that is, brought into proper relationship to God and His purpose, and to each other. Nothing has yet cancelled our commission to preach the Gospel far and wide. In this, as in other things, we must be obedient. Obedience is the evidence of love (John 14. 23). We must look carefully and prayerfully into His word, to know more perfectly the meaning of our calling, then individually and collectively we shall serve Him acceptably because it will be "according to His purpose".

A feature of the Assembly was the question meeting on Sunday morning. This was ably led by Bro. Barber and proved to be a very profitable session. The meeting was full of interest from beginning to end, and time was all too short.

Bro. Guard gave the Public Lecture on Saturday evening. His subject was, "*The Kingdom of God is at Hand*". Brother set forth very clearly the reason for man's inability to deal with the present world situation. Men are running here and there trying to repair the breaches in the present structure, but thinking people realise there is no human remedy. In a very convincing way Bro. Guard showed that it is God's purpose to establish a righteous government or ruling force in the earth. For this, people have been praying "*Thy Kingdom Come*". Evidence was given of the nearness of the Kingdom, and of some of the great blessings it will bring to mankind. The response from the public was poor. Only a small number attended, but the large number of brethren present agreed that their own hearts had been blessed by the way in which the message had been presented.

The Assembly was marked by the Spirit of Christian love and good will. It is in such gatherings that the brethren get to know and understand each other better.

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In the high heavens, and in the depths of our hearts, Grace abounding has mounted its Royal Throne, and has brought the unfailing resources of Omnipotent Power to the aid of Almighty Love.

# The Voice of the Monuments

## 4. The Moabite Stone.

Mesha, king of Moab, was the undistinguished king of an undistinguished people. The nation of the Moabites was never a very powerful or influential one; it had its beginning in the days of Abraham, at the time of the destruction of Sodom, a beginning that was by no means auspicious (Gen. 19. 30-38), and it came to an ignominious end by being absorbed into the surrounding peoples during the times of change that attended the coming of the Persians and the Greeks shortly before the First Advent. But Mesha king of Moab has one claim to enduring fame; he caused to be inscribed a stone tablet which, buried for nearly three thousand years, has appeared in these our days to give witness to the accuracy of Holy Scripture.

It was Mesha who rebelled against the overlordship of Israel. Omri, king of Israel, had reduced Moab to subjection. Ahab his son received tribute until the day that Mesha turned against him. Ahab allowed the case to go by default for the time being, but in the days of *his* son Jehoram, the Israelites advanced against Moab to re-impose their rule. They had entered into the land, driving the Moabites before them, until in his extremity Mesha resorted to the terrible act of sacrificing his first-born son in the fire to Chemosh the god of Moab, in the hope that in face of this offering Chemosh would relent and deliver his people. The Israelites were so horrified at the scene that they raised the siege and returned to their own land, at least for the time being. Doubtless the Moabites exulted in the thought that Chemosh had, at the eleventh hour, intervened to save them.

The whole story is told in 2 Kings 3. 4-27. "And Mesha king of Moab was a sheepmaster, and rendered unto the king of Israel an hundred thousand lambs, and an hundred thousand rams, with the wool. But it came to pass, when Ahab was dead, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel; and king Jehoram went out of Samaria the same time, and numbered Israel. And he went and sent to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, saying, the king of Moab hath rebelled against me; wilt thou go with me against Moab to battle? And he said 'I will go' . . . so the king of Israel went, and the king of Judah, and the king of Edom . . . And when all the Moabites heard that the kings were come up to fight against them, they gathered all that were able to put on armour, and upward,

and stood on the border . . . And when they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and smote the Moabites, so that they fled before them; but they went forward smiting the Moabites, even in their country . . . And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too sore for him, he took with him seven hundred men that drew swords, to break through even unto the king of Edom; but they could not. Then he took his eldest son, that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall. And there was great indignation against Israel, and they departed from him, and returned to their own land."

Up to the latter half of last century the Bible stood alone in this account of the conflicts between Moab and Israel, and the Old Testament historian not unnaturally enlarged upon the times when Israel was victorious, and said little about the periods of Moabite supremacy. But Mesha himself had also committed to writing the story of his exploits in those same days, and so it came about that in the year 1868 the Rev. F. A. Klein, of the Church Missionary Society, was taken by a friendly Arab sheik to a spot near the ancient village of Deiban, where the River Arnon rushes down a steep gorge into the Dead Sea, to see a massive black basalt slab, some four feet in length, by two feet wide and thick, inscribed with a mysterious writing, that had come to light.

That slab is now known as the Moabite Stone, and a replica of it stands in the British Museum. (The original is in the Louvre at Paris.) The local Arabs, learning of the interest their "find" had aroused, superstitiously broke it into pieces before it could be moved, but impressions of the inscription had, happily, been taken; the pieces were for the most part recovered and the monument restored.

It is sometimes said that the Moabite Stone confirms the Bible story of Jehoram's war against Moab, but that is not true. The inscription refers to an earlier period, and recounts the events of a time when Moab rebelled against Israel and was victorious, capturing many Israelite towns and taking many Israelite captives. But it is a striking confirmation of Old Testament history just the same. The first verse of the first chapter of 2 Kings says, simply and briefly "Then Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab". Nothing is said as to the success or otherwise of

the rebellion and the chapter goes on to tell of the reign of Ahaziah, Ahab's successor. It is not until we come to the reign of Jehoram in the third chapter, earlier quoted, that we find Moab still independent, and Jehoram advancing against them in order to subdue them. Obviously then, although Scripture says not one word about it, the Moabite rebellion had been successful. And this is what the Moabite Stone declares, giving the fuller details of that revolt that the Old Testament historians had omitted. The inscription commences "I am Mesha, son (worshipper) of Chemosh, king of Moab, the Deibonite. My father reigned over Moab thirty years and I reigned after my father. I made this high place for Chemosh because he had saved me from my enemies. Omri was king of Israel, and he oppressed Moab many days, for Chemosh was angry with his land. And his son (Ahab) succeeded him, and he too said 'I will oppress Moab'. He said so in my days, and I went out against him and his house, and Israel perished utterly. . . . And Chemosh said to me 'Go, seize Nebo from Israel'; and I went by night, and fought against it from dawn until noon, and I took it and slew all . . . and I took from thence the vessels of Jehovah, and placed them before Chemosh . . ."

There is more in the same strain. The Book of Kings, eloquent in what it does not say, merely tells us that Moab rebelled after the death of Ahab. Mesha tells us of the success of that rebellion and how Israel—as he thought—perished utterly under his onslaught. The Moabite defeat of Israel in the

days of Ahaziah the son of Ahab must have been a crushing one. Then in the reign of Jehoram the successor of Ahaziah came the reversal of fortune which is recorded in 2 Kings 3, when Israel drove the Moabites back into their own land with heavy loss. Taken together, the two accounts, the one in the Scriptures and the other on stone, yield us a complete picture of those stirring events.

2 Chronicles has another sidelight on the story. It is the well-known account of how good king Jehoshaphat of Judah and his people set out to meet the invading Moabites without weapons but trusting in God for defence and singing the high praises of God as they went. "Ye shall not need to fight in this battle" was the word of the Lord to them "for the battle is not yours, but God's". And God delivered with a great deliverance.

Now that, also, was just after the death of Ahab and it must have been the same invasion which is recorded on the Moabite Stone. This time it is Mesha of Moab who is silent. He exults about his victory over the king of Israel; he says nothing at all about the king of Judah. That is Mesha's unwitting testimony to the truth of 2 Chron. 20. That part of the Moabite army which encountered good king Jehoshaphat's men, trusting in their God, was routed and dispersed. The part which fought Ahaziah the wicked king was victorious, and that victory was engraved upon Mesha's stone monument to be a witness against the ten-tribe kingdom for ever.

## Reflections of the Cardiff Home-Gathering

Now that the eagerly awaited event has come and gone we are able with profit to reflect upon the occasion which produced so much happiness and encouragement to the brethren present. It was a surprise when arrivals from London, Dublin, Leicester, Bristol and other places revealed a more than usual interest in the Assembly. There was an air of joyful anticipation that our Father had a blessing in store for His people. The meetings started well. A packed audience listened to exhortations from the chosen speakers with sincerity and obvious assent. To accommodate all the brethren attending, a quick change round of chairs enabled the seemingly impossible to become an achievement whereby all who had set out to hear were accommodated.

Sunday was a great day. In a commodious ball-room the friends engaged in songs of praise and the speakers continued their exhortation to Christian

holiness of living and the practice of the teachings of Jesus. The effect of these exhortations to brotherly love and charity one towards another was evident in the attitude of complete understanding evinced throughout the proceedings by the friends. There was calm enjoyment and freedom and liberty of expression.

It was obvious that this gathering was one in spirit and in purpose. The friends gave close attention to Brother Lodge, and their evident appreciation of his addresses will long be remembered. Brother Thomson's discourses were heartening and full of assurance. His closing address, relating to the habits of the humble sparrow, in contrast with the swallow, which flies in circles, was eloquent and appealing to the child of God.

The gathering closed with expressions of love and good wishes to all, near and far, and the hope that this effort might become an annual event.

## FROM THE WALLS OF THE CITY

A look-out on  
signs of the times.

"Mr. Trygve Lie, United Nations Secretary-General, has asked that the possibility be considered of opening each General Assembly session with a minute's silence 'for meditation and prayer'." (Press Report, 28/5/49.)

If only the statesmen who gather at these sessions were, all of them, convinced Christians assured of the mighty powers waiting to come to their aid in the solving of their problems, what a difference would the reports of those sessions reveal! If, instead of "exploring the possibilities"—favourite diplomatic phrase—of so little as "one minute's silence for meditation and prayer" some outstanding figure in this world's politics were to stand up and lead a believing Assembly in earnest supplication to God for sincerity of purpose and clarity of judgment, what a different atmosphere would pervade the hall as he sat down! The frame of mind thus engendered would of itself lead to happier counsels and wiser decisions quite apart from the Divine aid which would surely come in such case.

There is no doubt about that. If the nations of the world came to God with their problems He would, even now, guide them to a solution. He could not do otherwise and still be God. But there is no likelihood of such a thing happening. The only reasonable conclusion that can be drawn from the history of man, through all the ages and down to the present day, is that men will persist in their attempts to conduct affairs on lines of selfishness and brute force, even to the destruction of organised society as we know it to-day. God *will* answer prayer; but the prayer He will answer will be that which has been ascending from the hearts of devoted believers the world over in all the years since Pentecost "*Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as in heaven*". God will intervene in human affairs to set up His own Kingdom, His own administration, and the rulers then will be men of His own choosing. Nothing short of that will lead humanity out of its present dilemma, and guide mankind into the way of peace.

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In December of 1946, fishermen in the Indian Ocean, thirty miles out from Bombay, captured a twelve-foot tiger shark in the stomach of which

they discovered the complete skeleton of a man and some clothing. This occurrence does at least illustrate the story of Jonah and is of interest as indicating the possibility of a man being swallowed whole by a large fish.

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According to Mr. A. V. Alexander, Minister of Defence, the present annual cost of national defence is £15 per head. A great many of the nation's problems could be solved with the aid of fifty million times fifteen pounds per annum. It would completely wipe out that "dollar gap" which is giving such trouble and still leave a hundred and fifty millions for other purposes. And it is not as if this colossal sum *guarantees* defence. Neither does it guarantee peace. "*If you want peace, prepare for war*" is one of the most lying sayings ever perpetrated upon a long-suffering people. The fear engendered among nations by reason of military preparations inevitably leads to conflict at last. Economic problems lead to war from motives of pure national selfishness. Until the Prince of Peace re-arranges this world's affairs and apportions a fair division of labour and a fair division of the world's produce to each member of the human race the people will continue, as said Jeremiah, to "*labour in the fire, and they shall be weary*". (Jer. 51. 58.) And this does not cast any reflection upon the sincerity and strenuous endeavours that are being made by so many of the world's statesmen for peace. They are doing the best they can with the tools they have got, and if they know not of other and better tools, or have no faith in such if they do know of them, the blame may lie, to some extent, at the door of those Christians who have failed themselves to manifest faith in their own standards and hold them aloft before the world. If the world refuses to believe that Christianity is a workable proposition it may well be because they have not yet seen it work within the Christian community. That does not excuse them altogether, neither does it alter the fact that the way of Christ is the only way that *will* work and the way to which all the world must one day come. But the sooner we make it an obvious power in our own lives and—very important this—in our own community, the sooner we can expect the world to take some notice of it—and us—and begin to consider whether there be not some practicable alternative to its present methods after all.



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