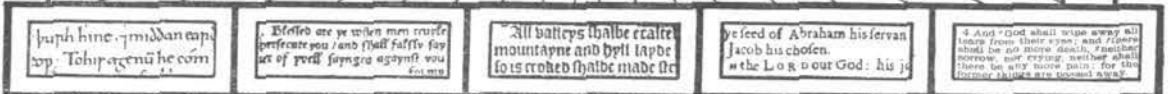


BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY



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THE ASSOCIATED BIBLE STUDENTS OF GREAT BRITAIN.

An undenominational Christian fellowship devoted to the study and dissemination of Bible truth in the light of present-day knowledge and to the deepening of personal Christian life and experience. Its members stand unreservedly for the teachings of Jesus Christ as a complete solution to humanity's problems, and believe in the eventual establishment of a new order of society upon earth in which the principles of love, equity and righteousness will prevail and evil be eliminated; and that under the spiritual rule of Christ and His Church the dead will be restored and mankind live in eternal harmony with God.

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CONCERNING THEM WHICH ARE ASLEEP.

An examination of
1 Thess. 4: 13-18

Chapter 1—ASLEEP IN JESUS.

The subject of the "Sleeping Saints" has been of absorbing interest for many years among those Christians who cherish the hope of our Lord's return. It could not be a question of outstanding importance to those who believed that each saint, on finishing his course below went immediately into the Heavenly Courts,—for these Saints would not be "Sleeping." Nor could it be of interest to any who looked not for our Lord's return. A new point-of-view regarding the Sleeping Saints was introduced some sixty years ago among advanced Bible Students by reason of a new and clearer understanding of the meaning of the Greek word "**Parousia**." It came to be understood that the return of our Lord would not occur as with lightning flash, but like the dawn of day. Not a mere moment, but a period of time, would be covered by the "Parousia" events. This thought was held in general acceptance for a considerable while by many who had accepted what was then called "Harvest Light." Then came a difference of understanding, and some students returned to the older interpretation. Inability to see that the "Signs of the Times" indicated that the Lord was already present, caused some to relinquish their acceptance of the postulate that the Saints which slept throughout the Age had been raised. The counter-claim is made that when the Lord does come, the living Saints as well as the Sleeping Saints will be caught up together **in the same moment of time** to meet their Lord in the air.

This enquiry seeks to ascertain afresh whether the evidences of Scripture do warrant the thought that the Sleeping Saints have priority of entrance into the presence of the Lord, while yet those that remain and are "left over" to the **Parousia** of the Lord are still in the flesh.

In approaching this question of the Sleeping Saints it is necessary to consider the Apostle's words in 1 Thess. 4: 13-17, from a two-fold standpoint. First, we must consider them as an answer to a very perplexing difficulty existing among the Thessalonian brethren themselves. Secondly, we must investigate them in a fuller and wider sense, in the light of the Church's known history reaching from Apostolic days to our own, or until it is definitely established that the Lord has come.

There is thus involved in this discussion the difference between the human intention of Paul, as he wrote his letter, and the Divine intention in guiding his thoughts into right channels to answer that perplexing point once for all. It required a "word from the Lord"—a special disclosure on the point—to enable Paul to make suitable answer, and in setting forth that special item of recent revelation the human intention was over-ruled by the Divine purpose, so that that "Word of the Lord" should be recorded for all time.

Paul may not have had the slightest idea that his letter would be preserved for future generations to read. He knew not how long the Church would be called upon to follow its Lord, hence it scarcely seems probable that he had in mind later generations when answering the Thessalonians' questions. It seems to have been his intention to meet a very pressing present need for his own generation of believers. In considering the saying "I would not have YOU to be ignorant, brethren" (v.33.) it would seem the most natural way of understanding the words to apply them to the particular Church which had propounded the question, and which was the first recipient of the letter in answer thereto.

Again, some of the immediate purpose of the letter would be lost if we fail to see that it was written "concerning them that are **falling** asleep"—not merely "fallen" asleep. The Greek word is a present participle, and denotes some event or events in progress. Some of their company had died since Paul's farewell—others were dying. This passing of loved ones greatly disturbed them, for so keen had been their expectation of the Lord's return that they had had no thought of any member of their community dying before the Lord's appearance. This breaking of tender ties was causing them great grief, almost as intense as that of their Greek unbelieving relations. Brought up as they had been, in the heathenish practices of cultured (?) Greece, among a people which expressed its sorrow in excessive and hopeless lamentation, small wonder that they could scarce throw off the practice of long-established custom. The hopelessness of the whole Pagan world in the presence of death was likened by

both Greek and Roman writers to "the shadow of a starless night." Inscriptions have been found in this very city which told the reader that after death there was no revival; that the future was an unknown dark night, with no single ray of light ahead. Letters from friends to bereaved parents are still extant which exhort the poor sorrowing ones to try to forget—for there was nought else to do. The Greek poets and philosophers had mused about the probabilities of survival, but their only basis of reflection was Babylonian and Egyptian myth and legend, which in the hour of death afforded little comfort and less hope. At best, being without the Word of God for their guidance, it was but the mind of curious men groping in the dark to solve the riddle of human existence.

The mentality and customs of generations are not easily eradicated, and these dear Thessalonians, whom Paul had commended for their brotherly love to each other, were inclining to sorrow with excessive grief for their loved ones. They were not long broken from their pagan customs, and the new mentality of the Christian faith had not entirely eradicated that of their impressive childhood days. Let us bear in mind, not only this heathen parentage, but the fact that they had no Bible as we have—no New Testament records compiled and harmonised such as we possess. True, they had had the great Apostle of the Gentiles as their teacher, but he had not been permitted to stay very long by their relentless enemies. At best, these Thessalonian brethren were but babes in Christ, deprived of their father-in-God who had nursed and cared for them during their short Christian career.

Their faith was extremely simple—just the acceptance and enjoyment of a few basic facts, such as that Jesus died for their sins, and would return from heaven to receive them to share His Kingdom joys. This new great expectation was transforming their lives, helping them to forget their idols (Chap. 1: 10.) But the loss of their brethren was a stunning blow for them, as it seemed to their immature outlook that their loved ones would not be able to share in the joys and rewards which the Coming of the Lord would bring. They did not doubt that the dead would be raised again, for Jesus' own death was the pledge of that, but they feared this awakening would be too late for their brethren to share the blessings of Jesus' arrival, and this had been the cause of their sorrowing. It was the very intensity of their

brotherly love which prompted it. Hence the peculiar form of Paul's re-assuring reply. He does not seek to re-convince them that their brethren would be raised up from sleep, but rather that after being thus awakened, God would bring them again in the company of Jesus when He came.

It will therefore be noted that the Thessalonian's problem was quite different from that posed by the Corinthian brethren. They denied the fact of the Resurrection—the Thessalonians did not. Paul had need to remind the Corinthians that if the dead rise not, then is Christ not raised (1 Cor. 15: 16.) Not so with the Thessalonians. They had no doubts that Jesus had been raised, and had ascended to heaven, from whence they were awaiting His return.

Hence Paul does not say "If ye believe that Jesus died and was raised again, so likewise, your loved ones who have died, will be raised again—." He passes right over the fact of their brethren's resurrection to the certainty of their return and re-union with themselves when the Lord Himself comes from heaven. "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." (v. 14.) The words "If . . . even so," institute a parallelism between the course of the Lord and that of the brethren. But it is a three-fold parallelism as follows. Jesus died; was raised again; and will return.

Set out in parallel phrase it stands thus:—

JESUS.	THE BRETHREN.
Point 1. "We believe that Jesus died."	"them . . . which sleep in Jesus (that is, they were dead)."
Point 2. "Jesus . . . rose again."	Their resurrection implied, but not definitely stated.
Point 3. "God will bring . . . Him."	"them ALSO which sleep in Jesus will God bring WITH Him."

Thus Paul, in his own personal intention, sought to comfort the sorrowing hearts of his brethren by assuring them of a future re-union with their loved ones when their returning Lord should come.

How soothing it must have been to their changed hearts to be assured that their brethren "slept." This word no heathen philosopher

could have used. It was a purely Hebrew thought, based upon the "sure word of the Lord." So far as His faithful ones are concerned "God is not a God of the dead, but of the living." So Jesus reasoned when disputing with the Sadducees. "As touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?'" It is from the days of Abraham that death is looked upon as "sleep." Not that the dead were not dead, for Hebrew thought was most explicit upon the non-sentient condition of those "gathered to their fathers" "there is no knowledge, nor wisdom, nor device in the grave" "the dead know not anything." But because God had purposed their return to life, they were spoken of, not as extinct, but as in a suspended state of being, as in a state of sleep; and as though gathered into a "place" called "Sheol." There is no actual place bearing that name; there is no actual congregation of the dead, for nothing literally survives after the dissolution of the body; it is only a prospect of sharing in God's intention that all who are in the graves shall be awakened and come forth to enter into life.

The assurance that their brethren were not extinct as the heathen philosophy taught, but accounted "asleep in Jesus" (according to the Hebrew and the later Christian thought), was a word of intense comfort and assurance to those who had looked upon death as "the shadow of a starless night." Hence, though death had left its wounds, there was no cause for sorrow "even as the rest."

Death is still an enemy, and tears in the presence of the dead is no censurable weakness. Even the Master, who more than all others of His day knew the verity of God's promise, and the certainty of the awakening from the dead, wept sorely as He stood by the grave of His beloved friend. Thus by the use of this precious word Paul, within the scope of his own human intention, sought to speak a word of comfort to the sorrowing brethren of his own day, without of necessity having future generations in mind at all.

But the Divine Overseer had further intentions and purposed using these precious words for still unborn generations.

In passing the object of Paul's immediate intention to the plane of God's higher and more comprehensive intention, we must be very careful not to miss or blur the full meaning of

Paul's actual words. It is obvious, by considering the course of Church history, that the Divine purpose was to place on record for all later generations an explanation covering the gathering together of the Saints to the Lord at the time of His appearing.

That it happened so under the over-ruling providence of God is full proof that God's purposes were higher than Paul's, but it also seemed quite evident that God had allowed Paul to pursue his own intention and purpose so that that first generation (which probably needed it most) might have the word of comfort and assurance which their sore trial made so necessary.

The facts of history show that all they of Thessalonica, and of all other places, from that day forward throughout the long centuries, followed their loved ones into death. This longer period of waiting for the Lord's return has not altered or modified the meaning of Paul's words. It has only increased the numbers who waited for His Coming. To several scores of generations the words may have been as readily applied as they were in Thessalonica, with just the same force and meaning. Each generation lost its dead and mourned their passing, but no subsequent generation stood quite in the same position as the Thessalonians. Later generations had the written records of the New Testament, with their formulated doctrines and developed Christian mentality.

Time did not alter the basic facts. They remained as true and unchangeable for each later generation as for the first. In each generation it was right and proper to say "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." The number that slept has increased with every successive generation, but it has always remained true that all who thus slept from every generation "God will bring with Him," (Jesus) when He comes. Always, all the time, it is the fact of bringing back the sleeping saints to be re-united to those who have remained on earth till the Coming of that Lord of whom Paul speaks, for, "bringing with Him" or "leading forth with Him" always means and only means the return and restoration of those which each generation had "loved . . . and lost awhile."

These words are unmistakably the main clause of this whole passage. This part of the text is pure assertion; all else is by way of explanation. The assertion is based on two events forever sure and incontrovertible, "Jesus died"

—without that event there could have been no redemption, no drawing nigh to God. That is the foundation stone of approach to God. It was so in Paul's day; it is so to-day; and will remain so forevermore!

"Jesus . . . rose again"—apart from that there could have been no Church of God, no High Calling, no Intercessorship—nothing at all!

One more thing (taking Paul's standpoint) was still future—"Jesus will come again." On these three points Paul neither proposes nor argues; he asserts, without qualification.

Sure as the stars these things have been and shall be. That is the bed-rock of the whole section, and on the bed-rock everything else is built.

A second emphatic assertion is based on that "If we believe (and this is not the "if" of doubt—but of proposition) that Jesus died and rose again (and will come again) even so . . ." As surely as He comes, then "even so them also which sleep" will come with Him. This is assertion number two; certain and sure as the first.

Our generation has riveted its attention on some of the scaffolding and overlooked this foundation. It has built its case upon the explanation (vv. 16 & 17.) and has passed over the basic fact (v. 14.) We have failed to

see that the due order for the "sleepers" and the "left-overs" to enter into the presence of the Lord is emphatically conditioned by the force of Paul's second assertion. That "the dead in Christ shall rise first" is based upon the fact that when Jesus comes to earth, them that "slept" "will God bring with Him." The "catching-up" later of them that "remain" is to effect the re-union of the two sections of this class which death divided. The translation into the air is necessary because Jesus is a Divine spirit being, and because all His faithful followers will likewise partake of the Divine Nature.

Those basic statements (v. 14.) of the Apostle stand to-day in the same relation to their context as they did in his day. They govern the meaning of all the remainder of the passage. To discuss the explanation and overlook the fundamental assertion is like building in the air without a foundation. Whatever may be deduced concerning the meaning of words or phrases, or even the whole context, the construction cannot be right without reference to its basic assertions. The interpretation of verses 16 and 17 must of necessity be governed by the assertions of verse 14.

Part 2 of this series will appear next month under the title "Caught up together."

THE MORNING COMETH.

It is self-evident truth that the age of doctrinal uniformity has gone past; equally obvious that no doctrinal platform whatsoever, however comprehensive and liberal, can serve as the gathering-place of deep, profound, and Christ-like thinkers. This raises an issue at once threatening evil and disorder, and yet prophetic of good and harmony. The only truth capable of bringing about a reconciliation of divergent opinions, or which will help to spread genuine charity, is that there is a church forming within all churches, and in the minds of all true and noble thinkers, disclosing to all true minds higher views of truth than the sects can any of them hold, and imparting to all intellects that turn to the Lord, a life which the sects as such cannot give; that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming nearer and nearer in spirit, and that this energy is creating a new thought, and an entirely new affection among men; that this spirit is not evolving a new sect or ecclesiasticism to which men point and say, Lo here,

or Lo! there; it is a quickened spirit from the Lord, and out of that spirit a new theology will arise, more reverent, more heavenly and practical, before which the old scragged dogmas will melt off and fall away.

The Watch Tower.

* * *

Before Dwight L. Moody, the great revivalist, came to London, one fearful questioner had suggested that he print his creed before coming. "My creed is in print," Moody replied. "It is found in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah."

* * *

*But be not thou as those whose mind
Is to the passing hour confined;
Let no ignoble fetters bind
Thy soul, as free as mountain wind.*

*Stand upright, speak thy thought, declare
The truth thou hast, that all may share,
Be bold; proclaim it everywhere;
They only live who bravely dare.*

THE QUIET TIME



THE SECRET PLACE.

Wondrous the thought—that the Father
 Knows of our every care,
 Feels for us when the shadow
 Lurks where the sky was fair;
 Knows of the pent-up sorrow,
 Feels for the eyes that weep;
 Tells of a brighter morrow
 Where shadows never creep!

Precious to know the Good Shepherd
 Tenderly guides His sheep
 Over the stony places;
 Cares when the path is steep:
 Watches for greenest pastures,
 Tends them with loving skill;
 Guards them from fright and danger,
 Leads them by waters still!

Joyous the thought—that the angels,
 Guardians are, to keep;
 Bearing in hands so tender
 Weary and wounded feet:
 Daily are gaining access
 To the dear Father's face;
 Hourly are seeking succour
 For those who crave His grace!

Blessed to feel we are dwelling
 Safe in the secret place;
 Under Jehovah's shadow,
 Trusting till we can trace:
 Knowing no ill can harm us,
 Knowing his arm of love
 Safely will shield, till He calls us
 Unto His home above!

(Mary Cleveland Jewell).

COURAGE STRENGTHENED BY PAST DELIVERANCES.

Sir Francis Drake, being in a dangerous storm in the Thames, was heard to say, "Must I, who have escaped the rage of the ocean, be drowned in a ditch!" Will you, experienced saints, who have passed through a world of tribulation, lie down and die of despair, or give up your profession because you are at the present moment passing through some light affliction? Let your past preservation inspire you with courage and constrain you to brave all storms for Jesus' sake.

CHRISTIAN GRACES.

Longfellow in his "Hiawatha" sings of—
 "The pleasant watercourses,
 You could trace them through the valley,
 By the rushing in the Spring-time,
 By the alders in the Summer,
 By the white fog in the Autumn,
 By the black line in the Winter."

So traceable are the lives of really gracious men and women. They are not solicitous to be observed, but the gracious "signs following" are sure to reveal them. Like their Master they cannot be hid.

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

HIS AMPLE PROVISION.

If beguilement come to us, let us say with the apostles of old, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." There is life nowhere else, and we wish to go nowhere else. We are feasting in the banquet hall of our Father's house," and His banner over us is love! We have an abundant supply; our table is richly laden. So we eat and go on our way rejoicing. We are nearing home; we shall soon reach the last mile-stone in our journey! Then, with a song on our lips, let us press on.

Tempted and tried, whatever betide,
 In His secret pavilion His children shall hide,
 'Neath the shadowing wing of eternity's King,
 His children may trust, yea, His children may sing.

DIVINE CONSOLATION.

What is Divine consolation? It is the balm for wounded spirits on the battle fields of time; the cooling draught for fainting souls hard pressed by the relentless foe; the soothing caress of a loving hand upon the fevered brow of a noble contender for truth and righteousness; the gentle whisper of hope and courage when the heart and flesh begin to fail—that is consolation, Divine consolation, the only consolation that has any virtue of healing and refreshing in it. But it is reserved only for those noble souls who are faithfully bearing the burden and heat of the day; while those who listlessly drift with the current of the world's favour, and of the downward tendencies of the carnal nature, can never have an intimation of its sweetness.

THE "ALL THINGS."

"All things work together for our good." Nothing is unsuitable or unprofitable. Out of all evil comes good to the saints, out of all darkness comes light, out of all sorrow comes joy. Each pang, sharp or slight, is doing its work, the very work which God designs, the very work which we could not do without. The forces of earth, unless they all bear in one line, or nearly so, tend to counteract each other and arrest the common impulse, but the forces which God brings to bear upon us are all directly and necessarily impulsive. Come from what quarter they may, they still bear us successfully forward. "All things work together for our good." "All things are ours."

*Build a little fence around To-day,
 And therein stay;
 Look not through the shell-ring bars
 Upon To-morrow,—
 Sufficient for each day, the evil
 And the sorrow.*

THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS.

"The Everlasting God, the Lord . . .
there is no searching of His understanding."
Isa. 40: 28

Part 1—THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL.

The highest accomplishment of all religious life and experience is to become intensely aware of the holiness of God. This great fact—God's absolute holiness—is the very essence of all revealed Truth, in that it takes us behind all that God does in order to show us what He "is." Behind the whole structure of the Divine Plan of Redemption is the character of that God Who framed it. If, in our Gospel day, we have been permitted to see that Redemptive Plan as a manifestation of unfathomable love, it is because that love existed before the plan was made. If we to-day can talk of Bethlehem, and Calvary, and Olivet, and realize that the coming of a Babe, the dying of a Man, the resurrection and the ascension of the Son of God have made salvation possible for all, then back of all that preparation we must see the yearning heart of One Who, for a time, had lost possession of His earthly sons. If, looking onward down the years, we see a righteous world, where no ill deed is done, and man is free from sin, then behind the whole design we must allow for One who hated sin before that sin began. Behind all precious doctrine, behind all redemptive work, behind each type and shadow, behind the whole Gospel story, there stands the identity of One Who in Himself is greater than His works. From His own great heart the love-stream flowed; from His white-hot soul the sin-hatred sprang; and from His unfaltering Will, the drive and power of accomplishment came forth. Effects spring only from adequate causes—Redemption and Restoration must have Redeemer and Restorer, and though others may be chosen to help reach those effects, He only is the First Great Cause.

Behind all Truth, behind all development of this or that to serve His ends, stands God Most High; a God of Love and Pity, compassionate, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, yet not over-looking sin. If love of man is found in men, it is because it first was found in Him. If love of truth is found in man, again it first was found in Him. Out from His unsullied fulness sprang all that He has done. He "does" because of what He "is." Because He "is" to-day all that He ever "was," His purposes remain unchanged. Because eternal years to come will find Him still as He "now is," the utmost bounds of time will

find no variation in His ways. To-day, as yesterday, and throughout everlasting years, His integrity will remain the same, because His native Holiness can know no change. His glorious plans, made sure by promise, and precious blood, and "Oath" upon His own Great Name, assure both Heaven and Earth that He will uproot sin, and uplift man, till naught of Adamic or Satanic taint remain; till man, and angel too, shall savour of that holy state so like His own.

No student of God's word can feel surprise that He who dwelt with the Eternal God before the round of time began should here on earth, in time, teach mortal man as the first burden of his prayer to say "Our Father . . . hallowed be Thy Name . . ." Through ages too profound to calculate the worthy Son, as Logos of His worthy Sire, had held in reverent esteem that Holy Name, and times unnumbered He had led the undefiled in heaven to sing its worthy praise, and echo forth the "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord"—a song which in due time will rise from every tongue.

Come down to this sad earth, the sweetest hours which blessed his lonely life were those in which memory sped back to those far days before the world was made, when, dwelling in the presence of the Eternal God, He was always God's delight. The memory of that Holiness in this His hour of need, what time He walked 'mid sin and death, kept Him, as needle to the pole, at rest and peace, and faithful unto death. When humble earthly fishermen, desiring to know God, requested to be taught, the theme that rose from His own soul was given as pattern for their prayers. "Our Father . . . hallowed be Thy Name."

In His touching farewell prayer, though heavy sorrow filled His soul, the same great theme engrossed His mind. When placing His little band for their safe-keeping within His Father's care, He prayed "Holy Father, keep through Thine own Name, those whom Thou hast given me" (John 17: 11.) No thought of nearing death could banish from His mind the "Holy Father" and the "Holy Name." By precept and example then, before His chosen few, the Son of Man who came from Heaven held up on earth that Holy Name as worthy of all praise and adoration, because it was the Name of Him who in Himself was holy beyond

compare.

How extremely poor are illustrations and words to show to us mere men the incalculable heights of worthiness and excellence which natively reside in God. High as the highest heaven, above the lowest spheres of earth, so stands God's moral worth above the worth of worthiest man. No single thought, no single word, no single act, from the far depths of everlasting years gone by, to the far distances of everlasting years to come has ever yet, or ever can know taint or flaw. No tongue of man or angel will ever need to utter accusation against the Holy Name, when once He deigns to show Himself such as He truly is. No truce with sin, nor irresolution to root it out will ever come to be preferred against the Holy One of Israel. The sacred writers say that "God is Light." How wonderful, and yet how inadequate is light to illustrate that greater "Light." Far back along the stream of time chaos and unending darkness reigned, and light "was not;" but the "Eternal Light" dwelt in His abode and sent forth from thence His brooding power, and drew the beams of light out of the womb of black eternal night. Greater far that "Holy Light" than our majestic king of day, at summer's noonday hour!

The Scriptures say He is "of purer eyes" than to behold approvingly the sins of men. But how insufficient are those mere words to tell of that undefilable purity which neither friend nor foe can taint. If whiteness be the token of inward purity then God's native Holiness shall out-white the winter's virgin snow. If the white-hot glow is needed to consume the dross in order that the pure red gold may be set free, then God's fiery jealousy against sin is a flame intenser far. Brighter than the equatorial noon-day sun, purer than the polar virgin snow, hotter than the mercury or oxygen-fed flame is Divine jealousy for the right, the good, the true, and its zeal against sin and wrong and evil in every form.

But there it must be left. Our world contains no parallel to the exceeding intensity of the Holiness of God. Our language has no words—not even Shakespeare's facile pen nor Milton's glowing tongue—to paint the Holy Fire which dwells eternal in the heart of God; and here our quandary begins.

All students of the Holy Book admit the Holiness of God. But none admit the holiness of man. How then can we contemplate our text? If God is Holy beyond compare, how can we attain to holiness like Him? What do these words of Peter mean? Let us note

again that they are prefaced by an "it is written." "Because it is written." "Be ye holy, for I am holy." Back somewhere then in an earlier day the inspired penman had recorded these few words, and Peter takes them up to sharpen his appeal to win his brethren to a purer life. But can disciples live a holy life? Is it not presumptuous to speak of holiness and saintliness while here on earth? Are we not of sinful stock, and tainted by the fall? Do we not oft do things we ought not, and leave undone those we should do? Can we claim, even in our best moments, to be free from sin? Nay indeed! Before the query arises the answer comes! Yet Scripture describes brethren as holy (Rom. 12: 1, Heb. 3: 1,) and often calls them saints (Rom. 1: 7, 1 Cor. 1: 2, Eph. 1: 1, etc.)! In what way then can sin and holiness accord? Another distinction here needs to be made. Paul says "There is none righteous" (Rom. 3: 10.) Is holiness and righteousness the same quality of heart? Holiness is generally understood to mean freedom from sin, "an absolute purity of heart. But so is righteousness; that is, when speaking other than of righteousness by faith. Wherein comes the difference then?"

Righteousness is a forensic term—that is, it indicates a state or condition in harmonious conformity with a law. It is a "law" term, and as such applies to the equitable action, the righteous balance or the just measure, in men's inter-dealings with each other. A transaction is accounted righteous or unrighteous according to its conformity or non-conformity to a code of laws which has been accepted and constituted the standard of rectitude in any given community. These standards vary in different communities, hence an action may be lawful (legally correct) among one people, but unlawful in another. An action may be considered right (righteous) in one community but condemned in all the rest. Herein lies much of the basic cause for the world's present distress.

Connected with the things of God and God's dealings with men, it is the Divine code of laws which determine what is right and what is wrong. Here the standard of righteousness is absolute, and is the same for every land and every man. It applies to angels too; it embraces both heaven and earth. Not even God Himself is exempted from its claims (John 17: 25.) Righteousness (in the absolute) is a state in which full compliance with Divine Law exists. Such compliance denotes a state of legal sinlessness. Sin is accounted to be equivalent to

unrighteousness—"a missing of the mark"—a non-compliance with the Law's demands. Sin and unrighteousness are thus synonymous. Righteousness is the legal opposite condition to both sin and unrighteousness.

Holiness applies to the moral aspect of an act. It describes the moral quality of a man whose action when completed is determined as righteous. Lack of holiness, before an act, predisposes to the performance of an act which when completed is determined as an unrighteous act. Holiness is thus the moral opposite of sin. Lack of holiness implies taint in the man, just as unrighteousness implies taint in the act. Holiness implies that man is wholesome in himself, exactly as righteousness implies that the action is wholesome in itself. Holiness is thus the basic moral quality within the man whether in action or at rest. Righteousness is the outworking of that inner quality when its activity conforms to the accepted standard of law. Holiness applies to what one is ("the Holy One of Israel.") Righteousness to what one does ("Thy righteous acts are made manifest" Rev. 15: 4.)

In God we have Holiness in what it is—in others words subjective Holiness—the holiness of the subject whether active or at rest; but in God we see it also applied to an end, to rid the world of sin. Here we see it as objective Holiness as well, applied to an objective or purpose. The holiness of God's inner Self desires the holiness of His whole environment. In God's Divine Plan we have God's intrinsic Holiness expressing itself in such activities as will eventually reproduce a similar intrinsic holiness (the same in kind though in less degree) in a race of men who had been once defiled by sin. God sets Himself before this race of men as the pattern for them to

imitate. He desires to see produced in them the same high qualities of heart which dwell so richly in Himself—to see men love their fellows, and dwell at peace, each with his kin, and all with God.

God longs for man to reach up to an untainted state within in order that he may perform untainted works without. Thus, to renew righteousness in the earth God will act upon the human heart, enabling man to create a new environment. From the inner to the outer; from the centre to the circumference, from the heart to the hand; such is God's order in the uplift out of sin. To make man's life sound without, God will first make it sound within.

If then God's Holiness is such, where do we stand to-day? In this mad world of sin and sorrow how can we become like Him? It is not nature's gift to any man to be a saint, it is the work of Grace. We needs must learn, patient and slow, how best to copy God, and then, to stand the strain, God must give Grace to help, and eyes to see, and meanwhile hold us in His Hand; and then by slow degrees the lesson will be learned, and we shall come to see our God more lovely than all the sons of men. The dark forbidding cloud that hides Him from men's view will open up its folds and we shall pass within the veil of mysteries and see things there which human eye has never seen, nor mortal ear has heard, nor heart of man conceived. In there, like Moses on the mountain's crest, God's glory falling upon our hearts will change them day by day, until the holy supersedes the vile, and we become like Him.

Part 2 of this series will appear next month under the title, "The Kindergarten Lesson Set"

DIVERSITIES IN MINISTRATIONS.

The Scriptures admit of diversities of operations and administrations in the Household of Faith; and this admission is rendered with perfect compatibility with the declared catholicity and unity of the church. (1. Cor. 12: 4). In essentials firm; in circumstantial moderate; is our safest way. The several departments of the one universal church may differ as appropriately and beautifully, in opinion and ceremony, as the varying foliage and flowers of the several portions of the earth; all, in harmony, can send up one commingled perfume to the Master Spirit that creates, sustains and governs all. The moral universe, like the natural world, is variety in harmony, and di-

versity in unity. Christ is the Sun and centre of all minds unfallen and redeemed, and it will matter little what shades of difference may prevail among them if all do but drink in His beams, and rise in the odour of devout affection to circulate eternally around His Throne. We contend not, however, for diversified name and sect among men; this is rather to be deprecated; but when a Peter, needed a Paul's rebuke surely we should beware of the plausibility of those who should retain or cherish error for unity's sake, sooner than contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, at the sacrifice of what is only apparent harmony in the guise of destructive falsehood.

Rev. W. Mudge, 1843

PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM.

THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS. (Matt. 25; 31-46).

That the parable of the sheep and the goats refers to the Millennial age is clearly indicated in verses 31 and 32—"When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations." As in the present age every act of those on trial (the Church) goes to make a part of that character which, in due time, will determine the final decision of the Judge, so will it be with the world (the "nations") in the age to come. As in the present age the trial of the majority of the individual members of the Church ends, and the decision of their case is reached, long before the end of the age (2 Tim. 4: 7, 8), so under the Millennial reign the decision of some individual cases will be reached long before the end of the age (Isa. 65: 20); but in each age there is a "harvest" or general separating time in the end of the age.

In the dawn of the Millennial age there will be a gathering of the living nations before Christ, and in their appointed time and order the dead of all nations shall be called to appear before the judgment seat of Christ—not to receive an immediate sentence, but to receive a fair and impartial, individual trial (Ezek. 18: 2-4, 19, 20) under the most favourable circumstances, the result of which trial will be a final sentence, as worthy or unworthy of everlasting life.

The scene of this parable, therefore, is laid after the time of trouble, when the nations shall have been subdued, Satan bound (Rev. 20: 1, 2) and the authority of Christ's kingdom established. But even in this favoured time of blessing and healing of the nations, when Satan is bound, evil restrained, mankind in process of release from the grasp of death, and when the knowledge of the Lord fills the earth, two classes will be developed, which our Lord here likens to sheep and goats. These, He tells us, He will separate. The sheep class—those who are meek, teachable and willing to be led, shall during the Millennial age be gathered at the Judge's right hand—symbol of His approval and favour; but the goat class, self-willed and stubborn, are gathered to the Judge's left hand, the opposite of the position of favour—as subjects of His disfavour and condemnation.

This work of separating sheep and goats will require all of the Millennial age for its accomplishment. During that Age, each individual, as he comes gradually to a knowledge of God and His will takes his place at the right hand of favour or the left hand of disfavour, according as he improves or despises the opportunities of that golden age. By the end of the age, all the world of mankind will have arranged themselves, as shown in the parable, into two classes.

The end of that age will be the end of the world's trial or judgment, and then final disposition will be made of the two classes. The reward of this "sheep" class will be granted them because during the age of trial and discipline they cultivated and manifested the beautiful character of love, which Paul describes as the fulfilling of the Law of God. (Rom. 13: 10). They will have manifested it to each other in their times of sorest need; and what they will have done for one another the Lord will count as done unto Him, counting them all as His brethren.

The condemnation of the "goat" class is shown to be for the lack of this spirit of love. Under the same favourable circumstances as the "sheep," they wilfully resist the moulding influence of the Lord's discipline and harden their hearts. The goodness of God does not lead them to true repentance; but like Pharaoh they take advantage of His goodness and do evil.

In the end of the Millennial age Christ thus addresses His sheep: "Come, ye blessed, . . . inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." It is manifest the "sheep" here addressed are not the sheep of the Gospel age, the Gospel Church, but those "other sheep" to whom the Lord referred in John 10: 16. And the kingdom prepared for them in the Divine plan from the foundation of the world is not the kingdom prepared for the Gospel Church. Their kingdom will be the dominion of earth which was originally given to Adam, but which was lost through sin and which is again to be restored when man is brought to perfection and so made fit to receive and enjoy it. That dominion will not be a dominion of some of the race over others, but a joint dominion in which every man will be a king, and all will have equal rights and privi-

leges in appropriating and enjoying every earthly good. It will be a republic on a basis of perfect righteousness wherein the rights of every man will be conserved; because the golden rule will be inscribed on every heart and every man will love his neighbour as himself. The dominion of all will be over the whole earth and all its rich and bountiful stores of blessing. (Gen. 1: 28; Psa. 8: 5-8). The kingdom of the world to be given to the perfected and worthy ones of the redeemed race at the close of the Millennium is clearly distinguished from all others by being called the kingdom prepared for them "from the foundation of the world," the earth having been made to be the everlasting home and kingdom of perfect men. But the kingdom bestowed upon Christ, of which the Church, His "bride," becomes joint-heir, is a spiritual kingdom, "far above angels, principalities and powers," and it also shall "have no end"—Christ's Millennial Kingdom, which will end being merely a beginning of Christ's power and rule. (1 Cor. 15: 25-28). This endless heavenly, spiritual kingdom was prepared long before the earth was founded—its inception being recognised in Christ, "the beginning of the creation of God." It was intended for Christ Jesus, the First-Begotten; but even the Church, His bride and joint-heir, was chosen or designed also in Him, before the foundation of the world. Eph. 1: 4.

The kingdom or rule of earth is the kingdom that has been in preparation for mankind from the foundation of the world. It was expedient that man should suffer under the dominion of evil to learn its inevitable results of misery and death, in order by contrast to prove the justice, wisdom and goodness of God's law of love.

Then it will require the reign of Christ to restore him from ruin and death to the perfect condition.

The dead nations when again brought into existence will need food, raiment and shelter. However great may have been their possessions in this life, death will have brought all to a common level; the infant and the man of mature years, the millionaire and the pauper, the learned and the unlearned, the cultured and the ignorant and degraded: all will have an abundant opportunity for the exercise of benevolence, and thus they will be privileged to be co-workers with God.

Further, these are said to be "sick and in prison" (more properly, under ward or watch). The grave is the great prison where

the millions of humanity have been held in unconscious captivity; but when released from the grave the restoration to perfection is not to be an instantaneous work. Being not yet perfect, they may properly be termed sick, and under ward; not dead, neither are they yet perfected in life; and any condition between those two may be properly symbolised by sickness. And they will continue to be under watch or ward until made well—physically, mentally and morally perfect. During that time there will be abundant opportunity for mutual helpfulness, sympathy, instruction and encouragement, and any failure to assist will mark a lack of the Lord's spirit of love. The love and benevolence which men will then show to each other (the brethren of Christ) the king will count as shown to Him. No great deeds are assigned as the ground for the honours and favours conferred upon the righteous: they will have simply come into harmony with God's law of love and proved it by their works. "Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13: 10), and "God is love." So, when man is restored again to the image of God—"very good," man also will be a living expression of love.

Let us now examine the message to those on the left—"Depart from me, ye cursed" (condemned)—condemned as unfit vessels for the glory and honour of life, refusing to yield to the moulding and shaping influences of Divine love. When these "brethren" were hungry and thirsty, or naked, sick, and in prison, ye ministered not to their necessities, thus continually proving yourselves out of harmony with the heavenly city (Kingdom); for "there shall in no case enter into it anything that defileth." The decision or sentence regarding this class is—"Depart from me into everlasting fire (symbol of destruction), prepared for the devil and his angels." Elsewhere (Heb. 2: 14) we read without symbol that Christ "will destroy . . . him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."

THE TEN VIRGINS.

(Matt. 25; 1-13).

The scene of the parable is laid near to the close of the Gospel Age as is indicated by its opening statement, "Then shall the Kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, who took their lamps and went forth to meet the Bridegroom." The parable has not been applicable all the way down through the Gospel Age, but is applicable now because we are

living in the end of the age, at the time when the Bridegroom will be present—at the time when the wise virgins will go in to the wedding and the foolish will be excluded. The understanding of this parable at the present time, therefore, should be meat in due season to all who are the Lord's true followers.

Throughout the Scriptures the Church is represented as a Bride in preparation for her marriage. The Bridegroom uniformly is the Lord Jesus to whom belongs the entire inheritance, and the opportunity granted to the Lord's followers in the present time is that of becoming His Bride and joint-heirs. They have no status or relationship to the King eternal except as they obtain it by union with the King's Son. The type of this in the Old Testament is a very beautiful one: Abraham typified the Heavenly Father, very rich; Isaac typified our Lord Jesus, the seed of promise, the heir of all; Abraham's servant, sent to call a wife for Isaac, beautifully typified the Holy Spirit which, during this Gospel age, has been selecting the Church. Throughout the Gospel age this Church, under the guidance and protection of the Holy Spirit has been approaching the Father's house of many mansions, the heavenly Kingdom, the glorious conditions promised in joint-heirship with the Bridegroom. If we rightly understand the matter we are now at the end of the journey and the Bride class, typified by Rebecca, is putting on the veil and alighting from the camel and being received by the heavenly Bridegroom. As the entire matter has occupied a long period of nearly nineteen centuries, so the coming features are occupying several years for their accomplishment. Soon the Bride will be with the Bridegroom and in the Sarah tent—joint-heirs with Him in the Abrahamic Covenant. It is in harmony with this that the Apostle assures us that "If ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Gal. 3: 29).

Having the parable then located before our minds as belonging somewhere about the present time, we note the fact that it refers only to virgins—pure ones. The parable does not refer to the world at all, nor even to nominal Church people. Both of its classes represent Christians, consecrated believers, who have heard the Gospel of the Kingdom, who are expecting the King at His second advent, who have lamps, and who get from their lamps light, information and instruction.

The Lord's object in giving the parable was two-fold; first, to give a salutary lesson to the

apostles and the entire Church of this Gospel age on the necessity for alertness, watching and praying anticipating and preparing for the coming King and His Kingdom that they might be constantly ready for a share therein. Second, the parable was specially intended for we who live in this time, to let us see that it would not be sufficient to be hoping and praying for the Kingdom and in a general way expecting the Bridegroom, but that we must be so alert and so full of enthusiasm for the event that it would lead us to make the wisest possible preparation for it, that we might not be disappointed at the final moment.

True to the picture of the parable a movement took place amongst the Lord's people of all denominations in the nineteenth century which culminated in what was known as the Second Advent movement. Christians all over the world were aroused with the thought that the coming of the Bridegroom was near, and a general lamp trimming, a general investigation of the Bible especially on that subject resulted. The expectations of those dear people were disappointed—"the Bridegroom tarried," and while He tarried "they all slumbered and slept." The lamps were measurably neglected and a general stupor fell upon this class. But by and by came the midnight announcement, "Behold the Bridegroom!"

This cry has been going forth ever since, and in response to it all of the virgin class everywhere are awakening and a fresh examination of the Divine Word is in progress. The lamps are being trimmed. As days and weeks and years roll by more and more of the virgins awaken, and as they do so the investigation continues. Then it is discovered that some who thought they were ready to enter into the joys of their Lord find that they are deficient in the all-important oil, which represents the Holy Spirit, and from which alone comes their enlightenment. The delay of the Bridegroom thus serves as a test to the virgins invited to go in with Him to the marriage—serving to prove who are the wise and who are the foolish. The question now then is, who has a sufficiency of oil, of light, of the Holy Spirit, from which this illumination proceeds, to be able to stand in the procession of the virgins and enter in with the Bridegroom before the door closes? It is an important question and one which appeals to every one who has his lamp burning. How necessary that we see to it that we have a good supply of the Spirit of the Lord—the spirit of meekness, patience, gentleness, long-suffering, brotherly kindness,

love. We may be sure that unless we have a good supply of these our lamps will go out.

To illustrate this spirit of consecration which all of the wise virgins must have in full measure in order to maintain their light and their place in the Bridegroom's favour and to gain an entrance to the marriage, the Lord in the parable represents the foolish virgins as asking the wise for some of their oil, and then shows the impossibility of its being thus obtained from one another. The fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit cannot be had for the asking; they must be bought in the market of experience—they are of gradual growth and cost painstaking care of words and thoughts and doings. It is because these fruits of the Spirit are so difficult of attainment that they are valuable in the Lord's sight. None can get too much of this Holy Spirit. None can secure an over supply for their own use so that they can supply others from their abundance. The Bridegroom has made abundant provision by which all those who are invited to go in with

Him to the marriage may be properly equipped, not only with robes and lamps, but also with the oil; and if any are careless in the procurement of the oil, they thus indicate their unfitness to be of the class who are to enter with the Bridegroom before the door is shut. This is the essence of the Lord's instruction by this parable—that those who hope to enter into the Kingdom and share its glories with Him must expect to make preparation in advance. If they wait until the moment for the door to close, however willing they may be, however anxious, they will not be prepared—the preparation requires time, patience, care. All of the wise virgin class should be in the attitude commanded in this parable; they should have a knowledge of the fact that the Bridegroom is coming; they should have lamps and a full supply of oil. Those living in this ready condition will be neither alarmed nor surprised at the message when at long last they hear for themselves the stirring cry "Behold! the Bridegroom!"

THE DIVINE FASHIONER.

The sculptor, with an ideal form in his thought, produces a statue from the block of marble. Every measurement of the block, every turn of the drill, every blow of the mallet upon the chisel, and every effort of the sculptor's mind, goes to make up the finished form, which is the production of his ideal, as nearly as the materials would admit. So, our Lord, as our Maker, has the idea toward which He seeks to form us. And all His operations are but steps in the work of our formation. Every measurement of our life by the Divine truth, tests our capacity to attain the ideal; every turn of the drills of penetrating precepts of life, prepares us for the ideal character; every blow of the hammer of circumstances is, in the hands of the Divine providence, constantly shaping us toward the heavenly pattern. And, in the perfect economy of our Lord, never do we have to bear one measurement, or one penetrating cut, or one blow of circumstances, that is not absolutely needed to produce the most perfect work which we will allow to be done within us.

Selected.

THERE SHALL BE NO MORE PAIN.

Sickness and pain and all diseases will yield to the power of the Great Physician upon the

throne; and He will not permit death to befall any except those who shall intelligently and wilfully refuse his offers of full restitution, by rejecting the terms of obedience required under the New Covenant then open to all. And even these shall be liberally dealt with; for our Lord willeth not the death of him that dieth, but would rather that all should turn unto him and live. Accordingly, while all will be forced to "bow," in at least outward recognition of that kingdom, and to "confess" it a blessed improvement upon the reign of sin unto death (Rom. 5; 21; 1. Cor. 15; 26); yet their will must remain their own and their progress in restitution beyond the common advantages will depend upon their willingness or unwillingness to come into accord with that kingdom and its righteous arrangements. Concerning these we are expressly told by the Prophet, that if still sinners when a hundred years old they will be cut off (in the second death—**destruction**—from which there is to be no ransom and no resurrection); but that to die at that age then, would be like a death in infancy now;—because the smoking flax he will not quench, nor break the bruised reed; and all who shall then show any evidence of love and consecration to the Lord may continue to enjoy the kingdom blessings at least until the close of that Millennial age.—Isa. 65; 20.

(Bro. Russell).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GONE FROM US.

Brother Thomas Hope, of Wolverhampton, answered the call on Thursday, November 23 last, and was laid to rest on the following Wednesday. Our brother had loved and served the Truth and for a long time too had been a patient sufferer physically. Now he has come to the end of the way we have confidence that the prospect before him is one of "joy unspeakable and full of glory." Surely the sympathy and prayers of many will ascend upon behalf of Sister Hope, who writes saying how, unable to serve his Lord in more active fashion, Brother Hope busied himself in passing the printed message to a Mission hall where the books were used to the glory of God. Sister's faith is expressed in these words—

"There the Lamb our Lord shall meet us
There about Him we shall throng
Great His joy in Heaven to greet us,
And to hear our happy song."

GATESHEAD.

The Gateshead friends held two special meetings on Sunday, 12th November. Beside the Tyneside brethren, there were in attendance, representatives from Darlington, Sunderland, Spenny-moor, etc. Forty were present at the morning session, and one hundred in the afternoon. For the afternoon meeting, which was of a semi-public character, 5000 folders were distributed and in addition to a good newspaper advertisement, a slide was shown in four cinemas. This resulted in an attendance of between forty and fifty strangers. Ten names of interested ones were handed in, and added to the mailing list of the Class. The method adopted by the brethren is to issue Hymn Cards with a space for name and address, at all public or semi-public meetings. The speaker announces that a booklet will be posted to any desiring to look further into the matter. A "mailing list" is thus gradually built up, and all are notified on the occasion of any special meetings. It is a very businesslike way of carrying on a Witness Work which is worthy of emulation.

The speaker at both meetings was Brother A. D. Kirkwood, of Glasgow. In the morning the topic was "The Master's Joy," and we hope to present the thoughts expressed in article form in our next issue. The talk was very deeply appreciated.

The topic for the afternoon public meeting was "The War—and the Word. God's message for to-day." It was based on Isaiah 26:20, 21, and three points were emphasised—God's punishment, God's people, and God's protection. The speaker stressed the more important issues, greater than those at present occupying the world's attention, which must be faced before Divine protection in the midst of trouble can be our portion.

"YOUR OLD MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS."

This extract from a letter received from one of our West Country brethren will stir the hearts of some of us.

"When I used to visit classes in the district including Taunton, there came along to Taunton Class about 20 years ago an old man (aged 84) who had just embraced 'Present Truth.' He had spent his life trying to serve the Lord as a Local Preacher and in Salvation Army. I well remember his telling me that after about 12 months' association with the class he had read the 'Divine Plan' through seven times, so great was his joy in learning that 'Restitution' would be offered the human family instead of 'Eternal Torment' as he had preached. . . . Now the dear old Brother is 104, ONE HUNDRED AND FOUR years of age, and by the Lord's grace I was privileged to see him again after many years. . . . This dear Brother concluded by saying, 'Keep away from sectarianism.'"

TWO NOTABLE BOOKS.

Attention is again directed to two books which are always available in the bookroom. "A Little Life of Jesus" by Basil Matthews, is by far the best book of its kind for children of all ages, 224 pages, illustrated, at 3/- post free. A very good edition of the "Pilgrim's Progress" red cloth, 286 pages, well set in modern type, worthy of a place in every bookshelf, and suitable for all but very young children, at 1/4 post free.

BIBLE STUDENTS' REFERENCE LIBRARY.

The reference library is now in being. A list of books at present available appears on the back cover of this issue, and this list will be added to from time to time. There will be no charge for the use of books, but friends are asked to pay postage both ways. To simplify this, it will be sufficient if a postcard is sent asking for the book to be forwarded, and when returning the book, postage stamps in payment of forward postage can be slipped inside the book. Please note that all requests for books and correspondence in connection with the library should be sent to—

Bro. C. G. Sears, 52 Huxley Road, Welling, Kent.

EMPHATIC DIAGLOTT.

We regret to state that the Diaglott is temporarily unobtainable, owing to the British publishers' stock being exhausted and there being some difficulty in obtaining fresh supplies. Due notice will be given as soon as we are again in a position to supply.

SCRIPTURE GREETING CARDS.

Brother Lardent has issued a number of new designs in his well-known "F" series, and we are happy to make this as widely known as can be. For many years the friends have appreciated these cards, and the bookroom continues to stock a widely varied assortment. The price remains, as always, 1/1 per packet of 6 post free.

PRICE INCREASES.

It is with regret that we announce an increase in the price of all publications imported from America, consequent on the alteration in the rate of exchange due to the war. For the present there will be no change in the subscription rates to the "Herald" and the "Dawn," these both remaining at 5/- until announcement to the contrary is made. Booklets, however, will be subject to the following prices:

	Post free.
	s. d.
"Zionism in Prophecy"	10
"Evolutionists at the Cross Roads"	10
"God and Reason"	3½
"Day of Jehovah"	
"What is Man"	
"Hope beyond the Grave"	
Hymns of Millennial Dawn (Music)	4 0
"Daily Heavenly Manna" (with Birthday pages cloth	3 0
de luxe	6 0
"Tabernacle Shadows"	1 4

Booklets (including the vest pocket "Mannas") published by the Berean Bible Institute, Australia, are not affected, and previous prices hold good.

BRILLE KINGDOM CARDS.

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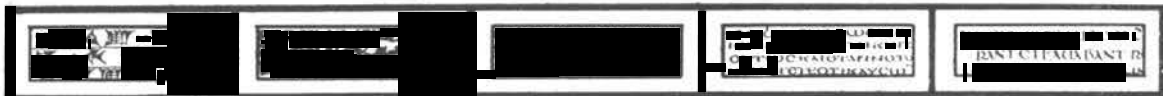
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Why God permits Evil.



BIBLE STUDENTS' MONTHLY



ḥuph hinc ḥmidan capē
ṭop. Toḥiṣ ḥgēnū ḥc cōm
Blessed are ye when men revile
persecute you / and shall falsly say
of you ḥyngō ḥgōmiff you
All valleys ḥalbe craite
mountayne and hēll ḥapde
fo is croked ḥalbe made str
ye seed of Abraham his servan
Jacob his chosen.
is the L o R o our God: ḥū ju
O And God shall wipe away all
tears from their eyes: and there
shall be no more death, neither
sorrow, nor crying, neither shall
there be any more pain: for the
former things are passed away.

Vol. 17 No. 2

FEBRUARY, 1940

THREEPENCE

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THE ASSOCIATED BIBLE STUDENTS OF GREAT BRITAIN.

An undenominational Christian fellowship devoted to the study and dissemination of Bible truth in the light of present-day knowledge and to the deepening of personal Christian life and experience. Its members stand unreservedly for the teachings of Jesus Christ as a complete solution to humanity's problems, and believe in the eventual establishment of a new order of society upon earth in which the principles of love, equity and righteousness will prevail and evil be eliminated; and that under the spiritual rule of Christ and His Church the dead will be restored and mankind live in eternal harmony with God.

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CONCERNING THEM WHICH ARE ASLEEP.

An examination of
I Thess. 4: 13-18

Chapter 2—CAUGHT UP TOGETHER.

"We which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them."

So much stress has been laid on this part of the passage, and particularly upon the Greek word "**hama**,"—translated "together"—that it is necessary at this stage of our discussion to pay special attention to it.

Eminent Scholars tell us that in classical Greek this word means "at the same time," and it is so translated in the Diaglott. While this is a good and exact equivalent, its precise application must depend on its context. "At the same time" may mean more in some settings than others, because both length of time and the run of circumstances may be different.

Its precise force and meaning in this passage has been over-drawn and exaggerated by introducing into the text an additional thought deduced from another Scripture where the word "**hama**" does not occur. This Scripture (I Cor. 15: 50-51) speaks of a great change taking place "in the twinkling of an eye." "We shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." This thought of a momentary change is introduced into the passage in Thessalonians also, and "**hama**" is interpreted to mean "at the same moment of time." On the basis of this interpretation it is then assumed that all the Saints, both living and dead, will be caught up together in a single moment of time into the presence of the Lord.

The Lord is expected to descend from heaven swifter than the lightning flash, and in that same instant the sleeping dead will be aroused, and the living Saints snatched up and transformed, so that together they may enter the presence of the returning Lord.

If this view—which was the view of the old theologians and commentators—is true, it offers a very serious denial to those later views upon which the whole Harvest understanding with its particular form of service was based. More than a half-century of service was based upon that understanding, and if it is not correct then a very serious mistake has been made by those who claimed to have additional dispensational light. As this is a matter too serious to be neglected it is necessary to examine this word according to its New Testament usage.

It is necessary to make sure whether "at the same time" does really mean "at the same moment of time," and determine thereby the Lord's descent and the Saints "ascent" is of no longer duration than a "moment."

According to the standard Greek Concordances, this word "**hama**" occurs nine times in the New Testament. It is translated by several English equivalent words, as follows:
"and" . . . once; "with" . . . once; "together" . . . thrice; "also" . . . once; "withal" . . . thrice.

Taking these one by one, and in that order, the following observations arise in the enquiry.

The one instance of "**hama**" where it is translated "and" is found in Acts 27: 40.

Here is the story of the ship-wreck on the journey to Rome, and how after driving before the storm for fourteen days they drifted within sight of land. Desiring to run the ship aground in a sheltered creek, they cut the anchor chains (see Diaglott) and "at the same time" they cut the bands with which the rudders had been tied while drifting. These two operations, though perhaps not covering any great length of time, were however not just the work of a mere moment of time. Cutting the chains, and then the ropes, were undertaken "at the same time," before hoisting the main-sail and making for the creek.

Attention is next directed to Acts 24: 26. Here "**hama**" is translated "also." The story tells us of Paul's reasoning before Felix of "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." Felix calls Paul before him "the oftener, and communed with him" hoping that Paul would offer him money to secure an acquittal. Felix evidently thought that one of the most prominent leaders among the Christians would surely be able to offer ransom money for his release. "At the same time" therefore that he was hearing Paul, he was "also" hoping that Paul would offer him money. No idea of a "moment of time" can be deduced from these repeated audiences. They covered a period of time, during which "hearing" and "hoping" went on together.

"**Hama**" is translated "with" in Matt. 13: 29. "He saith Nay, lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat **with** them."

The details of this parable are well known and need not be quoted here. Unwanted tares are found growing among the wheat. The solicitous servants want to root them up that they choke not the wheat. "Nay" says the Master "let them alone, else in rooting out the tares, ye disturb the wheat also." The loosening of the soil to extract the tare-roots might loosen the wheat-roots also. Thus both these things could happen "at the same time." If therefore the extraction of all the tare-roots, with the possible disturbance of the wheat-roots, were just the work of a single moment of time, then in this case "**hama**" could mean "at the same moment of time." Surely it is more reasonable to assume that this process of clearing the wheat-field of its tares implies a "period" and not a "moment" of time.

The next enquiry is regarding the word "*withal*." This word occurs three times—in Col. 4: 3. I Tim. 5: 13. and Philemon v. 22. Taking them in that order we note that Paul exhorts his Colossian brethren to "**continue** in prayer and **watch** in the same with thanksgiving, 'at the same time' praying also for us that God would open unto us a door of utterance," etc. Whosoever therefore they continued to engage in prayer for themselves, the Apostle desires them "at the same time" to pray for him. No more need be said on that. Regarding I Tim. 5: 13., we find Paul speaking of some young widows, who having cast off their first enthusiasm of faith, became idlers and busy-bodies, wandering about from house to house, tattling and speaking about things they ought not. Obviously this was no work of a single moment, for they had time enough at their disposal to "**learn**" to be idle, and leisure enough to wander from house to house. "At the same time" therefore that they were waxing wanton against Christ, they were learning to be idle. That occurrence of "**hama**" speaks for itself. In Philemon we find Paul writing to that worthy brother on behalf of the run-away slave Onesimus, whom Paul had sent back to his master. Paul begged Philemon to receive Onesimus as he would himself, and then, having found a shelter for his old slave, now a brother in the Lord, to prepare "at the same time" a lodging for himself, in anticipation of Paul being given unto them again from captivity. Nothing here indicates the work of just a "moment"—a mere twinkling of an eye. The act of receiving Onesimus would be of much more than a moment's duration, to say nothing of the preparation of a room for Paul's accommodation.

We come now to its most important usage—in the word "together." The first occurrence of this word is in Rom. 3: 12, which reads . . . "they are together become unprofitable." In Romans Chapter 1, Paul had shown how grievously the Gentiles had fallen from moral rectitude, and had become absolutely unsuitable to God's purposes. They were completely "unprofitable" to God. Now at long last, the Jews too had become unprofitable, but it is only too obvious that the Gentiles had become unprofitable to God much earlier than the Jew. Now "at the same time" they were both become unprofitable. Seeing, however, that the Jews would remain unprofitable throughout the Gospel Age (and all the Gentiles likewise) the Greek word "**hama**," in this case covers an entire Age. This is a point of the utmost importance, for while it shows two things running concurrently, it gives the widest possible latitude to the duration of these concurrent things.

Taking now the other two instances of the word "together" we find one of them in our text, and the other in I Thess. 5: 10. These are nearly parallel passages. In both texts the word "**hama**" is supplemented by words which imply association. One reads "together with them"—"**hama sun autois**;" the other reads "together with Him"—"**hama sun auto**." It is very noticeable in this latter passage that even the Diaglott does not attempt to render the phrase "at the same time with Him," and it is very obvious it should not be translated "at the same moment of time with Him." The whole verse reads (speaking of Jesus) "who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him." The Diaglott reads "who died on our behalf, so that whether we may be watching or sleeping we may live **together** with Him." This is a parallel thought to I Thess. 4: 16 and 17. In one text we have the "dead in Christ" and those that "remain," in the other the "sleeping" saints and those who are "awake" or watching for His Parousia.

In one case "**hama sun autois**" means association with our brethren; in the other "**hama sun auto**" means association with our Lord.

No follower of the Worthy Lamb would rejoice to think that his association with his Master would be over "in a moment of time." If that is the correct translation of "**hama**," then that must be the precise duration of that unspeakable bliss. This text is the most specific commentary upon its companion text which the whole New Testament affords, and shows with unerring precision that its scope cannot

be limited to a moment of time. The almost complete similarity between the two compels us to interpret them alike, and as our association with our beloved Lord cannot be limited to a "moment," no more can our association with our brethren in the Parousia events.

Having examined every Scripture in which the Greek word "**hama**" occurs, it may now safely be suggested that its classical definition—"at the same time"—does not mean in Biblical usage "at the same moment of time." It is unmistakably a "time" word—but it applies to a period, not to a moment. That period can be of varying duration, according to the nature of the two (or more) events running concurrently. It may cover a period no longer than was required to cut the chains and sever the ropes of the ill-fated ship proceeding to Rome (Acts 27: 40.) It could cover the whole period (made up of repeated smaller periods) required for the "often communings" of Felix, with Paul (Acts 24: 26.), and for the Colossian's continued seasons of prayer for themselves and for Paul (Col. 4: 3.) As their need for grace to help would continue all their days so would their necessity to continue in prayer. "**Hama**" would therefore cover all their own, and the whole of the Apostle's lifetime too.

Applied to the Jewish and Gentile "unprofitableness" it could cover, at least, one whole Age. Most conspicuously of all, when applied to our "living together with Him" it can last forever. Being a "time" word, and not a "place" word, it refers therefore to the duration of two (or more) contemporary events without any reference to the location or nature of those events. It does not tell of the order of those events. It requires other words to denote which of two (or more) events begins or ends first. Most definitely therefore we should not make "at the same time" carry the same restricted thought as "at the same moment of time."

If therefore, we cannot restrict its usage to a mere moment of time, when it is applied to the Parousia of our Lord, it can cover forty, seventy or a hundred years as readily as forty, seventy, or a hundred seconds. "At the same time" can cover all the years, till now, since the Harvest Work began.

That being seen and admitted makes it possible for "the dead in Christ" to rise FIRST, THEN (or afterwards) we, the living to be caught away at some point or other in the early part of His Parousia.

Having examined the Scripture testimony concerning the Apostolic usage of the Greek word "**hama**," the way has been prepared to see how during the "same time" the "dead in Christ" can be raised "first," leaving those that remain alive unto the Coming of the Lord to follow "afterwards" into the presence of the returned Lord.

Two other Greek words must now engage our attention. One of these is the last word of verse 16, the other the first word of verse 17. They are thus consecutive words in the text. These words in the Greek text are "... **proton**, **epeita** . . ." and are translated in the A.V. "... first, then . . ." The word "**proton**" (or **protos**, a variant word) occurs more than 150 times in the New Testament, always with the thought of the priority or precedence of one thing over another, or over several or many others. Prof. Strong says it means "**firstly or foremost (in time, place, or importance).**" He gives the words "before," "beginning," "best," "chief," "first," and "former," as equivalents and synonyms.

Concerning the word "**Epeita**" he shows it to be derived from two Greek roots (a) "**Epi**," and (b) "**Eita**." Regarding the root "**Epi**" he shows it to mean (a) super-imposition, and (b) relationship in distribution. Then concerning the root "**Eita**" he defines it as a "participle of succession"—either in point of time or of logical enumeration.

The proper relationship of the words "**proton**" and "**epeita**" are therefore the same as that of our English words "first" and "second" when applied to numerical order; or "first" and "afterwards" when applied to timed events. "Best" and "seconds" would be the equivalents when applied to quality. "Before" and "behind" would be the right usage when applied to positions or sequences. The relationship of "**proton**" and "**eita**" is vividly shown in Mark 4: 28. Concerning the corn springing forth from the earth, the Lord says "**first (proton)** the blade, **then (eita)** the ear, **then (eita)** the full corn in the ear." The sense of rotation or succession is unmistakable here.

Another instance of these two words is found in 1 Cor. 15: 46. "Howbeit that was not first (**proton**) which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterwards (**epeita**) that which is spiritual." Here again, there can be no mistake about the relationship of the two words.

A varied relationship of these words is found in 1 Cor. 12: 28. "God hath set some in the Church, first (**proton**) Apostles; second-

arily prophets; thirdly teachers; after that (**epeita**) miracles . . ." Here though the second and third numeral factors intervene, there is the same successional order—"first . . . after that." Again, in 1 Tim. 3: 10, the Apostle says . . . let these also first (**proton**) be proved, *then (eita) let them use the office of a deacon . . .*" Here again the meaning is clear and unmistakable.

These examples will suffice for our purposes though they do not exhaust the list of instances of the juxtaposition of these two words to be found in the New Testament. In all cases the position of the word **proton** (or **protos**) in the text indicates priority. It denotes its position at the head or forefront of the two or more items or factors under consideration. This suggestion will stand the test of grammatical research in every language under heaven. The "first" is first; the "best" is best; the "former" is the former in every tongue. The "second" is never the first; the "inferior" is never the best; the "latter" is never the former, no matter where we turn. That which comes "afterwards" can never be in exact step with that which is "first." More than 150 instances of the usage of the word "**proton**" in the New Testament forbid

such a thought. The word "**Epeita**" always indicates that which comes after the first and is translated "afterward" (twice) "afterwards" (once) "after that" (four times) or "then" (nine times). These sixteen instances forbid the thought that any events to which these two words should rightly be applied could be taking place simultaneously—"in the same moment of time."

These are the two words then by which the Apostle throws into sequential order the time-relationship of the awakening dead in Christ who "slept" unto the Parousia of the Lord, and the "change" of those who remained alive till that long awaited Return of the Lord. While therefore "**proton**" and "**epeita**" can only be set in proper relationship, as "first" and "afterwards," (both in point of sequence and in point of time), yet both stages of the event can very properly be included within the scope of the word "**hama**." "**Hama**" must therefore be of a sufficiently long duration to have a first stage, followed by an "afterwards." As we have seen, it can last either for a short or a very long time.

Part 3 of this series will appear next month under the title "They rest from their labours."

CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIPS.

"One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." Matt. 23 : 8.

The Word of God is the unailing guide for the Christian who is here "in the world but not of it," and its pages reveal many relationships—so many indeed that to consider them all would take a very long time; but there are four in particular which we would do well to *ponder over as we strive to follow in the footsteps of our Lord and Master.* These are:—Our Relationship to Christ; Our Relationship to the World; Our Relationship to the Brethren, and Our Relationship to God.

Regarding the first, our Lord said, "Ye are my friends, if ye do what I command you." He did not say "you will be called my friends," but "ye are actually my friends." At the time these words were spoken the disciples would not understand their full import; this was revealed to them later by the Spirit. The disciples had a great experience at Pentecost (so great that others thought they were intoxicated) and they there learned how they were really to be His friends. They had known Him, witnessed His crucifixion, seen Him laid in the grave,

and thought their hopes were dashed; but then they saw Him raised and knew He was raised to the Father's right hand, and their hearts were filled with joy. They were friends of the One Who died and was raised, and had fulfilled all the conditions that would give them life.

This friendship is upon conditions:—"If ye do whatsoever I command you." For three and a half years He kept His Father's commandments Himself, then He said, "Walk ye in my footsteps." Our path, therefore, will be a difficult one, for it means we must strive for the perfection of Christ. He laid nothing upon us that is impossible. His commandments are all possible and we have the Holy Spirit in our hearts helping us to obey. The gospels from Matthew 5 to John 16 are full of our Lord's commandments. They teach honesty of heart; we must bring no dishonour on the name of Christ. They teach purity of mind, for our minds are changed and purified and become the mind of Christ. They also teach forgiveness; we must be ready to forgive. Our brethren

need forgiveness, and we are even to pray for those who harm us. The spirit of forgiveness must be strong in our hearts. Some say that the Sermon on the Mount is impossible of attainment; but if so, why did the Lord give it? He said "I will send you the Holy Spirit," and this Holy Spirit shows us how to obey all His commandments and so become His friends. Jesus has always been our friend, but we have not always been His friends.

Our relationship to the world. The first commandment in Matthew 5 is, "Ye are the Light of the World. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven." How can we glorify God before men? Our Lord came and let His light shine before men, but they did not glorify God; they blasphemed God and crucified His Son. Men do not yet glorify God; they still continue in the downward path. Light is best seen in darkness by those who are seeking for light. The astronomer does not work by day, but by night, and sees things never seen by others; so, only to the few, the "spiritual astronomers," are these things revealed. Our Lord did not say "all men shall glorify God," but, "they." The reference is first to the body, but the day is coming when our lights will be gathered into one and in the Kingdom we shall shine forth as the noonday and then all men shall see the Lord.

Our relationship to the brethren. Ephesians 4: 25 says "We are members one of another." How very close this is, closer than being brothers. We are one body linked together. Every member of the body knows if another is ill. Are we neglecting one another in any sense? If we take the opportunity to help those with whom we come in contact we are fulfilling His commandment "bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ." This union with the brethren is brought about by our Lord calling us His friends, the Light drawing us together and we becoming bound by the Holy Spirit. Romans 15: 1 says "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves." How are we to realise when we are strong? It is hard to know just who the weak ones are but the Lord will show us because the weak ones need our help and prayers, and by this they become strong and we become stronger. We are told in 1 Thess. 4: 18 to comfort one another and

in Eph. 4: 32, to be kind one to another. We should esteem those who labour for us, praying for them, for we cannot pray too much for the brethren who are serving us. In the body of Christ nothing from outside can hurt us; nothing can touch our real life; only from within can that life be harmed. The "old man" is our enemy, for, paradoxical as it may seem, that which is dead may come to life again. The body of Christ must be holy, for without holiness no man can see the Lord. Have you seen the Lord? Can you recognize Him? If so, you are holy. "**Be ye holy, as I am holy.**" Holiness must be a habit, and this is not an easy habit to attain; but it is something we can practice in our daily lives and it will then become a part of ourselves. Prayer is essential to the attaining of holiness, and therefore let us pray without ceasing, lifting up our hearts to Him morning, noon and night.

Our relationship to God. There are many figures in which our relationship to God is shown in the Bible. We think of Him as our Father and we His children, or He our shepherd and we His sheep, but these show more His relationship to us. The particular relationship we are dealing with now is shown in 1. Cor. 3: 16. "Ye are the temple of God." Psalm 132: 14 says "This is My rest for ever, here will I dwell for I have desired it." He has called us out of the world to become the Temple in which He will abide forever. How glorious is the thought that when the Temple of God is complete we shall be stones in that Temple. We were in His heart before the foundation of the world and His Name is to be glorified in us.

In the Temple there was an Ark containing the Golden pot of Manna, representing Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life, the Manna on which we feed continually. The Rod that budded is there also. Are there buds coming forth from us, promising fruit to the glory of God? The Ark also contained the Tables of the Law, written on stones representing the Law of God written in our hearts, and it is because we are in the Ark, Jesus Christ, that we can keep the law.

In our daily walk and conversation let us then strive to bear in mind these relationships which are so vital to our Christian life, and live as becomes friends of Christ, lights in the world, members one of another and stones of that Temple in which God will rest for ever.

THE QUIET TIME



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

MADE BEAUTIFUL.

"Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us." Ps. 90: 17. "How great is His beauty!" said Zechariah. How can this beauty be upon us? . . . One way is by His covering us with the robe of Christ's righteousness, looking upon us as if all the Saviour's beautiful and holy life were ours, reckoning it to us for His sake. In this way He can call us "perfect through my comeliness which I had put upon thee." Another way is by giving us the beauty of holiness, for that is His own beauty; and though we never can be quite like Him till we see Him as He is, He can begin to make us like Him even now. Look at a poor little colourless drop of water, hanging weakly on a blade of grass. It is not beautiful at all; why should you stop to look at it? Stay till the sun has risen, and now look. It is sparkling like a diamond; and if you look at it from another side, it will be glowing like a ruby, and presently gleaming like an emerald. The poor little drop has become one of the brightest and loveliest things you ever saw. But is it its own brightness and beauty? No; if it slipped down to the ground out of the sunshine, it would be only a poor little dirty drop of water. So, if the Sun of Righteousness, the glorious and lovely Saviour, shines upon us, a little ray of His own brightness and beauty will be seen upon us. Sometimes we can see by the happy light in a face that the Sun is shining there; but if the Sun is really shining, there are sure to be some of the beautiful rays of holiness, love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, making the life of His child very lovely.

(F. R. Havergal.)

EVENING THOUGHTS.

O strive to say at eventide, when sinks the golden day,
The Father's hand has guided me and led me all the way,
In all I've said or done I've sought His Will to manifest
Now shadows lower and evening falls. Thy Will, my Lord, is best.

O strive to say when sinks the day, though sad or bright it be,
I've felt His love, His grace, His power, His help this day in me,
And though He chasten, I shall feel, as dawns another day,
I closer to His footstool kneel, nearer the perfect day.

THE GUIDING ANGEL.

When Israel, by Divine command
The pathless desert trod,
They found, though 'twas a barren land,
A sure resource in God.

Like them we have a rest in view,
Secure from adverse powers;
Like them we pass a desert too;
And Israel's God is ours.

His Word, a light before us spreads,
By which our path we see;
His Love, a banner o'er our heads,
From harm preserves us free.

(John Newton 1779).

TROUBLESOME MISSES.

Misconceive, mistrust, misunderstand, misconstrue, misrepresent, misquote, misapply, misuse, mislead, misreport—here is a lengthy list of troublesome misses. Who has not seen a victim of their awful work? They have trampled upon and triumphed over the just. They have drowned out the voice of the innocent with their unrighteous din. The Lord himself suffered from the most of them. He was misunderstood, misjudged and misrepresented; and His words were misconstrued and misapplied, and are to-day. He heard Scripture misapplied and at last suffered death through the misapplication of His own words. Can a disciple expect better treatment than his Master? Poor, frail humanity is always missing the mark. A good man may be the victim of all these troublesome misses, but no good man will entertain or employ them as soon as he finds out their character. We had better be praying to God for more wisdom than to be missing the mark with any of this list. "A fool uttereth all his mind, but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards." It saves heaps of trouble to have a mouth that will not go off half-cocked, like a dangerous piece of fire-arms, and wound somebody. It is a mark of wisdom to keep the tongue still unless Divine grace causeth it to move.

(Selected).

THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS.

"Be ye holy, for I am holy" I. Pet. 1; 16

Part 2—THE KINDERGARTEN LESSON SET.

It is not possible for us to say how far God revealed His holiness to our first father in Eden's sinless days. That God forewarned him about the fatal consequences of a rebellious act, we know quite well. How far he understood its deadly moral nature, we may not easily say. Enough to know he dared to risk the sinful act with open eyes, knowing quite well that he would die. On that point his knowledge was complete; but how far he had come to understand the attitude of his Creator-God towards the principle of sin (as distinct from an act of sin) is another point we may not know. It could not be, in the short time he had lived that he had comprehended everything about his God. He knew that he was God's handiwork; he knew his consort, Eve, was God's gift; he knew that God had made his lovely home and filled it with all desirable things. Hence he would know God as a Creator, mighty and bountiful, Who would have the right to expect obedience in the use of all His gifts.

But did God tell him of that vehement detestation of sin which burned, fiercer than any flame, within the Creator's heart? Did God make him to know how zealously He would uphold the Universal Law against every infraction of its terms? In short, did God reveal to Adam that He was a "Holy" God—as distinct from a Creative God—the sworn enemy of sin; and that, cost Him what it may, He would fight it with all His power till the last trace of it was gone? We may not know for sure, for Adam's Eden days were few. Doubtless God would have told him more as time went by, so that he would know that every act falls into line with this or that of the two basic principles of holiness or sin. Had he remained at peace with God he would have learned those deeper things which angel visitants could tell about their God and his.

In their own estate, where sin did not then abound, these heavenly messengers can understand the awful Majesty of the Eternal God; for they have seen and known the terrible effects of sin. There was a time when an angel Prince led revolt against the Heavenly Throne, and brought abasement to himself and those he led astray. Divine power had arisen to the

task imposed and thrown around the fallen host the bands of darkness and restraint. Thrust down from heaven and chained in the dark depths of this earth's atmosphere, they had been made to feel the scorching fire of Divine zeal against sin.

Those holy messengers who maintained their first estate could have caused God's human son to learn and deeply realise that God could never countenance sin, nor permit the sinner to abide one instant before His Holy face. By observation and by contact they had learned how unchangeably holy was their God, and how with omnipotent and omniscient power He stood pledged eternally to uphold the Truth and defend the Right. All this Adam might, in time, have learned. The angelic visitant could have made known how when sin raised its ugly head the peace within the heart of God remained undisturbed, yet there brake forth with more than volcanic force a holy displeasure which revealed, to all who saw, how unfathomably deep was the Divine repugnance to haughty pride, rash act, or insubordinate word. Moreover, the earthly son also might have learned how these heavenly sons, possessed of holiest desires, were able to find and appreciate hallowed fellowship with God, He as Creator and Sovereign over all; they as created and subject Spirits obeying His behests. No need of any kind existed for God to hide away from them, nor they to be forbidden access to His face, but subject only to such decorum well-suited to that august Court, they went unafraid into the Presence, and enjoyed unscathed "the burning bliss" of that great Eternal Light; the fervent response of each angel heart meeting with ready accord the holier desires of the Heavenly Throne. All this Adam might have come to know; and knowing and comprehending it, this knowledge might have anchored him also to the Heavenly Throne with chains stronger than steel.

How greatly otherwise must it be where sin comes in! God's pity for the sinner may be great, but God cannot parley with the sin. No provision for excuse had been made in the Divine Code of Law, and He who had to maintain that Law could show no toleration of the sin. Of necessity God must separate Himself

from the sin, and in so doing, the sinner too. No greater welcome to His Presence could be offered to rebellious men than to the sin itself; for to such rebellious men the Holy God could be no other than a consuming fire. When therefore, for some wiser end, Omniscience Divine determined that the state of sin should be allowed to stand, the very intensity of Holiness Divine could only mean that God must withdraw Himself—He must draw apart and stay apart from men. This Adam found out to his cost.

How quickly amid those Eden bowers the sense of guilt and shame disclosed itself. The shrinking sinner fled away, coming not at evening hour with ready heart into the presence of his God. Since morning sun arose a fearful change had taken place, for sin had won the day and spread its empire over man. The unhallowed influence of Lucifer had triumphed, for the time, over the hallowed influence of God. Sin had stormed the heart of man and sin-consciousness had been born. Sin-consciousness dared not seek the face of God but shrank into the shade to hide. Called from his hiding place to meet the "Judge" the shame-faced sinner came forth to hear his doom. "Sin," naked and ashamed, stood face to face with Holiness and hung its head while putting up its lame defence; then Holiness withdrew and man was driven forth to die. The gift of life and happiness mis-used, the Giver took back the gift, and left the sinner to his fate. Sent forth outside the gates of Paradise, God came no more to meet with man; and man, in contact daily with his sin lost his fine sense of righteousness, and, as time passed on, prostrated himself to stocks and stones and creeping things. The Holy One withdrawn, the inner heart-need being unfed, man must needs bow himself to some meaner thing, and sink himself to lower depths in the defiling slime of sin.

Throughout the corrupted years until Abram came from Ur, in answer to God's call, but little added light was given. Enoch spake of recompense for ungodly men (Jude 15.) Noah warned a wicked world, but little heed was given! The light which nature gave bore witness to Eternal Power and Deity (Rom. 1: 20.) but rebellious men gave it no ear. They preferred the ways of sin, and man, made subject to demoniac power, sank down into corruption's deeper depths. Yet though the whole world was thus steeped in sin, increasing every day, vile cities arising on every side, God told the faith-

ful pilgrim (who, leaving Chaldea's idol-serving land, came to adjourn with Canaan's polluted hosts, that), spite of all the sinful filth. He purposed yet to bless and win the hearts of men. God told that Pilgrim Father that all that He desired to do, He surely could perform, "I am the Almighty God . . . I will . . . I will . . . I WILL . . ." (Gen. 17: 1-8.) So spake the Most High God to that worthy man. His theme was "power"—Almighty Power to carry out His Sovereign Will. Two thousand years had passed; throughout them all God had maintained the severity of His law. No tender message came from God until He told this chosen man He had a plan to bless the world and power to see it through; and let us note God did not point out and stress the fact or heinousness of sin to that good man.

Apart from one grim day when Almighty God came down to burn the cities of the plain, He made no reference to sin in any of His talks with Abraham. At no time throughout his life did Abraham learn from God's own lips that He was a holy God! Of beneficence and ability he truly heard, but not one note of that deeper chord which vibrated in the heart of God. God told him what He proposed "to do," but spake no word concerning what He truly "was." God told him of the "outflow," but did not describe the "spring" from whence the beneficent stream should flow. The part which holiness must play in purifying the world from sin was left unrevealed. That God would Himself provide a sacrifice was shadowed forth when that worthy sire, with uplifted hand, stood near to slay His son; but the weighty reason WHY God should provide that Lamb went undisclosed.

More centuries still then passed away before much further revelation came. A shepherd was tending desert flocks when mysteriously a bush began to burn. The bush remaining unconsumed, the man drew himself aside to see the sight. "Take off thy shoes . . . the ground . . . is holy ground." sounds forth a voice (Exod. 3: 1-6.) Here a new theme breaks forth, a theme unheard before in Holy Writ since Eden days (so far as records go). No man since Adam sinned had heard that word from God until this momentous day; but from that day and through that man this word, with an increasing range of thought, was always to the fore. The idea of holiness was set forth anew, that man might again begin to learn how high and lofty are the heights of virtue and purity which have their source in God. It was

a great lesson to be set before fallen men, and so, in many ways, by various means, God took such as had desire to learn into His newly-formed school.

How strange (and yet not strange) to find the lesson has not changed from those far pre-human days, when erring spirits were cast forth from the presence of the Eternal Light! Nor has it changed from Eden days when man was forced by cherub sword to quit his paradise. The holy God and the unholy participant in sin must separate from each other, must draw apart and dwell apart. But now it comes about in order to accomplish His great design that God would separate unworthy men from their unworthier kind, and fit them to become the means whereby the Holiest of all could reach right down to grasp the unworthiest of all. The lesson for the scholar in God's school was this—"Come ye apart from them and walk with Me, and let Me make of you the channel of my Love. Come, let Me teach you the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and when you have looked into those black depths beneath, then let Me teach you to look up to Me, and see in Me the radiant heights of unchanging holiness and everlasting Love."

But not for all in that far day was this far-reaching lesson set. To none but Abraham's lineal seed was the offer made. To other peoples the Holy God still dwelt in darkness and afar. Though those vile "cities of the plain" would have repented of their sin had opportunity knocked, the "Most High" passed

them by. They were not of the chosen seed. Nor yet to Egypt's people came the call, for they also were outside the pale. Sin's utter darkness hid Him from their sight.

To none save Abraham's seed, and for their faithful father's sake (Deut. 6: 8. Deut. 10: 15.) God sent the call to come apart and dwell with Him. God came not fully from the dark, it was too soon for that. He came into a twilight world of shadow and type. God came to meet this chosen seed to make known to them the A.B.C. of Holiness Divine. He came—shall we say—part-way to meet them, to call them to His feet, but in their turn they too must make effort to "draw-near" to the Holy One who came to dwell in Israel. This then is the great fact we have to learn, that the Most Holy God, Who perforce had separated Himself from sin, and had separated sinners from Himself, now sought to bridge the gulf between the exalted heights of Holiness and the depraved depths of sin by separating unworthy men from their unworthier kin, and helping them to learn His Laws, that thus, through this favoured Seed, the whole company of the nations might be blessed.

Separation! separation!! separation!!! that and that alone is the A.B.C. of the lesson even we must learn, if we would know, and walk with Him whose voice has said

"Be ye holy . . . for I am holy."

Part 3 of this series will appear next month under the title "Shadows of better things."

THE MASTER'S JOY.

"I knew that thou hearest me always." John 11 : 42

We are living in dark and troublous times, with perplexity and doubt on every hand; but to those who have set to their seal that God is true, the promise comes "The joy of the Lord is your strength." That joy does not depend upon conditions being easy or pleasant, or upon the continuation of material prosperity. The sources of our Master's joy were beyond the reach of men and circumstances, and in consequence it was a joy the world could neither give nor take away. The Lord Jesus joyed in God. All nature spoke to Him of His Father. This wondrous world of which we, even to-day, know so little was to Him, not alien soil, but a mansion in the Father's House, and the Father Himself was at the back of all Nature's bounty, beauty and beneficence.

Jesus joyed in the Scriptures, for they spoke to Him of His Father and revealed the character of One with Whom He was in constant communion. As a boy He eagerly awaited his attainment of the age of twelve, the age at which he could get to Jerusalem and be found in His Father's House. What a keen desire there must have been in the heart of the boy Jesus to enter those Temple precincts where He could ask the great ones there, those "sitting in Moses' seat," some of the many questions which even then were crowding in upon His perfect but as yet undeveloped mind!

God's Word throughout His whole life was the joy and rejoicing of the Master's heart. By that Word He repelled the Tempter at the commencement of His ministry and by it He

caused the hearts of the disciples to burn within them immediately after His resurrection, at its close.

To the Lord Jesus God was unimaginably good: exceedingly abundantly above all that one could ask or think. In the joy of His knowledge of God's love He sketched for us the picture of the prodigal son and the love of an earthly father, saying in effect, "if ye then, being evil, are like that, **how much more God!**" Our Lord experienced constantly the joy of boundless hope in a God so wonderfully and unimaginably good. Satan was the god of this world, evil was rampant, those who would do God's Will must endure persecution, He Himself was confronted by the thought of a cruel and shameful death but the Master's gaze was habitually directed beyond these things. He lived in the constant view of those conditions that will prevail when God's Will is done upon earth even as now it is done in heaven.

As our Lord Jesus continued in communion with His Father, he found God not merely One to be enjoyed, but also One to be served, and this opportunity of loving devotion was in itself to Jesus another constant source of delight. The **Will of God**; this was placed centrally in the Master's life, and to carry it out was His meat and drink. His natural love for His own home, for His mother, and for His family circle, was intense, and yet before all these He placed those who did the Will of God. "Whosoever shall do the Will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." (Matt. 12; 50). From this delight in doing the service of God there arose another source of joy; that of a constant sense of the Divine approval on His life. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" was the testimony given from heaven to John the

Baptist on the banks of the River Jordan; a testimony that was repeated to the three disciples upon the Mount of Transfiguration and attested by numerous evidences of the Father's favour during our Lord's earthly ministry. Those declarations were made that "men might know . . . Jesus Christ" whom God had sent, for Jesus Himself needed no such outward assurances. For within Himself, all the time, like sweetest music in His soul, vibrated the thought "I do always those things that please Him."

Greatest of all, our Master had the supreme joy associated with supreme self-sacrifice. Despised and rejected, scorned and spat upon, scourged and crucified, that wonderful mother-love in the heart of Jesus inspired Him to exult with a deep and holy joy that in this way, through the valley of suffering and humiliation, He could bring the prodigal world back to God. All the evil that was inflicted upon the Master, all the mental and physical suffering which He bore so patiently, all the evidences of hardness of heart and lack of faith in those near to Him as well as far from Him, only made Him feel the more how desperate was their need of Him; and in prophetic vision he saw "of the travail of his soul" and was satisfied.

How true then is the Scripture which declares that "For the **joy** that was set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the majesty on high." It was because our Master so consistently found joy in all that His life held for Him that He was able to say "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you . . . Let not your heart be troubled"; and the Apostle adds as a triumphant commentary and exhortation to all Jesus' disciples "Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, rejoice."

THE MIRACLE BOOK.

"The Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." 1. Pet. 1 : 23.

The Holy Scriptures have truly been described as a miracle of diversity in unity. The Bible is its own great evidence to its Divine origin and authority and we cannot consider these two great facts without being tremendously impressed with its diversity and its unity.

First there is the diversity of language; the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, a portion of it in Chaldean, while the New Testament was written in Greek. There is a diversity of authorship. These Scriptures were neither written by one man nor by a company of men

collaborating with one another, but men with greatly diversified mental calibre, training and occupation were employed in writing them. Moses was a shepherd, Joshua a soldier, Samuel a seer, David a King, Solomon a philosopher, Amos a herdsman, Daniel a statesman, Ezra a scribe, Matthew a taxgatherer, Luke a doctor, John a fisherman, Paul a scholar. There is a further diversity of place in which these Scriptures were produced; they have come to us from the desert of Sinai, the wilderness of Judea, the banks of Chebar, the city of Zion, the public

prison of Rome, and the Isle of Patmos. There is no literary phenomenon in the world to be compared with this book, the Bible. Not only so, but there is diversity of form; in Genesis there are stories, in Leviticus ritual, in Deuteronomy oratory, in Ruth romance, in Samuel and Kings national history, in Job drama; the Psalms are sacred hymns, in Proverbs we have ethics, in Ecclesiastes philosophy, in the Canticles a love song, in Joel and Habakkuk rhapsody, in Isaiah and Jeremiah prophecy, in the Gospels biography, in Acts church history, in the Epistles doctrines, in Revelation the Apocalypse. All these forms of literature make up this great spiritual classic. From the standpoint of diversity of subject matter also, is there any other book in the world to be compared with it? In the Bible we read of God, of men, of angels and demons, of Jews and Gentiles, of Christians and pagans, of saints and sinners, of the church and the world, of peace and war, of friends and foes, of blessings and curses, of holiness and sin, of honour and shame, of faith and unbelief, of time and eternity, of life and death, of love and rage, of Heaven and Hades. These and countless other subjects are brought to our notice within the covers of this extraordinary volume.

We are not impressed, however, with any sense of incongruity; there is an eminent fitness in the relation of these tremendous themes to one another. Nor were these writings produced at any one time. They do not belong to any one age; they come to us as the growth of many centuries. Is there any other book in the world that can be compared with this as to its diversity? Were the number of subjects treated or their equivalent brought together in any other book no publisher would take the risk of publishing it and no purchaser would ever buy it, and yet the Bible is the most widely circulated book in all the world. Other books have a season, they have a run and then we hear of them no more, but this book lives on through the ages. It outlives all other literature and is the queen of all literature.

Notwithstanding all this diversity the Bible is nevertheless a sublime unity; every part is essential to the whole, and it all originates in the will and revelation of God. The two Testaments are essential to each other; they brood over the mercy seat as did the cherubim of gold of old, each answering to the other. "The New is in the Old contained, the Old is in the New explained." Genesis and Revelation are essential to each other; Genesis is the book of commencement, Revelation the book of consumma-

tion; Genesis anticipates Revelation and Revelation consummates Genesis. Each part is related to and corresponds with every other part. Genesis with Matthew, the two great beginnings. The books that introduce the two covenants, Leviticus and Hebrews—Leviticus giving all that is essential to Judaism and Hebrews all that is essential to Christianity. Exodus with Acts—Exodus telling of the nationalisation of the people of God and Acts of the beginning of the Christian Church and the first generation of her history. Joshua with Ephesians, telling of the inheritance of God's people. Daniel, the Old Testament Apocalypse with Revelation the New Testament Apocalypse, pointing beyond the rise and fall of the world's empires to the coming of Him who is King of kings and Lords of lords.

As an illustration of this correspondence, take the first three chapters of Genesis and the last three of Revelation and it will be found that each of these chapters treats of the same subjects but in the reverse order. In Genesis 1 we have the first Heaven and Earth, in Revelation 22 the last Heaven and Earth. In Genesis 2 we have husband and wife. In Revelation 21 the Lamb and the Bride. In Genesis 3 the sentence is pronounced upon Satan, and in Revelation 20 the sentence is executed. It is little wonder that the Devil attempts to have us believe that the one book is all myth and the other is all mystery.

The Word of God is not a dead letter; Hebrews speaks of the Word of God as being alive, and Peter speaks of the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever. We can no more leave the Bible alone or leave it out of our reckoning than we can leave Christ alone. Christ does not derive His value from the Bible; the Bible derives its value from Christ. Only through the Bible can we get to Christ; our eternal knowledge of Christ comes through the Bible.

The Bible is built up in an extraordinary way, not to be accounted for by accident or chance, and both Testaments we find in sequence. For instance, in the Old Testament from Genesis to Esther we have history and further back we cannot go; but begin that first verse of the first of Genesis, and interest is aroused and we are led on through all the books right to the sublime end in the Apocalypse of John. We are impressed as we read with this amazing diversity, yet it unfolds and presents itself as a sublime story. All these stories are one story, all these revelations are one revelation, and all these records are one record. Across

the whole of the Old Testament you may write the word "expectation," and across the whole of the New "realisation." In Genesis there are origins, in Revelation there are issues, and all the way between, from Exodus to Jude, there are processes leading from those origins to those issues. The revelation of God to man has been made in history and everywhere in Holy Scripture there is historical continuity and sequence. There is historical unity everywhere in Scripture; there is, further, prophetic unity. Here there is opportunity for the wildest confusion and multiplied contradiction, as witness modern prophecies, but, although there was not, and could not have been, any collusion among the writers of Holy Scripture, there is no contradiction. There are four great themes of prophecy—the Messiah, the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church. Some treat of one, some of another and not a few touch upon them all, but there is an amazing harmony everywhere. There is no contradiction among the voices. In the Old Testament there are predictions, and in the New there are fulfilments. In the Old we get types, in the New antitypes. The whole of the Old is leading up to the First Advent and the whole of the New is leading up to the Second Advent. There is prophetic unity as well as structural unity, and historical unity everywhere in Scripture. We also have here doctrinal unity. Were man left to themselves, how utterly impossible it would be to have harmony of doctrine, but these many writers across the ages were not left to themselves.

Everywhere in Scripture Jehovah is God. We are told in some quarters that Jehovah was the tribal Deity of the Hebrews, but this is not so; He is declared the God of all the earth, the creator and sustainer of the universe. He is the God of all men, and the New Testament shows that He so loved—not the Hebrews, nor the Church—but the WORLD that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Everywhere in Scripture man is a sinner. The Old Testament does not present man as half a beast on his way up to morality and the New as a man made like God; both Testaments agree in saying that man has sinned and come short of the glory of God. Both Testaments teach that Christ is the one and only Redeemer and His Cross our only hope. Redemption, in the Old Testament anticipated, is in the New accomplished, and it is from the Acts to the Apocalypse applied. It is the one great theme which runs through all the Scriptures. It is the note that dominates in this orchestra from start

to finish.

We also have spiritual unity. Think of the level of thought in the Bible. Think of its range, of its vision, of the sublimity of its themes. Think of the loftiness of its ideals, of the power of its appeals. The horizons of the Bible are infinitudes and immensities. The current coin of this realm is Faith, Love, and Hope. Think what the Bible has done for individuals. Think of the countless numbers who, were they with us still, would say, "this one thing I know—that whereas I was blind, now I see." No man ever came to say that by studying philosophy or science, but many have done so through an acquaintance with the Word of God. Think of what the Bible has done for the Church of God and for national life; for where the Word of God is accepted and believed there is emancipation and deliverance from degradation and from cruelty.

It has turned the demons out of cruel hearts and made men sober and kind. If the Bible is to be judged by what it has accomplished, then verily it is the Book of Books and the Word of God. It could have no other origin than God Himself. It does not need our apology or our special pleading; give it a chance and it will demonstrate its own character and its own power.

The poet Dryden wrote:—

*Whence but from Heaven, could men unskilled
in arts,*

*In several ages born, in several parts,
Weave such agreeing truths? or how or why
Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie?
Unasked their pains, ungrateful their advice,
Starving their gain, and martyrdom their price.
Then for the style; majestic and divine,
It speaks no less than GOD in every line:*

REQUIREMENT.

We live by Faith; but Faith is not the slave
Of text and legend. Reason's voice and God's,
Nature's and Duty's, never are at odds.
What asks our Father of His children, save
Justice and mercy and humility,
A reasonable service of good deeds,
Pure living, tenderness to human needs,
Reverence and trust, and prayer for light to see
The Master's footprints in our daily ways?
No knotted scourge nor sacrificial knife,
But the calm beauty of an ordered life
Whose very breathing is unworded praise!—
A life that stands as all true lives have stood,
Firm-rooted in the faith that God is Good. —Whittier

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GONE FROM US.

Our sister in Christ, Lady Cecile Beatson, passed away suddenly at Wadhurst, Sussex, on 17th January last. A true disciple of the Lord Jesus, our sister was always keenly interested in the work of the Truth and up to the day of her passing was busy mailing copies of the recently published booklet "The Golden Future" to friends in various parts of the world. The golden future has come to her suddenly, and those who knew her best will realise with what joyous anticipation she always looked forward to the coming of the Heavenly Bridegroom. "How wonderfully the prophecies are fulfilling" reads a letter received from her early in January, "and more rapidly than for some time past as far as I can see, but I feel far too ignorant of these blessed truths." Her last letter, received only a few days before her death, ends characteristically "Yours with a cry of encouragement." What a fitting last message, from one whose feet were already at the heavenly portals, to those who yet are left to witness for the cause of Christ in a darkening world.

THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS.

This series of articles, which commenced in the January issue, is planned to be complete in six parts, and it is earnestly hoped that the friends will derive much spiritual profit from their perusal. The parts will appear in order under the following sub-titles

1. The Holy One of Israel
2. The Kindergarten lesson set
3. Shadows of Better Things
4. Holiness comes to a people
5. Reformation begun
6. "Be ye holy"

MEMORIAL EMBLEMS.

It is a happy privilege to despatch, each year, the emblems of "the feast" to isolated friends who find difficulty in obtaining them for themselves. Will all such please send a post card to the office not later than April 15, stating for how many persons the elements are required, and they will be despatched to arrive not later than April 19. Please do not leave the request until the last minute. There is, of course, no charge for this little service.

WANTED.

We would be very pleased to learn of anyone having any of the following books, etc., available second-hand, with particulars of price asked.

- Copy of the "Brother Russell—Rev. Eaton debates."
- Copies of "Zion's Glad Songs" (music).
- "What P.R. said." "P.R. Sermons."

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Following the series published last year dealing with the second coming of our Lord Jesus, this series of articles has been contributed by another brother as an examination of a related subject—that of the "First Resurrection." It is expected that this series will be complete in five parts under the following captions

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2. Caught up Together
3. They rest from their labours
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* * *

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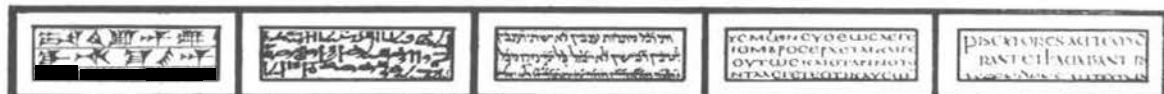
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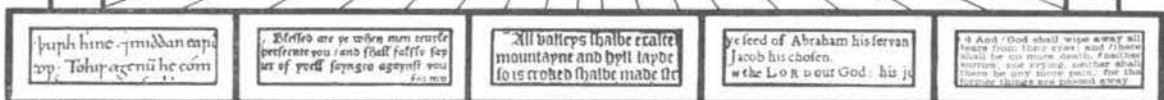
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BIBLE STUDENTS' MONTHLY



Vol. 17 No. 3

MARCH, 1940

THREEPENCE

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THE ASSOCIATED BIBLE STUDENTS OF GREAT BRITAIN.

An undenominational Christian fellowship devoted to the study and dissemination of Bible truth in the light of present-day knowledge and to the deepening of personal Christian life and experience. Its members stand unreservedly for the teachings of Jesus Christ as a complete solution to humanity's problems, and believe in the eventual establishment of a new order of society upon earth in which the principles of love, equity and righteousness will prevail and evil be eliminated; and that under the spiritual rule of Christ and His Church the dead will be restored and mankind live in eternal harmony with God.

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Military and other National Service.

Many of the brethren are affected by compulsory military service legislation, while others are doubtless anxious to help them. There is also the question of voluntary national service which might at some future date become compulsory.

In view of the vital importance of these problems, the Committee have given careful consideration to these matters with the result that they are able to offer useful service to any brother or sister who cares to communicate with them. The arrangements are, briefly, as follows. There are competent brethren in London who are devoting their time to a study of the relative legislation and keeping up to date with all developments. The results of these labours are being disseminated, in the form of Memoranda, to representative brethren in various parts of the country who have been pleased to undertake the re-distribution of this information in their respective areas.

A post card or letter sent to the Office for details will immediately bring to you the address of the nearest local representative while you will also receive an informative letter, according to the nature of your enquiry, from the brother who has undertaken to accept the oversight of this work generally. In this way, we hope to maintain suitable contacts with all friends who are in need of assistance.

Any Class Secretaries to whom our Memoranda are not at present being sent, but who would be able to use them to advantage are invited to make request accordingly to the Office.

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THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS.

"Be ye holy, for I am holy" I. Pet. 1; 16

Part 3—SHADOWS OF BETTER THINGS.

Among the many questions on which Christians of an earlier day made great mistakes was that of the Israelitish system of religion. By many it was accounted to be merely a pattern for the Christian Church, the priesthood being the model for the Christian ministry, the congregation of the tribes being representative of the Christian laity. A warranty was thus produced for the particular privileges which the ministry claimed as their special prerogative.

Others, looking at the frequent effusions of sacrificial blood, considered this part of the system barbaric and revolting, and utterly unworthy of the Christian's God. In consequence, the Hebrew's God, Jehovah, was accounted to be a mere tribal God—akin to Baal (the Assyrian God) and Dagon (the Philistine's God)—a God delighting in blood sacrifice and oft-repeated rite. The real reason for the institution of the Israelitish system was **not** to provide a pattern for the clerical and lay division of the Church in this present dispensation, nor were the constantly repeated sacrificings intended to teach that Jehovah was a mere tribal God. The object behind these things was to shadow forth the cleansing and adoption of that people—but in a later day—as the channel of Divine Love and Redemption for all the peoples of the earth. In thus becoming the adopted channel of the Lord, they would be the means of manifesting God's Holiness to man. In order to prepare them for that Millennial task, God began to teach them, in kindergarten form, the deeper values of life and liberty, of holiness and sin.

God had no pleasure in the blood of bulls and goats, but for a time they served as patterns of some greater thing. Israel had need to learn that vicarious sacrifice was an essential requirement in their life, if they were to become and remain reconciled with God. The constant application of animal blood on their behalf was the means used to drive that lesson home. Whatever else they failed to learn, they could not fail to see that such animal blood was shed to make reconciliation for **their** sin. "Its blood was shed for me" was the outstanding fact every Israelite would be obliged to confess. But even should the re-

flective Israelite appreciate that fact, a lesson of such magnitude, touching the deep foundations of moral things, could not be learned in one brief year. A life-time's lessons would be all too short to teach men the strict equity of the highest law. It was not meant to teach man that he might sin and then cause an animal to suffer in his stead. That would be a wrong idea for him to learn. Another principle of the law laid down the equation of "Like for like." "An eye for an eye,—a tooth for a tooth" was the exaction laid upon the wilful transgressor. Carried to its highest point, that principle would require "a man for a man." Thus as the pious Israelite contemplated the dying beast, it was intended that he should see it as an emblem of "a dying man." Since man had sinned, and thereby become unclean, the highest law required a sinless man to die—like for like—and by his death conduce vicariously to the sinners cleansing from sin. But quite obviously the sacrifice of human blood (of human life) though required by the highest law could not be shed from year to year, as sacrifice for sin, in order to afford the data for the lesson to be learned, hence, if this lesson must be taught, sacrificial blood from some other source must be procured. Thus, year by year, the blood of bulls and goats was shed to provide the means for the lesson to be re-set, and if need be, re-learned.

To teach them the elementary aspect of redemption truth, God took them apart from the rest of men, and instituted, with great care and detail the system of the Priesthood and the Law. They needed to be taught the true nature of sin, and of its power over men. They needed also to learn that God was holy—a God who could not approve sin. Other peoples associated vile practices with the worship of their gods, and entertained no consciousness of sin therein. With Israel it was intended to be otherwise. Their God desired to erect the standard of purity and holiness in their midst, and to create within them an intense abhorrence for their sin.

In the wicked state of that ancient world, that was indeed a great and exalted lesson to be learned. In order to show them something of the vast difference between holiness and sin,

God instituted a series of separations among men, each stage of which was intended to depict an increased degree of holiness, until, by the emblem of His own Presence in their midst, the absolute degree was shadowed forth.

First of all, the entire nation was separated from the rest of men. When God's due time for deliverance had drawn near, God sent Moses to lead them out of Egyptian bondage. "Israel is my son, even my firstborn...let my son go" so said Moses to Egypt's king (Exod. 4: 22-23). Among the whole concourse of the nations of the earth to be regathered to the Creator-Father Israel was intended to be the first. He brake the Egyptian yoke, and set His people free. He led them through the sea, and separated them into a place apart. After this He separated one whole tribe (taking them in place of the first-borns of every tribe) from among this separated people; then a separated family from among this separated tribe; and then a separated man from among the separated family. This man alone of the whole nation—nay of the whole world—was permitted to appear before that Holy and mysterious Light wherein God had made His presence known.

In order to begin His great design of blessing all the nations of the earth, and winning back their hearts from sin, the Holy God, who because of Eden's sin withdrew into the distance and the dark, now began His approach to men. In keeping with the Promise made to Abraham God made this first approach to Abraham's seed, in order to teach them how He hated sin. Accordingly He came and pitched His Tent within the circle of their camp. He came to dwell in that mysterious Light; to be the central feature of their life—to be their God, and take them to be His people. Yet though He came so comparatively near to this chosen people, how far away He really was! Around His Tent, a Holy Court was marked. A holy fence prevented Israel's unceremonious ingress to the Sacred Court, save when presenting oblation before their God. None save the chosen tribe had daily access (of right and duty) to enter within that white-curtained space. But not all these, those Levi's sons, were privileged to tread the Holy Place within the Sacred Tent. None save the anointed Priest had right of access there. But deeper still, within the Most Holy Place (the *Sanctum Sanctorum* of Israel)—dwelt Israel's God, so near, and yet so far away. The separations among the people were thus augmented by the separations of these respec-

tive "places."

Again, the chosen tribe must show distinction in its dress. In robes of linen, pure and white, they trod the holy ground. No other men could wear this dress. Above all this, he upon whom fell the highest choice must dress in robes of even greater distinctiveness, to all else everywhere denied. A golden crown adorned his head—fit emblem of his Holiness to the Lord. Anointed with an holy oil, for other use forbidden, this special man stood forth as the Anointed of the Lord.

Yet even he, the final choice of all these stages of selection, was not permitted at any time, or at his own will or pleasure to enter before the Holy Light. Not more than once each year, and even then not without the holy blood to make recompense for sin, this chosen Priest was admitted before the Holiness within to leave upon the Mercy Seat the 'Kaphar' for himself and all the tribes of Israel. There was thus a way between Israel's need and God's abode, but how very narrow and circumscribed it was!

How far from the dark distance into which He had withdrawn the Holy God had come, that He might dwell with Abraham's Seed, and yet how far away His Dwelling-place was pitched! Too far for unaided, uninvited man to reach! That Holy Light, untended and undefiled, enthroned aloft amid cherubic wings, was emblem of that Eternal Light in heaven above, the source and fount of Holiness Divine. This was the standard of the Absolute, the Sinless, the Incomparable. Here was All-Holiness, undervived. No holy oil sustained the Light. Here was no consuming, nor diminishing, nor replenishing. Here was Fulness (Col. 2: 9). Exhaustlessness—Eternal Plenitude.

Here was no enthronement of a tribal God. No festal days of Isis or Osiris, of Bel or Dagon could compare with this.

In His own good time the Eternal Custodian of Virtue and Truth began herein anew to grapple with the heinousness and sinfulness of sin. For full two thousand years since Adam fell, God made no effort to hold sin in check, except on rare occasions when vengeance fell on vile unholy men. Death reigned everywhere unchecked, before Moses came, but God had sent no further enunciation of His Law (Rom. 5: 14). No sin-sacrifice was offered or accepted throughout those years, for without proclamation of Law, no charge of sin was laid. God gave no law adapted to man's fallen estate when Adam fell. Thus, without Law

defined, no transgression could occur. Man was condemned already, in the first father's condemnation. Adam broke the Law, and the broken Law had spoken. Its Judge had issued His decree; its Executive Power had acted, and both the sinner and his seed were under penal claim. No man of Adam's seed could break the grip and power of sin within, nor lessen its contaminating effects without. Still, notwithstanding that man was vile, and wallowed pleasureably in his filth, God had taken no occasion to re-assert His Law, nor to adapt it to the needs of fallen man, until His own due time arrived. When Abraham's Seed had multiplied, and had smarted beneath the tyrant's whip, God's due time had come.

The due time come, the Holiness of God began again to grapple with the sinfulness of sin. To show how far it separated God from men (and men from God) He drew around Himself the children of His faithful Friend (Jas. 2: 24. Isa. 41: 8). Though fallen like all other men, yet God devised a way to use this seed to serve His ends. By bringing them apart from other men; by clothing some of them in special robes; by teaching them a code of adapted Laws; by accepting animal blood as atonement for their sins, God clothed and invested this people, priest and laity alike, with ceremonial saintliness. If they would obey His voice, He promised to accept them as a holy nation, and as a community of Priests, and to place within their Camp His own Holy Habitation. This procedure did not free their hearts from sin. It did not cleanse them, once for all, from sin's effects. Their taints remained within, and oft they fell. Yet spite of this, if they would follow certain prescribed rites, God promised to account them clean, so that they might continue to serve His ends. How like a father, teaching his son to build! The "nursery" bricks—just tiny blocks of wood—are placed in this or that design, as doting sire thus teaches his little son to learn how it should be done. More than all else, the father seeks to cultivate his off-spring's "building sense."

Building it surely is,—but oh, how crude and immature, yet it is exactly the right thing for the untrained infant mind. In course of time the wooden blocks may be superseded by brick or stone, and some imposing edifice, artistically constructed, may come forth from brain and hand, as consequence of that kindergarten cultivation of the "building sense." We speak of building sense illustratively here—now let

us speak of "holiness sense," as God takes His family of pupil sons in hand. That it was nursery work and kindergarten instruction, all will admit. But in that far time, in no place else the wide world through, could anything to compare be found.

God was commencing a great design—of this Abraham had been told—but no effective instrument was ready to His hand. God must needs make that instrument in His own way. Hence, He gave them statutes and instructions to expand their minds, so that they could order their lives thereby. The exact value of this instruction is found in its results upon the lives of those rare souls who rose to heights of trust and faith—as Joshua, Samuel, David, Daniel, and others too, who shone like stars in a dark sky. Faithful men, of whom the world was not worthy; of whom God bare record that they had pleased Him, yet all in very truth, the product of Sinai's Law and Covenant.

This faithful few and not the sinful mass, are token of the task God undertook when He began to "make" a people for His Name. That all the rest in Israel, the ox-like stubborn mass, were not pure in heart is only too painfully sure, yet spite of all their sin and stubbornness, it still remained that they were accepted as the first-fruits (the first-born) among all the peoples of the earth. Intrinsically no better than the rest God accounted them as separate from their fellows, and invested them with an external holiness to make possible their participation with Him in His plans, "I am the Lord your God which have separated you from other people... And ye shall be holy unto Me; for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine" (Lev. 20: 24-26). "Sanctify yourselves therefore and be ye holy, for I am the Lord your God... I am the Lord which sanctify you" (Lev. 20: 6-8.) "I am the Lord your God, ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves and ye shall be holy, for I am holy... ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy." (Lev. 11: 44).

These words, spoken to the whole nation, describe the whole nation's standing before God, and the lesson we must learn in connection with their calling is that their lapses into sin and idolatry did not cancel out their position before God, nor destroy their holy standing as His people, and intended co-workers in the accomplishment of His plans. To enable them to maintain their national holy standing before their Holy God, the whole Levitical

system was then set up. Though they were chosen to be a nation of priests, yet God appointed for them a chosen tribe to render priestly service, and a priestly family with its specially chosen priest, to slay the sacrifice and offer the blood which ceremonially cleansed them from their sin. Themselves a nation of intended priests, yet God provided for them a family of priests. Israel was at school—its teacher was the Most High God—(the Almighty God who had called Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob)—its lesson, first, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, second, its converse postulate, the Absolute Holiness of God. To that end God surrounded them with holy things. He gave them holy days and holy years to keep, He gave them ordinances of service and ablutions to keep them clean, or to restore cleanliness when lost. He gave them holy fire to consume upon an holy altar the oblations which they brought. He gave them holy water wherein to wash after contact with the dead.

Looking back from our own fuller day, how hopelessly trivial and inadequate these carnal ordinances may seem. The constant round of sacrifice with its repeated effusion of blood—the slaughtering of bulls and goats, the repeated washing of hands and robes, the trimming and feeding of golden lamps; the swinging censur while incense burned; the regular eating of permitted foods—oh, how humdrum and monotonous it might seem; a constant round of tawdry ritual and fleshly ceremonial; but let us not forget even in this our "better" day, that this is the most advanced lesson in righteousness and holiness which the whole world of that distant day affords. In no place else than Israel did God condescend to set before the minds of men the first principles of that holier estate where man might live at peace with man, and in subjection to a Holy God. Count it elementary if we will; esteem it kindergarten as we please, but let it not be overlooked that here historic fact attests that in this way the chosen race first began within the bounds of post-Edenic times to lisp its

alphabet in the deepest things of life. A people was set apart to God, to serve His deeper purposes; to throw upon the screen of life a picture of the present tragedy of sin, and of its ultimate finale in righteousness, when once the "better things" have brought to pass the redemptive blessings for all the nations of the earth.

Faulty and frail they were, so often falling as other men to worship idol gods, yet notwithstanding all, they were accounted holy unto God. Not holy in themselves, not undefiled in heart, but for the programme's sake, God took them as His own. Not from within, but from without that holiness derived. It came from God; and from His presence in their midst and from His expressed desire to have them co-operate with Him to out-work His great designs.

A great objective was set before them—and even in those early days the credit-worthiness of the scheme was attributed to them for the scheme's sake. It was intended in future times to produce holiness in man—to conquer sin and make man whole and wholesome within. This holy "end" made holy the "means" thereto. And thus in those far off primitive days, by means of elementary rites and sacrifices God set on record for such to read as can, the basic lesson concerning His own inner Self, and of His unfaltering intention to set man free from sin and death. Intrinsicly unholy men were accorded extrinsic holiness, so that they might co-operate with God. Gathered round the emblem of His presence, within the hidden depths of the Holiest place, and set by God each in his own respective relation thereto, High-Priest, under-Priest, Levite, and tribesman, each and all, from centre to circumference afford a picture of holy means dedicated to a holy end. The lesson we must learn to-day is this, that those whom God calls to be associated with Himself in carrying forward His great design, are made Holy by that association, for the sake of the design.

Through many a thorny path He leads
My tired feet;
Through many a path of tears I go.
But it is sweet
To know that He is close to me—
My God, My Guide;
He leadeth me, and so I walk
Quite satisfied.

Soul, let nothing make thee fretful
Nothing bitter or regretful
Heart, keep sweet, keep sweet!
And all day long
E'en from the moment of thy waking,
Let a song
Keep welling from a heart that's breaking.
Soul, keep sweet, keep sweet!

THE QUIET TIME



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

PRAYER.

Go when the morning shineth,
Go when the moon is bright,
Go when the day declineth,
Go in the hush of night.
Go with pure mind and feeling,
Fling earthly thoughts away,
And in thy chamber kneeling,
Do thou in secret pray.

Remember all who love thee,
All who are loved by thee;
Pray too for those who hate thee,
If any such there be.
Then for thyself in meekness
A blessing humbly claim,
And link with each petition
Thy great Redeemer's name.

Or if 'tis e'er denied thee
In solitude to pray,
Should holy thoughts come o'er thee,
When friends are round thy way,
Even then the silent breathing
Of thy spirit raised above,
Will reach His throne of glory,
Who is mercy, truth, and love!

Oh, not a joy or blessing
With *THIS* can we compare,
The power that He hath given us
To pour our souls in prayer!
Whene'er thou pinest in sadness,
Before His footstool fall,
And remember, in thy gladness,
His grace who gives thee all.

Anon.

ENDEARED PROMISES.

We never prize the precious words of promise till we are placed in conditions in which their suitability and sweetness are manifested. We all of us value those golden words, "When thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee," but few if any of us have read them with the delight of the martyr Bilney, to whom this passage was a stay, while he was in prison awaiting his execution at the stake. His Bible, still preserved in the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, has the passage marked with a pen in the margin. Perhaps, if all were known, every promise in the Bible has borne a special message to some one saint, and so the whole volume might be scored in the margin with mementoes of Christian experience, every one appropriate to the very letter.

(Selected).

THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK (or lampstand)

The form of its workmanship was beautiful—a fruit and a flower, a fruit and a flower, following successively, representing the true church as both beautiful and fruitful from first to last. . . . The light from this lamp was from olive oil, "beaten" or refined; and the lamps were kept always lighted. This oil was symbolic of the Holy Spirit, and its light represented holy enlightenment, the spirit of the truth. . . . The lights were to be trimmed and replenished every morning and evening by the High Priest. So our High Priest is daily filling us more and more with the mind of Jesus, and trimming off the dross of the old nature—the wick through which the Holy Spirit operates.
(*Tabernacle Shadows*).

CHRIST THE CENTRE.

As the sun is the centre of our solar system, so Christ is the Christian's sun and centre of desire. As gravitation holds the planets in their proper orbits, so love holds the trusting heart in the pathway of willing obedience. As in completing the solar circuit, the earth receives the pleasing variety of seasons adapted to beauty and health, and to promote all organic life, so in our loving service of Christ, there is a pleasing and useful variety of gracious and profitable experiences. Sometimes fierce storms sweep across our pathway to drive us into the shelter of His promised grace. Sometimes the cold repulsiveness of the world's unbelief and sin chills us like a winter's blast, driving us to the central, steady sunlight of a Saviour's constant love, causing springtime to burst forth in the Christian's heart, and bursting buds of developing faith and love to expand into the fruits of Christian grace. But there is no winter in the sun, and he who has the Sun of Righteousness in his heart will have constantly the springtime of His abiding love.

Back of the loaf is the snowy flour
And back of the flour the mill;
And back of the mill is the wheat and sower
And the sun and the Father's will.

CONCERNING THEM WHICH ARE ASLEEP.

An examination of
1 Thess. 4; 13-18

Chapter 3—THEY REST FROM THEIR LABOURS.

Having examined every text where the Greek word "**hama**" occurs, and several instances of the words "**proton**" and "**epeita**" (or "**eita**"), sufficient to establish the fact that these latter words both come within the compass of the time-duration of the word "**hama**," we must now note other parallel Scriptures, and see whether they agree or disagree with the evidences presented thus far in this study. It is necessary at this stage to take note of Paul's words to the Corinthian brethren in 1 Cor. 15: 51-52. "Behold I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." This is the Scripture which has improperly been incorporated into the meaning of "**hama**" in 1 Thess. 4: 14-17—to make the definition "at the same time" mean "at the same moment of time." This improper interpretation then becomes the basis for the idea that the Sleeping Saints and all the "remaining saints" go up into the Presence of the Lord in the same identical moment of time, in what is commonly called the Rapture of the Saints.

Taking up the consideration of 1 Cor. 15: 51-52, let it first be pointed out that the Apostle makes use of terms which are equivalent to our pronouns "us" and "they." In this way he conceives of a division in the company of the saints—a division occasioned by the pealing forth of the "Last Trump." Up to that turning-point moment, each saint, as he finished his course, fell asleep in Christ, and remained asleep for longer or shorter duration in proportion as his day preceded the coming of the day of the Lord. This is the class which Paul calls "the dead." At the time of Paul's writing, he scarcely classified himself with these.

For the sake of his argument (and within the scope of his understanding at that time) Paul placed himself and some of his immediate Corinthian readers among the other class, the "We" class. "**We shall not all sleep.**" The reasonable deduction to be drawn from these words is that Paul then believed that he and others of his readers might be alive when the Trumpet sounded forth, and that being so, they would not need to "sleep" like those deceased brethren who had passed from their midst,

but would experience instead a mighty change from mortality to immortality without having need to sleep.

That Paul did not live to see the day of the Lord, nor to hear the trumpet of God does not alter the facts he sets forth. Another and later generation has had the honour of being the "We" section of the Saints, while Paul and many brethren of his own and of the intervening generations have fallen asleep to await their awakening at the Coming of the Lord. Thus Paul's way of distinguishing between "them" (the dead) and "we" who have the happy privilege of being changed, is the same thing in grammatical usage as our use of the pronouns "they" and "us," no matter to which generation it may actually apply.

Now passing over the primary idea that may have been in Paul's mind, to the facts which Church history discloses, we find that by far the greater part of the saints would have fallen asleep—asleep in Christ—before the day of the awakening Trumpet would arrive; but the fact that the majority of the saints would be asleep does not change the exact application of the other part of Paul's thought. Some day there would be a generation in very truth which would not lie down in sleep; not even for a moment. The exit from this world, and their entry into that higher sphere would require no more than a single moment of time.

A recognition of Paul's classification of the saints as "the dead" and "we" leads us to another very important distinction. Concerning the "dead" Paul says "the dead shall be raised" but of the "we" class, he says "**We shall be changed.**" It is very necessary to make and stress this distinction, for it is the key to the understanding of this text. There are so many points in the context, both preceding and succeeding these words, where Paul speaks of a common experience in the flesh, and a mutual participation in the conditions in glory for both these classes, that the student can easily pass over the clear-cut, definite distinctions which Paul makes in these two verses.

Very definitely Paul says, first, that while some of the saints would sleep, others would not, and that the deciding factor which would differentiate between the two sections would be the sounding forth of the Trump of God.

Second, Paul says that **"the dead would be raised"**; but the **"we"** class would **be changed**. He does not say, nor should anything in his words lead us to infer that **"the dead"** would **"be changed."** His way of showing their passing out of **"sleep"** into **"life with the Lord"** is to say that they would be **"awakened."** Although the A.V. has the word **"raised"** here, it is used in the sense of **"rising up"** from sleep. It is not the Greek **"Anastasis,"** but a word based upon the verb **"Egeiro,"** the primary meaning of which is **"to awaken, to rouse,"** and after that **"to raise up"** as a mother might raise an awakening babe.

"The dead" shall be **awakened** to immortal life,—but of the living he says **"We shall be changed"** so that we too may enter into immortal life. Here the Greek means to **"make different"** or **"to make over"** from one condition to another. Paul's words therefore do **not** indicate a common experience for both classes in this passing-over into the presence of the Lord. Very definitely (in verse 52) he reserves the use of the phrase **"and we shall be changed"** to those who will not sleep, who do not join the congregation of the dead. He does not, even in the remotest sense, apply these few words to those who for a longer or shorter period had been sleeping. This differentiation is definite and clear-cut and a due recognition of it vital to the understanding of Paul's thought.

If any student should be inclined to re-arrange and say that the transition of the sleeping dead into the living Presence of their Lord indicates a **"changed"** condition for the dead, they will have to allow Paul to define this point himself in his own way. Manifestly there is some difference between being **"asleep"** and being awake; between being in Hadean rest, and in Heavenly life and activity, but Paul covers this difference by saying **"the dead shall be aroused (or raised)."** But very manifestly Paul does not think or speak of that as **"the change"** into immortality, but as an **"awakening"** into immortal life. It is only to the class which the breaking of the Day of God finds still in the flesh that Paul applies the thought of entry into life **"by change."**

That point being demonstrated, it leads to the specific application of the further words **"we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye."** The **"momentary"** experience is one for the **non-sleeping Saints** only. It does not say that **the sleeping saints would be raised in a moment.** This is an assumption added to the words and thoughts of Paul. Nowhere in his writings, or in the whole of the

Scriptures is there to be found any suggestion or declaration that the transition of the dead, from Hadean rest to Heavenly glory would be the experience of but one single moment. This assertion does not question the ability of Divine Power to accomplish such a transition. It is only to say that, if such should actually come to pass, it is not so stated in the Divine record.

Let this thought now be analysed in the light of Paul's argument. It was not the declaration of a mystery to say that the dead would be raised. Paul had demonstrated that fact by the unimpeachable evidence of the resurrection of Jesus. Because He had been raised, they too would be raised. Then to meet the derisory argument of men such as Paul encountered on Mars Hill, he turns to describe with what body they will come. Their ultra-scientific minds could not conceive of God's ability to re-clothe the deceased identity in any body suitable to its environment, or any body such as pleased Him. Paul then touches upon the question of New Creature identity and experience, saying that **"it"** is sown **"thus"** and **"so,"** and that it will be raised, each seed with its own kind of body. He has not the slightest doubt about the raising-up after the sowing—that is unfailingly sure, for the token and pledge of the resurrection was already seated at God's right hand. Because the Leader, Jesus, had gone up into Heavenly conditions, so too would His faithful followers go up; hence he says **"as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly"** (v. 49). In this general declaration there is neither uncertainty nor **"mystery."** There was nothing very secret about that. No matter whether the saint lived in the earlier or later generations of the Church's life, it would make no difference to the certainty of his resurrection, providing he had complied with the conditions of consecration, thus preserving the germinant seed alive. Then, after reaching such a conclusion he has something exclusive and special to say. **"Behold I shew you a mystery"**—or **"behold I will tell you a secret."** They had not queried this point in Corinth, for they had never heard of it before.

Hence Paul makes this statement as a revelation—very much after the manner of his declaration to the Thessalonian Church. **"Now brethren beloved I want you to know, that a time will come when the believer will not need to sleep,"** says Paul. Why not? they might ask. **"Because the day of the Trumpet will have come"** he replies. **"But will the living be able to enter into the heavenly sphere to be with**

the Lord?" "Yes," he answers "all who are not asleep, will be changed instantly so that they may enter into immortal life." "We shall not all sleep," but all of us who do not sleep, and therefore need no awakening (no raising-up) will in an instant be made ready for the heavenly state—will be changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye, (in) at the last Trump.

This was the mystery. It had no reference to the hosts of the saintly dead, but affected only the saints still in the flesh, at the auspicious moment (and thenceforth) in which the Trumpet peal would sound forth. For these, and these alone, there awaited a momentary experience of unalloyed bliss when the day of God should arrive—one glorious moment, as fleeting as the time required for tired eyelids to close over tired eyes—but in that brief span the faithful saint would pass up from mortality to immortality, from corruptibility to incorruptibility—glorious victor over both death and the grave through Him who had loved and led them all their journey through.

Over the sleeping dead, death had held dominion—Hades had held them captive; but over this last living remnant, neither death nor Hades should triumph; for in the very act of earthly dissolution the New Creature would be set triumphantly free, and be at once at home with the Lord.

Even this Scripture cannot therefore be made to mean that "the living" and "the dead" go into the presence of their Lord, "at the same moment of time"—and it is contrary to the Apostle's argument so to apply it. It is "we" (the living class) that "shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last Trump..." Thanks be unto God, for a knowledge and understanding of this wonderful secret, who in His love for His children does not desire to have them sleeping or absent one moment longer than is needful, but longs rather to have them gathered home to Himself and to His exalted waiting Son.

But that elucidation of these words raises another question. Is it possible that Paul says all the living saints will pass up into the presence of the Lord in one brief simultaneous moment?

Does he not say "we shall all be changed in a moment," and does not that mean that every living saint will go together as a company—all in one brief stroke of time—here in the flesh one moment, there in the glory, with but one eye-beat of time in between—It might seem so,

if fuller revelation had not something more to say on the matter. This last word of progressive revelation was given to John some years after. Paul had passed to his "sleep in Jesus." We shall later see that the Trump of God is not a momentary peal of sound—beginning and ending in the sixtieth part of a minute. Its peal is of very long duration. This being so, there is no essential need for the "change" of the living saints to be the experience of just a single moment—this we shall see as other evidences from Holy Writ are brought to bear on the question at issue. Any utterance by another Apostle is just as authoritative and as truly the Word of God on the matter as the utterance of Paul, and seems to have been divinely intended to fill out Paul's outline on the various aspects of the great Home-Gathering of His Sons—a further secret, added to the several other secrets previously revealed.

It is here where the words of John in Rev. 14: 13, come under review. They are linked by their context to the Day of the Lord, for verse seven tells us of the proclamation going out that "the hour of His judgment is come." Again it is linked with "loud voices" (Rev. 14: 2, 7, 9),—and belongs most definitely to the last days of the Church's career on earth.

As John beheld these symbolic scenes he heard a voice from heaven say "Write; Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth." "Blessed...from henceforth." The word "henceforth" is from (Greek) "aparti"—a compound word made up by combining "apo" (from) and "arti" (now; this hour, this day;) The Heavenly voice therefore says "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from this hour." "Why?" we ask. "That they may rest (pause) from their labours; (Greek "kopos"—"toil," and by implication, pains and weariness) and their works (acts, deeds, doings,) do follow (are in the same way with them; or, accompany) them" says the angel (Those are Prof. Strong's definitions). Here is a combination of facts impossible to locate anywhere in Church experience prior to the sounding forth of the Last Trump. At no time previous to the beginning of the day of the Lord have saints been said to die and yet have their works keep right on "in the way with them," or to be able to rest from toil and pain and weariness, and yet be accompanied by their acts. Obviously there was no such "Blessedness" for those who died in the Lord before the sounding of the Trumpet—for those who died and fell asleep in Jesus.

The record of this company of saints goes back to Apostolic days, but there was no "henceforth blessedness" in all those years, and, if all the saints, both living and dead, are to go up into the Presence of the Lord together—"at the same time," and in the same moment in which the Trumpet sound peals forth, then there could be no "henceforth" wherein the saints could die, after the "from-this-hour" period began. If it were true that the living and the dead share together one moment of ineffable Rapture, then the "Henceforth" experience for each and all would be to live. The heavenly voice should have said "Blessed are the living who live with the Lord from henceforth."

This blessed promise, therefore, imperatively requires that from some specific moment at the end of the Age those of the saints then living must pass through some unique experience not enjoyed by their previously deceased brethren, some special privilege different from "those that slept."

What is the peculiar feature of this different experience? Is it that they shall not die? That cannot be so, for the "blessedness" is for "the dead" who do "die in the Lord." Already consecrated to death, already sacrificially dead, they finish (in this "henceforth" period) their course by being "faithful unto death," till the sacrifice is fully consumed. The difference is not in that they do not die, but in that they do "not sleep," but pass over into rest, still accompanied by their works. With their enlarged powers they find it easy as resting to do that Will of God, which, while on earth occasioned them such labour and anguish. They are evidently those of whom Paul said "We shall not all sleep," and the time of the "henceforth" coincides with the pealing forth of the Lord's Trumpet.

But assuming that that point is now established, do not all these living saints experience their change collectively at some particular moment subsequent to the "henceforth" turning-point? Do not all these "left-overs" pass-over in one single moment? If so, there would be no "henceforth" condition of blessedness such as described. The word "henceforth" does not indicate any change in the way the "consecrated" finish their course. The consecrated dead, who had died and slept before the coming of the Lord **did not all die in one single moment.** Some had slept from the first Christian century—others from every succeeding century thenceforward, as one by one these

faithful followers finished their course. Nothing in the word "henceforth" indicated that this part of the dying procedure would necessarily be changed. "Dying in the Lord" had been a solitary experience all those centuries, and "dying in the Lord" experience needed not to be changed in any particular. While however, that procedure could remain unchanged, an experience of blessedness awaited each one, as "one by one" each reached his dying hour. Seeing then that a period of blessedness must be allowed for, and that this blessedness is for those who from "thenceforth" die, and that no necessity exists from the standpoint of time why all this "living remnant" should go up into the "Air" together, it seems not only a reasonable deduction, but an absolute necessity (to fulfil this Scripture) for them to go up "one-by-one" as they each finish their course during the early part of the Presence of the Lord.

The blessedness for each saint will be to pass into the Presence of the Lord in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, with their last fleeting breath. Thus the Last Trump—the Trump of God—sets free the Sleeping Saints from their long sleep, and God brings them back for the saints' re-union, along with Jesus. Then to this company of glorified saints, each one of those "left-over," as they finish their course faithfully, are caught up to be together with their brethren and their Lord—and so shall they ever be with the Lord.

It is submitted that this important Scripture in 1 Cor. 15: 51-52, when qualified by and harmonised with Rev. 14: 13, is thus brought into line with our conclusions on 1 Thess. 4: 14-17, and that their united testimony is that the dead in Christ will rise first, and that the living "left-over" saints will be changed and glorified one by one, as each one finishes his course faithfully unto death.

That the distinction between the living and the dead saints which has been set out in the foregoing is correct may be seen by setting out the essential clauses in 1 Thess. 4: 14-17, and 1 Cor. 15: 51-52, in parallel columns, remembering as we compare them that Corinthians was written within a reasonably short time after the Thessalonian letter, while the thoughts were still fresh in the Apostle's mind.

1 Thess. 4: 14-17. 1 Cor. 15: 51-52.

TIME SETTING.

"The Trump of God" (v. 16.) "The last Trump" (v. 52.)

PARTIES INVOLVED.

"The dead in Christ" (v. 16.)

"We which are alive and remain" (v. 17.)

"The dead" (v. 52.)

"We . . ." (v. 52.)

EXPERIENCES INVOLVED.

"The dead in Christ shall be raised" (v. 16.)

"We . . . shall be caught up" (v. 17.)

"... the dead shall be raised" (v. 52.)

"We shall be changed" (v. 52.)

"We shall not all have passed to our rest, but" (even though we have not passed to our rest) "we shall all be transformed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet call, for the trumpet will sound and **THE DEAD WILL RISE IMMORTAL**; and we also, **SHALL BE TRANSFORMED**. "For this perishable body...must put on an imperishable form and this dying body a deathless form."

Twentieth Century Translation.

STRENGTH FROM ON HIGH.

"For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; in returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." Isa. 30, 15

It can safely be said that none save the consecrated child of God realises the utter truth of this statement, "In confidence is strength, in returning and rest is salvation." It is upon this and like promises that the Lord's people rely more and more in these days of stress and turmoil. How contrary to God's ways are the ways of fallen man; strength to-day is measured in a very different manner. Calm, quiet confidence and rest in God is not considered strength and finds no place in unregenerate hearts. It was ever thus, for we read in the very next verse the reply made by Israel of old to this wise counsel from God, "But ye said, No (we will not return) for we will flee upon horses." They preferred their own way rather than the way of God, and God's answer to them was, "therefore shall ye flee."

The horse in Old Testament usage is a counterpart of the modern tanks and guns. It was their idea of confidence and strength. Egypt was distinguished for producing fine horses and the Egyptians used them much in war. God knew this and had forbidden the kings of Israel to multiply horses (Deut. 17: 16.) and in prohibiting them He designed to distinguish His people in all respects from the Egyptians. It was not His purpose for them to rely upon horses for strength and deliverance but solely upon their God, who had promised them victory over all their enemies on conditions of faithfulness to Him. Psalm 20: 7, says, "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will remember the name of Jehovah our God."

In spite of God's warning through Moses in

Deut. 17: 16, to those who would afterward become the kings of Israel, we find Solomon grossly violated this law, for 1 Kings 10: 26 says, "Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen." He had "1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen" and verse 28 says that Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt. This course finally led to Solomon's downfall and the downfall of his kingdom as shown in the next chapter (1. Kings 11: 9-12.)

Among the heathen nations the horse was dedicated to the sun and driven in processions at the festivals of sunworship. The ancient Persians, who were sun worshippers, dedicated white horses and chariots to the sun and it is supposed that other nations derived the practise from them. The sun was supposed to be drawn daily in a chariot by four wondrous coursers. That even Israel had become contaminated by this particular type of idolatry is shown by 2 Kings 23: 11, for Josiah, in instituting his wonderful reformation, took away the horses that the Kings of Judah had given to the sun and burned the chariots of the sun with fire. In view of this we can well understand the fitting rebuke of Isa. 2: 7. "Their land is full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots. Their land is full of idols, they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made."

Isa. 30: 16 continues, "We will ride upon the swift, therefore shall they that pursue you be swift." Alas that man still, as Israel in Isaiah's day, should rely upon the "swift," and his pursuers have access to the same "swift," whatever it be, whether the horses of the ancients or their modern counterparts, and it is still necessary for the Lord (as in verse 18) to

"wait that He may be gracious." Yet how our hearts rejoice as we continue this passage, in verses 19 and 20. "For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem, thou shalt weep no more; He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry, when He shall hear it He shall answer thee. And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be re-

moved into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers," and, even as we apply to ourselves now the words of verse 21, "This is the way, walk ye in it," so, soon we believe, God will say with authority, "Stand still, and know that I am God," and mankind will then no longer have any trust in horses, but will in "quietness and confidence" wait for the word of our God.

WATCH AND PRAY.

"What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." Mark 13 37

Our Lord, when teaching his disciples, placed much stress on watchfulness. He taught it by direct exhortation, illustrated it by several parables and practised it in his life to such an extent that if the question were put to us, when shall we watch? we must reply, Always, every moment of consciousness. The standard set up by a review of our Lord's example and teaching on this matter is exceedingly high; indeed it seems there is nothing more difficult for a Christian to practice.

Regarding watchfulness from a general aspect, it is usual to associate it with ourselves alone, but the Bible assures us that God, the angels, and Satan, all watch. There is also the special prerogative to be exercised by those whose privilege it is to serve the Church, besides the general watchfulness of the whole Church in respect of the Lord's return, which in practice is an individual matter for each one of us.

God Watches. This is the all important thing. Is He watching over and for us? The Psalmist says in Psalm 127: 1. "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain" and the principle holds good whether it be a city or an individual. Is He our Father? Can we go to Him and claim a Father's protecting care? If so, we need not fear. Psalm 121 is full of God's loving care for Israel, "He watching over Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps." If He took such an interest in them, how much more does He watch over us who are recognised as being in Christ, personally represented before Him by his own beloved Son? This psalm alone will furnish material for much thought and comfort. God is represented there as our protector, the preserver of our soul, and as keeping us in the way of life, never for one moment relaxing His vigilance. We may stumble, but

He knows and seeks to restore us. We may forget Him, but He remains faithful. We may go astray but He will never leave us or forsake us unless we wilfully reject Him. In 1. Cor. 10: 13 we are assured of God's watchfulness in the matter of our temptation. He is watchful to see that we are not tried beyond our capacity; there is always a way of escape.

Jesus time and again bade His disciples to watch, and not only so, but He left minute instructions regarding watchfulness. It is His counsel for the whole of our spiritual life. Why did He lay so much stress upon it? Undoubtedly it was the fruit of His own experience; He had realised it all through His earthly career. He examined everything that was presented to Him, having the Father's will pre-eminently before His mind. On the eve of His death He urged His disciples repeatedly to watch and pray; even in the dreadful ordeal of the garden of Gethsemane it was upon His mind. It seems as though in spite of all His personal suffering one great object was before Him, if by any means He might give them the full benefit of His experience and teach them the necessity of meeting trial and temptation by watchfulness and prayer. When He was face to face with the crisis of His life, when it might reasonably be expected that He would be concerned only with His own need, we find Him rising from his knees, going to His disciples and finding them asleep and waking them, saying, "Could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." He forgot Himself, desiring only to help them to meet their comparatively light temptations with the same weapon as had brought Him success. No human sympathy could be found for Him, but for them the love and sympathy of the Son of God was expressed in the most practical manner at the very time He was longing for theirs. With what regard then we should seek to watch and care-

fully consider what it cost Him to help us. In season and out of season to Himself, He ceased not to warn us. Watchfulness was not given as a command, or as a piece of advice such as a parent might give his son when starting out in the world, but as the last word of love to those for whom He was about to give His life; His dying wish. Does not this enthuse us and make us wish to examine His words again and respond to them to the very best of our ability? We cannot watch continually without a living motive to sustain us; it would be too arduous, too wearying, but when love demands it what is there too hard? If we really loved Him as much as we love some of those around us we should delight in Him more than we do, and we should find His yoke easy and His burden light. If we desire to love Him better, our prayers will continually express that desire, and He will reveal Himself to us. Then we shall see things in a new light; place fresh values on everything, and in Christ become overcomers. **Watchfulness is love in action.**

Watchfulness pre-supposes vigilance, wakefulness, to take heed, to observe. It implies keenness, placing duty to the Lord above every other. It is always coupled with prayer. We have already seen that God must watch for us, otherwise it is useless for us to watch. Jesus said, "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation." Paul in Col. 4: 2, speaks in the same strain, and, like Jesus, his last words to Timothy included an exhortation to be watchful in all things. 2. Tim. 4: 5. How can we be delivered from entering into temptation, seeing that we are surrounded by it, and even more, seeing that it comes from within also? Here lies the reason for prayer; watchfulness alone would not save us, or we should attribute overcoming to our own strength. As we are fallen by nature how can we watch against evil in our own strength? So He bids us pray, taking our joys, temptations, trials, victories and failures to Him that we might remember that all our ways are ordered of the Lord. What room is there for the selfish counsel our hearts would dictate? What opportunity is there for the Adversary's suggestions to take root if we watch our thoughts, words and conduct by applying the principles of the Word to them and seek His blessing and guidance continually? Why should we not lift up our hearts to God in mental prayer at any time, wherever we are, whatever we are doing? There is a tremendous power latent in that.

The Scriptures show also that Satan watches, and the Apostle in 1. Pet. 5: 8, tells us that we are to be sober, vigilant and watchful that we may resist him, steadfast in the faith. James tells us that if we resist him he will flee from us, and our Lord said, "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation." The watchfulness of Satan may be defeated by being vigilant ourselves. If we do not watch there is the possibility of being devoured.

In Rev. 3: 1-5, the Church at Sardis was exhorted to watch and strengthen the things that remain, and some were specially commended because they had kept their garments pure. This is to be the aim and object of watchfulness. If we fail to watch to keep ourselves pure we shall be judged and found wanting in an hour when we think not. Have we set our hearts on being with Him and being accounted worthy? Then let us watch and not let our garments be defiled by anything impure either from within or without. Let us set ourselves this daily task for love of Him who will not be ashamed to confess our names before God and His holy angels.

*Teach us in watchfulness and prayer
To wait for thine appointed hour;
And fit us by thy grace to share
The triumphs of thy conquering power.*

THE GOLDEN ALTAR.

The golden altar in the Holy would seem to represent the consecrated church in the present sacrificing condition. From this altar ascends the sweet incense, acceptable to God by Christ Jesus—the willing services of the priests; their praises, their obedience—all things whatsoever they do to the glory of God. **Those who thus offer incense acceptable to God come very close to their Father**, close up to the veil which separates from the Most Holy; (1 Pet. 2: 5. Hebrews 13: 15-16) and if they have requests to make they may be presented with the incense—"much incense . . . with the prayers of saints." (Rev. 8: 3). The prayers of such priests of God are effectual. Our Lord Jesus kept the incense continually burning, and could say: "I know that Thou hearest me always." (John 11: 42). So the under-priests, members of His body, will be heard always if they continually offer the incense of faith, love, and obedience to God.

(Tabernacle Shadows).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GONE FROM US.

Sister Margaret Black, of Edinburgh, has passed beyond. One highly esteemed by the friends at Edinburgh, our sister had many years in the Way, and remained to the end a firm believer in the precious promises of God. The spiritual strength which her presence and fellowship imparted to those around her will be keenly missed by those who knew her so well, even although they realise with joy that "God hath called her home."

THE MEMORIAL.

Sunday, April 21st, after 6 p.m., is the date when friends all over the world will foregather to "keep the feast" in remembrance of He Who first instituted this precious celebration. Whilst it is possible, this year, to argue the appropriateness of a March date due to the positions of the March and April new moons in relation to the Spring equinox, we believe all the friends will assent to the desirability of a uniform date for the observance of this ceremonial, which means so much to us all. It is generally agreed that for this reason the date given in the Jewish calendar is the most appropriate one to adopt. Hence it is with a sincere and deep appreciation of the significance of this day that we look forward to our gathering together. So far as we in Great Britain are concerned the present outward conditions will surely cause us to examine ourselves the more searchingly and to endeavour more than ever before to enter into that full spirit of brotherhood with all our brethren which was the burden of our Lord's prayer. "That they may be one, as we are one."

MEMORIAL EMBLEMS.

It is a happy privilege to despatch, each year, the emblems of "the feast" to isolated friends who find difficulty in obtaining them for themselves. Will all such please send a post card to the office not later than April 15, stating for how many persons the elements are required, and they will be despatched to arrive not later than

April 19. Please do not leave the request until the last minute. There is, of course, no charge for this little service.

BOUND VOLUMES OF B.S.M.

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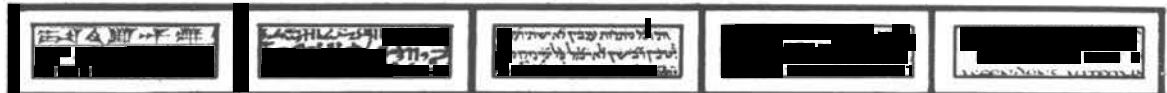
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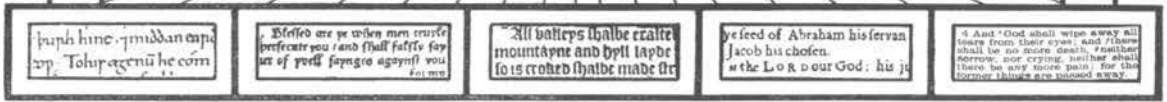
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BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY



Vol. 17 No. 4

APRIL, 1940

THREEPENCE

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THE PASSOVER MUST BE KILLED.

"Christ our Passover is
sacrificed for us." I. Cor. 5 : 7.

The term Passover amongst the Jews was frequently applied as the name of a festival week, otherwise called the Feast of Passover, beginning on the fifteenth day of Nisan. But we must not confound this with the frequent references to the Passover found in the Scriptures when the word feast is not used, which generally referred to the lamb that was killed, the Passover. For instance, we read, "Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed." Again, our Lord sent disciples to enquire of a friend, "Where is the guest-chamber, where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?" Again we read, "And they made ready the Passover." When our Lord sat down with the disciples to eat of the lamb He said, "With desire I desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I say unto you I will no more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God."

While the Jews still apparently think more of the Passover week than of the Passover lamb, we, on the contrary, and in harmony with the example of our Lord and the apostles, have special respect for the lamb, which typified the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," and under whose blood of sprinkling we who now believe—namely, the "Church of the First-Born"—are passed over or spared in advance of the world.

God's arrangements for the Jews were typical and full of valuable lessons for us who belong to anti-typical or Spiritual Israel. In the type the Lord provided for two great religious occasions amongst his people, the one at the beginning of the secular year and the other at the beginning of the religious year. The religious year began in the spring, counting from the first new moon after the vernal equinox, approximately April 1st, but varying because of the difference between lunar and solar time. It was in connection with this, the beginning of their religious year, that the Lord appointed the Passover—the killing and eating of the Passover lamb on the fourteenth day, to be followed by a Passover week of unleavened bread. The civil year with the Jews began six months later, in the seventh month, approximately October 1st; and it was in connection with this civil year that the Atonement Day sacrifices were appointed, in connection with the Feast of Tabernacles or

Booths, in which the Israelites called to mind their wilderness journey on leaving Egypt en route for Canaan.

These two great religious celebrations pictured the same lesson from different standpoints: the first emphasised more particularly the passing over of the first-born, who subsequently were represented in the tribe of Levi, at whose head stood the priesthood. Although the type seems to carry forward and to picture the deliverance of all Israel through this priestly tribe, to which Moses belonged, yet specifically, particularly, in detail, it dealt merely with the deliverance, the blessing, of the priestly tribe, the first-born. The other type, in the seventh month, more particularly pictures the atonement for the sins of the whole world, the forgiveness and reconciliation of all mankind who desire to be reconciled to God; nevertheless, in connection with this Atonement Day sacrifice, the special favour of God to the Church is also represented as preceding the blessing coming upon the world, reconciliation for the Church's sins being represented in the first sacrifice of the Day of Atonement, while the sacrifice for the sins of the world in general was represented in the second offering.

There is a force and meaning in the Apostle's expression, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us," which is not generally appreciated. (I Cor. 5, 7.) Our Lord is not the world's Passover, but the Church's Passover. All Israel prefigured or represented the world of mankind, and the bondage of the whole people represented all mankind under the bondage of sin and death, the great taskmaster in the type being Pharaoh, in the antitype being Satan. Deliverance is desired for all, and the Lord's arrangement is ultimately to deliver all. The Apostle so explains when he writes, "The creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God."

But the Apostle divides the groaning ones into two classes, saying, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now"—"waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God." (Rom. viii, 19, 21, 22.) His reference here is to the world of mankind whose deliverance from the bondage of Satan and the power of sin and death will only come through the manifestation of the glorified

Church, the Christ in glory and power, as God's Kingdom ruling the world. The Apostle also mentions the Church of the First-Born in her present condition, saying, "But ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, do groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the deliverance of our body." Both classes have an experience of groaning, both classes have an experience of waiting, but they wait for different things. The latter, the Church of the First-Born, waits for her deliverance as the Body of Christ through a share in the First Resurrection. According to the Divine promise the former, the world, waits until the Church class shall have been perfected, glorified, empowered, and shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father for the blessing of all the families of the earth, for the uplifting of all who desire Divine favour on Divine terms.

Look now at the type: notice that it is not all Israel that is in danger from the destroying angel, but only the first-born. Only the first-born of the Egyptians were slain. Hence it was only the first-born of the Israelites that were spared or passed over. These first-born ones, protected by the blood of the lamb, the Lord declared to be specially His; and, with a view to marking them out and keeping them as a special, peculiar people, an exchange was made whereby the first-born of all the tribes were exchanged by the Lord for the one tribe of Levi, which He accepted as specially His and which in the type represents the household of faith. Out of this household of faith, in turn, a priestly family was selected, which typified Christ our High Priest and the Church His Body, the under priesthood, the Royal Priesthood. So, then, those who perceive the matter clearly see that the Passover has to do only with the household of faith. It is in full accord with this that the Lord's Supper, which antitypes the eating of the lamb, is not offered to the world, but is strictly and exclusively an institution for the household of faith.

Seeing in the type the slain lamb, its blood sprinkled upon the posts and lintels of the home and its flesh eaten with bitter herbs, we apply this in the antitype and see Christ the antitypical Lamb, see that His blood sprinkled upon our hearts cleanses them from a consciousness of evil and gives us an assurance of our being passed over, of our being spared, of our being granted life through His blood. This sprinkling represents our justification by faith; and the subsequent eating of the lamb with bitter herbs is represented in the antitype

by our consecration, our partaking of Christ, our participation with Him in His sufferings and self-denials—also represented by the bitter herbs, which give zest to our appetite and encourage us to partake more and more abundantly of the Lamb. All who believe the testimony, all who trust in the precious blood, are passed over, and, more than this, are expecting a general deliverance of the whole people, of all who love God, who desire to do Him reverence and service. So many as thus believe realise themselves pilgrims and strangers under present conditions, looking for a better country, even the heavenly Canaan. All this was represented in typical Israel, for while eating the lamb on that night of Passover they stood staff in hand, girded for a journey. Likewise the Lord's faithful to-day should realise themselves pilgrims and strangers, having no continuing city, but setting their affections on things above.

We meet not as Jews to remember the deliverance from Pharaoh and Egyptian bondage, but as antitypical Israelites seeking to escape the power of Satan and the dominion of sin. We meet not to eat literal lamb and bitter herbs and to commemorate the passing over in Egypt, but as Spiritual Israelites to recognise and commemorate the death of the Lamb of God as our Passover—to feast upon Him, upon the truths which He gave us.

More than this, as explained by our Lord, we not only will use the unleavened bread to represent the purity of His flesh broken for us, and the fruit of the vine to represent His blood shed for us, but also in the light of the Apostle's explanation we perceive that it is a part of our privilege to be broken with Christ as a part of the same larger loaf, and to have fellowship in His cup of suffering and death as a part of the larger cup. From this double standpoint we view our relationship to the Lord, first as those whom He passes over, and secondly as those who share also with Him by and by in the great work of leading forth from bondage to sin and Satan all who will accept of the Divine favour and liberty as the sons of God! How wonderfully grand is the privilege thus accorded us! No wonder the Apostle said, "Let us keep the Feast."

Our feasting upon this bread which came down from heaven and which was broken for us is not merely for the special occasion of our assembling annually. Rather that annual assembling which our Lord enjoins represents our experiences throughout the entire night of His absence, until He shall establish His Kingdom in the

morning. It is for us to keep the feast, not merely in this special and commemorative manner, once a year, but day by day, hour by hour, to feed upon the Lamb of God, to by faith realise and appropriate to ourselves His virtues and merits, and to grow in grace and knowledge and love and all the fruits and graces of the Spirit. Indeed, we remember the Master's words to be in the nature of a command, "As often as ye do this, do it in remembrance of Me." There is no doubt in our minds now as to what we do in this annual celebration of our Lord's death—we are keep-

ing the feast because we have come to realise that Christ was slain for us as our Passover Lamb. Evidently no other time would be so appropriate as the anniversary. Whether that be reckoned by sun time or moon time, according to the days of the week or according to the days of the month, it is unquestionably an annual celebration; and as oft as we do it, every year as we do it, every year as the anniversary occurs, we do it not in remembrance of the type, but in remembrance of the grand antitype, Jesus our Redeemer.

CONCERNING THEM WHICH ARE ASLEEP.

An examination of
I Thess. 4: 13-18

Chapter 4—A SHOUT! A VOICE! A TRUMP!

The point of enquiry in each previous section of this discussion has been to ascertain whether the thought of a simultaneous glorification—the work of a mere moment—for both living Saints and dead, is warranted by this Scripture. Reasons have been found to think otherwise, and further reasons will be found under this present heading. The events which are associated with each item of this heading lead to the conclusion that a period of considerable duration is involved in their fulfilment.

While it may be taken for granted that the Shout, the Voice, and the Trump may be sounding simultaneously, there is no direct statement to say that each will start and end at the same given moment. In manner similar to the glorification of the Saints in which the dead first, the living afterwards, will be clothed upon "at the same time," yet not at the same moment of time, so with great probability the three voices may begin at different dates, thereafter proceed simultaneously, and finish at different times. Very certainly the Trump of God, if it follows the course of its type at Sinai, will sound "loud and long," until the people of Israel are gathered to Mount Zion for the inauguration of their New and better Covenant. The gathering of redeemed and re-united Israel is most certainly the work, not of moments, but of years.

In His great prophecy in Matt. 24: our Lord spoke of "a Trumpet and a great Voice" (margin—v. 31.) as attending His return, by which means His elect would be gathered from the four quarters of heaven. That gathering is not pictured as the work of a mere moment, but

of a period—the period of the Harvest (Matt. 13: 29-43.)

Three times the sound of the Trumpet is associated with the resurrection of the dead (1 Cor. 15: 51-53, Rev. 11: 18; and in our text). In two of these three instances it is the resurrection of the Church to which reference is made. In the other it is the resurrection of Saints (the Church); of Prophets (the Ancient Worthies); and of "them that fear Thy name, both small and great." In no case therefore can the sound of a Trumpet be construed to indicate the work of a mere moment of time, but, even in its shortest aspect, a period of some considerable length. In one case, this Trumpet is called the "last" Trump (1 Cor. 15: 52.), in another "the Seventh Angel sounding" (Rev. 11: 15.), and in our text the "Trump of God." There is no Trump after the Seventh Angel's sounding, presumably therefore that sounding is the "Last" Trump. The Last Trump accompanies the resurrection of the Church (1 Cor. 15: 52.) So does the Trump of God (1 Thess. 4: 17.) Presumably therefore, the Last Trump is synonymous with the Trump of God. The Trump, therefore which sounds concurrently with the descent of the Lord Jesus from heaven does not cease to sound until the Saints, the Prophets, and all that fear God's name, both small and great, have received their reward, and those that destroy the earth have been destroyed. (Rev. 11: 15-18.)

The great Voice (Matt. 24: 31. margin) has also its counterparts in Rev. 10: 3; Rev. 14: 2, 7, 9, 15, and 18. Different agents are

associated here with the loud voices. A mighty angel, with an opened scroll in his hand, descends from heaven, crying with a loud voice. Other angels (chap. 14:) with different specific messages also cry with loud voices. These angels and voices may represent different movements and different messages among the messengers of God on earth, or in the religious heavens, but one and all belong to the era of "the loud voice." That era covers the harvest of the Age (Rev. 14: 14-16; Matt. 24: 31.) to say the least. It may cover much more. Again, the conclusion seems inescapable that it is a period and not a moment of time which is thus spoken of.

Coming now, after reviewing these associated texts, to the words of 1 Thess. 4: 16-17, we read

"The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel and the Trump of God."

What ministerial rhapsodies and poetic effusions these words have engendered. How often tongue and pen have been fired by allusions to Gabriel's horn, and the "mighty Trump," as white-hot evangelists have tried to picture that stirring moment of the Lord's descent, and the rending earth, and the tottering tombstones as the grave gives up its dead: Items, these, of a too literalistic theology. Orthodox Christians still wait for that piercing shout to announce the Lord's descent to call the dead out from the tomb and close this present evil world in flames of fire.

No warranty is found, however, in Paul's words for such a thought, for neither the Shout of the Lord, nor the Voice of the Archangel can be limited to a moment's duration, any more than the Trump of God can be so limited. A close analysis of the words, as well as the phrases, which Paul designedly uses leads to the conclusion that it is an intensification, not a cessation of service which is implied. The Lord's "Keleusma" shout; the Chief Angel's command to his legions; and the Divine Trumpeter's call to life, liberty and happiness are not symbols suggestive of an utter crash of worlds in a mere moment of human time. They betoken the rally of all the forces of righteousness for the grand assault upon the unrighteous Kingdom of Satan and sin. It is a period of mobilisation of all who love and all who hate iniquity into their respective Camps.

Taking one of his ideas from the ancient Galley-master, whose shout and beat adjusted the rhythm for the whole company of oarsmen (some scores of them per ship at times) to

pull as one, it could hardly be taken to mean the cessation of the Christian's stroke, nor even a resting on their oars. The same idea is seen to-day in the Bandmaster's (or a-march, the drummer's) beat of time. It sets the tempo, the pace, the rhythm, the swing, and causes both melody and feet to fall into step together. Such a word, chosen by design, ought never to be construed to imply the cessation of service. It cannot tell of labour ended, but of labour regularised and systematised. It tells of co-ordination, where else service would be unrhythmic and disorderly. It implies that servants, working at random before, continue still to work, but under harmonised control. This happened with the Harvest Light. This "Keleusma" idea does not agree with the thought of all the Saints passing out of the "Galley" where they had been labouring, in one brief speck of time. **They still remain to serve and toil**—but to pull with rhythmic stroke. It cannot show the instant passing of all the Saints from the earth to heaven.

Our Lord speaks also of angelic attendants at His Coming (Matt. 25: 31.), Daniel and John speak of "ten thousand times ten thousand" attending upon His Throne. (Dan. 7: 10. Rev. 5: 11.) The Arch-angel (the chief angel) would be first in rank among the "principalities and powers in heavenly places." No matter if there be but one or several of this rank, the thought must surely be that He that takes control is announcing his commands to set in motion all those forces and activities (by Angel hands) which will terminate a world of sin, and establish a world wherein dwells righteousness. It tells of those heavenly legions whose services, at need, were once at Jesus' call (Matt. 26: 53.) now come to help at the establishment of Mount Zion (Heb. 12: 22.) and of the Kingdom which nevermore can be shaken.

In very truth it tells not of a mere speck of human time when angels and men stand still, and cease all labour. It tells the rather of the Troop-Commander's shout, issuing the word to "March," and start the grand advance in heaven and earth; the Lord's own shout, assembling and co-ordinating the work on earth; the Archangel's voice commanding those from heaven.

With like force and precision too, the Trump of God shows the great grand sweep of righteous work begun. One place, one place alone, provides in Scripture the base for this sublime idea. In no place else, and at no other time has God's own Trump waxed loud. Once

only from Sinai's brow has that dread blast been blown, and there it waxed long and louder till Israel quailed and shrank from that intimidating sight, beseeching Moses to approach the Awe-ful Majesty enthroned therein. Assembled at that mountain's foot, to hear God's law, the newly delivered hosts of Israel heard the voice of God, Him who spake on earth (Heb. 12: 25.)

And when **"the voice of the Trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice."** (Ex. 19: 19.)

From no other source came Paul's conception of the Trump of God. While Scripture speaks of other Trumpets—trumpets of war, trumpets of Jubilee, trumpets of Atonement—no one of these is the Trump of God. Once only in that distant Age God's Trumpet sounded—but once again the Holy Word tells of one more blast when He shall have bent Judah to His will, and filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up the sons of Zion . . . , and made them as the sword of a mighty man. (Zech. 9: 13). "When I shall have bent Judah to me."—after Judah's long years of travail, and "filled the bow with Ephraim"—when Israel's development is come to the full (Gen. 48: 19; Rom. 11: 25.) then "the Lord shall blow the trumpet, and shall go forth with whirlwinds of the south" in a time of great trouble (Zech. 9: 14.) When therefore the House of Israel and the House of Judah shall have been prepared and made ready as a people for the Lord, then they will be brought near and hear His voice again, and enter into the bond of a New Covenant, with better Sacrifices and better prospects. The Trump of God will sound again, and at its sounding the generation then living, and generations once dead, will join themselves in holy compact to serve Him with one consent.

Among the assembled hosts at Sinai's foot one class was accounted separate from the rest. On that dread night in Egypt when the Angel of God, with smiting sword passed through the land, God hallowed to Himself the first-borns of man and beast for holy service and sacrifice. In advance of their brethren they were made dedicate to God, to be His special

inheritance; He, to be theirs (Num. 18: 20.) Thus, with these special prerogatives the first-born stood at Sinai's foot while the Trumpet sounded loud and long. Thus their lot in Israel was arranged even before God proposed the Covenant terms to the remainder of the Camp.

Nineteen hundred years God has devoted Himself to separating out His Firstborn, the Church of the Firstborn, His spiritual sons, to be made ready for the inauguration of His Priestly and Messianic Kingdom. God will gather His chosen people—their firstborns included but with special prerogatives—not now to Sinai and its bondage, but to "Mount Zion, and unto the City of the Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of Angels; to the general Assembly of the Church of the firstborn . . ." (Heb. 12: 22-23.) This Scripture outlines the full constitution of Israel, when gathered to the **institution of the everlasting Kingdom.**

Some of the Firstborn have long been in the tomb; they need awakening. Many generations of Israel are in the tomb; they also need awakening. It requires the arrival of "the time of the dead . . . the prophets, . . . the saints . . . and all that fear Thy name, both small and great," to present that great assembly before the Lord. The "time of the dead" is the time of the sounding of the Seventh Angel, the Last Trump, the Trump of God. That counterpart to Sinai's assembly—the anti-type to the founding ceremony of the Old Covenant, can be no work of a mere moment. It requires time, a long time to found so great a Kingdom. Our text reveals the gathering of two of those parts, the Church of the Firstborn, and the innumerable company of Angels. The Lord's "Keleusma" gathers the one, the voice of the Arch-angel the other. The Trump "of God" stands for all else required to gather from the tomb the hosts of Israel, and the spirits of just men made perfect, to stand and join their living sons and brethren in that Kingdom of love, forever sure.

In very truth, Scripture forbids the thought that the Shout, the Voice, and the Trump are the outworking of any single moment of human time.

Yes, think and thank! 'Twill lighten care,
And make thy pain less hard to bear.
Count up the mercies of to-day,
And discontent will flee away;
More calm and patient thou wilt grow,
While from thy lips thanksgivings flow.

Yes, think and thank! Look up and see
By faith the home prepared for thee,
Where neither weariness nor tears
Can ever come—nor pain, nor fears.
Think how 'twas bought—by Jesus' death—
And thank Him with thy latest breath.

THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS.

"Be ye holy, for I am holy" I. Pet. 1; 16

Part 4—HOLINESS COMES TO A PEOPLE.

When God brought Israel out of Egypt, and came to dwell with them in the wilderness, an illustration was set before us of a two-fold aspect of the attribute of holiness. In the Shechinah Light which dwelt in the "Most Holy" we have the emblem of inherent holiness. Another term for that would be "subjective" holiness—or holiness of the "Subject" or "Being" to whom the attribute referred. To this aspect of Divine holiness God's coming to dwell with Israel made no difference, for even in those remote times when God had withdrawn Himself, and was putting forth no active power to arrest the increasing prevalence of sin, within Himself God's essential holiness remained unchanged and undiminished.

Its existence as an attribute of God did not depend upon His activities against the course of sin. At rest or at work that essential intrinsic holiness persisted and continued because of Him being Who and what He was. That unchangeable attribute of God was represented by that mysterious Light within the Most Holy of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness. There was nothing in the whole Tabernacle structure to be compared with that peculiar Light. It hung between the Cherubim, unsustained and unchanged—ever and always a mysterious glow of light emitting its rays without Priestly care or other earthly derived attention. No human labours could improve it, no human effort could quench it. It came from God, and was maintained by God. It was the token of the Presence of God. It was the emblem of the holiness of God. It was of this Light God spake when He said to Moses ". . . I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the Mercy Seat, from between the Cherubim . . ." (Ex. 25: 22.) From above the Mercy Seat! From between the Cherubim! Exactly the location of that Holy Light. From that location God said "I will meet with thee." That Holy Light positioned there between the Cherubim was the nearest approach to a revelation of the exalted and holy Personality of the Lord God of Heaven and earth which could be disclosed to mortal man—fit emblem of One who had an inexhaustible fount of life within Himself, and who in Himself and by Himself upheld the absolute standards of virtue and purity.

The arrival and presence of that Holy Light

in the dark depths of Israel's Tabernacle represented that the Holy God had come down to earth to begin the preliminary stages of His plan for cleansing it from sin. To that far distant project of purifying the world from sin God called Abraham's seed to be His servants and associates. By coming down to earth in this emblematic sense, and by drawing Israel's hosts around His dwelling-place, the native inherent holiness of God began to be active against sin. It set before itself an objective, and applied itself to that end. To accomplish that objective it gathered around itself and absorbed within itself the whole nation of Israel.

The nation complete and entire, the tabernacle in all its parts and the mysterious self-supporting Light were all essential parts of the one Divine instrument for eliminating sin. The holy Light in its relation to Israel was as the centre to the circumference, as the hub to the wheel. "It" and they were one, each in their respective place, each with its respective part to play in the great task of sanctifying the earth. That Holy Light was directive and advisory in its relation to the entire Camp. It gave guidance when need arose. That Holy Light was as the Watchman against unholiness; it smote the sons of Aaron when using strange fire, unholy fire. It was—shall we say not irreverently—as the highest directive officer of the co-partnership concern. Inasmuch, however, as here on earth both manager and messenger are parts together of one firm, so God and His chosen people Israel were associated together in God's scheme to rid the world of sin.

This association of the Eternal God with the seed of His friend (Jas. 2: 20.) is beautifully shown in Rev. 4 and 5. The personality of God is represented by the jasper and sardine stone, seated on the centrally positioned throne. The throne supports are of such a form as to correspond to Israel's banners—a lion, a calf, a human face, a flying eagle. This combination shows Israel associated with the throne of the Living God. Around that central throne, but of smaller size, are four and twenty other thrones, occupied by the same number of elders, crowned with golden crowns. These represent the priestly and kingly attributes joined in one—kings and priests—and stand out from the elect nation as their very elect and choicest

members. It is a picture of a priesthood which has superseded the Levitical order—the great original, of which Aaron's was a type.

The jewel-pictured occupant of that central throne, the throne itself, and the circle of priestly-royal elders are joined together in solemn session, awaiting the coming of Judah's Lion—a Lamb as it had been slain, for the release of a temporarily lost inheritance. This was the grand design with which the Ancient of Days set out. This was the master-draught of His plan, of which the events at Sinai, and in wilderness days constituted only a kindergarten copy. God and Abraham's chosen seed were to be as "one," to accomplish the grand redemption of the world, set out in symbolic language as a Holy City, lying foursquare (Camp-like) with ever-open gates into which all the earthly kings should bring their glory. God's purpose stands unchanged. Christ supercedes Moses, but all else remains unchanged.

When God thus set forth this scheme as His objective, the holiness which required the earth to be made free from sin—which holy intention was the basic cause for the plan being formed—became objective too. The intrinsic indwelling holiness within the heart of God began working in an extrinsic—external—manner to make His environment (which means all creation) clean. When God took Israel into co-partnership with Himself (represented by placing His Holy Light in their midst) His own objective holiness came down to rest on Israel as well.

Thus the sublime subjective holiness (represented by the Holy Light) became manifest and active, as an objective holiness too, what time it began to act and work with Israel and through Israel for the elimination of sin. God's holiness was thus revealed in its two-fold aspect (a) **subjective** (an indication of what He is—the Holy One of Israel) but it became (b) **objective** too (indicated by what He was about to do).

It is very necessary for us to make this distinction clear between these two phases of holiness, for Israel shared in one phase, but not in the other. Israel, by her association with her God, was made objectively holy—holy for a purpose—but most obviously she was not made holy subjectively, i.e. she was not holy in herself—she had no real holiness of heart. It is on this basis of a two-phased holiness that we can approach New Testament days. These things and experiences in Israel were the pattern of the "better things" of our later days.

To teach men of this earth (in the only way that man could learn) that the Most High God claims in Himself to be the be-all and end-all (or as Paul puts it "that God may be all in all") of their being, God commanded men and utensils (altars, censers, tables, etc.,) to be exclusively set apart to His service. So long as these men used these utensils in the prescribed way, that is, in His exclusive service, God accounted both men and utensils holy. This holy standard did not lapse because, at times, these men failed to follow precisely all the prescribed details of their instructions. God had made provision for these unintentional lapses, both on a national and individual scale, by means of vicarious sacrifices (sin-offerings, both personal and national). See Leviticus, chapters 4 to 7, and Leviticus 16.

When the more faithful in Israel, those who had higher vision and keener hearts than their fellows (see Heb. 11:) had become thoroughly and appreciatively familiar with this kindergarten idea of holiness (separateness unto God) God advanced His purpose to a higher stage. By reason of the sacrificial death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus, God was able to carry the theme of revelation (that is, redemption by blood) up from the lowly, limited, literal level of fleshly Israel, to the higher, unconfined spiritual level of spiritual Israel, in this way carrying the thoughts and understanding of the responsive among His people up to the great realities of His plan. In learning these higher things His faithful ones were still at school, still learning the one great lesson concerning holiness and sin, but were advanced upwards from the kindergarten to the qualifying grade. The little square wooden blocks of the nursery were no longer necessary for these pupils to continue developing the "building sense"—that is, the sense of holiness. This sense—this awareness of God—had already considerably developed, and now the time had come to put realities in place of typical and shadowy things; but in so doing God used the various objects of the Mosaic ceremony and ritual to illustrate the verities of the Christian faith.

The Holy Spirit used those sacrifices and ablutions and Tabernacle arrangements generally as patterns to lead Christian thought to see that the believer in Christ—each separate believer—was himself a Temple of the Living God (1 Cor. 3: 16.) At the same time, but from another point of view, each believer was a "royal priest" (1 Pet. 2: 5 and 9.), and from yet another point of view each believer

was "a living sacrifice" (Rom. 12: 1. Rom. 6: 13 and 19). On this higher level of Christian tuition it was learned, (as in Egypt on the Passover night), that a "first-born" class stood in special relationship to the plan of redemption—called to supersede the natural first-born, priestly, class, just as "Christ our Pass-over" (Lamb) superseded the Lamb whose blood be-sprinkled the door-posts of Israel.

A better and greater Priest with better sacrifices had superseded Aaron's line with its bulls and goats. A better Mediator, too, had been appointed to take the place of Moses. A better, larger, longer Sabbath had been designed to displace the typical seventh day. Thus, those lowlier, carnal conceptions, so long current in Israel, became the embodiment of better, fuller, nobler conceptions when carried up into the Christian's thought and life and experience. The form of the expression was changed, yet notwithstanding that, its germ and theme remained the same, just as the bud, fully developed into the flower, is changed in form, yet withal remains the same.

From first to last, on lowlier typical level, or on higher spiritual plane, the purpose of the Most High God remains the same. The twin-theme to-day, as it was in ancient time, is "holiness" and "sin." These major chords are made up of many accordant sounds. We speak of atonement, redemption and precious blood, we tell of baptism into His death, and companionship of Christ, and grace to help in time of need, but back of all these kindred themes stands God Most High. He it was who caused them all. Sacrifice and favour are all of His devising. It was God Himself who so loved the world as to give His Son (John 3: 16.) It is His own Love which is commended by the death of Christ (Rom. 5: 8.), and thus, when we rejoice together over redemption's wondrous story, each note of the harmonious chord harks back to the Most High God, who, before time began, arranged His plans to provide for every such emergency. Back of all these plans, deep in the heart of God, we reach the basic theme of all—that unchanging intensity of desire for the absolutely good, the altogether pure, the unchangeably true. That was the first spark that fired the

whole train, and from which all subsequent energy derives.

Again, we speak of evil and its long permission; of the reign of death; of the ravages of sin; of unholy men, and unrighteous rule. We speak of Gentile supremacy and of Israel's fall; we tell of Armageddon and all its fury, of a crushing time of trouble such as never was before, and then we look forward to the rounding up and chaining down of all these things, of Satan's imprisonment and final destruction. Back of all this permission and suppression stands God Most High. He it is Who has determined that though evil shall be triumphant for a time, it will be completely overthrown in the end. He it is Whose mighty power will bring it to its end. No one else is equal to the task.

Therefore behind the scenes of right and wrong there is One whose abhorrence of sin is so intense that He will not rest content until it is destroyed both root and branch. Again we reach the lesson's point, that Divine holiness will not permit its universal environment to be polluted forevermore. Again we reach the conclusion that the mainspring of all Divine energy and all Divine intention for uprooting all evil, and establishing forevermore the good and pure, is that supreme intense moral force which burns in the heart of God. Behind and beneath the attributes of Wisdom, Justice, Love and Power, is the unfathomably deep moral platform on which they all are built—the holiness of God.

The glorious Gospel truth in which we all rejoice is but the same theme continued, but in higher grade, that was taught to Israel in the wilderness. Moses, under God, was the teacher then. Christ, under God, is our teacher now. Things which "might be touched" and seen were the illustrations Moses used. We learn of things unseen; but through it all the lesson theme is just the same. Behind it all is God Most High, glorious in His holiness, pure beyond compare, working out His great designs to free the world from sin. Holiness must triumph over sin, and God is holiness sublime!

It is easier to pray than it is to praise. Prayer is the act of asking God for something. Praise is the act of thanking God for something, perhaps that which you have not yet received. Prayer is taking your words of want to God; praise is taking God at His words. He

has promised us many good things, among them to answer our prayers. If we really believe Him; if we are really willing to rest on His words of promise, why should we not praise?

THE PASSING OF ENOCH.

"Enoch was not, for God took him." Gen. 5: 24.

A singular Old Testament character is the antediluvian patriarch Enoch—seventh from Adam in natural descent and of whom it was said "Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him." (Gen. 5: 24.) To that strange expression the writer to the Hebrews adds his comment "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God." (Heb. 11: 5.)

This unusual ending to the brief record of a saintly man's life has given rise to endless conjecture and speculation; so much so that the question "What really *did* happen to Enoch?" is by no means an uncommon one.

The usual conclusion favoured by nineteenth century commentators was that Enoch was taken to heaven without dying—a kind of instantaneous passage from the scenes of earth to the presence of God. This has remained a satisfactory answer for many, but the fact that other words of Scripture are contradicted by this conclusion is sufficient justification for an endeavour to attain a deeper and more accurate understanding of these two cryptic texts.

In such an enquiry any suggestion which may be of assistance, no matter from what source it comes, will be of value as an aid to thought.

Beside the two texts quoted above, Enoch is mentioned in only one other place in the Scriptures. Jude (verse 14) quotes him as predicting the coming of the Lord with ten thousands of His saints to execute judgment. This reference contributes nothing to our knowledge of the life of the prophet and does not materially assist our enquiry. It does however stamp Enoch as one of the prophets who spoke of the coming of the Day of the Lord and assures us that, like Abraham in later years, he "rejoiced to see my (Christ's) day, and was glad." (John 8: 56.)

The first point of enquiry is as to the precise meaning of the words in Genesis 5: 24. Does the phrase—"Enoch walked with God, and Enoch was not, for God took him" really mean that he was taken to heaven without dying as is so often supposed, or does it bear another meaning?

"What man is he that liveth and shall not see death?" asks the Psalmist (Psa. 89: 48). "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God" are the words of Paul (1. Cor. 15: 50) and again "the King of Kings and Lord of Lords . . . dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom **no man hath seen nor can see.**" (1 Tim. 6: 16); whilst our Lord Himself declares "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man." (John 3: 13.)

Such Scriptures as these should be sufficient to confirm that no man, not even Enoch, can hope to have escaped the hand of Death, even had not the writer to the Hebrews stated so definitely, after including Enoch in his portrait gallery of heroes, that "these all died in faith." (Heb. 11: 13.) It should be an accepted conclusion therefore that Enoch, when his allotted span was expired, did pass into death and "slept with his fathers."

The use of that latter expression serves as a clue to this strange word in Gen. 5: 24. Although we must believe that Enoch did eventually sleep with his fathers, there is no record to that effect in Genesis. This is the more strange when it is noticed that in every other case the formula is consistently the same "Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son . . . and called his name Seth. And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years and he begat sons and daughters. And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years, **and he died.**" (Gen. 5: 3-6.) The same expressions are used for each one of the patriarchs up to Methuselah, **except Enoch.** Why the exception?

Is it not a reasonable conclusion that the time and circumstances of Enoch's death were not known to the men of his day, and therefore the record could not be completed? There is another fact that helps to confirm this thought. The ages of the antediluvian patriarchs ranged between 895 and 969 years; but Enoch again is an exception. The record states that he lived 365 years and God took him. Can it be possible that the ancient historian intended his readers to understand that Enoch lived 365 years among men, becoming famed for his piety, and at that age disappeared unac-

countably and was never heard of again? Can it be that God in his inscrutable wisdom took Enoch away from the habitations of men perchance to carry out some work for Him during the remainder of His earthly life, living perhaps as long as his fellow patriarchs and, like Moses, at length ending his life in a solitary place known only to his God?

Let the Scriptures and such other records as are available be examined in this light and a reasonable understanding of the story comes into view.

"Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him." The Hebrew here has the significance of "walking to and fro" as a man does with his bosom companion. Thus is depicted the fact that Enoch was a man living in close and habitual communion with God in a day when quite certainly the wickedness of man was increasing on the earth and "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (Gen. 6: 5.) Heb. 11: 5 confirms this view by saying **"Before** his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." Picture then this venerable man surrounded in all probability, by a godly family—for one of his great grandsons was Noah, a man who was "seen righteous" before God (Gen. 7: 1)—attaining what would be considered "middle age" of nearly four hundred years. One day Enoch was not to be found; he "was not" for he had been "translated." What had happened?

"God took him" says Genesis. The word is **"laqach,"** meaning "to be taken away" or "removed" as in Amos 7: 15 "The Lord took me as I followed the flock," and Josh. 24: 3 "I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood" (river). A more definite word is used by the writer to the Hebrews when he declared that Enoch was "translated." The two occurrences of this word in this verse are from the Greek **metathesis** and **metatithemi**, meaning to take up an object and put it down somewhere else. These words appear frequently in the New Testament and a clear idea of their usage is gained by noting the following occurrences:

Heb. 12: 27 "signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken."

Acts 7: 16 "And were carried over into Sychem."

Luke 16: 4 "When I am put out of the stewardship."

Acts 19: 26 "Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people."

It is not necessary to insist that the expression "was not" must imply death, or the death condition. It need only indicate that the one referred to is not present or not to be found. A striking example of the usage of this expression occurs in the Babylonian story of the Flood. (It is probable that Genesis 5 was originally written in the same style of writing and perhaps not very much earlier than the Flood story which has survived in its purest form in Genesis and in a much more distorted form in the Babylonian account). Telling of the time when he sent forth the birds from the Ark, Uta-Napishtim (the Babylonian Noah) says "To and fro went the dove, and returned, for a resting place **was not** . . . to and fro went the swallow. She too returned, for a resting place **was not.**" In this light the expression need only mean that Enoch was not to be found, and this is exactly what Heb. 11: 5 declares.

It seems then that both the inspired writers intended their readers to understand that Enoch was taken away from amongst men and found himself, in the providence of God, in some other part of the earth. From that day onward, Enoch was never seen or heard of again, and the ancient chronicler who first compiled the history which now appears in Genesis 5—probably in the days immediately after the Flood—was unable to say any more about this venerable character beyond the well-known fact that in the three hundred and sixty-fifth year of his life he "was not—for God took him." Where He had taken him was not known, and for that reason the length of his earthly life and the time of his death could not be recorded.

Now it is a remarkable fact that the traditions of the Israelites shed a distinct light on the fact of, and reason for, this mysterious disappearance. The apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus declares (44: 16) that "Enoch pleased the Lord and was translated, being an example of repentance unto all generations." This can only be taken as a reflection of Jewish understanding of the Genesis account, but one is impelled to ask in what way Enoch could be an "example" to "all generations." Perhaps the answer is to be found in the Hebrews verse, where it is said that in faith was Enoch translated, having already pleased God (Heb. 11: 5.) Now in that chapter Enoch's faith is placed on the same level as that of Abraham, Moses and others, who at the call of God left their home, kindred and country and went out to a place which God would show them, **not knowing whither (they) went.** (Heb. 11: 8.) Per-

haps Enoch also went out to a solitary place, away from men, in close communion with God, to do a work for God just as did Abraham and Moses in later days, and maybe that was the secret of his translation.

Many have wondered from what source Jude took his famous quotation when he said (Jude 14) "Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints . . ." and so on; for the quotation is not to be found in the Old Testament. It was little more than a hundred years ago that a complete copy of the "Book of Enoch," in which this passage occurs, was made available in the English language, and although none would now claim that this book was written by Enoch, competent authorities declare that not only Jude but our Lord Himself were quite familiar with it. It is to this book that we are indebted for sufficient light on Judaistic tradition to confirm the suggestion advanced above as to the nature of Enoch's disappearance.

Although the Book of Enoch was put together in its present state no earlier than one or two centuries before Christ, its nature suggests that certain portions are taken from written records which are considerably older. Apart from a great deal of pseudo-astronomical lore with which we have no immediate concern, the book purports to tell of the conditions prevailing immediately before the Flood—an amplification of the story told briefly in chapter 6 of Genesis. It is evident that various "fragments" of older records, some considerably distorted by their passage through the generations, by copying and re-copying, translation and re-translation, have been put together in a very clumsy and disjointed fashion with much material of later composition, but a careful study of these "fragments" does reveal one very interesting fact.

That fact is that the prevailing theme of the book was the taking of Enoch away from the world of men and his establishment in some part of the world where he could not be approached except by one or two favoured ones who were aware of the secret. The story tells of both Noah and Methuselah visiting Enoch thus, and of the family of Methuselah coming to him to hear his words. Perhaps the most eloquent passage in this connection is I Enoch 12: 1, which says "Before these things Enoch was hidden, and no one of the children of men knew where he was hidden, and where he abode, and what had become of him. And his activities had to do with the Watchers,

and his days were with the Holy Ones." Again chapter 70, verse 1 declares "It came to pass after this that his name **during his lifetime** was raised aloft to the Son of Man and to the Lord of Spirits from amongst those who dwell on the earth. And he was raised aloft in the chariots of the Spirit and his name vanished from among them."

The similarity of this to the story of Elijah is very striking, and this likeness is heightened by words which are accredited to Enoch himself (39: 3) "And in those days a whirlwind carried me off from the earth and set me down at the end of the heavens." Elijah too was separated from Elisha by a chariot of fire and carried up by a whirlwind into the heavens (II Kings 2: 11) and the translation of Enoch is depicted here as having occurred in very similar fashion. The sons of the prophets besought Elisha that they might go and search the mountains, believing that the "wind of the Lord" (Heb. **ruach**, translated "wind" or "spirit" as required by the context, and incorrectly rendered "spirit" in this instance in the A.V.) might have dropped Elijah somewhere within reach (II Kings 2: 16). They searched, and found him not. So with Enoch; it seems the Israelites believed that he had been removed to some inaccessible part of the earth and throughout the Book of Enoch he is described as continuing in a closer and more direct communion with God and the spiritual powers of heaven than man had enjoyed since the Fall in Eden. They believed that he bore God's messages to the "fallen angels" of whom both Jude and Peter speak in the New Testament (Jude 6, II Peter 2: 4), warned Methuselah and Noah of the coming flood and declared that the judgment of God would come upon the ungodly; but as far as mankind generally were concerned, they knew not where he was and they never saw him again. Incidentally the Book of Enoch depicts the events of Genesis 6: 1 as first taking place in the time of Jared, the father of Enoch.

There is a hint in Heb. 11: 5 that some search for Enoch was made after his translation, for the verse declares that he was "translated that he should not see death, **and was not found**," as though men searched for him and their efforts were fruitless.

The most difficult part of this verse is the expression "that he should not see death." Once only is the same expression used elsewhere in the Scriptures, and that is in the well known saying of our Lord "If a man keep my saying he shall never see death" (John 8: 51).

It should not be thought that this promise implied the escape of the physical human frame from the inevitable end which comes to all men when life's allotted span is past. Our Lord referred to a far deeper truth, and a far more enduring life than that which men to-day are pleased to call "life." Those who are the faithful of Christ, who have been "born again" and have a life within them which is from above and not of "this corruptible seed" (1. Pet. 1: 23) shall truly "never see death" even although their "earthly house of this tabernacle" (2. Cor. 5: 1) be dissolved. In like manner the ancient worthies of old who are said in Heb. 11: 39 to have obtained a good report through their faith have not failed of their reward and it can truly be said of them that having manifested their loyalty and allegiance to God by their faith there is a city which God hath prepared for them. (Heb. 11: 16). They too, shall not "see death." Enoch was one of these; and his faith, exercised as was that of Abraham, Moses and Daniel, is an assurance that he inherits the promise which God has prepared for him and so does not "see death;" but just as surely as Abraham and Moses and Christian believers throughout the centuries, finishing their course with joy, have gone down into the grave, so, in some lonely place far from his fellow-men, Enoch yielded up his breath to the One Who gave it. If it be assumed that Enoch lived to the average age of his fellow patriarchs, he could have been alive within half a century of the Flood. In this event he might well have been used of God to communicate those messages to Methuselah and to Noah, which the Book of Enoch declares he did in fact communicate. In such case one can well visualise this saintly old man in his quiet retreat spending his time in meditation on the things of God, perhaps seeing in ever clearer vision the trend of events in the world of sin and death, and—who knows—being the one who first discerned that impending fate which hovered over the antediluvian world. It may well have been that he perceived the natural signs of the impending catastrophe many years before it happened—perhaps with knowledge born of long observation of the heavens, undisturbed by other distraction, realising something of the mighty changes which were at work in the earth and which at length culminated in the "breaking of the great waters of the abyss" and the opening of the floodgates of heaven (Gen. 7: 11). Some dim memory of this may be the reason

why those long passages about the stars, winds and forces of Nature in the Book of Enoch are accredited to this mystic personage. It seems then that he lived as a righteous man in a world fast giving itself over to every form of evil, that he prophesied to it concerning coming retribution, and that in the heyday of life he was removed from his place among men and until the day of his death lived in his peaceful retreat serving and living in "quiet fellowship with God."

WHY ?

WHY should the Glorious Lord of Heaven and Earth,
 Before Whose Face the Angels stand in awe,
 So condescend to prove to Man the worth
 Of His immutable, eternal Law ?
 Why promise, plead, and reason with a Man,
 A Man of Earth, mere creature of a day ?
 Why trouble to encompass in His Plan,
 A Piece of common animated clay ?
 And why did God require those rites of old,
 The blood of bulls and goats, so often shed ;
 Those ceremonies, strange and manifold,
 That could not cleanse the soul, or save the dead ?
 Say, why did He require those holy rites,
 And why appoint His Priest to intervene ;
 Say, why the Bread, the Incense and the Lights,
 The Holy Places, with the Veil between ?
 Because, in Eden, when the Man He made,
 And modelled from the common lifeless clay,
 Although to naught He saw His image fade,
 He made him not but so to pass away.
 Ah no, His grand design was here to see,
 A Race, in spirit, like unto His Own,
 Lords of Creation, Earth, and Air and Sea,
 Subservient only to His Heavenly Throne.
 To Him, a Thousand Years are "Yesterday,"
 A Watch within the Night, when it is past,
 The Evil which Men suffer here to-day,
 Is but a Shadow ; Time is fleeing fast.
 And if He suffers Men His Law to flout,
 As they have flouted it since Eden's Day,
 It is that they themselves may reason out,
 That after all His is The Better Way ?
 The Better Way ? Indeed The Only Way,
 The Basis of His Empire and His Rule,
 Defying which brings Death by sure Decay,
 The Lesson plainly taught in Evil's School.
 And if The Lesson seems so hard to learn,
 And Men are dull, and slow, and need the Rod,
 Shall He lose Patience, and His Children spurn,
 He, their Maker, Father, Saviour, God ?
 Ah no, because He is all these, and They
 Are His by virtue of Creation's Plan,
 He works and waits. We have His Word to say
 His Purpose was, and is, to make a Man,
 A Man, the image of Himself, who knows
 The Heart of God as it is known Above,
 And from his own all taint of Evil throws,
 And wholly, gladly takes the Law of Love,
 That fundamental, all-embracing Law,
 Sole Basis of the Universal Throne,
 Which, from the first, Creative Wisdom saw,
 Would make the vast Eternity its own.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GONE FROM US.

Brother James Wilson, elder of the Church at Belfast and for very many years a well-known figure in our midst, was called to rest on Friday, 23rd February last. He had been in failing health since a severe operation in July last, and the end came after nine weeks' serious illness. One who knew him intimately for twenty-five years testified to his absolute devotion in the cause of Christ and to his continuous exhortation to all to lay down their lives for the brethren, an exhortation which he himself exemplified constantly. He will be greatly missed by the company whom he has served faithfully for many years, and the prayers of friends will ascend on behalf of his sisters who are left behind; but there is joy that he has not run in vain, nor laboured in vain.

The Kettering friends have lost a much-loved father in Israel with the passing, on March 7, of Brother W. Essam, known to many up and down the country, at the age of eighty years. One who for many years had given of his best in the service of our Saviour, Brother Essam truly merited the description given of him "a good man who did good things." Our brother leaves four daughters, and the sympathy of friends in many places will be with them in their loss. His parting message was John 17:3 "THIS is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

The funeral took place on March 11, being conducted by Brother Charles Barratt of Leicester.

ANONYMOUS

We would acknowledge with sincere appreciation the receipt of anonymous donations of £1 and 10/- respectively.

WHITSUN CONVENTION

After careful consideration, the Committee has decided not to arrange for a general Midlands Convention during the Whitsun holiday this year. It is thought that the interests of the friends will be better served by classes in the larger Midland towns making arrangements for local gatherings during Whitsun week-end, to serve the needs of friends within easy reach of these towns. Any assistance the Committee can give in connection with such local efforts will be afforded very readily upon request, and we would seek to encourage all the friends to do what they feel can be done in thus arranging for times of extra fellowship over the holiday week-end.

GATESHEAD

The Gateshead friends would like interested brethren to note that their meetings are now held in the Y.W.C.A. Hall, 22 Bewick Road, Gateshead-on-Tyne. Full particulars can be obtained from the Secretary, Brother Charles Storey, 48 Ripon Street, Gateshead 8, Co. Durham. Brethren visiting or passing through the town will always be more than welcome at the meetings.

AN OPPORTUNITY

The following items, originally second-hand, have been re-bound in cloth boards, titles in gold, pages trimmed and edges tinted, and so far as binding and appearance are concerned are equal to new. Prices are post free.

One "Emphatic Diaglott" ..	7s. 0d.
One Greek-English Lexicon (Robinson. 918 pp.) ..	15s. 0d.

We are also asked to mention that a sister has available one set of "Watch Tower" Reprints, in good condition, and if anyone desiring a set will write to us stating how much they can offer, we shall be pleased to pass their offer to our sister.

WELLING

The Welling friends announce the opening of their new Meeting Hall, to be known as Berean Hall, High Street, Welling. A warm invitation to visit the meeting is extended to any who find it possible so to do. Sunday meetings are held at 3-15 p.m. and 6-0 p.m. with tea and fellowship between the sessions. A permanent bookstall will be maintained at which all literature listed by the B.S.C. can be obtained. The Hall is ten minutes' walk from Welling Station, whilst friends coming by bus should alight at Welling Post Office (Service 241) or Welling Corner (Services 89 and 160, and trolley bus 696). The Hall is immediately adjacent. Further details can be obtained from the class secretary, Brother Charles G. Sears, 52 Huxley Road, Welling, Kent.

S.E. LONDON HOME GATHERING

A special gathering will be held (D.V.) on Sunday, April 7th, at Berean Hall, High Street, Welling. There will be a meeting at 3.15 p.m., addressed by Brother George A. Ford (Luton) and one at 6 p.m., addressed by Brother Alex. Guy (Forest Gate). Visiting friends are asked to bring their own food and a cup of tea will be provided. The hall will be open for fellowship from 2.30 p.m. and the evening meeting will close at 7.15 p.m.

A LABOUR OF LOVE

Advantage of this opportunity is taken to tell the brethren of the loving service rendered by an anonymous sister who has worked a beautiful rostrum display cover for use at Conventions and the like. The cover bears an artistic cross and crown design in colour, flanked by a replica of the seven-branched lampstand of the Tabernacle, and is for the use of brethren arranging conventions and other gatherings. We feel sure that this contribution to the beauty of our meetings will ascend as incense to the One who accepts every love-offering made as to Him, and we are certain too that the friends will deeply appreciate the action.

Applications for the loan of this cover may be made at any time, and we will do our best to accommodate all who wish to make use of it.

EMPHATIC DIAGLOTT.

We are now able to supply the Diaglott again, after the interruption to deliveries caused by the War. The price is now 13/6 post free.

THE MEMORIAL.

Sunday, April 21st, after 6 p.m., is the date when friends all over the world will foregather to "keep the feast" in remembrance of He Who first instituted this precious celebration. Whilst it is possible, this year, to argue the appropriateness of a March date due to the positions of the March and April new moons in relation to the Spring equinox, we believe all the friends will assent to the desirability of a uniform date for the observance of this ceremonial, which means so much to us all. It is generally agreed that for this reason the date given in the Jewish calendar is the most appropriate one to adopt. Hence it is with a sincere and deep appreciation of the significance of this day that we look forward to our gathering together. So far as we in Great Britain are concerned the present outward conditions will surely cause us to examine ourselves the more searchingly and to endeavour more than ever before to enter into that full spirit of brotherhood with all our brethren which was the burden of our Lord's prayer. "That they may be one, as we are one."

MEMORIAL EMBLEMS.

It is a happy privilege to despatch, each year, the emblems of "the feast" to isolated friends who find difficulty in obtaining them for themselves. Will all such please send a post card to the office not later than April 15, stating for how many persons the elements are required, and they will be despatched to arrive not later than April 19. Please do not leave the request until the last minute. There is, of course, no charge for this little service.

REFERENCE LIBRARY

Translations

Emphatic Diaglott (N.T.)
Ferrat Fenton
Leeser (O.T.)
Moffatt (N.T.)
Rotherham (N.T.)
Variorum
Weymouth (N.T.)

Study Helps

Berean Bible Students' Manual
Cambridge Bible Dictionary
Oxford Students Helps

Histories

History of the Reformation (6 vols.) (D'Aubigne)
Life of Christ (Neander)
Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History (2 vols.)
Works of Josephus

Research and Travel

Biblical Natural Science (2 vols.) (Duns)
Great Pyramid Passages (2 vols.) (Edgar)
Sinai and Palestine (Stanley)

Expository, etc.

1910 Convention Report
1913 " "
1914 " "
1915 " "
1929 " "
1930 " "
Daniel the Beloved of Jehovah (Streeter)
Foregleams of the Golden Age (B.B.I.)
Outlines of the Divine Plan
Photo Drama of Creation Scenario
Poems of Dawn
Revelation of Jesus Christ (2 vols.) (Streeter)
Studies in the Psalms (Rotherham)
Two Babylons, The (Hislop)

BRILLE LIBRARY

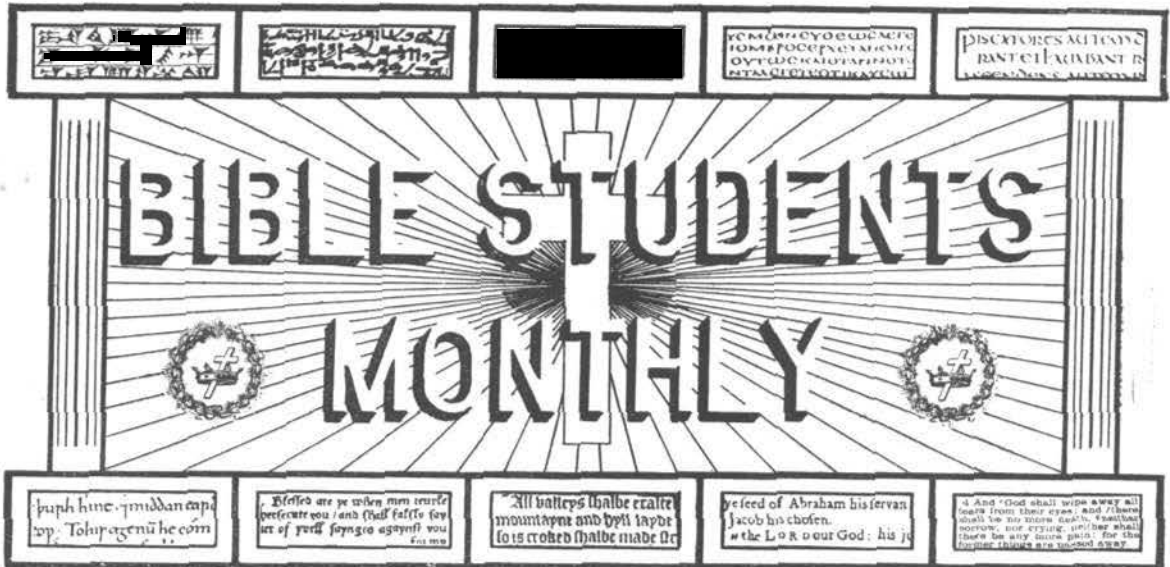
The following publications are available in Braille and will be sent in regular succession to all readers whose names are entered for that purpose, postage both ways being paid by the Committee. Address all Braille library communications to Bro. G. A. Ford, 13 Cranleigh Gardens, Luton, Beds.

The Divine Plan of the Ages
The Time is at Hand
The Atonement
The New Creation
Tabernacle Shadows

The above works are each in a number of separate parts. If a particular chapter is desired, please so state when applying.

Single Treatises—

Golden Age at the Door
Hope for Distressed Humanity
Hope of Immortality
Is there a God?
Manner of the Second Advent
Rich Man in Hell
Thoughts on the Covenants
What is the Soul?
Where are the Dead?
Which is the true Gospel?
Why God permits Evil.



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THREEPENCE

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THE ASSOCIATED BIBLE STUDENTS OF GREAT BRITAIN.

An undenominational Christian fellowship devoted to the study and dissemination of Bible truth in the light of present-day knowledge and to the deepening of personal Christian life and experience. Its members stand unreservedly for the teachings of Jesus Christ as a complete solution to humanity's problems, and believe in the eventual establishment of a new order of society upon earth in which the principles of love, equity and righteousness will prevail and evil be eliminated; and that under the spiritual rule of Christ and His Church the dead will be restored and mankind live in eternal harmony with God.

Bible Students Monthly

This periodical is published under the supervision of the Bible Students Committee, the articles appearing therein having been read and approved by at least five members before publication.

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Three months' free trial copies will be sent to any address upon request.

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of the Associated Bible Students
(1939—40)

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All communications should be sent to the above address, except those in connection with the following activities, which should be addressed as indicated.

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A REMINDER.

Facilities Available

"WITHOUT MONEY AND WITHOUT PRICE"
(Isa. 55: 1)

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List of available books published frequently.

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Assistance gladly rendered upon request, including suggested speakers, provision of printing, and financial help upon occasion.

"All His are thine to serve.

Christ's brethren here are needing aid;

In them thou servest Him."

BIBLE STUDENTS COMMITTEE.

A Whitsuntide Gathering

at

LUTON

Whit Sunday, May 12th

CONNAUGHT HALL,

(Room 5, 2nd Floor)

Upper George Street,

LUTON.

- 11 a.m. Bro. A. O. HUDSON (Welling)
1 p.m. Lunch
2.45 p.m. Praise Meeting
3 p.m. Bro. C. T. WARD (Kettering)
5 p.m. Tea
6.15 p.m. Bro. C. FARRANT (Worthing)

Further details and Programmes from
Bro. B. M. Bonner,
3 Chiltern Rise, Luton, Beds.

Lunch and Tea provided by the Luton friends.

GO -- PREACH!

"Go ye into all the world,
and preach the gospel." Mark 16: 15

In that rather dim yet fascinating epoch of history known to Bible Students as the period between the Old and the New Testaments much political activity went on among the nations of the East, and many rose to power, only to fall from the position of prominence; and as always, the weaker nations suffered as from all these moves. When the Persian Empire collapsed before the victorious and conquering Alexander (the Great) about B.C. 332, the Jews suffered badly although Jerusalem itself was spared the devastations of war. Afterwards, however, the tide turned in their favour and they were well treated by the Greeks until after the death of Alexander. Then began the troubles caused by the generals who succeeded their chief, and out of these conflicts and intrigues there rose to power the Ptolemies of Egypt, who gained control over the Jews despite the fact that one of the generals, named Seleucus, hotly contested their right to rule. In B.C. 198, Antiochus the Great captured Jerusalem, and he granted them many privileges such as had not been enjoyed for many years, among these being that of religious tolerance, a precious boon indeed for them. This however only lasted during his reign, for the son who succeeded him plundered the temple and took away from them many liberties. This process continued when Antiochus Epiphanes reigned in his stead, and it was he who encouraged the spread of Hellenising influence from Greece. This influx of new ideas was the cause of a great upheaval, and this disturbed and divided state led to many difficulties, allowing those who were unscrupulous in their dealings to become welders of power within the nation. The High Priesthood became a centre of conspiracies, plots and intrigues, with the result that the moral tone of the people began to sink to a very low level, despite the determined stand made by the noble minded Mattathias and his sons. They eventually suffered a complete collapse soon after the time of John Hyrcanus. This man was succeeded by Aristobulus I, who assumed kingly authority. At his death his grandsons contended for the position of power and as they were not able to come to an agreement among themselves they laid their case before the Roman general Pompeius, who ignored their plea and finally attacked Jerusalem and entered the temple in

B.C. 63. This was the occasion for further dispute, and resentment was kindled against the invading Romans, and this increased, resulting in many riots and outbreaks of political feeling; and much blood was shed in the quelling of these disturbances.

It was into such conditions that the Son of Man came. Can we wonder that all were in expectation and looked for the Messiah? (Luke 3: 15.) Also do we wonder that the disciples had the Kingdom so much on their minds and continued in that state of anticipation until after the death and resurrection of Jesus. **"Wilt thou at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?"** they asked of Him during the days of waiting (Acts 1: 6.) But they were still thinking of a kingdom on the model of the larger nations around them, in which power and authority were wielded by those who fought their way to the top. They betrayed their innermost thoughts when they quarrelled among themselves concerning as to which of them should be greatest. It was on one of these occasions (Matt. 18. 1-6.) that Jesus took a little laughing child upon his knee and gave these men an object lesson, gently pointing out to them that His Kingdom could only be received and embraced by those of a childlike disposition, a disposition in which rivalry is absent and teachableness and trustfulness, happiness and joy are the predominant characteristics. On another of these occasions He took a towel and washed their feet, humbly taking the place of the menial slave. "Know ye" He said, "What I have done unto you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet."

Yes, indeed, how true was the Master's word, "My Kingdom is not of this world" (of this order of things) for its principles were entirely different. This kingdom was to be ruled by love and not by hate, and pride, and envy, and self-glory. Love builds but hate destroys.

But concerning this Kingdom, Jesus said to them "I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now." (John 16: 12.) Their minds were not yet prepared to receive more information and accept a fuller and grander conception of things yet to be. He gave them, however, a promise "When the

spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth." In the meantime on that hallowed occasion when they saw Him in the flesh for the last time, He said "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," which statement was followed by the very definite instruction "Go ye therefore and teach (make disciples, *marg.*) of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." (Matt. 28: 19.)

How full of significance is the record in the Second chapter of Acts, "**And when the day of Pentecost was fully come . . . Peter standing up with the eleven lifted up his voice:**" Luke tells how Peter publicly proclaimed his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and declared the need for his hearers to experience a change of mind. "Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

How quickly after receiving that illumination of the Holy Spirit did they hasten to obey the command of the Master, "**Go . . . preach,**" (Mark 16: 15.) for they understood very much more concerning the Kingdom and now they had become teachable and were ready to serve. Note well how that service was rewarded "**for the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.**" Nor did they flinch at opposition to their cause, but with very great boldness continued to proclaim in no uncertain manner the Good News of the Kingdom. This they did even when they came in open conflict with the authorities and boldly made their stand, and on one occasion said to those who would have restrained them, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." (Acts 4: 19, 20). Now they saw clearly that the Kingdom was truly different in kind from those that they could observe around them, and staunchly they spake for freedom of thought and utterance. That same kind of activity continued for some time, in fact until the old fault manifested itself once more and place-seeking became prominent, and those who should have been servants took to themselves many to serve them. Their message became a mixture of truth and error, and the bright light of truth became dim.

Then followed the "Dark Ages." Is it cause for surprise? What has just been expressed may not be the complete explanation of that strange period but it most certainly was a factor in the situation. Later, when the light

of learning showed its flickering rays and shone on some of the errors taught by the leaders of the church, instead of weighing up the evidence and considering any adjustments that might be needed in their teaching they had recourse to the dreaded and dreadful Inquisition. Without doubt there was a remnant who knew better, and did their part in letting the light shine, but they were overwhelmed by the power held and used by those in authority. Even the great Luther, who was used so mightily to uncover and publish the splendid truth of Justification by Faith, gave vent to the following words. "People give ear to an upstart astrologer who strove to show that the earth revolves and not the heavens of the firmament, the sun and the moon. Whoever wishes to appear clever must devise some new system, which of all systems is of course the best. This fool wishes to reverse the entire science of astronomy, but sacred Scripture tells us that Joshua commanded the sun to stand still and not the earth."

The man referred to in this quotation was Copernicus, one who did much to give to the world a truer and more complete picture of the universe. Since that time many more facts concerning the movements of the heavenly bodies have been discovered and in the light of the present day Luther's words seem more childish than childlike. No doubt he felt strongly on this matter and said what he thought was right, and yet the view that he expressed has been shown to be false, whilst Joshua no doubt referred to the apparent motions of the heavens and not their motions as science conceived them.

Astronomy is not our chief concern, but astronomy and other sciences can help us to know more of the works of God, and hence assist us to know more of Him from this angle. Our chief concern has always been and must continue to be the end of the age, "**Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.**" It must be the Word of repentance, or terms that mean the same thing, for man has turned away from God and must needs turn about and face Him if he would know life. The followers of Jesus have thus turned and as He Himself said, "Ye are the light of the world . . . let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 5: 14-16.) He called His disciples to walk even as He walked, in a world disfigured and darkened by sin and evil. Difficult? indeed yes, so difficult that none have done so perfectly, but have progressed

slowly with many a slip and stumble. But always has there been the consolation held out, "Lo, I am with you even to the end." And how precious has been this promise in the dark hours when the cross seemed so heavy and the way so lonely.

Now what of the words already referred to. "I have many things to tell you but you cannot bear them now?" Has He thus spoken; and if so, how?

Bearing in mind the large bounties of truth that we now enjoy, and looking back over the centuries that have passed since these words were spoken, it is clear that He has fulfilled His promise; but the truth has come little by little, here a little, there a little, and there is ample justification for saying that it has come just as and when the disciples were able to bear it. It was not always in the cloistered calm of the monastery or the quietness of the study, for more often than not it has been the result of the endeavour to obey the Master's command, "Go . . . preach."

An illuminating incident is recorded in Luke. Jesus had been at prayer and afterwards he asked of his faithful few, "Whom say the people that I am?" They were ready with the answer. "Some say, John the Baptist, but some say, Elijah, and some say that one of the old prophets is risen again." From all this we can see that they had been among the people and had talked to them about their Master and had taken note of what they thought concerning Him. Jesus however wanted more from them. "But whom say ye that I am." A sudden flash of inspiration illumined the mind of Peter and he said, "thou art the Christ of God." Contact with those around and with the Lord Jesus was the means of Peter's giving voice to one of the greatest of truths. It was not then the time for the proclamation of that particular aspect, because no doubt the popularity that it would have brought would have interfered with the plans that the Master had in mind. But they still witnessed with Him that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand, for the record says that His set purpose was thus to preach in all the towns and villages of the land, and they were with Him. (Luke 8: 1.)

Nevertheless in the garden they forsook Him and fled, forgetting their mission, and through the awful hours of the crucifixion they must have faced many a conflict. Afterwards, though, a new spirit possessed them. They had been tested and were ready, and the time was ripe with such results as have been already noted. The same process has gone on down through the age, and truth was being unveiled

by various means and by many agencies and the command still rings out, "Go . . . and preach," individually, collectively, by word of mouth, by printed page—and then when the books are opened it may be found that some of the most effective preaching was done by one who never wrote a line, or hardly ever expressed himself in public, but who had lived a quiet, consistent, Christian life. For loving, unselfish and lovable acts and words, like the pebble dropped into the pond, have an expanding influence, and who can measure their power or the radius of their activity?

Is there a time limit, a period when this activity is to cease? Will the time come when this command no longer rules in the Christian life? In the nature of things any rule can only be obeyed until the hand of death stays all activity and the same rule must hold for collective action. So while even there are a few who are left as the salt of the earth, as the light of the world, the activity must go on. We desire the Kingdom as did those who walked with Him along the roads of Palestine, and we have learned the lesson that the Kingdom is not of this world and so we would look in vain to man for the fulfilment of our desires. Therefore we do not turn to the governments and all their machinery, for they can only influence externally. The Kingdom that we seek works from within, from the heart, and we know that in God's due time He will make plain upon the hearts of all His wise and wonderful laws.

The present day is one darkened by the clouds of war and many long to be assured of a brighter and better day, a time when wars shall cease, when none will make another afraid, nor any destroy the works of his fellows. A time when sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Yes, when death itself shall be no more! God has granted to His children a knowledge of these things, but not merely for their own satisfaction. The glad message of heavenly love is to be passed on, even as did our Lord and Master pass it on. Do we lack opportunity? Do the difficulties of doing what is our heart's desire seem insurmountable? Do we seem unable to reach those of whom we feel sure that the message is just what they need? We can be sure that all this is known by the Lord of the Harvest. He will direct the work. Let us not be weary nor grow tired because of these seeming obstacles, but tend our lamps and keep on the watch, for still the commission rings out, "Go . . . and preach . . ." in all the world, and remember, greater is He that is for you than all that can be against you.

WHEN GOD CREATED.

"Bereshith bara Elohim eth hasshamayim veets haarets"—"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." In those few words is enshrined the story of countless ages. Long before man came into being, long before the infinite variety of animal and vegetable life which now inhabits this planet was brought forth, the work of God went steadily forward. In the mighty crucible of Nature He was moulding and fashioning a fitting home for humanity. Before even that great work, of creating this earth, began, He was working, compelling the tremendous forces of the Universe to work together in slow but ceaseless motion until one day a star, approaching on its journey measurably within reach of our sun, tore from that sun masses of incandescent vapour, which streamed out into the heavens and then began to consolidate into separate planets, cooling and shrinking until after the lapse of ages upon ages the angels looked down upon this solar system of ours; the parent sun, majestic in the centre of its family of circling worlds.

The Earth was one of those worlds. Long ages had yet to pass before even the humblest form of life could appear on its troubled surface. Great eruptions of Nature from within, avalanches and floods from above, all combined to keep this new world in a state of perpetual unrest. But eventually there came a time when the tumult was stilled, when the

boiling seas subsided and the land had some measure of peace from warring elements, and in that eventful day life was born on earth.

No man saw it come. No human history can go back to those first beginnings when lowly creatures of the seashores were the lords of material creation. Long years afterward the chronicler wrote "And God said, Let the waters bring forth the moving creature that hath life . . . and it was so."

So passed the centuries, the millenniums, the epochs during which God worked silently, in that orderly development which characterises all His works preparing a home for a new creation which He purposed, until at length the watching angels saw a new wonder at which they shouted aloud for joy. Beings—intelligent, perfect, capable of love and gratitude, worship and service—made to be the crowning glory of all that creation which had taken so long a time to bring to this climax. "The morning stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38; 6). With what serene pleasure must the Father of all have gazed upon those first material beings and foreseen, even then, the wonders of a still future age when the earth shall be fully perfected; and when mankind shall have achieved the Divine ideal and attained to the image and likeness of God.

STRENGTH IN SORROW.

"Underneath are the Everlasting Arms."

*The clouds hang heavily overhead,
And suddenly raindrops start;
Like the tears to my eyes,
And the sob of surprise,
That comes from an anguished heart.*

*You have felt alone with the crowd around,
And the multitude sweeping by,
When the roar of the street,
Was a safe retreat
For the softly breathed-out sigh.*

*Familiar friends have been found to fail,
High hopes have been brought low;
Shorn of their worth,
Dashed down to the earth,
With the wrecks of the past to go.*

*So perishes trust in the arm of flesh,
And the lesson is learned at length,
When we willingly own,
That Jehovah alone,
Supplies Everlasting Strength.*

(S.R.S. 1940.)

MY PRAYER.

(Eph. 2 : 10-11).

"That I may know Him," Father, grant the longing
That burns within me as a quenchless fire;
For in these words what wondrous depths be hidden,
Embracing all I need or can desire.

"That I may know Him," this is life eternal
Not to possess a gift apart from One,
Who is the fount from which all true life springeth
And Whom to know is heaven on earth begun.

"That I may know Him," not in name or theory
This brings no power to stand, amid earth's strife,
Nay, I would know Him as the living Saviour,
The very strength and centre of my life.

"That I may know Him," in His resurrection
Triumphant over sin and Satan's power;
May know Him as He ever intercedeth,
Upholding thus His saints through each dark hour.

"That I may know Him," Lord I would not shun it,
The drinking of that cup He drank for me,
The sacred fellowship with Him in suffering,
The dark night-vigil in Gethsemane.

(Selected.)

THE QUIET TIME



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

GREATER WORKS.

Jesus said, "Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto my Father." Have any of the Lord's disciples done any greater miracles than Jesus did so far as healing physical ailments are concerned? We have no record of greater works of this kind than are recorded in the Gospels. Have any of the Lord's disciples at any time done as great works according to the flesh as Jesus did? Have any of them ever waked the dead? Surely none except the Apostles have done this wonderful work. What then could our Lord have meant by this expression, "Greater works than these shall ye do?" We see that Jesus in His ministry dealt only with the natural man, and could not communicate to natural man respecting spiritual or heavenly things except in parables and dark sayings, which could be but imperfectly comprehended until after Pentecost gave the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. The greater works, therefore, that have been done by the Lord's followers since the ascension have been such works as related to the hearts of men rather than to their bodies. The whole creation is groaning and travailling in physical discomfort, but the worst of all groans and pains comes from the anguish of the soul—broken hearts. The Lord's followers, in proportion as they receive of His Spirit, may communicate it through His word and bring to wounded and broken hearts peace and joy and blessing, regardless of physical conditions or discomfort, so that, as the Apostle explains, they may rejoice even in tribulation, knowing what the tribulations are working out for them in the way of greater glory and blessing and association with the Lord in His Kingdom.

FAITH.

Faith is the most potent force in the realm of thought.

Faith is the spiritual eye that, piercing the clouds, can see God in the dark.

If a man maintains his faith in an unerring God, all the grinding poverty that ever crowded a man into a garret cannot keep him from the mansion prepared for him.

Faith must rest on evidence—the evidence of God's Word.

IN THIS HOUR OF TRIAL.

We are now in the hour of trial which cometh upon the whole world to try them. The present is represented in the Scriptures to be the "hour of temptation" or testing at the close of this age. It is the Gethsemane hour, in this sense of the word, to all who are the Lord's true people, fully consecrated to Him. It is the hour, therefore, in which we, like our Lord, should be seeking the Father's face to receive the full assurance that we are His, and that He is ours; and that we may rely confidently on His strength to carry us through this time. It is the time in which we are to make sure, as we sometimes sing:

"O let no earthborn cloud arise
To hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes"

It is a time in which those who neglect the Master's words, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation," will be sure to enter into temptation, and be tolerably sure to fall therein, and the fall will be severe, and even though, like Peter, they should afterwards be recovered out of it, it will be with weeping.

"SO GREAT SALVATION."

Nothing to pay? No, not a whit.
Nothing to give? No, not a bit.
All that was needed to give or to pay,
Jesus hath done in God's own blessed way.

Nothing to settle? All has been paid.
Nothing to anger? Peace has been made.
Jesus alone is the sinner's resource;
Peace He has made by the blood of His cross.

What about terror? It hasn't a place
In a heart that is filled with a sense of His grace.
My peace is most sweet and it never can cloy,
And that makes my heart bubble over with joy.

Nothing of guilt? No, not a stain;
How could the blood even one let remain?
My conscience is purged and my spirit is free;
Precious that blood is to God and to me.

What of my future? 'Tis glorious and fair
Since justified, sanctified, glory I'll share.
By His blood first redeemed, by His grace then enthroned,
Side by side with my Lord, as His bride I'll be owned.

What then, dost thou ask? Oh, glory shall follow!
Earth shall rejoice in the dawn of the morrow,
To rule and to bless comes that kingdom and reign;
Flee then shall sorrow, death, crying and pain

THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS.

"Be ye holy, for I am holy" I. Pet. 1; 16

Part 5—REFORMATION BEGUN.

Many are the lines of thought carried over from Old Testament days into the Gospel story to teach the need for a holy life. Indeed, for the Church of Christ, since Pentecost, the need for a deeper sense of holiness has been more pronounced, for the simple reason that the day of types and shadows has given place to the day of realities. Concerning many of the items of the Aaronic system of ceremony and services the Epistle to the Hebrews says that they were "imposed . . . until the time of reformation" (Heb. 9: 10.) This time of re-formation has no connection with the period of Church history covering the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries of our era, but is located in the Apostolic days. Moreover it is not church reformation which is thus indicated, but Israel's reformation. The first of the great realities being come—in the person of our Lord Jesus that is, a new and better High Priest being come with the first of the better sacrifices, God began to reform and re-mould the instrument He designed to use in accomplishing world deliverance from sin. This re-formation is intended eventually to affect the whole regathered nation of Israel, when their days of scattering are over, and when they are ready to enter into a New and better Covenant with their waiting, long-suffering God. The clay which was once marred in the hands of the Potter will be moulded again another vessel as it will seem good to the Potter to mould it. (Jer. 18: 4.)

In preparation for that great day the great Master-craftsman has been re-forming and re-moulding the Priesthood. This is the first stage of God's Reformation, and the whole of this Gospel Age has been set aside for it. It began by the supersession and removal of the Aaronic House of Priests and the installation of the Christian priesthood (Heb. 9: 12-15.) One feature of this Reformation was that the principle of taking one whole tribe (with its further division into Levites and priests), was abolished, and the earlier system of counting the first-born as the family's priestly member was re-introduced—but on the higher spiritual level. This priestly privilege was the first-born's true relationship to the rest of the family at the time that the Old Law Covenant was made,

and this relationship is to be restored in readiness for the establishment of the New and better Covenant. In harmony with this thought we find that the first-fruits unto God (the first-born class, the 144,000 of Rev. 14: 4) are not represented as coming from Levi alone, but as though gathered from all the tribes of Israel. (Rev. 7: 4-8.) This is in keeping also with the thought in Hebrews that the followers of the Lord Jesus are called "the Church of the first-born" (Heb. 12: 23.) This is in accord, too, with the position in Egypt, when the destroying Angel spared the life of every first-born sheltering beneath blood-sprinkled lintels, irrespective of tribal lineage. The first-borns of every tribe alike were in danger that fearful night, and in their "passing-over" they were hallowed unto the Lord.

A further feature of this reformation was that the essential things belonging to the new day were to be "real," not shadowy. It would not now be enough to follow a course of ritual and ceremony, no matter how elaborate the ordinance may be. Instead of "incense, beaten small," the odour and fragrance of a consecrated life would be acceptable through Christ to God (2 Cor. 2: 15.) The blood of bulls and goats was no longer acceptable to God. He required the surrender of human blood—that is, of human life. Thus the whole system vested in Aaron and "his house," which endured from Sinai till Jesus came, was swept away, and the whole nation for whom they served was set aside to wait until the reformation of the "First-born" should be complete. When the first-born class has been made complete the remainder of the Israel family will be brought in ("All Israel shall be saved," Rom. 11: 26.) and be formed anew—reformed—and made another vessel, as it will seem good to the Potter to make it.

If then God spake so earnestly to the "shadow" priesthood of Israel, beseeching them to walk before Him in such holiness as was then possible, with how much greater emphasis has God spoken to the Christian Church to walk worthily before Him, perfecting holiness in His sight, from day to day. How greatly he desires that they shall shape their lives so that His Will in them shall have free course! How ardently He wants the innate

qualities of His own great heart to be reproduced in them, so that they can be the first and chief portion of that long-purposed Seed, through which His Love can flow to heal the sin-sick nations of the earth. "Be ye holy—for I am holy,"—how intensely these words reflect the longing of Almighty God.

What is this holiness? What does it mean to be a saint? Does it denote a state of easy recognition to one and all? Do worldly minds understand it when it is in their presence? Do even Christian minds realize what it means? Does it mean the cultivation of a "goody-goody," sentimental "holier-than-thou" attitude among men? Does it require the wearing of distinctive dress, or the possession of some special title? Can the Church make saints at will?

Holiness is a word usually associated with religious life and experience. We have an equivalent in the word "Saintliness." Our modern English word "Holy" comes from an old Anglo-Saxon word, "**Hal.**" **Holiness** comes from a kindred word—"Halig." In the less-developed language of our forefathers' day these words did not have the almost exclusively religious meaning which the modern word has, but were applied to various physical and mundane things too. We have several kindred words to-day which spring from the same roots. One such is "**hel**"—a word denoting good sound health. Another such is "**heal**"—to make sound or well. Still another is "**whole**"—(or "wholly") meaning "entire," "complete," "nothing lacking."

Our modern word "Saint" comes from the Latin "**Sanctus**;" and means "one set apart"—i.e., one wholly devoted to a purpose, usually a religious purpose. The words "holy," "Holiness" and "Hallow" (used instead of holify) and "Saintly," "Sanctification" and "Sanctify" are synonyms for each other respectively, and stand, almost without exception, in our English Bible as the equivalents of one Hebrew word (**Qadash** or **Qodesh**) in the Old Testament and one Greek word (**Hagios**) in the New Testament. How accurately the Greek "**Hagios**" corresponds to the Hebrew "**Qadash**" may be seen by the fact that the Septuagint translation (a Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures) uses that word exclusively to pass over into the Greek tongue the old Hebrew thought on holiness. This is of great advantage to us, and helps us to carry forward the Old Testament thought into New Testament days. It affords us additional advantage also to have two sets of English words by which to define that ancient Hebrew thought.

Holiness is usually taken to mean sinlessness, undefiledness—an equivalent thought to absolute purity. Under present conditions this can mean different things to different men, according to the credal conceptions employed. For instance, some Christians believe they have not sinned for months and years. They claim to have kept unbroken all the ten commandments. They claim to have forborn to steal, to lie, to covet, etc., and on this ground claim sinlessness of life—i.e., they thus advance a claim to holiness. All Christians do not agree to this claim because they do not accept that definition of holiness.

Others, mindful of their sins, confess them freely, and while telling of God's forgiving grace, strive to promote feelings of deep emotion, leading to tears of contrition or songs of praise. This flow of deep emotion is understood by them to be a state of deepening holiness—a deepening of heart-felt revulsion for sin, and appreciation for unattained purity. True holiness is neither the one nor the other of these states. To seek to attain to holiness by keeping the ten commandments constitutes a "throw-back" to the Jewish Age. It tells of retrogression to the lowly Israelitish level, to an attempted holiness of the flesh, and shows that the would-be observer of such commandments is in bondage to the "letter" of a law. It seeks to attain "subjective" holiness at the very low level of the "types" and like Israel, it obtains not that what it seeketh for. It forgets that Israel was not made sinless by keeping those commands, but was accounted so by the shedding of blood. Cleansing blood, not works, is the primary essential to holiness among men.

The other body of Christian thought fails to take holiness at its proper value, and dwells, with tears, upon its desperate and perverse unholiness—and of its constant need for grace and mercy. It lives the Christian life on its penitential side alone. It dwells in one room only of the Christian's abiding-place, forgetful or unknowing that the house is large and wide. Repentance unto tears, in proper place is right; but repentance is not the whole of the Christian's life and standing.

Holiness in man begins first with God. It is a standing-ground before God, conferred by Him for a purpose. Of His own Will, God took Abraham's seed to be His people, notwithstanding their defects. By His own hand He separated them from other men,—and that not for their deserts but to serve His own designs. This was the first step in their sanctification, and arose purely out of His grace.

This is where holiness begins in the Christian's life. Of His own Will God still takes hold of Abraham's seed, but in these days it is a spiritual seed, and God takes them notwithstanding their defects. Again it is not for their deserts, but purely of His grace—to serve His own designs.

Delivered through the Red Sea, God next offered terms of co-operation and service. He gave them statutes and commandments to educate and advance them, the observance of which, had they been taken to heart, would have refined and elevated them high above the nations around. By slow degrees this would have wrought a change of heart in them—akin to that evinced by those rarer souls outlined in Hebrews 11:—and taught them a love for their neighbour nations within the spirit of that gracious promise which told of a blessing for all the families of the earth. Especially should this have been accomplished in the priestly tribe, who had been called into such close association with the holiest things.

God offers terms to the responsive believer in His Son "If ye will . . . then . . ." (Matt. 26: 24-27.) But now the terms mean sacrifice and submission to His Will. It is not enough to have been separated from a world of sin. Separation "from" must be followed by separation "to." Having left the world, it is necessary to live with God, walking thus with God, the Word of Truth made active by His Spirit's power will work a change within. The inborn taint of sin will need to be removed, and as God adds grace to grace, the heart will be healed and made sound and whole; made ready for the resurrection change when that which is perfect will be come.

Thus the holiness which begins in us objectively—that is, with God's great object in view—comes to completeness by the healing (or **haling**) of the sanctified believer's heart. The grace that invited and accepted us to co-operate in the achievement of its plans will win our heart's most loyal compliance, till our own hearts beat with the spirit of that great purpose. The Love that won us from the ways of sin, so that through us it may win a world from sin, can so infill our hearts with its own radiant warmth, that we shall ardently desire only those things which God desires. Holiness in us, means Godlikeness, and Christlikeness, co-operating with God and Christ in the fulfilment of His plans.

This two-fold aspect of holiness runs through many New Testament Scriptures, exactly as it did throughout Old Testament records. Let us note a few passages first which speak of

holiness from without—holiness coming through a channel outside ourselves.

"But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us . . . sanctification . . ." (1 Cor. 1. 30.)

" . . . such were some of you, but . . . ye are sanctified . . . in the name of the Lord Jesus . . ." (1 Cor. 6: 11.)

" . . . both He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified are all of one." (Heb. 2: 11.)

"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling." (Heb. 3: 1.)

"By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ . . ." (Heb. 10: 10.)

" . . . the blood of the Covenant, where-with he was sanctified . . ." (Heb. 10: 29.)

" . . . that He might sanctify the people with His own blood." (Heb. 13: 12.)

In this list of Scriptures the reference is to a sanctified standing accorded to us by God, on account of the death of His dear Son. This sanctified standing was represented by the cleansed and purified standing of the Priesthood, on the Atonement Day after the blood of cleansing had been presented in the Most Holy Place. That cleansing accomplished, the priests were in a position to co-operate with God in their services to Israel at large.

We then have another list of Scriptures which show the vital necessity for the inward change of heart.

" . . . yield your members servants of righteousness unto holiness." (Rom. 6: 19.)

" . . . and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness." (Rom. 6: 23.)

"let us cleanse ourselves . . . perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Cor. 7: 1.)

"Follow . . . holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. 12: 14.)

These Scriptures will suffice as a sample of their kind to show the absolute necessity of that growth in grace and Godlikeness which is characterised as subjective holiness—holiness within.

Thus far then, God's reforming work has gone. That which was shadowed forth by linen robes and holy ground and sacred instruments stands forth on its higher plane as purity of heart and life—a love for all that is right and true, balanced by a hatred for all that is sinful and wrong. And because God's great objective is to set up forevermore the right and overthrow the wrong, each day the consecrated believer lives he grows more ardently desirous of working together with God to accomplish His great design.

CONCERNING THEM WHICH ARE ASLEEP.

An examination of
I Thess. 4: 13-18

Chapter 5—"IN THE CLOUDS . . . IN THE AIR."

Because the Coming of the Lord has so long been expected to be a visible event it has likewise long been held that all the Saints (both those that slept, and those that remained) would ascend into the air to meet the descending Lord. It is always assumed that this means the literal expanse overhead in which the clouds float, from which the rain descends. The word "clouds" is taken to mean the literal banks of vapour which condense into rain-drops or snowflakes. "Air" is taken to mean the open oxygenated firmament which surrounds the earth on every side. It is further believed that the Lord one day will ride down to earth on the crest of a cloud (or of clouds). "Behold He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him" (Rev. 1: 7.) is cited in proof of this. A further citation is ". . . behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat, like unto the Son of Man" (Rev. 14: 14.) That the word "descend" in "the Lord Himself shall descend" seems to lend countenance to this thought is fully believed by many, as though "descending" means only a descent through the atmosphere.

So are the words "caught-up" in "we which are alive and remain shall be caught up." No doubt can be entertained that the place where the saints will be gathered into the presence of the Lord lies somewhere in the field of space between the earth and that far-away heaven where the Lord has dwelt since He departed this earth. But whether it will be in or upon some one or other bank of vapoury cloud is quite another matter. It will be "in the air"—but whether that means within the height of our earth's atmosphere is a matter for more precise enquiry. That the place of meeting will **not** be on earth is certain, but that is about all that with certainty can be said.

If it were the literal "air," and actual "clouds" to which reference is always made when these words occur elsewhere in Scripture it would have to be allowed that this reference also is literal. But when we read that "Clouds and darkness are round about Him" (Psa. 97: 2.) another interpretation must be sought. Again in Isa. 14: 14, the assertion of Lucifer "I will ascend above the heights of the **clouds**, I will be like the Most High" must be given

other than a literal interpretation. That Scriptural statement also connects up with the Apostle's pointed phrase wherein he styles Satan "the prince of the power of the Air" (Eph. 2: 2.)

Here "Air" means something other than the atmospheric expanse. It speaks of a sphere where some authority is exercised, over which Satan is installed as "Prince" or chief ruler. Seeing then that Scripture allows another interpretation in addition to the literal one, it becomes necessary to inquire whether both (or either) of these two senses may be implied in our text.

If Satan, as prince of the power of the Air, has had his dwelling-place somewhere in this field of space, near enough to earth to go about "as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour," and from that place has exercised a general baneful power over all the earth, it is fairly evident that "the Air" represents a condition where Satan can be present, but beyond human sight. Like holy angels, he can be present but unseen; for no man yet has seen him at his work. Yet every Scripture reference speaks of him as being near at hand; casting devices; seeking advantage over the Saints; hindering God's messengers, etc.

Satan has thus been a dweller "in the Air" in that, as a fallen Spirit being exercising power over the earth he has not needed the earth as terra-firma for his feet. He as well as the angels of God has been able to come and go as wind (John 3: 8.)—a power to be felt, not seen. Again, the Apostle assures us for our comfort, that the angels, are ministering Spirits, sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation, yet in all their ministry they remain unseen, dwelling not upon earth, but in a sphere of higher and wider dimensions, yet, at times, perhaps no further than an arm's length distant. The mighty angel who, by revealing his presence caused Daniel so much alarm (Dan. 10: 7-9.) would have caused no less alarm to the Prince (King) of Persia, had he in like manner revealed himself; yet, from his own words, he was accredited by God to the Court of the Persian King. The king had withstood him one and twenty days,—thus affording clear evidence that the angel had been closely

in contact with the king, though unseen. (Dan. 10: 10-20.) "Now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia" said the angel. Locomotion from place to place is thus implied, yet *it must have been invisible to human eyes.* No earth's-crust for his feet; no ass or camel to bear him along; yet from Persia's Court to the Hiddekel, from the river to the Persian Court he passed, but passed unseen, "in the Air." Many cases more could be adduced *if space allowed.*

The main lines of evidence however, concerning this condition "in the Air" can be deduced from the behaviour and conduct of our Lord between his Easter-morn awakening and his departure from Mount Olivet. For nearly all those forty days, our Lord was "in the Air." Some eleven times he showed Himself, remaining with His followers for periods of longer or shorter duration, but all combined those periods comprised but a fragment of the forty days. Yet He was not absent, nor unaware how they fared; He heard their words, He watched their moods, and helped them where He could. One sad lone figure stood to weep when others left the tomb. He knew; He saw, and "came through" to comfort her, in these early morning hours. Yet Mary saw a garden-keeper only until He spoke her name, then ran to tell her friends; but He "went back." After that "He was seen of Cephas" (I Cor. 15: 5.) Somewhere during the hours of that first day, the Lord saw heart-broken repentant Peter, alone in his distress, and "came through" to comfort him. A watchful eye kept him in view, and in that dark retreat saw all that passed. He "appeared unto Simon" (Luke 24: 34.) Towards close of day, two baffled souls walked home, sad-hearted, disappointed. A stranger joins their walk, and then their talk, and then their home, and then their meal, and lo! He blesses bread and disappears! A watchful eye had seen them go. So near was He and yet unseen! He "came through" to hear their down-cast talk, and then to talk with them, and fire them with new hope—and then "went back" again. Back to Jerusalem these two men sped to tell the glorious news. "They found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them" (Luke 24: 33.) and as they "thus spake Jesus Himself stood in the midst," and spake peace to all. Alarmed and terrified by this unlooked-for appearance, fear gripped their souls. No door had opened to let Him through, as for the elated, travel-weary two.

Already He was there, but "in the Air." From an unseen but inter-penetrating sphere, He "came through" walls and barriers they knew nothing of. One of the little band was absent from that feast, and to him his brethren brake the news. With doubting heart he heard their tale and would not be convinced. Again, the Lord "comes through" into their midst; the doubting one is there; "Reach hither thy finger—feel—and be not faithless but believing"—*an unseen ear had heard the doubt and came to meet the need.*

A boat was tossing on the sea. 'T was night, and they had toiled in vain. They drove their boat to shore, unfilled. A voice calls through the morning gloom and gives advice to cast the net just so. A load of fish—so great—then recognition came. A listening ear had heard "I go fishing;" a watchful eye had seen them through the night; an understanding Mind had known where they would land. He came there too to bless their quest.

A little band walked out to Bethany. The world near-by knew nought of this, as Jesus "came through" again to say good-bye. The last instructive words were given; the last farewells were said, and slowly, from their midst, He rose up . . . and up . . . till lost to view. A little cloud received and hid Him from their sight. He had gone, into the clouds, caught up "into the Air." And yet this differed not—except that it were final—from all the leave-takings of those forty days. He had not lodged with any man. No Martha attended to His needs. He slept not in Jerusalem, nor Bethany, as in days gone by. He ate not with them day by day, nor dipped from the same dish as they. It all seemed strange; they could not understand. They knew not when or where He next would come. That He was raised they knew right well, but why so silently did He come, and why so mysteriously did He go? A gardener first, a stranger next, then a spear-scarred frame; why all this change? Why these long absences? And where went He away? . . . Must we too, be baffled by these things? Is there no answer, clear and sure?

That watchful eye was never far away; that listening ear was always near at hand. He knew each fear; He heard each sigh; He understood their lonely hearts. Locked doors were naught to Him; He was there with them unseen, there "in the Air." The atmosphere, intangible itself, was quite as tangible as He till some sore need arose. Then He "came through" unseen Spirit doors, and clothed Himself in denser

flesh (Luke 24-39). His task performed, back to "the Air" he went, and again was hidden from their sight. Thus passed the days of waiting till His time had come to go, and then from Olivet, despite the earth's attractive pull He rose unhampered and unchecked. The laws of nature which bind all flesh to earth had no control for Him. Earth's swaddling bands could hold him down no more. The power of gravitation had no "pull," for He was made of other substance now. His "pull" was upwards, to His Father's House . . .

When all has been said that can be said this much stands clear,—Jesus was changed; had reached a sphere beyond His disciples range of sight or understanding. He was always near, to see, to hear each stumbling act or word, but He was Himself unseen. They were of this earth, He now was not. They were creatures of but three dimensions, length, breadth, and height; He now was not. Jesus was "in the Air" before the interviews began; He came through from "the Air" to meet His friends; He went back into the Air when the interview was done. He was of the heaven, heavenly, a sphere outside, above, beneath the confines of this mundane world.

It is into that realm of Spirit realities that the Saints will rise to be with Him "as He is," while countless ages run. No catching up into a thin tenuous firmament of air, nor ascent into vaporous cloud could bestow that range of thought and contact which being "with Him" implies. The place where we shall meet Him may be near; it may be distant—that matters not, if we are safely carried to the other side of that great gulf, which man, as man, has never crossed. (John 3: 13.) To leave

this world, we must "go up" or "out" into or through the air and clouds. Yet that is but a second thought arising from mere force of circumstance. The major thought links us with that mysterious power exercised by our Lord and Head, when "coming through" from, and returning to His tarrying-place till He went up on high. That same Jesus, with all His mighty powers, had promised to return again, and He it is we rise to meet when we are clothed with the house God has prepared for all who follow in His steps.

It was no home among the rain-drops nor amid the snowflakes of which Paul spake, nor yet to live mid-air twixt heaven and earth. It was to find eternal habitation with the King who comes to meet his "own" and take them with Him whithersoever He goes. When the Christian passes up "into the Air" he moves unfettered by the law of gravitation. He needs no longer the oxygenated air which surrounds this earth. He needs not any longer the vegetables or other provender peculiar to this earth. He has been set free from all its bonds; set free to fly the depths of space, up, out, and beyond the earth's remotest bounds. Yet at the first, he mounts not up to heaven, the home of God. The Lord Himself has come from thence, to meet His "own" part-way. The saint stays not on earth, he is caught up part-way hence, to the Apostolic mind, his going-up is into that intermediate place that lies between this earth and that far heaven—"the air"—"the clouds." No more could then be said; no more can now be said; but when that has been said, how much must be implied of that great change which predicates a New Creation.

As illustrating how the tendency of fault-finding grows upon one, a story is told of a young lady who once expressed to a great satirist a wish to draw caricatures. He replied, "Alas, it is not a faculty to be envied. Take my advice and never draw a caricature. By the long practice of it I have lost the enjoyment of beauty. I can never see a face but distorted, and have never the satisfaction to behold the human face divine." So it is with those who unsympathetically practice fault-finding and criticising others' faults; they become so proficient in the matter that they never see good qualities, but merely the deficiencies. Their own happiness is thus injured, as well as the happiness of others. It is well that we should be able to note defects—that we should not be blind to them entirely; but we should remember that we ourselves are most profited in noticing in others whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things

are just, whatsoever things are reputable, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, rather than by noticing and thinking upon their defects and ignoble qualities.

"Some day of days! Some dawning yet to be
I shall be clothed with immortality!
And in that day I shall not care
That Jane spilt candle grease upon the stair.
It will not grieve me then, as once it did,
That careless hands have chipped my teapot lid.
I groan, being burdened. But in that glad day
I shall forget vexations of the way.
That needs were often great when means were small
Will not perplex me then at all.
A few short years at most (it may be less)
I shall have done with earthly storm and stress,
So, for this day, I lay me at Thy feet.
Oh, keep me sweet, my Master; keep me sweet!"

FOSSIL THEOLOGY.

A lump of coal showing on its surface, in delicate tracery, the form of a fern or fish, is prized by the geologist as a specimen of the vegetation or fauna of a very remote period in the day of creation. Such a fossil is valuable as a connecting link between the dead past and living present, possessing no other value except to be burned.

In the world of theology we find many such relics of bygone ages fossilised in the form of liturgies, creeds, confessions of faith, etc., many of them originating in the Carboniferous period of religious knowledge, the "Dark Ages," which, apart from their value as antiquities, representing the mind and practice of the religious systems of their day, are of no use whatever, except as fuel.

*"For what so fiercely burns
As a dry creed that nothing ever learns?"*

It is remarkable that in this age of progress and development, men of education and intelligence should shape their thoughts and teachings after the pattern of these Theological Fossils, which are devoid of life as the petrification that we find in the museum duly classified and labelled.

In the advanced light of medical science of to-day, the physician who would follow the old system of bleeding, pilling and blistering, and confine his patient in a dark, ill-ventilated room, would be denounced not only as an "old fogey," but as a fool, since medical colleges are continually experimenting and opening up new avenues of knowledge as to the causes and cure of disease. In like manner, theology can learn nothing so long as the minds of its teachers are moulded and shaped by the petrified dogmas of their ancestors. He who receives his credentials as a denominational teacher is not a free man if he is bound to accept as the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, the complications of doctrines handed down to him from the "fathers" of his denomination. What these men, hundreds of years ago, declared to be truth is truth, to which nothing can be added and from which nothing can be taken away. No matter what light advanced scholarship may have thrown upon the inspired Word; no matter what science may have revealed;

no matter what new truths the servants of God may have brought forth from the store-house; the religious instructor of to-day must shut his eyes to the light, and stop his ears from hearing strange or new sounds, and submissively bow to the teachings of antiquated theologians, priests, and prelates as though their voice were the voice of God. There is no idolatry that has more submissive devotees that has this worship of the stocks and stones of Fossil Theology; there is no tyranny more oppressive than is the tyranny of creed.

How is this accounted for? Very easily. Denominations are formed about the teachings of some man or set of men. These teachings are accepted as the quintessence of truth; preachers are instructed in these doctrines, and ordained to teach them; colleges are endowed to perpetuate them, and the graduate from these schools, before being authorized to preach, must subscribe to the system of practice and doctrine taught, and agree to teach the same. He is not a free man. He dare not turn either to the right or to the left under penalty of losing his commission, and with it the means of gaining a livelihood. Instead of building upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone, the foundation is human; and the Divine injunction applies with terrific force: "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men."

There is little wonder that spiritual deadness is characteristic of so many churches, with fussy Uzzas reaching out their hands to steady the ark of the Lord; with inquisitorial ecclesiastics snuffing out the light of truth as soon as it shows its first feeble rays, and then compelling those who hunger and thirst after righteousness and truth to accept their dead forms and creeds, or else look elsewhere to have their cravings satisfied. Thank God that His truth is not committed to such hands, but is as free as the water of life to all who will go to the fountain to drink. Divine truth is not in dead forms and compiled dogmas, but it is liberty and life in Christ Jesus.

From "Words of Truth."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GONE FROM US.

Our beloved Sister Patty Bunker, of Birmingham, passed away suddenly on Thursday, April 4, and was laid to rest on Monday, April 8. Dear Sister Patty will be missed by us all for she was a loving and helpful sister to all who met her, and many a one had been helped by her along the Narrow Way. She had been a silent sufferer for many years but of latter years her health had failed her greatly and she was not able to get amongst the brethren; but was always pleased to receive them, and many have been the helpful visits the brethren have had with her at her home.

The funeral service, which was well attended by the brethren and friends, was conducted by Brothers Court and Golder, Brother Guillemard concluding with prayer. There will be silent sympathy and prayer for Sister's daughters who are left to cherish her memory and to look forward in faith to the day when the great re-union shall come.

* * *

On Tuesday, April 2, Brother W. H. Pepworth, of Sandown, Isle of Wight, finished his earthly course, and it is our trust and belief that he has passed to his reward. Our brother was well-known to many in past years, and his quiet Christ-like character had endeared him to all with whom he came in contact. An earnest and active worker throughout a Christian life, he had been particularly associated with our fellowship for nearly thirty years, and one of the various directions in which his labours were expended upon behalf of the Truth and the brethren was the zealous use of some unusual poetic talent. His most notable work "The Coming of the Kingdom" will be remembered by many—a vivid and beautiful composition describing the events surrounding the establishment of Christ's Kingdom on earth.

The funeral, conducted by Brother Stracy, took place on April 6 and was attended by a number of relatives and friends. The sympathy and love of brethren in many places will go out to Sister Pepworth and to her daughters in their loss, whilst we know they, as we, hold to the certain hope of a glorious resurrection.

WELLING.

Special meetings are arranged for Sunday, May 19, at Berean Hall, High Street, Welling. The afternoon session at 3.15 will be addressed by Bro. John E. Humphrey (Maidstone) and the evening session at 6.0 by Brother C. Cornell (Aldersbrook). Tea will be served at 4.45, and a very hearty welcome is extended to those friends who find it possible to attend.

The Welling friends would take this opportunity of saying that tea is now provided every Sunday at Berean Hall and brethren from any part are always very welcome to the meetings and the fellowship.

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British Correspondents :

BIBLE STUDENTS COMMITTEE

WHITSUN GATHERINGS.

Announcement has been already made that there will be no Midlands General Convention this year, but it is probable that there will be several local Whitsun gatherings. This issue contains an announcement of one such, to be held on Whit-Sunday at Luton, and the Luton friends are extending a very warm welcome to all who find it possible to attend. The B.S.C. office will gladly send particulars of similar gatherings to anyone interested upon request, as soon as details of same are to hand from the organisers of such gatherings, and it is our sincere prayer that all such meetings at this Whitsun season will be sources of rich spiritual profit to all who attend.

AUGUST CONVENTION IN LONDON.

It is hoped to arrange the usual General Convention in London extending over the August holiday, Sat.—Mon., Aug. 3—5. Further details will be published in the June B.S.M. and programmes, which will be available during June, will be sent to anyone making request to that effect.

ELECTION OF BIBLE STUDENTS' COMMITTEE.

Nominations are now invited for brethren to serve on the Bible Students' Committee for year commencing Aug. 1 next. For the benefit of any who are not familiar with the usual procedure, we would say that the constitution as prepared by the brethren of this country in the year 1919 requires that the Committee shall hold office by free vote of the friends and that an election shall take place annually. Any classes, or brethren, desiring to take part in the election have the privilege of sending in nominations, and all brothers nominated will have their names placed upon the voting list provided they are willing and able to accept office if elected.

We would impress upon the friends that a brother should only be nominated if he is able to devote a certain amount of time to the duties which may devolve upon him and is held in good repute amongst us for his devotion to his Lord, to the Truth and the brethren.

Nomination forms have been sent to all classes and friends who usually co-operate with this work. Should there be any group or individual brethren desiring to participate in the election who have received no form, will such please write to the office as soon as possible, making request for a form.

Bros. G. Absalom (Beeston) and W. J. Rew (Darlington) have consented to act as Election Scrutineers. All nomination forms must be sent to Bro. G. Absalom, The Square, Beeston, Notts, by May 21. Details of the despatch and return of voting papers will be given in the June B.S.M.

BIBLE STUDENTS BOOKROOM

For the friends' convenience, the Committee holds a stock of all publications issued by:—

Pastoral Bible Institute.....Brooklyn
Dawn PublishersBrooklyn
Berean Bible Institute.....Melbourne

Lists of these books, in addition to the Committee's own publications, are available upon request.

BIBLE STUDENTS COMMITTEE

24 Darwin Road, Welling, KENT

REFERENCE LIBRARY

Please note that all requests for books and correspondence in connection with the library should be sent to—

Bro. C. G. Sears, 52 Huxley Road, Welling, Kent.

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Emphatic Diaglott (N.T.)
Ferrar Fenton
Leeser (O.T.)
Moffatt (N.T.)
Rotherham (N.T.)
Variorum
Weymouth (N.T.)

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Cambridge Bible Dictionary
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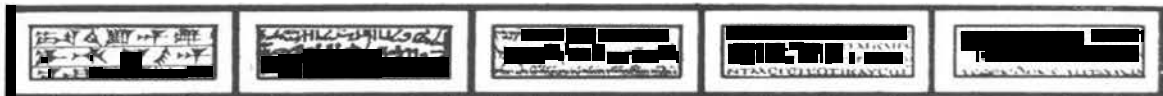
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1913 " "
1914 " "
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BIBLE STUDENTS' MONTHLY



þurph hinc þu maddan eapu þop. To þu agenu he com	Blessed are ye when men curse persecute you / and shall fall for us of your sýngis agaynt you	"All battes þat be crafte mountayne and byll sayðe so is croked þat be made str	ye seed of Abraham his seruan Jacob his chosen. # the LoR o our God: his ju	" And God shall wipe away all teares from their eyes: and there shall be no more death: neither sorrow, nor crying: neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.
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JUNE, 1940

THREEPENCE

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THE ASSOCIATED BIBLE STUDENTS OF GREAT BRITAIN.

An undenominational Christian fellowship devoted to the study and dissemination of Bible truth in the light of present-day knowledge and to the deepening of personal Christian life and experience. Its members stand unreservedly for the teachings of Jesus Christ as a complete solution to humanity's problems, and believe in the eventual establishment of a new order of society upon earth in which the principles of love, equity and righteousness will prevail and evil be eliminated; and that under the spiritual rule of Christ and His Church the dead will be restored and mankind live in eternal harmony with God.

Bible Students Monthly

This periodical is published under the supervision of the Bible Students Committee, the articles appearing therein having been read and approved by at least five members before publication.

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Berean Bible Institute,
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Bible Students who, by reason of old age, infirmity or other adverse circumstances, are unable to pay for this journal may have it free of charge if annual request is made to that effect. This expense is met by voluntary donations from those interested.

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"All His are thine to serve.
Christ's brethren here are needing aid;
In them thou servest Him."

BIBLE STUDENTS COMMITTEE.

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"In these tense days we need more than ever to draw aside for a season and consider in quietness and confidence the basis of our faith."

THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS.

"Be ye holy, for I am holy" I. Pet. 1; 16

Part 6 — "BE YE HOLY."

Before we can reach a proper conclusion concerning the holiness of believing saints while here on earth there is one other aspect of the question which we must consider. It centres round the English word "wholly." We may speak of it as "wholeheartedness" or all-out-ness. It implies the diligent, full-out application of all one's powers for all one's time, till all the full purpose of one's life has been achieved.

We see this aspect markedly manifest in God. Our gracious God is Holy, not only because of what He is; Holy, not only because of what He does, but Holy because of "HOW" He acts. God is so utterly devoted to His great Plan that it "wholly" absorbs His vast resources. He has set Himself apart without stint or reservation to carry it through. Through all the years since time began He has kept on His way, pursuing His great objective. Though men have failed Him (as when Israel fell) He has not failed nor halted. He ceased not to work on, with such as served Him well, until He led them up from the temporary, literal, carnal things to the higher, better, eternal, spiritual things; and as each stage was reached, no whit of all His mighty Power, nor of His infinite Wisdom, nor of His regard for righteousness, nor of His inexhaustible, unfathomable Love has been withheld, nor will be withheld, until He has accomplished all His great design. He placed the whole of His illimitable resources at its call. Not merely for a day, or century, or age, but for all time, until the task is done, He pledged Himself—all that He is—all that He has—to see it through. Our God and Father has consecrated Himself to fulfil His Pledge—His oath-bound Promise—and from that He will not change. God is "Hal"—holy, "wholesome," without taint, loving, benevolent, kind, in all He undertakes to do; and God is "Halig"—He is "wholly," completely, and forever pledged to His great eternal purpose to root out all sin and make the whole earth sweet and clean.

Do we wonder then that God should ask us to lay down our "all"—our ALL, for ALL our time? If He has consecrated His vast resources to that one great end, could He require less from us? Will He accept the bits and scraps, the odds and ends of human life given when the mood suits us, to co-labour in His

Plan? What if God has done the same? What if He attended us by fits and starts? What if we had to wait upon His moods? Thank God He is "all out," in all He does, for all the time!

Now let us trace this through and place the facts together. All whom God takes to be His own were born children of wrath, even as others in the world. None was righteous; none was good. All had turned out of the way. Of His own Will He formed His plan to redeem and bless. In order to demonstrate to man His own great Love. When by His grace and leading we learned of this great Love, through the Saviour whom He freely gave to die, our hearts became lost in wonder, love and praise. As the truth broke out more clearly, we saw that He is calling a people for His Name, through whom to teach and bless "the residue of men" (Acts 15: 14-17.) All whose hearts are right in the sight of God, and who, while they love their fellowmen, have found that all schemes of human uplift must fail, rejoice with great joy to know that **God purposes to help the human race** to throw off its burden of sin and selfishness. When they learn that God invites them to become co-workers with Him in this great task, it gives them joy untold. Though aware of their own sin, they ask "How can I be a co-worker with God—He is holy, just and good—and I am of the earth, weak, frail and tainted by my sin?"

The diligent student of God's word who progresses in his studies until he has learned something of the "deep things of God" finds God's way of enabling him to co-operate set out in types and shadows of Israel's wilderness days, as well as in more direct New Testament statements. In both Old and New Testaments he learns that all who walk and work with God must be made holy. But how can that be? What part can light have with darkness; or how can God consort with sinners?

There is but one way. The scheme—the plan—must swallow up its advocates, both great and small, and then the excellences and virtues of that design will diffuse themselves to all who participate in its outworking. God has put Himself into it, and pledged Himself to Abraham and his posterity to carry it through. It is now open to such as would share in this task as Abraham's Seed to do likewise. God, as author of the scheme, has

full knowledge of the conditions and requirements incident to its performance, hence it is imperatively necessary that His mind should be the directing mind of the project, and that all other participants should subordinate their minds to Him. God only has the energy to carry it through, hence all who would share in its activities must be prepared in such manner that they become suitable conduits through which the Divine energy can flow. A million volt conductor requires much more careful preparation than a ten volt conductor.

Since God has put Himself and all His ilimitable resources into this scheme, and the believer (even though now reconciled and justified and made free as Abraham's Seed), is putting nothing but his very inefficient little self into it, it should be very obvious to all who understand that the very very junior membership of this co-partnership must be under the absolute direction of its competent and omnipotent Sponsor. Hence consecration and full surrender is so very necessary.

However, no matter how poor and inefficient the invited participant really is (when accepting the gracious invitation) the intrinsic excellence of this purpose applies to him as it applies to all. He shares the credit of the co-partnership though in himself of little worth. Thus it matters not how little he brings into the scheme, he shares with all his partners its good-standing—whether of low or high degree. Its claims of what is just and righteous, but, after satisfying every claim, it overflows and provides an abundance of grace and mercy for a needy world. The all sufficient sacrifice of Jesus, as a Ransom for all (as part of this Plan) met all the exacting claims which Justice preferred against the sinner—then, that embargo to life being removed, grace and mercy will reach down to the lowest depths of sin, and lift up the released sinner to life, to happiness and peace.

This Plan is one of kindness, benevolence, and tender love—it designs to set men free from sin, and enable them both to love and do the righteous thing—and do it from a sincere heart. Hence, the scheme is more than righteous in its aims, for righteous act is but the outflow of holiness within. It is wholesome in itself, and seeks to make men wholesome too. It is a holy thing, holy in itself, the absolute and certain foe of sin and self, and when completed will make the world of men holy too. It is a holy means leading to a holy

end, a holy instrument devised for a holy task.

Each participant in this plan, to-day, has a special place allotted him. He is accorded a first-born's place. While all the Seed of Abraham will have a primary place in the plan, they who can show Abraham's faith are made a special Seed—a Spiritual Seed—and given a special place. This was foreshadowed and foreshown on two occasions when Israel was being separated from the nations.

In that dread night when the destroying angel carried the sword of death through Egypt, and slew its first-borns of man and beast, God claimed Israel's first-borns for Himself. He spared them from the angel's sword by the substitutionary death of a lamb, and by the sprinkling of its blood upon the door. From that night thenceforward God claimed them for His own, to serve His own deep purposes. All first-borns, both of man and beast, belonged to Him. God hallowed them to Himself; that is, He made them holy for Himself. Since Christ became the Lamb of God—"our Pass-over slain for us"—all who are God's first-born class, who have received the first-fruits of His Spirit, were claimed by God, to serve His greater purposes. They are hallowed unto Him. He makes them holy to serve His Plan.

When God had taken the whole tribe of Levi to replace the whole company of first-borns (Num. 3: 12, etc.) God chose Aaron and his sons from among their brethren and hallowed them again, to serve as priests in a very special sense. He caused them to be anointed with a very special oil, which no one else could make or use. Ear, thumb, great toe,—representing hearing, serving and walking—were all touched with the sanctifying chrism (Lev. 8:) That anointing oil was emblematic of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit of anointing which we have received from Him constitutes all its recipients holy. It sets them apart specially to do the Lord's Will; to be prepared as instruments for His great scheme.

It needs a strong faith to believe that faulty, tainted men can be of use to God, and that men with ingrained sin can be counted holy men—yet, so it is! Aaron was but an ordinary man till God chose him and clothed him in white robes and chrismed him with oil. It was not for what he had already done that God's choice fell on him, but for what God could cause Him to do. No more is it for what we have done that God's Spirit comes upon us, but for what God will fit us to do.

Consequently, as in Israel the priests were not made holy by service, but for service, so the priestly members of the Royal Priesthood are not accounted holy by what they have done, but by the blood of sprinkling and by their reception of the Holy Spirit (1 Pet. 1: 2.)

In spite then of their vacillations and weaknesses, and their daily round of trespasses and sins, their holy standing is not lost. Based upon the precious blood of Jesus as the appointed Lamb of God, supplemented by their own absolute surrender to the Will of God, their hallowed standing remains secure. The Altar sanctified all that touched it, no matter whence it came. (Ex. 29: 37., Ex. 30: 29., Matt. 23: 19.) So the Church's Altar, hallowed by Jesus' own precious sacrifice, makes holy all that comes thereon no matter whence it comes. Our little sacrifice, so small and poor, so marred by nature, and defaced by sin, is savoured by holiness what time the Holy Priest of our profession takes it into His holy hands to place it on our altar-privilege. Apart from Him, it is of little worth; in His dear hands it is a holy thing. In all this elementary stage of our partnership with God He blesses us with an objective holiness, holiness received by us from an external source, holiness bestowed upon us with an "end" in view. It is "wholeness" attributed to attainted men.

There is another side however to this design. Another phase of holiness begins when God has claimed us for His own. He starts to take the taint away and make the inward man hale and sound. By grace, God helps His child 'mid stress and strain, and by means of life's afflictions (counted light) God creates the likeness of His Son within. God shows His children what He is—a God of tender love and infinite compassion—and by this vision beautiful inspires a deep yearning in their hearts to be also made compassionate like Him. Their native leaning towards sin is slowly checked, its taint removed and its power broken. By slow degrees the sin-biased heart becomes more sweet and wholesome, and actual holiness, increasing in degree, begins to take the place of sin and self. Thus new desires of heart and mind, created and nurtured by the hand of God are brought slowly into line with God's great plan. We too, become inspired by the same desire to see men blessed, and set free from sin and death. Thus the Holy Spirit's work within brings us actually more into line with the spirit of the Plan, and of the holiness of its Author and Master-Workman.

To Israel and her priesthood God said "Consecrate yourselves and I will consecrate you." That is the spirit and principle of the whole Plan. First, as we surrender our "little all" we are sanctified for the plan's sake, afterwards we are made holy for our own. First it is an holiness derived from without, then it becomes an holiness developed from within. We become possessed of holiness which deepens every day—a real subjective holiness which increases in degree. Whosoever therefore desires God's favour to-day must devote himself "wholly" to the same plan and purpose to which God has devoted Himself. It requires a full and complete surrender to the Architect's Wisdom, to the Potter's hands, to the Sovereign Will. There must be no reservations, no half-hearted surrender, but a full and entire submission to the Purpose; as full and complete with our "little all" as that of the great Divine Father with His illimitable "all."

Thus wholly surrendered, He accepts the poor, lean offering, and makes it His very own. Linked with Himself it becomes indeed a holy thing. Men see it not in its true light, but God both sees and knows, and He it is who sees its holiness; He it is who calls such a child a saint. No man while on earth is entirely free from sin, flawless, but sure as the heaven is above, there are those on earth, who, accepted and owned by Almighty God, are holy in His sight—Holy, because both He and they have "wholly" set themselves apart to accomplish His great ends and purposes; holy because His spirit fills their hearts. Their standing is not "holier-than-thou" towards their fellowmen; nor is it due to some peculiarity of dress, nor does it come because of ecclesiastical preferment, but simply and solely because God dwells within—making them thus a Holy Temple for the Lord.

Some men are holy in the sight of heaven. Let others say what they may, already they are saints. A holy standing has been accorded them by God Himself. Unknown by men they work in lowly spheres—in kitchen, workshop, office, farm, or train. No titles grace their names; no silk or lawn adorn their limbs; no great accomplishments are theirs, ... but ... He who estimates all things for what they are, has called them saints and holy men—and they are so.

It brings no profanation to the Holy Name to say that God is working out a Plan. God could not bide eternally the rivalry of Sin. His very "Self" requires its overthrow. An

end of its domination there must be, that God's habitation may be clean. That very purpose springs out of what He is. With reverence then, and deep esteem each loyal-hearted child will

thank the Lord that He is working out the great Design, and in this work has asked His child to share with Him, the privilege of eradicating sin.

WHAT SHALL WE HAVE ? (*Mark 10, 28*)

A new idea of respecting the nature of the kingdom offer was reaching the Apostles, and Peter, the spokesman for them, called attention to the fact that although they were not wealthy they had forsaken all that they did possess to become the Lord's followers, and therefore he desired an assurance as to the nature of their entrance into the kingdom. Our Lord's reply was surely amply satisfying to His dear followers; He assured them that there is no man that "hath left either home or brethren or sisters or mother or father or children or lands" for His sake and the Gospel's sake, but would receive again an hundred fold now in this time, and ultimately in the world to come, eternal life. There was encouragement in this to the Apostles, and there is encouragement also to all who are the Lord's people to-day. If we could only have this thought well in mind continually, how we would vie with one another in our endeavours to spend and be spent in the service of so gracious a Master and in so glorious a mission and with so grand prospects and rewards.

Our Lord's words being true, it is very evident that some who receive little of the Lord in this present life and who have but faint prospects respecting a share in the Kingdom in the future have themselves to blame. They should ask themselves, "What have I sacrificed? What have I left for the Lord's sake, for the brethren's sake, for the Father's sake?" The stipulations are specific, hence those who have nothing to sacrifice can have no reward. But, who has nothing to sacrifice? We know of none so poor that he could not sacrifice something, and the poorer we are the more diligently should we strive to find something to render unto the Lord our God.

In this connection we are to remember that the thing which the Lord most appreciates and the thing which is most difficult for us to sacrifice is self. Hence we read, "A broken

and a contrite heart, O Lord, Thou wilt not despise." (Psa. 51: 17.) If we have given our hearts to the Lord we have given Him all that we possess, and He will see to it that this shall cost us enough to test the loyalty and sincerity of our sacrifice; and as we see the test coming day by day, we are not to be intimidated, but to remember that the Lord has promised that greater is He who is on our part than all they that be against us, and again, that His grace is sufficient for every time of need. Hence, as trials and difficulties, pain and sorrow and persecutions or slanders shall come upon us, we are to rejoice and be exceeding glad, first that these indications of our being in the hand of the Lord as pupils in the school of Christ are evidences that we are of the elect who are being shaped and polished, fitted and prepared for places in the Kingdom; and secondly, we are to remember that all those trials and difficulties rightly met, loyally responded to, are working out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. We are, therefore, to take the spoiling of our goods with patience, with joy, knowing that in Heaven we have enduring riches, enduring friendships, enduring knowledge and blessings of every kind.

But even in this present life, however much the Lord grants us to enjoy, our enjoyment will be proportionate to our loyalty of spirit in sacrificing. If we love much, and are prompt and liberal in our sacrificing, we will in turn be loved much by the Lord, be blessed and comforted, as He has stipulated, an hundred-fold more than all our distresses. Who are these who have an hundred-fold more than they give to the Lord? Who are these whose joys are more than an hundred-fold greater than their sorrows, trials and difficulties, pains and disappointments? They are the elect of God, whom Jesus is not ashamed to call His brethren.

CONCERNING THEM WHICH ARE ASLEEP.

An examination of
I Thess. 4: 13-18

Chapter 6—THE EVIDENCES ASSEMBLED.

This treatise, dealing with an important question, has been written so that both writer and readers may reconsider and re-explore the range of evidence which may be presented in support of the newer Harvest view-point. For those who have held fast to this view-point through all the years since it was first promulgated, it cannot be other than stimulating and strengthening to go over the ground again, with microscope in hand, so that every particle of evidence may be examined afresh very carefully and closely. As to those who once held this view, but have changed or returned in recent years to the older view, it is hoped that this review and discussion may cause them to think again and realise how comprehensive and close-knit are the evidences upon which the new view-point is built.

It is taken for granted that each one whose spiritual life has been enriched by the fuller understanding of the last two generations are desirous of holding to the Truth at any cost, and if the testimony of the evidences should lead the student back to the older standpoint, it is assumed that all would be willing to go back to that point of view.

Contrariwise it should be expected that if the evidences point to the newer view-point, then all would be ready without further demur to accept and stand for that newer view. The "truth," the "whole truth," and "nothing but the truth" is held by none so long as it is possible to suggest that there are two sides to any question. So long as it is deemed possible to meet text with text, the view is partial only, and "the whole truth" lies yet ahead. Lovers of Truth must be prepared to go all the way cost what it may.

The appeal has been made to familiar and well-known Scriptures, and although it cannot be claimed that the enquiry has been exhaustive, it has been made on a rather wide basis. Practically every pertinent Scripture has been reviewed, and brought into harmony with each other one, and in some cases the evidences have been traced back to their Old Testament origin. Each link in the chain has been taken separately and its testimony set forth. Now it is purposed to weave link into link so that the full force of the evidence may be seen and

considered.

On certain features of this question there is no difference between the old view and the new. Both believe that Jesus will come again. Both teach that the dead will be raised, and that the living saints will be "caught up" or "changed." These three items may be called the basic facts, and as facts, are necessary to the claims of both the old view-point and the new. It is not on the "fact" of these events but upon the procedure of translating these doctrinal facts into actual historical experience that the differences appear. The old teaching, as we well know, claims that in the crucial, lightning-flash moment of the Lord's descent, the grave will give up its holy dead, who will be joined by the living saints as they are "changed" and "caught up" abreast of their awakened brethren and then carried together as one company into the presence of their beloved Lord.

This question of the "simultaneousness" and "momentariness" of this entry into the presence of the Lord has been the point at issue throughout our whole discussion—the related questions, as to whether the Lord has already come and the saints already raised, being kept in the background until the fundamental basic facts have been well discussed; but these further points of necessity need attention when true conclusions have been reached regarding the due order in which the dead and living saints will be accorded entrance into the presence of their Lord.

Seven distinct points of enquiry have been set out, and on every one of the evidences have been found contrary to the old view of a "simultaneous" and "momentary" entry, into the presence of the Lord, of these two classes into which the Scriptures divide the saints. It is on these points that the Harvest teaching rests.

These are the seven points:—

- (1) The assertive statement by Paul that God will bring the Sleeping Saints **WITH** Jesus (v. 14.)
- (2) The Scriptural evidence that the Greek word "**hama**," while admittedly meaning "at the same time" does not mean "at the same moment of

time" (17th verse.)

- (3) The obvious sequence of events implied in the words "first"—"then" . . . (v. 16-17.)
- (4) The implied effects of the "**Keleusma**" shout, as illustrated by the "**Keleotes**" beat.
- (5) The association of the Lord's Trump with the making of a Covenant and the correspondence between Mount Sinai and Mount Zion.
- (6) The absolute necessity of allowing a period of time following the "Henceforth" moment, in which the living saints will finish their course and "die"—but will not sleep.
- (7) The broader scope of the saints' translation into the Spirit sphere occupied by the Lord Jesus and all holy angels, and by Lucifer and the fallen angels—called "**the Air**" and "**the Clouds.**"

(1) The enquiry began by noting the reason why Paul wrote these words to his sorrowing brethren at Thessalonica. They had lost some of their loved ones and were uncertain what their lot would be when Jesus came back in kingly power. They believed Jesus would return (1 Thess. 1: 10) and they believed that their loved ones would be raised again; but whether they would be raised in time to share in the Kingdom triumph they did not yet know. Paul's assurance to them was that Jesus would bring them **WITH** Him, when He came to the near environment of the earth. This was a word of pure revelation. By the process of argument Paul could have established the fact that because Jesus died and was raised again, so would their loved ones, who had died, be raised again, but he could not extend that line of reasoning to say of necessity that their loved ones would come along with Him. It required a "word from the Lord"—a revelation—to make that fact known. Paul assured them that it would be so; that Jesus would bring them so that the deceased and the living should be re-united, and thus re-united, they would all ever be together with their Lord. The creation of that assurance was the specific and definite reason for the writing of this section of Paul's letter. This is Paul's basic statement, all else in this immediate context being by way of amplification and explanation. This is the vital clause, out of which all the remainder of the passage proceeded. It is definite and precise. No matter

which translation or version of the New Testament is consulted the thought stands clear that the saints who had slept are brought or "led forth" **WITH** Jesus at the time of, and in the act of His descent. No later statement in this context can alter or invalidate that assertion. The first and basic point of the evidence presented is that of our Brother Paul, which stands unassailable, assuring the Thessalonians (and ourselves) that the dead in Christ will be led forth to their re-union along **WITH** Jesus.

(2) It is impossible to Scriptural usage to make the Greek word "**hama**" mean "at the same moment of time," for it can be (and is) applied to any period ranging from a few minutes only (Acts 27: 40.) to a life-time's length (Col. 4: 3.) to an entire Age (or longer—Rom. 3: 12.) or even to an eternal association (1 Thess. 5: 10.) It has so wide and varied an application that it is not possible to pin it down in our main text to one single moment of time—an interpretation which would be entirely at variance with every other instance of its New Testament usage. Now, it should be incontrovertibly obvious that if it cannot be pinned down to one single moment of human time, then there should be no more difficulty in applying it to the sixty or seventy years required by the Harvest teaching than in applying it to sixty or seventy seconds or even to two seconds of our time.

There is no warrant here for a simultaneous or momentary entry into the presence of the Lord—nor is there any need, for the dead have been raised so that He might bring them **WITH** Him at His descent.

(3) Unwarranted confusion would take place in every phase of our daily life, if the "sequence" value of our "numeral" or "time" words "**first**" and "**second,**" or "**first**" and "**afterwards**" were disregarded. All values would lose their meaning and both commercial and domestic life would be thrown into disorder. Every child learns that the "**first**" comes always before the "**second;**" and from childhood to old age he will base all his conduct and calculations on the lesson learned.

Not less so is this the case with the Greek word "**proton**" (first) and "**epeita**" (then, or afterwards). They must be sequential—otherwise they mean nothing at all; even though no greater interval than the two ends of a single pulse-beat separate them. With even so short a span the first end of a pulse beat must **precede** its latter end; and its latter end must **follow** its first. They cannot be exactly synchronous or simultaneous.

So it must be when Paul says "the dead in Christ shall rise FIRST, THEN (or afterwards) we that are alive . . . shall be caught up." Those who enter the glorious Presence "afterwards" cannot be abreast of those who enter it "first." Some time-lapse must be allowed;—but, if so little as one second of time-lapse is conceded to this argument, then the whole contrary position is conceded.

There can be no simultaneousness nor momentariness in a matter that can be classified as "first" and "afterwards."

(4) The very extraordinary word chosen by Paul to indicate the effects of the Lord's descent upon the living saints on earth does not indicate that all their activities would be brought to an abrupt end by the shout, any more than the stroke of the numerous oarsmen would cease each time the galley-master uttered his shout or struck his sounding board. He set the tempo and rhythm of the "stroke" to drive his ship. Can we assign another meaning to the "Keleusma" shout in our text? Can we think that it means that the toiling oarsmen of the Christian Church are caught up on the instant out of the bowels of the ship where they had laboured prior to the Lord's descent? To do so would violate both the meaning of the word, and of the text in which it is found. That "Shout" set the tempo of the Harvest work—the gathering of the first-fruits which was the first and special work of the returning Lord of the Harvest. (Rev. 4: 14-16.)

(5) It is only by tracing the thoughts associated with the Trump of God back to their origin on Mount Sinai that their proper significance can be seen. There is no other source from which to draw the idea of a Divine Trump,—and it has no other association than that of calling a people together to hear and accept the terms of a Covenant. As at Sinai, so it is purposed at Mount Zion (Heb. 12: 18-24.) when the whole assembly shall have been gathered thereto. The first company from the earth to gather there will be the Church of the First-born, to be followed by "just men made perfect," (the Ancient Worthies) and later by the Houses of Israel and Judah, many of whom will have to be called from their graves. From the heavenly side comes the Lord Jesus—the Mediator of that Covenant—and an innumerable company of angels, presumably under the command of the Archangel.

The very immensity of this assembly forbids

the idea of a mere momentary event. Of all this assembling the old orthodox view takes no note at all; but less than this cannot be stipulated for the occasion when the Trump of God is sounded forth. The prophecy of Zechariah clinches this point with emphasis. (Zech. 9: 12-17.)

(6) The problem of the "Henceforth" (of Rev. 14: 13.) is not an easy one for the advocates of the old viewpoint. The orthodox member of the older denominations has little use for this text except as an engraving for tombstones—and it is usual even then to omit the words "from henceforth." Among our brethren who have re-embraced the old viewpoint it is generally explained away, as for instance, in a recent effort to apply it to the Great Company—an evident mis-application, unless it be that the Golden-crowned Reaper gathers not the choicest of the Wheat in His Reaping! If the sharp sickle is used to gather only the Great Company, then perhaps they could be the "blessed" dead who die in the Lord! In that case the Great Company would be "they who keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." (Rev. 14: 12.) and if they have kept the commandments of God inviolate, and the faith of Jesus unsullied why are they then of the Great Company? Surely these words are true only of the Overcomer—the disciple who has been faithful (like Jesus) unto death, who has not withheld the service of either hand or heart, but who has been eaten up by the zeal of the Lord's house! This glorious promise does not belong to any other company save the Church of the Living God; the Saints still alive and remaining in the earth when the Lord Jesus comes; and when the Trump of God sounds forth.

The "Henceforth" indicates a period during which this faithful remnant, still in the flesh, knowing that their Lord has come, knowing that those who slept are with the Lord, knowing that the time has come for themselves to be changed and join the glorious Assembly beyond the Veil, are yet exhorted to be patient, and tarry a while longer on the earth, to execute the work which the Lord desires them to do. The glorious Lord Himself is depicted as the Crowned Reaper, yet that reaping is executed by His Saints still in the flesh. Who among the faithful Saints would not rather be "changed" and "clothed upon," and find entry into the presence of His Lord than stay here on this inhospitable earth, did not his Lord

desire him to stay and work and labour in His Harvest field? "Be patient, beloved" says the Lord, "and bear the testimony I wish you to bear, till the work is done. Tell the princes of this world that the hour of judgment is begun" (Rev. 4: 6-7.) "Cry aloud that Babylon is fallen and become corrupt—a hold of every unclean and hateful bird (Rev. 14: 8; Rev. 18: 2.); tell the whole world that if they prefer the government of "the beast" and of its "image" instead of the Kingdom I am now come to establish, then they must suffer the torments of seeing their earthly kingdoms destroyed—for my Kingdom must be set up, and theirs must be overthrown (Rev. 14: 9-11.) Be patient beloved, and seek those out who love my Name and my appearing. I know you long to come to Me, and share with Me in my Throne, but wait a little longer, till this inaugural work is done . . ." (Rev. 14: 14-16.) "Here is the **patience** of the Saints, here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."

The "henceforth" covers the period of the Saint's patient toil and service, harmonised and systematised and co-ordinated by the "**Keleotes**" beat—gathering the golden sheaves with patience, till they earn the Lord's "Well done, beloved, lay down the burden now, and come to Me. With Me, thy task shall still be 'in the way with thee,' but thou shalt be wearied no more." (Rev. 14: 13.)

It is a saddening position for any child of God to be driven by his misunderstanding of these glorious words and of their marvellous context to apply them to the Great Company, and cast away his own inheritance in them. These words do indeed conflict with the doctrine of a collective "instantaneous change" and overthrow it completely. The "Henceforth" is the period during which the saints remain on earth to complete their Lord's work.

(7) Last of all, we have seen that the place where the beloved Lord awaits the ascent of His faithful disciple is not within the bosom of some rain-cloud, nor yet upon the wings of our thin tenuous atmosphere, but in the spirit world which may be near or far, which may inter-penetrate and pervade our mundane world so much that the inhabitants of that world may be no farther than an arms-length away, and yet remain unseen. Certainly this appears to be the case in the seance-chamber, when the obsessing evil spirit takes charge of its mediumistic channel; and what is possible on the evil side could be as readily possible on the

good. Yet they who inhabit that sphere are not chain bound to earth. They need none of the earth's supply of food; they are not tied by gravitation down to the crust of the earth; they need not the locomotive appliances of men. Yet like Satan they can survey the world of men, and lay plot and scheme to trap men's feet; or like Jesus, they can watch over men for good—and like the Angels, minister unto the saint's salvation. (Heb. 1: 14.)

The "change" from mortality to immortality divests the saints of the tabernacle of the flesh, and invests them with a House from heaven; (2 Cor. 5: 1-5.) a House prepared in Heaven. The "snatching-up" may not mean vertical ascent at right angles to the lay of the earth, but the power to range up, or out, to any or every point of the wide universe—and move on with faster or slower tempo than the beat of human time,—in a word, it means deliverance from this planet's thralldom into a world of infinite possibilities and unlimited potentialities. "**Clouds**" and "**Air**" are merely metaphorical terms descriptive of that higher range and wider latitude of activity and experience which characterises the spirit world; and it is into that higher sphere that the saints will go to meet their Lord, and to be made like Him, to see Him as He is. This spirit world does not run on the chronometric wheels of human time. Day and night is no part of its ordinance. It knows not of hours, of minutes or of moments. It counts not its "tempus" by a man-made clock, nor even by the solar day. It is not possible to mark off its events by a pendulum's swing. That spirit world has no moments; and thus it is quite irrational to say that the Lord's descent is an event measured by the tick of a clock.

No more is it the work of a moment to gather the spirit-begotten Church into the presence of her Lord. There is no mere human chronometric measure to the time for the coming of the Lord, nor for the going of the Church corporate to the trysting-place, where those who have loved unseen will meet to tell, and share eternal love, each for each. Only at one stage, and then only for a limited few is a "momentary" event provided for, and when that moment is passed, eternity is for them begun. One moment for each "left-over" faithful child—his journey done; his sacrifice complete—to close his eyes in death, and waken in that higher sphere and then, the count of time is done.

It needs the fuller light of Harvest Truth to

see and comprehend this larger view. It needs the range of Millennial uplift to show why the Trump of God is the Trumpet of liberty and life to all. It needs the deeper comprehension of the consecrated life to understand how the saint and his Lord are one,—of one calling, of one family, of one priesthood. It needs the clearer sight to see that in His descent the Lord will be coming to claim His Bride, to take her to Himself, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

The older view knew nought of this. It saw only the sternness of the Judge, and told of trembling sinners imploring the mercy which a cold Heaven could no longer bestow. It told of grief, and doom, and eternal anguish—a dreadful eternity preceded by a dark day—in very deed "the Dies Irae" of heaven and earth.

To rehabilitate this view, and adorn it with some features of Present Truth is to mix tares with wheat, to bend dross with gold. The tares despoils the wheat, the dross defiles the gold. The new wine and the old do not combine;—they throw each other out of flavour. The bat-like croakings of the night do not harmonise with the exulting lark-like songs of the morning's flush. No child of God can mix Truth with proven error and grow strong on the mixed potion.

Here the evidences are left. The Lord will bring **with** Him the Saints who had slept—they are the first to be raised. Afterwards the living saints will be changed and "caught up" to their company, during the "Henceforth" period. Then, at long last, the Trump of God will call the hosts of Israel from the tomb, to begin the great work of a world's redemption.

THE END.

GOD IS TRUE.

"He that hath received His testimony hath set the seal that God is true." (John 3: 33.) "A friend gives me for the Orphanage a check, which runs thus: "Pay to the order of C. H. Spurgeon the sum of £10." His name is good, and his bank is good, but I got nothing from his kindness till I put my own name at the back of the check or draft. It is a very simple act: I merely sign my name, and the banker pays me; but the signature cannot be dispensed with. There are many nobler names than mine, but none of these can be used instead of my own . . . I must myself affix my own name. Even so, each one must personally accept, adopt, and endorse the promise of God by his own individual faith, or he will derive no benefit from it."

Spurgeon.

HIS WORKMANSHIP.

"We are His workmanship." Some of us have been moulded in the soft clay, touch by touch, by the gentle finger of Love; and others have been chiselled out of the hard, resisting stone, that needed so many hard blows before beauty that lay within could be unveiled; but when the blows were struck unerringly—not one wrongly, not one too many, not one unneeded, and all from the Master's loving Hand.

And others have been purified, as silver seven

times in the fire, and on these we look with reverence, for do they not reflect our dear Master's Image.

Ah yes; they bear His mark; they are stamped with His deepest engraving of Love for evermore.

CHRIST THE CENTRE.

As the sun in the centre of our solar system, so Christ is the Christian's sun and centre of desire. As gravitation holds the planets in their proper orbits, so love holds the trusting heart in the pathway of willing obedience. As in completing the solar circuit, the earth receives the pleasing variety of seasons adapted to the beauty and health, and to promote all organic life, so in our loving service of Christ, there is a pleasing and useful variety of gracious and profitable experiences. Sometimes fierce storms sweep across our pathway to drive us into the shelter of His promised grace. Sometimes the cold repulsiveness of the world's unbelief and sin chills us like a winter's blast, driving us to the central, steady sunlight of a Saviour's constant love, causing springtime to burst forth in the Christian's heart, and bursting buds of developing faith and live to expand into the fruits of Christian grace. But there is no winter in the sun. And he who has the Sun of Righteousness in his heart will have constantly the springtime of His abiding love.

"THESE THINGS"

A word of encouragement in time of stress.

"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" 2 Pet. 3: 11.

In obedience to the injunction of Jesus, "Feed my sheep," "feed my lambs," the Apostle Peter from Pentecost onward, sought very earnestly to fulfil that ministry and thus prove himself to be the Pastor of the Church of Christ. By his exhortations to holiness, sobriety and watchfulness, the Apostle has ministered to the needs of the Church throughout the entire Gospel Age. It might be seen that his message to the primitive Church would be, "Lay hold on the promises of God," the "exceeding great and precious promises whereby we are made partakers of the Divine nature," since in his day and time the promises of God had been covered and misapplied or unobserved by His professed people.

In mediaeval ages, when formalities and ceremonies began to get a foothold in the professed Church, the Apostle's word would be "Decorate the hidden man of the heart with what is incorruptible, a meek and quiet spirit which is very precious in the sight of God." (1 Pet. 3: 4. Diaglott) "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts." (1 Pet. 3:15.)

In this day, when all the light of Gospel and prophecy for the past two thousand years is focussed upon us, when prophecies of things to come are being fulfilled before our eyes and the purposes of God are so wonderfully revealed by His Holy Spirit through the Word and the fact of the Lord's presence, the message is "Seeing all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be?" "Seeing ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace without spot and blameless." "These things" shall be dissolved—laid bare.

In the history of mankind there have been two great powers at work; the power of good and the power of evil, working side by side in the striving and aspirations of man since the days of Adam. The power of evil is noted for and generally manifests itself in noise, glitter, might, force, arrogance and confusion, while the power of good radiates quietude,

harmony, rest and peace, as exemplified in those who are worshipful and Godward. The powers of evil have always sought to acquire power and influence in building up great systems, governments, institutions, schools of thought, and colleges of science. In matters of religion there have been amalgamation, alliances, world brotherhood and systematic theology and to build up and perpetuate these erroneous doctrinal systems, time and talent have been freely given and learned men have written massive volumes for other men to study instead of the Word of God. For this purpose theological schools have been established and generously endowed and from these schools of thought young men, instructed in their errors, have gone out to teach. Now the harvest of all this sowing and labour has come. The day of reckoning is here. Let us thank God that the time has come for a change according to Divine prophecy. The vine of the earth is ready for reaping (Rev. 14: 18-20. James 5: 1-5.) such is the fruitage of this evil power in the earth. How clear and convincing it is. "The whole world lieth in wickedness" and the great adversary of the human family has been successful in foisting upon it the practises of corruption, deception, fraud and hypocrisy, misrepresenting the principles of justice and truth and substituting a counterfeit for every form of good. Such is the unhappy condition of things to-day that once again in the history of man God has decreed a judgment of nations and Christendom as we find so frequently recorded in prophecy. (Zeph. 3: 8-10. 2 Pet. 3. Rev. 19:) It is these things that are to be dissolved. The heavens and the earth which are now, by the word of God kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

"Seeing then," says the Apostle, "that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be?" Having convincingly proved that this is to be so, let us reflect on our own position relative to these things; we who are, as the Apostle suggests, Sons of light, Sons of the day. "But ye brethren are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief," (1 Thes. 5: 4.) or, as Jesus says, "come upon you unawares." (Luke 21: 34.) Can we say we are as fully alert to the ensnarements of these things, as well as to

the privileges and opportunities of witnessing to the Kingdom of God in this solemn day of judgment upon the world, as it is possible for us to be as stewards of light and truth? One does, indeed, feel a lack at times and these impressive exhortations of the Apostle bestir one to greater diligence and carefulness. It is certainly a call to faithfulness, a time when we should recall the words of Peter, "Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ," (1 Pet. 1: 13.) and more especially since we are living in the closing years of this "day of wrath," when all these things shall be destroyed.

The words of Jesus come with tremendous force upon us as we reflect upon present day conditions and our relationship to these things. "Watch and pray always that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass and to stand before the Son of Man." Since destruction to all that is corrupt, dominating and deceiving is imminent, making way for the King Who shall come from the sun-rising, the Kingdom of Peace, in which we claim as New Creatures in Christ Jesus to have a particular share, and to which we have and do aspire, it is imperative that our manner of life should be in all holy conversation and godliness. Jesus again reminds us that "except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." The fire burning up the Heavens and Earth will affect everything and everyone; all classes of believers and unbelievers, for the Apostle Paul makes this clear in his letter to the Corinthians. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be made manifest FOR THE DAY SHALL DECLARE IT, because it shall be revealed by fire and the FIRE shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon he shall receive a reward."

The well being of a person's constitution depends very largely on what he eats, drinks and the amount of light, air and exercise he receives. So it is with the spiritually minded, the New Creature. In our building upon the sure foundation we need to take account of our building material as children of the Kingdom, and to regulate our reading, meditation and prayer. That which we read, meditate upon and assimilate of doctrine, as well as our

service to others and our devotion to God, will produce like character. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." (Prov. 23: 7.) "Set your affection on things above" is the Apostle Paul's advice. "Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God" (2 Pet. 3: 12.) The word "unto" should not appear in the text. The whole creation waits for the manifestation of the Sons of God. The fifth Angel of Revelation 7 is holding back the four winds and the Apostle, wishing to assure us that the delay is not on God's part, says (verses 8-10) "but, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness, but is long suffering to us ward, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to reformation." Let us then be more zealous in our devotions to God and our service to our brethren that we may prove ourselves consistent with our understanding, looking for and hastening that day, that great day of Jehovah, "wherein the Heavens being on fire shall be dissolved." Nevertheless we, according to His promise look for a new Heavens which will never "melt" and a new earth which will never be "burnt up," but wherein dwelleth righteousness, and it is according to HIS PROMISE; the basis of all our hopes and the burden of all our prayers. It is the inspiration of all our life's activities, in contradistinction to those who are asking, "where is the promise of His coming, for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation?" The promises of God have been the joy and inspiration of all God's people down through the ages from Adam to now. "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." To Abraham, "I will make of thee a great nation, and in thee and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." The promise of a son and the multitude of seed was the joy and inspiration of Abraham's faith; it was all he had to stand upon. It is all we have, the promises of God are not tangible. They require FAITH, the condition bearing the highest premium in God's estimation. "By faith Abraham went out not knowing whither he went." "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise." They were there, but the land was not theirs, yet the promises were theirs for ever. Think of Moses who "endured as seeing Him who is invisible" and many others who held to the promises,

being persuaded of them and seeing them afar off. We are right on the verge of their fulfilment, and so we, according to His promise, look for new Heavens, new ruling powers, and new earth, new society. To push forward in our minds to some remote date or time with all the convincing evidences we have about us will not only diminish our faith but will weaken our conviction of His promise. "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless, and account the longsuffering of our Lord your salvation." This, brethren, is the manner of person we should be, diligent and ardent for God and giving diligence to make our calling and election sure. It is without doubt the confidence we have in God to fulfil all His word in such a time as this, when so many problems confront us, which enables us to rest in peace, accounting the longsuffering of the Lord our salvation.

If the Lord is going to find us in peace, without spot and blameless, it will mean that He will find us entirely opposite to the world in all our aspirations and walks of life. In the world men's hearts everywhere are failing them for fear of those things coming on the earth. Men and women of all walks of life, living at very high tension, are agitated and confused, whereas the Lord's people, if diligent, will remain unperturbed and restful in peace.

The reason for this is because their anchor of faith and hope is sure and steadfast, well sunk and firmly gripping the promises of God. (Ps. 46.)

Let us then seek to conduct ourselves in such a manner as becometh ambassadors of God, not opposers of good, nor aggressors of evil but unspotted from the world. Good citizens, paying tribute to whom tribute is due, yet always alert to obey God rather than man where righteous principles are involved. Some, because of views discordant with those in authority, oppose and fight aggressively against them and persuade others so to do but this is not the portion of the Lord's ambassadors. Our privilege, if we would be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless, is to bind up the broken heart, salve and soothe the wounded spirit, proclaim coming liberty through the ransom sacrifice of Christ to the captives of sin, the opening of the prison to them that are bound, and declare the coming resurrection and the day of vengeance of our God. Thus will we give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise and thankfulness for the spirit of heaviness.

"Ye therefore beloved, seeing ye KNOW THESE THINGS, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness; but grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." "Watch and pray that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all THESE THINGS that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man," awaiting the inauguration of that glorious Kingdom of peace and love; the new Heaven ruling in righteousness; the new earth, clean society, neighbourly nations, unselfish and loving.

When every man will love his fellow;

When there shall be an abundance of peace;

When judgment will be laid to the line and righteousness to the plummet;

When the inhabitant of the world shall not say, "I am sick;"

When the earth shall yield her increase;

When the Lord shall "reign from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth;"

When all nations shall rejoice and be glad;

When the desirable things of all nations shall come;

When the poor will be satisfied and the deaf hear;

WHEN EVERYTHING THAT HATH BREATH SHALL PRAISE JEHOVAH.

ENTERING IN.

"Why don't you enter in?"

Into the work that calls for you,
Into the promises grand and true,
Into the inheritance that waits:
Why stand and weep without the gates,
O sorrowing one.

"You say you cannot see
Why, if He loves, He grieves you so,
Why thro' this path He made you go;
O if you'll enter in to-day,
He'll show you in His own sweet way,
Dear suffering one.

"But you will enter in,
I am so sure, some blissful day,
And then, you'll joy to hear Him say,
Why you have suffered and wept so sore,
And you will see your sorrow was the door,
To let you in.

"He lets us in,—
O Alchemist divine, O wondrous sight!
Our counted tears all changed to jewels bright,
When we have entered in the secret place,
Where He reveals the wonders of His grace.
Then we can see the "all things" of His Word!
When we have fully entered into the will of God."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GONE FROM US.

Sister Lake, of Hopwood, passed away last month. One who was well known and loved by the Lancashire friends, her kindly disposition endeared her to the hearts of all and she will be sadly missed as a "mother in Israel."

ANONYMOUS.

We would acknowledge with sincere appreciation an anonymous donation of 10/-.

FREE LITERATURE.

We have on hand a supply of back issues of the various Truth Magazines (the "Herald," "Dawn," "B.S.M.," etc.) together with various odd tracts and pamphlets, and would like to see these put to good use rather than occupy space on our shelves. It will be a pleasure therefore to send an assorted parcel of above items to anyone who will write and request same. In a time such as the present, opportunities are sure to occur from time to time where papers such as these may be the means of bringing comfort and hope to one who is in need of such. No charge will be made for these parcels although friends who wish, and are so able, are welcome to send a few stamps to cover parcel post.

LONDON CONVENTION.

A General Convention is being arranged by the Bible Students' Committee for August week-end, Saturday to Monday, August 3-5, at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, E.C.4. Every effort is being made to prepare a programme that will be a source of deep spiritual profit and happy fellowship to all who attend, and the friends are asked to cause their petitions to ascend before the Throne of Grace that this endeavour may receive our Father's blessing.

The usual light meals will be served between sessions, and it is earnestly hoped that every brother and sister in Christ who can take advantage of this opportunity to assemble in "holy convocation" will do so while yet the door of opportunity is open. For accommodation, programmes and all other information please write to the Bible Students' Committee, 24 Darwin Road, Welling, Kent.

WARRINGTON.

The Warrington Convention at Easter was a time of refreshing and happy fellowship. A goodly number attended and the addresses from Bros. Philip (Warrington), Wright (Stockport), Sidney Smith (Manchester), Court (Birmingham) and Riddle (Birkenhead) were greatly appreciated. The Friends parted with an enhanced consciousness of the value of these gatherings and a sincere desire to continue in the fellowship of the Spirit, come what may.

LUTON.

A number of brethren gathered at Luton on Whit-Sunday to spend a day together in consideration of the things of the Kingdom. Bros. Hudson (Welling), Ward (Kettering) and Farrant (Worthing) ministered to the friends and the seasons of fellowship between the sessions were made very pleasant by the loving services of the Luton brethren. The usual reluctance to part at the end of the day was very manifest but there was also the very real consciousness that this day's worship and praise had built a little more of that edifice which is rising in the lives of each one of us and preparing us for the Heavenly Kingdom and the work of the future.

PROPOSED NEW TUNE BOOK.

Various difficulties, including those caused by the War, have caused the Committee to decide to abandon, for the present, the production of a Tune Book for the "Bible Students' Hymnal." Whilst the brethren who have ordered copies of this book will be sorry to learn of this, we feel that they will realise how glad we would have been to have carried the work through had it been reasonably possible. In one or two cases brethren had already paid for their copy and in these cases the cash will be returned. If any such fail to receive their remittance within the next fortnight, perhaps they will kindly advise the office to that effect.

LEIGH HOME GATHERING.

The Leigh friends held their first Home Gathering on Sunday, April 28, and it proved to be a real blessing to all who were privileged to attend. Friends from Shotton, Warrington, Manchester and Wigan came along and about 100 brethren assembled. The morning session was taken by Bro. Boyce (Dewsbury) who spoke on "Remembering and Forgetting." Bro. Linter of Stockport gave a very encouraging address in the afternoon on "Our sufferings with Christ" which was very much appreciated by the friends. In the evening a Public Lecture was given by Bro. Sidney Smith (Manchester) who spoke on "These troublous times and their meaning." There was quite a number of strangers present and great interest was shown as the lecturer spoke on the various signs which demonstrated to us the near approach of the Kingdom. It was a day long to be remembered and the Leigh friends catered wonderfully for their visitors, who would like through the B.S.M. to say "Thank you."

All went home strengthened by the words of Truth and the fellowship of the brethren, determined to run the race with greater zeal until He shall say "Faithful thou hast been; come share with Me, glory, honour and immortality."

AMERICAN PUBLICATIONS.

In consequence of the continued fall in the rate of exchange, our prices for all literature obtained from America are now further increased and are liable to continued increase from time to time. Please consult the "B.S.M." for prices of these booklets as all our price lists are now out of date so far as U.S.A. publications are concerned.

The following prices prevail at present.

"God—and Reason"	} 4d. each. 5d. post free, 6 for 1/3		
"What is Man"			
"Hope beyond the Grave"			
"Coming World Dictator"			
"Truth about Hell"			
"Day of Jehovah"			
"Christ has returned"			
"Zionism in Prophecy"	} 1/3 each 1/5 post free		
"Evolutionists at the Cross Roads"			
Daily Heavenly Manna (with birthday pages) cloth	5/- each	5/4	
	de luxe	9/-	9/4
Millennial Dawn Hymn Book (with tunes)	5/-	5/6	
"Daniel the Beloved of Jehovah"	4/-	4/6	
Tabernacle Shadows	1/4	1/6	
Emphatic Diaglott	18/-	18/6	

SECONDHAND BOOKS.

A set of "Reprints," half leather binding, good condition, is available at 15/- carriage paid. Farrar's "Life of Christ," large edition, fair condition, will be sent free of charge on receipt of 1/- to cover postage.

B.S.M. SUBSCRIPTION PRICE.

In consequence of the increase in postage rates, the B.S.M., as from the date of this announcement, will be 4/- per year instead of 3/6. Group subscriptions will be 6d. per year and 2d. per quarter extra on the price at present paid. Thus, 3 copies will cost 11/- instead of 10/6 per year, or 3/- per quarter instead of 2/9, and 7 copies will cost 21/6 per year instead of 21/-, or 5/9 per quarter instead of 5/6. It is pointed out that where a number of friends can arrange to have their copies all sent to one address there is a considerable saving in postage and it also helps work at the office. Details of the cost per year for any desired number of copies per issue will be gladly sent on request.

REFERENCE LIBRARY

Please note that all requests for books and correspondence in connection with the library should be sent to—
Bro. C. G. Sears, 52 Huxley Road, Welling, Kent.

Translations

Emphatic Diaglott (N.T.)
Ferrar Fenton
Leeser (O.T.)
Moffatt (N.T.)
Rotherham (N.T.)
Variorum
Weymouth (N.T.)

Study Helps

Berean Bible Students' Manual
Cambridge Bible Dictionary
Oxford Students Helps

Histories


Ecclesiastical History (Bede)
History of the Jews (Milman)
History of Latin Christianity (9 vols.) (Milman)
History of the Reformation (6 vols.) (D'Aubigne)
Life of Christ (Neander)
Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History (2 vols.)
Works of Josephus

Research and Travel

Apostle of the Gentiles (Pask)
Biblical Natural Science (2 vols.) (Duns)
Great Pyramid Passages (2 vols.) (Edgar)
Life of Christ (Farrar)
Life of Paul (Farrar)
Sinai and Palestine (Stanley)

Expository, etc.

1910 Convention Report
1913 " "
1914 " "
1915 " "
1929 " "
1930 " "
Daniel the Beloved of Jehovah (Streeter)
Foregleams of the Golden Age (B.B.I.)
Outlines of the Divine Plan
Photo Drama of Creation Scenario
Poems of Dawn
Revelation of Jesus Christ (2 vols.) (Streeter)
Studies in the Psalms (Rotherham)
Two Babylons, The (Hislop)



BIBLE STUDENTS

MONTHLY

huph hine .jmidan eapd
wop: Tolup agenu he com

Blessed are ye when men revile
persecute you / and shall falsly say
ut of yous sayngs agaynst you

All ballaps thalbe crafter
mountayne and byll tapde
fo is croked thalbe made ste

ye seed of Abraham his servan
Jacob his chosen.
the L O R D our God: his ju

And God shall wipe away all
tears from their eyes; and there
shall be no more death, neither
mourning, nor crying, neither shall
there be any more pain: for the
former things are passed away.

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THE ASSOCIATED BIBLE STUDENTS OF GREAT BRITAIN.

An undenominational Christian fellowship devoted to the study and dissemination of Bible truth in the light of present-day knowledge and to the deepening of personal Christian life and experience. Its members stand unreservedly for the teachings of Jesus Christ as a complete solution to humanity's problems, and believe in the eventual establishment of a new order of society upon earth in which the principles of love, equity and righteousness will prevail and evil be eliminated; and that under the spiritual rule of Christ and His Church the dead will be restored and mankind live in eternal harmony with God.

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The Dawn,
136 Fulton Street, Brooklyn, N.Y.

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Berean Bible Institute,
19 Ermington Place, Kew, E.4, Melbourne.

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Three months' free trial copies will be sent to any address upon request.

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(1939—40)

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Braille Library

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Announcement of

A ONE-DAY HOMEGATHERING

AT

SHOTTON

(near Chester)

Sunday, August 25th

TRANSPORT HALL
NELSON STREET
SHOTTON

10.45 Words of Welcome
11.0 Bro. A. E. BOYCE (Dewsbury)
12.30 Lunch
2.45 Praise
3.0 Bro. W. SMALLMAN (Warrington)
4.30 Tea
6.15 Praise and Testimony
6.30 Bro. SYDNEY R. SMITH (Manchester)

*Lunch and Tea provided.
Please bring your own hymnbook.*

Programmes and further details from—
Bro. F. JOWETT,
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Chester

Friends are warmly invited to

A One-Day Homegathering

at

DEWSBURY

Sunday, July 14th

HAGENBACH'S CAFE

(near Town Hall)

Opening Session - - - 11 a.m.
Sessions throughout the day.
Lunch and Tea provided.
Please bring your "Bible Student's Hymnal."

*Further particulars and Programmes
may be obtained from—*

Bro. A. CARRINGTON
11 Greenmount Street
Beeston Hill
Leeds 11

OUR LORD

"The chiefest among ten thousands
the one altogether lovely."

Where should one search for details of the life, rank and service of our Lord? By considering relevant prophecy supported by events and sayings culled from the Gospels a narrative, chiefly of his life on earth, can be made, but only meagre details of his pre-human and resurrection life can be found. The apostle Paul gives a very condensed record of the three spheres of life in which He appears. It is found in Phil. 2: 6-11; and although concise, it would require the pen of a very ready writer to excel the story in few words.

There Paul gives the rank and honour our Lord possessed before ever the world was; and then reveals in seven steps down how His honour, His rank and even His life was expended for man, and then to complete the saga gives the seven items which describe the unending glory to which He has been raised by the exceeding greatness of the power of God. Here is seen perfection of self-abasement followed by perfection of exaltation, perfection of servitude succeeded by perfection of renown. Or, viewing the story in three phases instead of two sevens, we see life, death, and life again; or honour, humility, and honour again. A little quiet thinking concerning these steps will add meaning to the admonition of v. 5. Before we meditate further we may remember with gratitude and fear that while it is not given to the Church to descend to such death and surrender such honour, we may by the grace of God ascend to the throne solely because our Lord did descend and is now ascended far above all heavens.

In v. 6 Paul does not say "who, being God," though some think that is meant. Had that been intended the rest of the verse is meaningless, for none would aspire to be what they already were. Nor is it essential to read "a god," because the same apostle in his Colossian epistle says that our Lord's pre-human rank, His priority and headship in creation, His close association with the Almighty in subsequent creations, and His likeness to God Himself constituted the Logos in the form of God. That two great Ones are in mind is very plain. There are several renderings of the remainder of the verse, and they suggest that the translators were not satisfied with the A.V. and possibly not with their own versions. The Diaglott renders it "did not meditate a usurpation to be like

God"—an appropriate version, for while the Christian believes that aspiration to be equal with God would never enter the mind of the Logos, they also know that Lucifer did so aspire, and the faithful Logos saw Satan fall as lightning from heaven because of his wicked ambition.

During our Lord's human life the Jews accused Him of claiming equality with God because He said that God was his father. (John 5: 18-23). Their only reason for this opposition was because He had made a Messianic claim. The Lord does not discuss the point as to his claiming equality, but speaks of judgment deputed to the Son and of the honour due to the Son like to the Father Himself. How wonderful is the union of the Father and the Son! If the A.V. could use the words "form of God" and "equal" of that union when the Son was the Logos, what word can describe that union now? It is extremely doubtful if that union can be described in one or many words in man's vocabulary.

Then Paul details the fourteen steps by which this union is enhanced—the very reverse of robbery or usurpation.

The versions generally prefer the reading that "he emptied himself" to "make himself of no reputation" and properly so, because the Logos relinquished his rank rather than his character. Because man cannot comprehend life in higher realms we can only suppose how great was this surrender. We may read Prov. 8: 22 onwards and realise that He was giving up sight of his Father and the harmony and delights of spirit life enjoyed throughout many millenniums. We may read of the rank and power of Gabriel when speaking to Daniel and know the glory of the Logos to be greater. It is these and other splendours of which He emptied himself. Yes, the first step He made for us is beyond our comprehension. Later in the Philippian epistle we read of Paul counting as loss his many earthly advantages. The sacrifices are in no way comparable for though Paul may be commended he does it to acquire whereas the Logos sacrifices that he may give.

There is more even than that, for the next step reveals that though once in the form of God He takes upon Himself the form of a servant. These words were written in days when slavery was an established custom, and readers

would know that slaves had no rank. Truly, He had emptied Himself! We recall that the key text of Mark's gospel points out the slave of slaves is He who gave His life a ransom for many; and further, He resigns His rank in the fairest realms and becomes a slave in the realm of him who thought by robbery to be equal with God.

"He was made in the likeness of men" or, as Romans says, in the likeness of sinful flesh. The children of men being partakers of flesh and blood He likewise takes part of the same that through death He might "destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." This becoming a man is an essential fact of Scriptural doctrine, for on it hinges the whole truth of ransom-atonement.

"Found in fashion as a man." The Jews knew Him as a teacher, and would argue His worth as a prophet, and wonder if He were Messiah. Pilate asked Him if He were a king, but seeing Him crowned with thorns and robed in purple said "Behold the man." Perhaps an unconscious tribute at the very hour He was to sacrifice his manhood. Whilst it is true that we do not comprehend the rank and life of the angelic hosts, it is also true that we do not as yet know what perfect manhood embodies. Yet, even the step of descending to manhood does not accomplish redemption. We might know more of this great sacrifice if we understood the full meaning of these words "form, likeness and fashion." For though synonyms they have shades of varied thought.

"He humbled himself." Others tried to humiliate Him by casting aspersions about his birth, by charging Him with blasphemy, by attempting to entangle Him in His talk; but He humbled Himself. He could have brought about the confusion of His accusers, but because there were larger issues at stake than that of defence, He humbly accepted the leadings of God and despised the shame. Had the adversary succeeded in getting Him to defend Himself (one of the primary instincts of man) He would have been side-tracked from His mission.

"Obedience unto death." It was not obedience until death happened to come (for it would not have occurred unless He had sacrificed it) but unto death. It was by the grace of God that He should taste death for every man, and the way marked out for Him required surrendering that which of all men He was most entitled to enjoy—life. He had obeyed the will of God in those spheres where obedience and life were interchangeable terms; but now an absolute change. Thus He learned

obedience by the things which He suffered. By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous, and "he shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied."

"Even the death of the cross." This is the last step of descent; and one might ask, was it necessary for Him to stoop so low? Was it necessary for Him to become sin for us? Some do not like to think of Him as becoming sin for us, preferring to think He became a sin-offering for us. It can of course be proved that they are really one and the same in fact. Let us not diminish the wealth of His sacrifice by varying the inspired words, for the fact that Himself took our infirmities and that He bore the sin of many is the very foundation of redemption. The words of Peter put it beyond debate and at the same time explain why it was even the death of the cross. Every word is emphatic—"who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." There is no lower step to tread—there can be no lower! And no other could tread it! Hence the weeping of the revelator because no one had prevailed to open the book, and then the new song because at last One was found worthy.

* * * *

Now the story changes from death to life, from humility to honour. Seven phrases show the exaltation; and the Revelator also gives seven—Worthy is the Lamb to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. Our understanding of the steps of ascent, like the steps of descent, is limited, because it reaches to realms unknown to man; and though not understanding we can join in the chorus of praise, and look forward hopefully to that near time when we shall extol Him perfectly. Every Christian involuntarily rejoices that not only was He raised from the dead, but also was exalted to such rank and glory; and we may be sure that the exaltation was to greater honour than He enjoyed when He was daily the Father's delight.

How can it be possible that He could have a greater name than before? If He was next to the Father long ago, and now is again there, how is it enhanced? Now His name is known in earth as well as in heaven, now it is true that every knee whether in heaven or in earth or down in the dust shall bow, for it is by His redemptive work that His name has become universally known. It is enhanced because outside the heavens His name will be known by so many as the stars of heaven for multitude.

Every knee shall acknowledge the name of JESUS (the word that means Saviour) for that of all His titles means everything to man. "Every tongue shall confess that Jesus has become Lord and Christ to the glory of God the Father." For it was the Father, the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God whose purpose is visible in all this redemptive work, for it was He who started the work of

redemption by giving His only begotten Son for us. Paul introduced these fourteen phases by mentioning two (God, and He in the form of God) and he closes similarly—our Lord and God the Father. And in the last word we see the essential difference whereby the Son will never be equal to God Himself—for in the very nature of things no son can equal his Father.

"Keep in touch with Christ.—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, especially in the still hour of evening twilight, between the work of the day and the avocations of the evening, when you shall get alone with Him, telling Him all things, and reviewing the past under the gentle light that streams from His eyes."

"Tell God that you are willing to be made willing about all. A lady was once in great difficulties about certain things which she felt eager to keep under her own control. Her friend, wishful to pass her into the better life of consecration, placed before her a blank sheet of paper, and pressed her to write her name at the foot, and then lay it before God in prayer. She did so and at once entered this blessed life. Are you willing to do this? Are you prepared to sign your name to a blank sheet of paper and then hand it over to God for Him to fill in as He pleases? If not, ask Him to make you willing and able to do this and all things else. You will never be happy until you let the Lord Jesus keep the house of your nature, closely scrutinising every visitor and admitting only His friends. He must reign. He must have all or none. He must have the key of every closet, of every cupboard and of every room. Do not try to make them fit for Him. Simply give Him the key. And He will cleanse and renovate and make beautiful."

"Though disappointments are our lot,
Grieving the soul to tears;
Though tender friendships seem forgot,
And hopes give place to fears;
Though on life's tempest-sea we toss,
Still may we humbly bear our cross,"

"THE HALF WAS NEVER TOLD."

When the Queen of Sheba saw the glories of Solomon, it is said (1 Kings 10:5) "there was no more spirit in her," or, as we should put it to-day, "it took her breath away." Her astonishment at what she found, and her declaration that the half had not been told her, reminds us of the Scriptural declaration respecting the greater than Solomon and the wonderful kingdom glories in reservation for His faithful. We read, "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath in reservation for them that love Him." Now we know in part and see as through an obscure glass, but then we shall see as we are seen and know as we are known, and be like our Lord and share His glories.

The Queen's exulting remarks at the conclusion of her visit were, "Happy are thy men, and happy these thy servants, which stand continually before thee and hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the Lord thy God which delighteth in thee to set thee on the throne of Israel; because the Lord loved Israel forever, therefore made He thee King to do judgment and justice."

The greater than Solomon, in harmony with the Divine arrangement, has prepared to have His faithful servants of the present time with Him to share His glory and His kingdom, and the blessings of that time will be specially theirs. Happy those men who will be in His presence, who will see Him as He is and be like Him, and be the recipients of His favours. O blessed thought! O words with Heavenly wisdom fraught!

I know not the way that's before me,
The joys or the griefs it may bring;
What clouds are o'erhanging the future,
What flowers by the wayside may spring.
But there's One who will journey beside me,
Nor in weal nor in woe will forsake;
And this is my solace and comfort,
"He knoweth the way that I take,"

THE QUIET TIME



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

FOLLOWING CHRIST.

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." Matt. 16: 24.

This is a very beautiful and significant text. The words "come after me" have not been properly translated; "follow me" is a better translation. It was the custom in ancient times for a teacher to have a company of his disciples following him; as Socrates did, for instance. So our Lord's disciples, pupils, followed Him. They travelled with Him but they might have the opportunity of continually getting instruction from His lips. It was so with all the teachers in olden time. Sometimes, as in the case of Gamaliel, they had a school—the pupils sat "at the feet of Gamaliel." Their custom was that the pupils would ask questions and get the views of the teacher.

Jesus said that any one whom He instructed might know from the beginning that he would have severe experiences; he would not receive great honour. On the contrary, those who would be His disciples must take up their cross and follow in His footsteps. There would be trials all along the journey, He told them. The Lord did not wish any to become disciples of His under a misapprehension. "Where I am, there shall also my disciple be." Those who follow Jesus in this vale of tears, witnessing for God and the truth, will be blessed by Him and eventually share in His Messianic glory and honour and partake of immortality. But unless we partake of His cup and are immersed into His death, we can have no share in His kingdom.

Be patient and submissive; each disaster
Will bring thee nearer to thy loving Lord.
These trials make thee like thy blessed Master,
Who knows them all, and will His grace
afford.

Be patient and submissive; strength is given
For every step along the weary way.
And for it all thou'lt render praise to Heaven.
When dreary night gives place to perfect day.

DAY BY DAY.

"That which they have need of—let it be given them day by day without fail." Ezra 6: 9.

My Master, think through me to-day
Thoughts loyal, sweet and true,
Then, by Thy Spirit, give me grace
Thy holy will to do.
Whether I speak, or read, or write,
Let Christ through all outshine,
And all my being daily prove
The joy of being Thine.

Let my unconscious influence
Be always for the right;
Make me content to walk to-day
By faith, and not by sight.
Use me to others, pointing them
Along the Heavenward road,
And may they learn through me the joy
Of dwelling deep in God.

(*Laura A. Barter Snow*).

The morning cometh. Isaiah 21: 12.

Weeping may endure for a night but joy
cometh in the morning. Psalm 30: 5.

If long and tiring be the road,
And sad the lot Thy love ordains,
We tread the path Thyself hath trod,
And pain shall pass, but joy remains.

OUR UNFAILING SHELTER.

Precious children of the Lord, blessed are ye! Sheltered in the "secret place of the Most High" no evil shall befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. "He shall give His angels charge concerning thee; they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." How safe and secure are these! Though a thousand fall at their side, and ten thousand at their right hand, yet the plague shall not come nigh them. They have "made the Most High their habitation," and He will keep them from all harm.

Under His wings I am safely abiding,
Though the night deepens and tempests are
wild;
Still I can trust Him, I know He will keep me;
He has redeemed me, and I am His child.

MARTHA

A woman of action.

There is not a great deal said of Martha in the Gospel records, but of that which is said the least important is usually called to mind and emphasised. It is obvious from what we read of Martha that she was a devout woman sharing Messianic hopes and accepting Jesus as the Christ. She was the elder sister in the home at Bethany which was shared with Lazarus and Mary, that wonderful home which always had a welcome for Jesus when he came that way.

Luke shows one side of the character of Martha (Luke 10: 38-42). She loved the Lord as much as did Mary and had noticed that Jesus was tired, so she began to work hard preparing for His comfort and refreshment. Mary on the other hand realised that Jesus loved an appreciative listener, so she "sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word." Probably Martha desired just as much to listen to the Lord "but Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to Him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me." Martha was flustered and did not choose her words too well. It may be that Mary was so interested in what Jesus had to say that she forgot that her sister was being left to do all the work, but that did not excuse Martha for asking Jesus, her guest, to interfere; indeed it seems she rather blamed the Lord for not telling Mary to help. Jesus, however, did not give the sharp rebuke that many seem to think. It is in fact a gentle, loving, rebuke, "Martha, Martha," note the repetition of her name, "thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken from her." Martha's mistake was not in serving, but in complaining. It may be that many since then have used this account as an excuse for not serving, yet Jesus Himself has shown that no one is too great to serve. We are not always to want to do the same service; by persisting in such an attitude we should miss many opportunities of service for the Lord's people.

We get a further light on Martha's character from John's Gospel. In chapter eleven we read of her again. It is the occasion of the raising of Lazarus. The two sisters had sent to Jesus

the message "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." In verse 5 we read "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister Mary and Lazarus." What a wonderful tribute to that Bethany home! There is no room for doubt that Jesus appreciated the devotion of Martha as well as that of her brother and sister. Jesus waited two days and then went on to Bethany. In the meantime Lazarus died and the house was crowded with many of the Jews who "came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother," during the customary seven days mourning. As soon as Martha had news that Jesus was coming she "went and met him: but Mary still sat in the house." Martha was the woman of action, and John in his Gospel record reveals her as one who had real faith in God, and in Jesus as the Messiah. She said to Jesus "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died; but I know that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give thee." Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, "I know that he shall rise again, in the resurrection at the last day." Her words show that she still had a mixture of the Jewish tradition of a final judgment day. Yet she drew forth those beautiful words of Jesus which have comforted and thrilled countless thousands of mourners and believers from that day to this. "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." Jesus then asked her if she believed this. In reply Martha makes a further affirmation of her faith, "Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." These were words of encouragement to Jesus and they meant much to Him. We read of very few who made such a confession of faith to Jesus.

Martha then went back to Mary and told her quietly that Jesus was not far away and asking for her. Together the two sisters went out to Jesus and witnessed the raising of their brother Lazarus.

The third and last time we read of Martha is in John 12: 2. It was six days before the Passover and crucifixion of Jesus. We read that Jesus came to Bethany "and they made him supper, and Martha served." This time there is no suggestion of Martha being cum-

bered: she is not impatient. This is the occasion when Mary anoints the feet of Jesus. Judas complains but Martha is silent. She is still the woman of action, but the activity is calmed by trust. One can hardly doubt that Martha, with Mary and Lazarus will be among those whom our Lord will confess before His Father in heaven.

The lesson we learn from Martha is readiness to serve and readiness to learn: the quality of being able to take a rebuke without offence and a devout faith. When we think of Martha serving we can think too of her great faith which encouraged Jesus and called forth the all important truth "I am the resurrection and the life."

THE WONDROUS LIGHT OF OUR DAY

"The path of the just is as a shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

In the Scriptures, light is used as a symbol of truth, while darkness is a figure of error and superstition. The Apostle says, for example, "ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day, we are not of the night, nor of darkness." (1. Thess. 5: 4/5.) Again, we read "light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." (Psa. 97: 11.)

God has been pleased to reveal the secret purposes of His will in a gradual manner, so that the light of truth has increased with each succeeding Age. This is precisely in accord with the declaration that "the path of the just (justified) is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." (Prov. 4: 18.)

Light for the last days.

Never before has there been such a flood of light—as that enjoyed by the Lord's people during the last sixty or so years. Those who have been in contact with this light are always in danger of taking it for granted and it is good, therefore, to call attention to the wondrous favour which is ours. This light was the means of calling the Lord's people out of Babylon into the liberty of the truth and full fellowship with the Lord. All who were led to take this step testify to the fulfilment of the Apostle's words "if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." (1. John 1: 7.) The light made evident the errors of Christendom and caused the "virgins" to trim their lamps in recognition of the presence of the Bridegroom. As they obeyed the Scriptural injunction to walk in the light, so more light was given and the light still continues to increase because the perfect day has not yet arrived. The words found in the

"Divine Plan" yet apply "perfection of knowledge is not a thing of the past, but of the future—the very near future, we trust; and until we recognise this fact, we are unprepared to appreciate and expect fresh unfoldings of our Father's plan."

Light brings responsibility.

The point which it is desired to stress is the fact that the more light we enjoy, the greater our responsibility for its use. Our Lord declared "unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." (Matt. 12: 48.) Many to-day do not enjoy as clear light as they did in the earlier days of the harvest, far less obtaining an increased measure of light now due to the Lord's people. This question of responsibility for light received was very much impressed upon the writer recently when reading an account of the following incident, which is passed on for the benefit of others.

George Muller met Dr. Pierson on one occasion, when the latter in the course of conversation, expressed his belief that he had received more light upon the Divine Word than the ordinary minister. This incident occurred at about the commencement of the "Harvest-time," when the Philadelphia period of the Church was merging into the Laodicean phase. Dr. Pierson recounted his growing conviction that the worship in the churches had lost its primitive simplicity; he realised that the system of pew-rents in the house of God was unscriptural, in fact, pernicious; he saw that fixed salaries for ministers of the gospel were not in accord with the Bible, and that the needs of the Church should be supplied by men full of the Holy Spirit, rather than by those who entered the ministry merely as a profession.

When George Muller heard these words, he is reported solemnly to have said, "My beloved brother, the Lord has given you much light upon these matters and will hold you correspondingly responsible for its use. If you obey Him and walk in the light, you will have more; if not, the light will be withdrawn."

Those were the early days before the wondrous light of the harvest-time was fully made known to the Watchers, but the words apply with equal force to us to-day. The Lord has given much unto His people and He looks to us to use it aright. It is well, therefore, that we inquire for what purposes the Lord has made us recipients of His treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Sanctified by the Truth.

It has many times been said with truth that the light which we to-day enjoy has not been given for self-gratification. On the contrary, this truth, if properly applied to the heart and life, is nothing less than a mighty power to bring about in us that sanctification which is essential if we are to gain the Kingdom. We can never do perfect works here below, but by walking in the light (growing in the truth), we are gradually able to come nearer to the glorious summit of perfection. The Lord is looking on each one of us to see whether or not our will is more and more brought into harmony with His requirements, as we learn them from the Word of Truth. The object, then, which the Lord has in mind in giving us the light, is that we may become copies of His dear Son. The Lord's words are full of meaning when He said, "for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." As the years pass by, so there should be evidence of fruitage, for we cannot stand still; we either make acceptable progress, numbering our days so that "we may apply our hearts unto wisdom," or we pass back as a result of indifference and slackness in the payment of our vows.

All can remember how wonderful was the experience when first the light came, and especially the light of the harvest-time. It begat in each consecrated heart great zeal for the Lord and His service, coupled with an eager desire to know more of the truth then due. These same qualities should be manifest in increasing measure to-day, amongst all those who profess to be walking in the light of present truth.

Deliverance draweth nigh.

There is a further aspect of this theme which cannot escape us. To-day the world is compassed with severe trouble so that men's hearts are failing them for fear, but this is not the effect upon those who have walked in the wondrous light of our day. Their realisation of the Master's presence and the true cause of the present distress impart quietness and confidence, for "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early." As is well known, Leiser renders the last clause as "God will ever help her, at the dawning of (her) morning."

The light of our day, therefore, makes us aware of the speedy deliverance of the remaining members of the body, in order to be joined with those who have already been raised the other side of the veil. In harmony with our Lord's injunction, we lift up our heads and rejoice at the evident signs of the times which portend that our redemption draweth nigh. At the same time, we realise that blessings are about to be dispensed to the human family, once the mists of trouble have rolled away and Christ is revealed in His glorious *apokalupsis*. This glorious portion for mankind seems to be described in Psalm 90, verses 14-17, which are so beautifully rendered by Moffatt as follows:—

*"Let thy love dawn on us undimmed,
that all our life we may be glad and sing;
grant joy as long as thou hast been afflicting us,
for all the years we have been suffering;
let thy servants see thee at thy saving work,
and let their children see thy glorious power:
Lord, may thy loving favour rest on us,
and prosper all the work we undertake."*

SOMETIMES.

Sometimes, your sky is overcast with clouds,
That hide from you the shining of the Sun;
Sometimes, your struggling soul is so hard pressed,
You doubt if e're the conflict will be won.
Sometimes, you feel your friends so far away,
No earthly arm is near on which to lean;
'Tis then the time to stretch the Hand of Faith
With firmer strength to grasp the "things unseen."

THE ORIGIN OF SUPERSTITION

Words have been called "the indestructible vesture of thought." The original thought may have become corrupt, obscured, or obsolete; but the word remains "indestructible," and by it we may recover the thought. "Superstition" is such a word. It originally meant something standing over or above—something that remains or has taken the place of something else. It is, therefore, akin to supersede and superimposed. So the tree stands over or above the root out of which it has grown; so other subsequent cities have stood over and buried out of sight the genuine Homeric Troy. But as the something to which the word refers is always false or delusive in distinction from the true, so (we may say) does the fungus "stand over" the fallen and decayed tree in whose substance it is rooted. Nature and the world, like wheat and the corn field as well as religion, are full of such false parasitic outgrowths, bred from the decay of higher organisms which only exist in lower and degraded forms—**superstition.**

The word "superstition" thus gives us an important thought of which it is the "indestructible vesture." Something previous, and in a purer and better form, was before superstition. What was it? A comparative history of the oldest religions, such as those of Egypt and Persia and India and China, surprises us with many likenesses to the Bible faith. Archbishop Trenchard has beautifully illustrated this idea in his Hulsean lectures, "The Unconscious Prophecies of Heathendom," under such headings as these: "The Vanquisher of Hades," "The Son of God," "The Perfect Sacrifice," "The Redeemer from Sin," etc. These things were in the oldest religions, anticipations of the true and obscured by myth and superstition; but how did they get there? The idea of a suffering God was not unfamiliar to the Eastern mythologies—one who, like the Egyptian Osiris, also descended into Hades and there judged the dead righteously. And in their worship these religions were all originally monotheistic. The inference is, of course, the one suggested by the word superstition. It is an independent peep into the Eastern world, far up under the dawn. Outside the Jewish nation and uninfluenced by it, before Abraham's day, before the evolution of superstition, there was among the scattered nations a purer religion, and one received, apparently, from

the same general reservoir of truth. Nor, if Moses was inspired to record for us the true history, need this surprise us. And Christ must in some way be got rid of, before the sceptics can get rid of "Moses and the prophets." According to the Hebrew chronology Abraham was fifty-eight years old when Noah died; he lived to be one hundred and seventy-five, and even then died thirty-five years before Shem! Up to that time these two patriarchs of the Flood were living somewhere among those Eastern nations. They are not mentioned, nor any of the nations except Egypt, because they no longer touched the onward historic stream. But, at the dispersion of Babel, some two hundred years before Abraham's birth, these two must have gone with some of their descendants, carrying with them, as they had already made known, the true religion, and something of the earlier civilisation.

This fact of an earlier religion, however soon and widely it may have become corrupted, explains some things which the brevity of Scripture has left obscure. When Abraham, himself a monotheist from the Euphrates in the East, was in the vale of the Jordan in the far West, there came to him and blessed him, Melchisedec "Priest of the Most High God;" whilst not far off there was Abimelech and his people, with whom still dwelt "the fear of the Lord." This in Canaan itself, and in the very neighbourhood of Sodom! But from beyond that same distant Euphrates, four hundred and seventy years later than Abraham's time, came Balaam to confront Moses and Israel; a man who worshipped the same God with Moses, and by the same name: "I cannot go beyond the word of Jehovah, my God;" the man who, when the king of Moab, in his terrible extremity, proposed to sacrifice his first born, uttered these sublime words, recorded only by Micah: "Jehovah hath shown me, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God!" "Hath showed me"—where, how, in what early record known to both Balaam and the king as the word of the "Lord?" Moreover, of this Balaam from the far Euphrates it is said, that he "knew the knowledge of the Most High"—the very word used for God by Melchisedec in the valley of the Jordan. Except once in Deuteronomy, we do not meet it again

till the history gets back to the Euphrates, to Daniel, to the Chaldeans, to Nebuchadnezzar, and to Cyrus the Persian. They all use it, as evidently the earliest and descended term for the one God. It brought Cyrus, as belonging to a common monotheistic worship, into sympathy with the Jews. It is known to-day among the mountains of Thibet; and in the form of "Shang-Tie," is the one missionaries in China have adopted to express the idea of God.

This word (in its different forms), Most High, the Highest, the Lord God of Heaven, is, indeed, itself pregnant with thought. It indicates a process of thought and a conviction in the earliest men as they looked up to heaven; a conviction of a One God who was above all in power and glory, and to be worshipped. It was a source of conviction independent of any other source of knowledge, as for instance, Noah and Shem; and how strongly it impressed them is crystallised in the word they used and handed down to indicate God. David felt precisely the same when he exclaimed: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork." And this has an intimate bearing upon some present discussions about the heathen. Paul declared them "without excuse." Why, upon what ground? Upon the ground that "the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." Their lapses into idolatry and superstition, with the consequences, were purely wilful—they "did not like to retain God in their knowledge." Up the stream of universal history there was that knowledge, "clearly" to be derived, in all ages, from the same over-spreading testimony in the heavens. The power of that testimony and its effect upon the earlier men, lives in many languages, in that "indestructible" word, the Most High God.

A realisation of these things is valuable, considered in connection with Paul's inspired account of how ignorance and superstition came to be so wide-spread throughout the world, as detailed in Romans 1: 18 to 3: 23. Deplorable

and dense as the ignorance and superstition of the world is, it is well that all should see that it is not the fault of God, that it is not because God made men degraded and vile. It is necessary that this be fully recognized as an offset to the growing idea that God did a very imperfect work in the creation of man, and that present progress from darkness and superstition, to light and reason and civilisation, is merely human development—evolution.

Be it noted, that the Scriptures everywhere give one harmonious account of the origin and cause of evil and ignorance in the world, and show that God is not guilty: they tell that "God hath made men upright but they have sought out many inventions" (Eccl. 7: 29); and that it was when and because man was not desirous of retaining a knowledge of God in his heart that God gave them over to a reprobate mind. (Rom. 1: 28). Thus sin, which entered at Eden (Rom. 5: 12), manifested its tendency to be continually downward, except as God introduced "the salt of the earth" (those exercised by His truth—led of His spirit) whose influence has been to keep the social mass from utter corruption. Thank God for the blessed assurances of His word, that though the world has been thus left largely to its own course, that both angels and men may see the real tendencies of sin, yet, when this severe lesson has been well illustrated and deeply impressed, He will through His anointed ones, Christ Jesus and His Bride the overcoming Church, arrest the sway of ignorance, and sin, and superstition, and cause the knowledge of the Lord and His perfect plans to fill the earth. Thank God that His promised kingdom shall re-establish righteousness and give to the billions of earth (who, as inheritors of sin and weakness, have never known or been able to appreciate righteousness, purity, and their attendant joys), an opportunity to taste and see that the Lord is gracious and that wisdom's righteous ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

The meekness and gentleness of Christ. 2 Cor. 10. 1.

The fruit of the Spirit is . . . gentleness. Gal. 5. 12.

"Gentleness" seems to be chiefly a "fruit of the lips" and manner flowing from the long-suffering of the heart; while "longsuffering" means having just cause for anger, yet not being angry. Gentleness comes in as a gracious

adjunct, or as a smaller fruit of the same species. Gentleness will check the hasty word and substitute a soft one; gentleness will smooth over a thousand tiny crookednesses. Gentleness is one of the mightiest powers for daily life and all its little worries.

Paul says (1 Thess. 2. 7), "But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children."

THE SPIRIT OF THE COVENANT

"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"
Gen. 17: 25

In the heat of the day, as father Abraham sat within his tent sheltering from the burning sun, three travel-stained men drew near. With true Eastern hospitality Abraham ran forth to greet them, and besought them to rest awhile until he could minister to their needs. "Let a little water be fetched and wash your feet, and rest yourself under the tree." (v. 4.)

Of his little store of the precious fluid he would share enough to cleanse and soothe their sand-fretted feet. Hurriedly he and Sarah set about the task of preparing refreshment—cakes baked on the hearth, and a tender calf, and butter and milk—which food, when ready, was spread before them under the shade of the tree. With deferential respect for his guests, Abraham stood by to minister to their requests. Hereby Abraham reveals the fact that he knew these were no ordinary visitors, and as master of the establishment, it was a token of great regard to stand and serve while they sat and ate.

The repast ended, they called for Sarah, and in an extraordinary manner referred to a long-cherished promise which had been made to Abraham some years ago by his God. "I will return to thee the vigour of thy youth, and Sarah shall have a son" so said the spokesman of the little band. Sarah, within earshot, but within the tent, heard the words and "laughed within herself." For many years her maternal desire had been unsatisfied. What wonder then, as she heard these words, that she should smile, half-expectant yet half-incredulous? Had she not waited now too long? That little laugh, half-stifled, and her muttered words, reached the speaker's ears. "Wherefore did Sarah laugh . . . Is anything too hard for the Lord?" asks the remarkable guest. And so at long last, after many expectant years, the hopes of her whole life came to pass. Those aged wrinkled arms clasped to her breast, flesh of her own flesh, and maternal hopes were satisfied.

Some several times that "promise of all promises" had been renewed, and here, beneath the shade of Mamre's tree the messenger of Jehovah (who spake as Jehovah) re-affirmed it by word of mouth to sire and mother too. What recompense was that for "entertaining

angels unawares!" (Heb. 13: 2.) Not only was the Covenant re-affirmed but the approximate date was set, when the promised child (without whom the covenant could never be fulfilled) should arrive.

But this was not the sole reason for their call at Abraham's tent. They had other, sterner business to perform. Refreshment ended, they rose to go along, and Abraham, deeply moved, accompanied them some distance on their way. Then began the most remarkable conversation between the three, the prompting question of which is recorded for our benefit. "Shall I tell Abraham what I am about to do? I think I can trust him with the news!"

To this end spake the principal member of the three. In poetic language, the Lord (the Lord's messengers) had "come down" to see if the sin of Sodom was as great as its "cry," and if so, to destroy it with fire. Would it not seem strange to Abraham's ears, if He who stood pledged to "bless," were now compelled to destroy some of those families of the earth which dwelt on every hand? Had God not promised several times that in him and in his seed, all nations should be blessed? And had God not just re-affirmed his Covenant, and dated the birth of his son? If then the time for the arrival of the Seed were come, could not God defer those punitive measures upon those cities of the plains until the Seed were grown, and had had time to work reform? Thus the question might have presented itself to Abraham had he not been told.

"I know him" said the angel of the Lord "I know that he will command his children (as yet unborn) and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him" (v. 19.)

Something "bred in the blood" would "come out in the bone" in later days, and though Abraham's earthly seed should grievously fail awhile, something ingrained in the parents faith-built character should mature in the children's life when the process of develop-

ment was complete. The "faith of Abraham" (Rom. 4: 12, 16.) will become the faith of all his seed and "All Israel shall be saved" when God's due time is come.

What a testimony was that!—"I know him!" Alone in all the world in that far day, to hold true faith in God! Alone and childless, yet promises reaching on into eternity were centred in this man, who rested, like many others, in heat of day, within his solitary tent. The eye of God could see in this lone man those deep responses of faith, which led him on, by step and step until he laid the darling of his life upon the altar-wood, and raised his hand to strike the sacrificial blow. That substratum of faith has passed from sire to sons, and through it all when grown mature, "the Lord will bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him." A progeny, numberless as the sands of the sea-shore, shall yet be blessed for their great father's sake, because, as sire, he passed to them the ability to believe in God,—which means of course, ability to believe in Christ.

Two members of that little band went on their way, and came, at even, to Sodom's gate. "Righteous Lot" sat there and invited them beneath his roof. The wickedness of Sodom brake out, because of the angel's presence there, and summary measures were needed to hold the Sodomites in check. Bounteous harvests which brought fulness of bread, made pride of heart and carnal sin to grow. The other guest remained behind, and "Abraham stood yet before the Lord."

Then began the plea of a mere mortal man before the Judge of all the Earth! There is no story of those early days to be compared with this. Touched by a feeling for his human kin, the faithful righteous heart begged respite again and yet again for Sodom's sinful folk. "Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?" asks he. "Perhaps there may be fifty within the city who are not utterly overcome by sin! Wilt thou spare the city for their sake?" Will not the Judge of all the earth, who holds the scales of Justice for others' acts, Himself do right? Bold, courageous words are these, drawing Divinity to the bar of its own Courts and Laws! Immediate came the response, "I will not destroy the city for the fifty's sake."

The old man knew the city's guilt and knew his quota was too high. Again he puts his plea, "Wilt thou destroy the city perchance forty shall be found ... or thirty ... or twenty ... or even ten ... ? With each reduction, a d

renewal of the plea, the heavenly visitor concurred, until at last he said "I will not destroy the city for ten's sake." (v. 32.) Not even ten were found; but only one, and he an alien in their midst! With morning's early dawn he was urged forth, before the blow of Justice fell. The Judge of all the Earth did right. In later days God told His people He had seen "good" in taking them thus away. Some vestige still remained of innate good, to which, in resurrection days, appeal can then be made; some broken chords, which, when righteousness prevails, can be repaired and made to vibrate in unison once more.

"Shall mortal man be more just than his Maker?" is a query we must ask as we see the aged pilgrims pleading for his kind. Was Abraham more sympathetic to sinful men than God? Must God be moved by human plea before compassion could be shown? Had God relented of His purpose to bless all the peoples of the earth, or did He not include these cities of the plain?

That God was compassionate as well as just is true beyond all dispute. The plan to bless the world was His—it told of His great love. But how did the justice-loving patriarch stand when fronted by such baleful sin? Would he say Sodom got no more than its deserts when retribution fell? Would he say it served them right? Abraham was not more compassionate than God, though Abraham's compassion was deep and strong. He pleaded that justice might be done, and that the righteous (if there should be) should also have their deserts. But the plea he used asked for mercy in ascending scale. Mercy for a whole city, for fifty's sake, for forty's sake—nay even for ten's sake.

And the Judge of all the Earth agreed—the Judge of all the Earth had Abraham at the bar, to find how far in him tender mercy would temper strict justice. And the Judge found him sympathetic down to the degree of ten men in a city—ten men for a city; ten men (or less) to redeem a city from its just fate. This was the spirit of the Covenant itself. Abraham too would see men blessed. Abraham too would see sinners blessed. That was the spirit of his God, who had said, that through him and his seed, the nations should be blessed. And Abraham believed it, and let the spirit of the Promise soak in and saturate his soul.

And so, while Justice must be satisfied—this he knew quite well—the temper of the soul, catching Divine intent, grew merciful and kind. The outcome of this Divine Spirit led in due

time to the gift of God's dear Son (John 3: 16.)—and Calvary! But in those early days, the flow which had become a river of love at Calvary, was but a tiny stream. It grew as ages passed; and still it grows; and as it grows it has borne those noble souls along who catch the Spirit of the Lord.

To-day we live in an evil world. The cry of the weak and oppressed rises up to heaven. Sins of various kinds stalk the earth. Again, God has come down to make scrutiny for righteous men. How easy it would be for us to say "it serves them right," as tidings come that some other land or people is in distress. It may serve them right indeed, but it ill becomes the children of the Lord to hold that thought. Nations may have slighted and perverted their opportunities—they may have made false choice of leaders; or wrongly applied principles of action—but no nation is utterly responsible for that. No nation can have full cent-per-cent. responsibility under conditions like these. Measured responsibility they certainly have—and for that they must be called to account. But none save the Judge of all the Earth is competent for that. He only can assess the guilt of man or nation. The safer thing for us to seek is the spirit of Abraham's faith—the spirit which would plead for mercy for ten men's sake, and rest content that He who is the Judge of all the Earth will do no other than what is right.

It will not be an easy thing to remain in proper balance of heart and mind, as evil after evil is committed in the earth, unless the Spirit of the Covenant controls our every thought. The scales of Justice belongs to God—and He will hold the balance true. But God will temper the severities of Judgment with His mercy, what time the guilty one repents, and forsakes his wicked ways. His plighted Covenant with Abraham and his seed speaks blessing (and mercy) for all the nations of the earth. If, like faithful Abraham, we live within the spirit of this Oath-bound Pledge, allowing it to soak in and saturate our hearts, we too shall think in mercy of Satan's hoodwinked hosts, no matter who they are. It will permeate our thoughts; it will creep into very blood and bone, and make us more like Him who died for all. We speak at times of Christ-like character and its development. There is no method so clear and sure to attain that end, as to be caught up in the Spirit of the Oath and Pledge of Abraham's God, who stands

to-day, as then, sworn to bless all the nations of the earth.

That ancient episode in Abraham's life affords much food for thought. It shows that the Almighty God in working out His plan, was seeking Abraham's help to make His Promise come true. But Abraham could be no source of help, unless the spirit of the Covenant and the spirit of his God, could direct him through and through. And God made test of Abraham to see if compassion for a sinful city was active in his heart. God chose a time and place to make that test. Where brazen sin had reared aloft its ugly head, Abraham passed his test acceptably. God's confidence in him was well placed.

Sin's ugly head in all its forms is raised again to-day. The present international situation affords a test, to determine what spirit we are of. The visitation of Divine Wrath must certainly come upon the aggressive nations of the world, but that is only a passing phase of the Divine Plan. God is waiting to be gracious, in His own way, to one and all. God's Spirit is still the Spirit of that ancient Covenant. He waits to bless all the nations of the earth. The Spirit of that Covenant must possess and control us too in all we say and do. It may be more easy to "blame" to-day than "bless," to be "vindictive" than "vindicative," but all who are Abraham's seed, must be possessed not only of Abraham's inheritance, but of the Spirit which, if needed, would plead for all the fallen sons of men.

GROWTH IN GRACE

Jesus, when'er Thy Face I seek,
My soul bows humbly down;
Because in all Thy way so meek
Thou didst Thy Father own.
Whilst I do oft times fail to give
Praise unto Him alone.

But then, I know that Thou dost see
The strong desire within,
And there discern that I would flee
From each besetting sin.
And grow in grace, that I might be
All pure and clean within.

So by Thy grace I would control
Each motive and each thought.
And all my ransomed powers enrol
To praise Thee as I ought.
Then shall my life Thy praise extol
And count all else as naught.

A. E. S. 1940.

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Very sincere appreciation is expressed at the receipt of anonymous donations of 10/- and £1 respectively.

AN OPPORTUNITY.

The bookroom has on hand a number of copies of "The New Creation," all quite new, but for which there does not appear to be any extensive demand. In these circumstances it is thought that there may be friends who could make good use of these volumes and we shall be pleased therefore to send copies free of charge to anyone who makes request for same while stocks last. Friends may ask for as many copies as they can profitably use, and we will leave it to the friends' own discretion as to whether or no they forward a small amount to cover postage, so that none are deprived of the opportunity due to lack of means. Should the books not come to hand within one week of your request, please take it that the stock is exhausted, so saving us the necessity of writing you to that effect.

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POSTPONEMENT OF LONDON CONVENTION

In consequence of the uncertainty now prevailing, the arrangements for London Convention in August have been abandoned. With the cancellation of Bank Holiday and the fact that many will be at work, it is felt that wisdom suggests a postponement. We shall try, however, to arrange the Convention upon a suitable week end later in the year, when it is hoped that circumstances will be more propitious.

WHAT WILL IT BE.

WHAT will it be when all the toil is ended ?
When we have conquered in the last fierce strife ?
When the bright portals of our home are entered ?
Pilgrims no longer—heirs of endless life.
Gone the last dust our weary feet have gathered—
Wiped the last drop from off the aching brow;
Safe in the presence of our God and Father,
Whose strength supports us in the desert now.

WHAT will it be when the effulgent glory,
Of day eternal it is ours to see ?
When (for the first time in our life's short story)
Pure from all trace of sin our ways shall be.
When of God's household, in the land Elysian,
When not a thought can mar our perfect rest,
When not a cloud shall dim the spirits' vision,
Joint heirs with Christ we shall be fully blest.

WHAT will it be to see the hidden meaning
Of every trial we have met below ?
To trace the secret of our Father's training,
Where faith gained spoils from many a vanquished foe ?
All that seems dark to our imperfect vision,
The light of heaven at once will render plain;
Deeper our joys through that all wise provision—
Suffering awhile, ere with our Lord we reign.

WHAT will it be ? Oh, what no thought hath measured,
No eye hath seen, nor ear of man hath heard,
Unsearchable the riches Christ hath treasured,
Yet all is sure to him, who trusts His word :
On, then, though rough and dark the path and dreary;
All toil and pain the end will well repay :
Onward and upward, we may now be weary;
WITH JESUS SOON, to share His home for aye.

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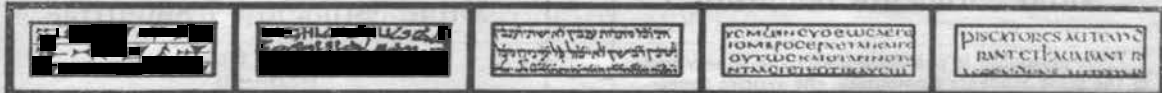
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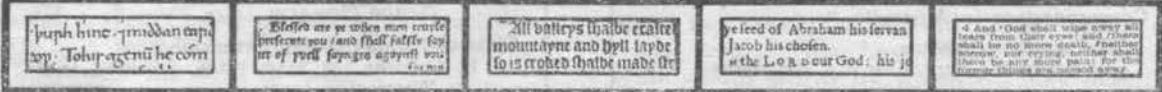
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BIBLE STUDENTS' MONTHLY



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AUGUST, 1940

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An undenominational Christian fellowship devoted to the study and dissemination of Bible truth in the light of present-day knowledge and to the deepening of personal Christian life and experience. Its members stand unreservedly for the teachings of Jesus Christ as a complete solution to humanity's problems, and believe in the eventual establishment of a new order of society upon earth in which the principles of love, equity and righteousness will prevail and evil be eliminated; and that under the spiritual rule of Christ and His Church the dead will be restored and mankind live in eternal harmony with God.

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A COVENANT BY SACRIFICE

"Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice."

Psa. 50 : 5

It is only as we reach the higher ground of the New Testament that the true nature of the consecrated life comes to view. All standards and forms of consecration preceding the life and death of Jesus had been formal and ceremonial only, introduced to last only until the times of reformation which followed Jesus' resurrection and ascension to heaven. With Jesus came the beginning of the "better" things—which better things will not be complete till, through a new Covenant, Israel first, and then the whole world, has been brought into conformity with the Will of God.

But, when we have reached that higher New Testament ground, even then it will be only as we understand and appreciate the nature of the fundamental opposing moral qualities of holiness and sin, and the way these principles work out in daily life, that we shall realise to the full what consecration actually means. We shall find every thought, word, and deed involved in that act of dedication which we describe by the word "consecration." It could be an easy matter for us to make a grievously uncharitable mistake on the question of "consecration." Differences of temperament as well as of Christian growth and attainment could easily dispose us to think that those of lesser stature in Christ were not consecrated at all, or were inattentive to their covenant vows. We might be too ready to measure another by our own standards, and expect him to toe our own line. A deeper appreciation of what is involved in consecration will show us that it may mean more to some than to others, and that more is required of some than of others.

The dictionary defines "consecration" to mean "the act of setting apart to a holy use—to hallow; to devote." This definition may be understood readily enough of a building or a plot of land set apart for religious purposes, or even of a man who withdraws himself from all secular callings, and applies himself exclusively to a religious life. This however, does not exhaust the meaning of the New Testament usage, for every true believer in the Lord, whether in "holy orders" or not is exhorted by the Lord and His Apostles not only to offer himself in consecration, but also to main-

tain that attitude of devotedness so long as life shall last. The unordained "lay" believer is no less exhorted to consecration than his clerical brother—and that exhortation applies while he follows his ordinary secular calling in life. Hence, New Testament usage is wider in its meaning than the dictionary definition.

The employment of the words "consecrate" and "consecration" brings into use another set of terms, derived from Latin sources, to supplement the Anglo-Saxon and Greek terms already used. We have thus three sets of synonymous words by which we may describe the act of full surrender to God, and the life of obedience which should follow. The word "consecrate" corresponds to the Anglo-Saxon "Hallow" (or holify) and the Greek "sanctify"; while "consecration" is equivalent to the Anglo-Saxon "holy" and the Greek "sanctification." Thus a "consecrated life" is the same thing as a "holy life" or a "saintly life."

Now it is quite proper to ask "To what or whom is the consecrated object devoted? and to what degree is it devoted?" The reply might be that the follower of the Lord is devoted to the Will of God, to live or to die, according to His good pleasure. That is a good answer and in every way correct so far as it goes. But it needs further amplification and definition. What is the Will of God? Is it something that may be known with precision?

The Will of God has many phases or manifestations ranging from its local application in the small sphere of a single life to the vast universal plan that embraces the whole Creation. The Will of God provided for Calvary and all that is associated with that sublime sacrifice. But it did not begin with Calvary, nor with Sinai, nor with Abraham's call, nor yet in Eden, but far back along the highway of time, when God purposed that all things in heaven and earth should for all time be made subject to Christ (Col. 1: 20. Eph. 1: 10). This is an expression of His Will, comprehensive and absolute—towards which all succeeding Ages are contributing their quota—hence the call of Abraham with its unalterable Promise, the thunders and Covenant of Sinai, and even the tragedy of Calvary, are but

outstanding steps by the way to that far-off Divine event to which the whole creation moves. From those far distant days the eternal God made known that He had found One in whom Divine wisdom could have everlasting confidence to "Head-up" both righteous beings, and righteous principles. That in its largest sense is the Will of God; but every stage of the development to that distant end is also accomplished according to the same over-ruling Will.

In consecration we behold a new and proper relationship of that sovereign Will to the small circle of an individual life. It brings the heart of a thenceforth willing child into alignment with its Father's good pleasure. The Will of God existed and pre-dated that little life by many ages but that act of submission brings that eternal Will into that little life to direct and use it for God's own ends. Consecration has brought that little life into alignment and harmony with an eternal purpose.

It is here that the fundamental moral issues underlying the whole Divine programme come into view, and give to the "act" and "life" of consecration their proper setting and value. It is very, very necessary to realise (with a very full realisation) that consecration relates the surrendered being to one side of the most intense antagonism which the whole wide universe, and the whole round of time has ever witnessed, or can ever witness, between the fundamental principles of sin and holiness, and between the two outstanding spirit beings who are their principal protagonists. God's Will is no "hole-in-the-corner" matter—it is no parochial affair. It is universal in its sphere, and will ultimately involve everyone and everything.

Lucifer's rebellion in the heavenly realms sent waves of disaffection universe-wide. It divided into two parts those bright sons of the morning who sang for joy at Creation's early dawn—who thenceforth took their places on this side or that of the contending forces. And as they then took their place, so have they continued to stand. Some of them are now called "spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places" (Eph. 6: 11-12.); others are the "ministering spirits who are sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1: 14.) From Lucifer the spirit of rebellion spread also to the earth and "sin entered into the world."

This spirit of conflict lies at the very heart of the universe and involves every thing or principle that is of good or ill to every intelli-

gent being in heaven or earth. It is not enough to think of Satan (and his rebellion) in a loose indefinite sort of way, as though the frequent hindering or thwarting of God's saints, or his temptation of weak unstable souls were the full scope of his activities. These are only incidentals—more in the nature of side issues to a far greater and more fundamental issue. Satan is a powerful rebel against Divine authority, and is fighting might and main for a kingdom. Driven forth from heaven, he is fighting with desperate determination to keep the kingdom which he and his evil minions have built up. Every evil device, every strategem in iniquity is in his hand to be employed to that end. And so far, he has every reason to think his rebellion a success, for he won over to his banners those bright angelic beings in the very courts of heaven itself, and extended his empire also to the habitations of men.

It is this universal situation that lies behind God's invitation to His people to consecrate themselves to His Will. God has purposed, and pledged Himself on the inviolability of His Holy Name that all the earth shall yet be filled with His glory, and that no trace of sin or rebellion shall be tolerated beyond a pre-determined time. To that end God has been calling all who hate iniquity and love righteousness to enlist beneath His banners, and share with Him in the great task of cleansing both heaven and earth from their defiling stains. "Consecration" implies voluntary enlistment into the ranks of the armies of God in order to be trained and prepared for the great Battle of the Day of God Almighty. It implies the full acceptance of the Will of God as the supreme authority in life, and the full and complete repudiation of the claims of all other men or angels to have any control over the actions or desires.

Hitherto the antagonism between sin and holiness and between Lucifer and God, has been more like the "pull" of two opposing magnets rather than the clash of open hostilities. Each man throughout the world has been like the compass-needle, possessed of some free swing but swinging towards this or that magnet, according to the power of its pull, and the degree of affinity between the magnet and the needle. Satanic power has exerted all its magnetism; Divine power has not!—hence the "Sin Magnet" has drawn and still draws by far the greater number within its "field." The record of human existence tells of an

almost unrestricted permission for Satan to work his way. He poisoned and tainted the affections of almost every human heart and made it difficult for men to live amicably with his fellows. Man, under Satan's influence became more selfish and self-centred—imbued with the idea of self-possession. To obtain and acquire this self-centred, self-satisfying possession of the earth's bounties men stooped to lying, stealing, and other means of taking what they wanted. The strong man either subjugated and exploited his weaker brother, or slew him out of the way. In this way arose the first primitive kingships of antiquity, and the primal orders of society, from which the huge aggressive organisations, and the present world order has been involved.

Concurrently with them have grown modes of life—customs, institutions and practices which hold the souls of men in thrall. The power of Satan over man is defined as tending to "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witch-craft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like." Thus, response to the Satanic magnet resolves itself down to acts of wickedness and darkness—the practical level of a sinful life. The world to-day is covetousness and selfishness writ large; the outgrowth of those smaller ancient systems which embodied, for ill, the principles of defiance and rebellion which Satan transplanted from heaven to earth in Eden days. And the whole system of Satanic control reduces itself to constant repetition, from generation to generation, of those various acts of wickedness which man has been taught to love and prefer by his Satanic master. Satan's "magnet" is over the whole Gentile system—it is his "world" and his "kingdom." It is of his building and is permeated with his spirit and his principles.

Into this predominantly Satanic "field" every son of Adam has been born. He has the taint of sin in his blood. The force of heredity and the power of environment constrain each one to run in its grooves. Into this predominating Satanic "field" of evil, God has sent His Word and His messengers to "draw" to Himself such men and women as have some regard for righteousness in their hearts. Enoch and Noah were the choicest products of "the world that was." Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and all the prophets were men drawn to the service of God. Since Pentecost God has been drawing those whose hearts have shown appreciation for

righteousness. God has drawn them by the power enshrined in His Word, and by His Spirit, and, as men have willingly yielded themselves to His Will, His holy power has permeated their lives, and led them to a purer and nobler form of life. Self-centredness has given place to self-denial, while love of self has been displaced by a love for one's brother. It is to the point to note that the Apostles set this purer life as the standard of rectitude for the consecrated followers of the Lord. Note particularly the words of Paul in Eph. 4: 17, and onwards to Chap. 5: 20. The good actions required in the saints are set over against the evil deeds of the Gentiles, and the believer is exhorted to eschew the deeds of darkness. This also is the purport of the Apostle's appeal to the Romans (Chap. 6:) to present their members unto God as instruments of righteousness, leading unto holiness—so that they shall not henceforth serve sin.

Consecration to God begins by turning one's back upon sin—that is, upon sinful acts—and seeking with all one's power to do those purer things which have God's approval. This means that the Satanic magnet is attracting less strongly than heretofore, and that the Divine "pull" is getting stronger as the days go by. The reforming drunkard, the converted criminal, are standing on the first threshold of the consecrated life, and as they seek to walk in the ways of truth and rectitude, they become more aligned with God on the great fundamental issues of the Ages. This is not placing the stress for their salvation upon these works, for apart from acceptance by faith of the merit of Jesus' sacrifice, there can be no acceptance by God of any man's efforts towards righteousness. But, faith in the Redeemer's sacrifice being present, these attempts to perform purer works brings the believer more nearly into harmony with God, and with God's ultimate purpose.

Consecration, therefore, means the voluntary enlistment of a life (which already has or is finding some affinity with righteousness) in the ranks which Almighty God is assembling and preparing in readiness for the ultimate conflict—the actual clash of hostilities—with which the reign of sin will be brought to an end. It matters not where one's ultimate destiny will be found, whether among the Church of the Firstborns, or among restored and purified Israel, or among the "Whosoever will" of the wider call of Rev. 22: 17, the general principle involved in consecration will remain the same.

It will imply the acceptance of the sovereign Will of God as the supreme law of heart and life. It will imply the taking of a vow to withstand the enticing power of sin in every word, thought and act. It implies a pledge to pursue uprightness and transparent honesty in the daily round of life. It means that one would not withhold so little as one hay-seed from the equitable balance, nor one drop from the lawful measure, nor one hairs-breadth from the mete-yard. It means that no inaccurate or untruthful word would willingly be spoken—and that no man's character (to say nothing of his life) shall ever be in jeopardy or danger from our hand.

Thus in the practical matter-of-fact sphere of the daily life, various actions which are described as "fruits of the Spirit" (Gal. 5: 22-23.) are set forth as the approved opposites of the evil modes of life peculiar to the world of the flesh and Satan. (Gal. 5: 19-21.) This

mode of countering the evil act by the good; of the untruthful word by the true; of the evil thought by the pure, is but bringing the arena of the eternal conflict down to its lowest practical level; and it is on this level that consecration to the good and true, i.e., to the Will of God must begin. Whatever else may be involved in consecration in its higher phases, this lowlier phase carries right through for every man, no matter what his ultimate destiny comes to be. Call it conversion if we will, or describe it by other term, consecration begins by turning away from the path of sin (which is the path of Satan) into the path of virtue and righteousness.

It is a voluntary choice of sides in the eternal conflict—choosing the banners of the Lord, instead of the service of Satan. That is its beginning, but beyond that beginning lie tremendous further privileges if we will only follow the present leadings of the Lord.

The Coming Age

(W. H. P.)

AMID events so tragic and stupendous,
The wreck of empires and the fall of kings,
There is a power Divine that will defend us,
Though there should come upon us vaster things.

Great is the Lord of Hosts, supreme in glory,
Wondrous His wisdom, marvellous His might;
The nations, though renowned in human story—
Lo, they are but as nothing in His sight.

Beneath the tempest of His wrath outpouring,
The heavens like a veil are rent in twain;
The sea and all the waves thereof are roaring,
The hills and mountains levelled to the plain.

Yet is He working out for our salvation
A wonderful and comprehensive plan,
Above our loftiest imagination,
Embracing in its fulness every man.

Beyond this desolating "time of trouble,"
This "Day of God" by prophets long foretold,
Wherein the nations are consumed as stubble—
Beyond all this there comes the age of gold.

His power Divine shall burst the bonds asunder
Which now enslave our helpless fallen race,
And man shall view with reverence and wonder
This mighty miracle of saving grace.

But not alone the living; all that slumber
Within the gloomy caverns of the dead—
These shall come forth, a vast awakened number,
A peaceful renovated earth to tread.

Behold this earth, to liberty uprising,
From anarchy and despotism free,
Endowed with strength and beauty tranquilising,
Like some fair island of a tropic sea.

Six thousand years of tyranny are ended,
Six thousand years of misery and pain,
And now before us dawns the vision splendid,
The longed-for glory of Messiah's reign.

From Zion peace and truth are ever flowing
In streams beneficent to all mankind,
New life and hope and happiness bestowing,
Hearing and eyesight to the deaf and blind.

The wilderness and solitary places
With joy abound and "blossom as the rose,"
And nature's wise and loving hand effaces
The last dark evidence of human woes.

Released from Satan's rule the world is wending
Its eager way to Paradise again,
And Truth and Righteousness and Love are blending
In one great Brotherhood the sons of men.

And all shall know the Lord and to Him render
The praise and worship due unto His name,
And own with gratitude His mercies tender,
His wisdom magnify, His love proclaim.

Mankind in harmony and love progressing
Along their spacious, unimpeded way,
Beneath Divine authority and blessing
Shall gain the sunlight of the perfect day.

THE RESURRECTION HOPE IN CONTRAST.

Julius Caesar boldly averred, in a speech made in the Roman Senate, that man had nothing to fear, or hope for, after death. Speaking of death he says: "Concerning punishment we are enabled to speak confidently, as to what may pertain to it, that for the grieving, and miserable, death brings a state of absolute repose from all affliction, and not a state of excruciating agony. It sets mortals more absolutely free from every form of evil; and beyond it there is no place for either trouble or enjoyment."

M. Portius Cato, an illustrious philosopher of the Stoic School, gives these sentiments of Caesar his unqualified approbation in these words:—"Caesar a very short time ago reasoned in a happy pertinent style, in this particular manner, concerning life and death. In making his estimate of what is commonly narrated about the dwellers in the nether world he says, 'I believe it all false that the wicked make a diverse journey from that made by the good, to hideous, waste, foul, and horrible abodes.'"

In the opinion of those eminent Romans death ended all, and this was the opinion of whole schools of heathen philosophers. With these, misery has its end in the eternal insensibility and unconsciousness of the grave. To what Caesar and Cato have said we will only add, at this time, the expression of another Roman of distinguished eminence. The Elder Pliny, speaking of the death-state, says:—"From the last death-day the same state will be for all as it was before the first birth-day. Onward from death there will never more be either bodily sensation or mental consciousness any more than there was anterior to our birth." Pliny thus makes our human existence a brief hour of sensation and unconsciousness between two eternal nights. (Plato's philosophy had not yet gained general acceptance amongst Romans). Leaving now the ancients let us see how this latter thought of Pliny was draped in figure by one of our English ancestry. Green, in his history of the English people, informs us that an aged Ealdorman once addressed Eadwine, king of Northumbria, in the following manner:—"So seems the life of man, O King, as a sparrow's flight through the hall when a man is sitting at meat in winter-tide

with the warm fire lighted on the hearth, but the chill rainstorm without. The sparrow flies in at one door and tarries for a moment in the light and heat of the hearth-fire, and then flying forth from the other vanishes into the wintry darkness from whence it came. So tarries for a moment the life of man in our sight, but what is before it, what after it, we know not."

Then speaking of Christianity, which was then just being introduced into Britain, he says:—"If this new teaching tell us aught certainly of these let us follow it." The mysteries of life and death were pathetic themes for the bards. The language of one of these poets of the olden times warns the living in these words:—"Soon will it be, that sickness or swordblade shear thy strength from thee, or the fire ring thee, or the flood overwhelm thee, or the sword grip thee, or arrow hit thee, or age o'ertake thee, and thine eye's brightness sink down into darkness." With them life and death were controlled by "weird" or destiny. "Strong as he might be, man struggled in vain with the doom that encompassed him, that girded his life with a thousand perils and broke it at so short a span." Life had its work of "doomed deeds," closing in the fateful "weirdness" of death and the tomb. It was a "sparrow-flight through the warm light room" from an eternal winter-night out into the self-same eternal winter-night again—into endless darkness and nothingness.

How ardently we should prize the glorious gospel through which "life and immortality are brought to light." In order to understand this let us read, in contrast to the words above quoted, some few of the triumphant expressions of the ancient worthies, who walked in the light of divine revelation, and spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Says Job:—"I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself and mine eyes shall behold, and not another: though my reins be consumed within me." David says: "As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness." Speaking of the living God, Isaiah

says: "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall be taken away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it." And again: "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing ye that dwell in dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." We close the contrast with the glowing words of Paul who lived shortly after Caesar and Cato, and who was contemporary with Pliny. "Behold I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on

incorruption, and this mortal shall have to put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Jesus Christ is "the resurrection and the life," and He will raise up all His people at the last day. Death, to the believer, is only the briefest suspension of conscious activities, and the grave-sleep a short, deep, undisturbed and unmeasured repose, during which the unmanifested life is hid with Christ in God. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

THE GOLDEN DAWN

"All things are onward moving!—Let the blessed time begin!
The Old is swiftly passing, and the New is coming in!
The golden bells are ringing, and the pageant sweeps along
Like an army that is speeding to the measure of a song.

"Dark theories now are waning: they are weak to build upon;
The light is on the hill-tops, and the Truth is marching on:—
Old landmarks are but shadows, which now fade and flee away
Before the mighty forces that are coming in to-day.

"O brother, why this waiting? And my sister, why so mute?
Up with the early sunshine; Watching for the golden fruit!
O poet, why this sorrow? O thou minstrel, why this hush?
And painter, why so long delay the heavenly tint and blush?

"Up with the larks of morning! Up with the rising sun!
Waiting not for noon-day, nor halting when begun!
For everything is moving; let the blessed time begin!
The old is swiftly passing, and the New is coming in!

"The heavenly light is spreading,—spreading at the King's command!
It is spreading in its glory, speeding onward through the land.
Human creeds are downward tending; let them droop and fade away.
Following in the dawning sunlight, we now see a better way.

"Oh, let us all be ready for the work we have to do,—
Toiling late and early, for the labourers are few!
Reaping, as instructed, in the morning light;
Reaping in the harvest field,—toiling for the right!

"All things are onward moving! Let earth's Jubilee begin!
The Old is swiftly passing, and the New is coming in!
It is coming! Oh 'tis coming, for my raptured eyes behold!
The light is on the hill-tops, the Shepherd with his Fold."

THE PATHS OF MERCY AND TRUTH

"All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth to such as keep his covenant."

Psa. 25: 10

It is extremely sweet doctrine to be assured that every step of the consecrated life is under the control of our loving Father in heaven. At all times it is comforting to be reminded that "All things work together for good, to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose," but it is especially helpful to have this assurance repeated frequently in seasons of trial and difficulty. Most of the children of God are such *leaking vessels*, that the sweetness of the morning's promise is apt to be forgotten before tired eyelids close for the night's repose. And for that reason every consecrated child of God needs the frequent reminder that every phase of his life is under the supervision of an Eye that never sleeps; that all the way he is kept in the hollow of a Hand that never grows weary. It is not that we want to forget that sublime fact—it is not that we find any pleasure in the slips of memory which afflict our advancing years.

But because the summers and winters steal by with increasing speed (or so it seems) and because modern life is so full of responsibilities of so many kinds, the things that belong to the higher life seems at times to be crowded into a very small corner of our day, even if they are not fully crowded out for a time. But no true child of the Father in heaven, is ever averse to being reminded again and again of that loving Father's Care. He will find it soothing to his heart, after a worrying day, to be told again that he is one of the sheep of His pasture; that the Lord is his Shepherd and that whether his pathway lies through the green pastures or the valley of shadows, the Lord is with him to keep and protect him all the way. When, during the day, the tender spirit of the New Creature has been wounded by the instability or harshness of some poor son of Adam, how good it is to be told of a Friend who standeth closer than any Brother, to whisper a word of comfort to our aching heart. It is the perfect end to any day to be able to listen to the gentle assurance of tongue or pen that no act or word need have cost us our Father's smile. Not that the day's page would not show blot or smudge (for indeed, no day is entirely free from short-coming or failure) but because by the grace of God, so many of His paths are paths of mercy. Long

ago, the Father of Mercies made provision for our need. He sent down from heaven a Saviour, who, by His death, can save His people from their sins. Himself without sin, yet in His compassionate love for men, became Himself the bearer of their sins. He gave Himself, the "just for the unjust that He might bring us to God" (1 Pet. 3: 18.) He reconciled us by His death; He now lives to save us by His living, loving care (Rom. 5: 10.) The path of mercy, from our first feeble Christian days, till now, is hedged about by His precious blood. It is a scarlet trail, for precious blood made possible our first faltering step in Grace, and precious blood has made safe our every further step.

From those first feeble feelings after God, when escaping from the darkness of sin, till now we know our God (and also are known of Him) the blood upon the lintel has been the constant pledge of our security and safety. No day has passed but that we have drawn upon the store of compassionate mercy—yet our constant claims have not impoverished the store, nor exhausted its supply. New every morning, and fresh with each evening's shades have been these resources of grace, for that precious blood was of compensating worth for every man, and for all time, and so, because Divine Law was satisfied, Divine Grace has been free to come to our relief, abundantly—yea, more than that, we have received superabundantly of His Grace. Thus, many paths in our lives which the Lord has directed have had their commencement in His Mercy, while all along the way, the shady bowers and quiet resting places have been fragrant with His Grace. Let us thank our Gracious God for His Goodness.

But along with Grace He gave us knowledge; along with mercy He gave us truth! "The paths of the Lord are mercy and truth." First those simple elementary truths which told us of our need for a Saviour to free us from our sins, and to release us from Father Adam's condemnation. The truth about God's own love was wonderful—it cost Him His dear Son. The greatness of His Gift was the measure of His Love. That truth was sweet to our famished hearts. It was the first satisfying

Truth we had ever learned. No collegiate course ever imparted Truth so satisfying and refreshing. Nor has any instruction from any other source in later days, brought such abiding joy. To the end of our earthly days, nay, let us say for all eternity, the remembrance of that blessed fact that God loved the world so much that He gave His Son to die, will never lose its soul-reviving power.

But Redeeming love was but the prelude to Paternal Love. We learned another transcendent Truth that He who redeemed us at such infinite cost desired to have us as His sons and daughters. He called us to follow in the footsteps of His First-born Son, that we might enter the innermost circle of His family, and be the Father's eternal delight. Our Gracious God caused His beloved Son to become unto us a channel of Wisdom, Justification, Sanctification, and ultimate Redemption. And in order that all these steps of Grace might be realized in us, and experienced by us, He gave us Truth accordant with each step. He taught us not only to learn the Truth, but also how to profit by that Truth. Knowledge thus acquired, then rightly applied, became in us "Wisdom." Knowledge that the Victim died for sin (and that means, among other things, for my sin; for our sins) led us humbly to seek our acquittal at God's hands, so that henceforth there should be no condemnation laid to our charge.

Knowledge that God desired the submission of our lives, so that we should no longer serve sin, but live solely unto Him, brought us to the point where He could invest us with His Holiness, and set us apart to His Will and

Purpose. What a wonderful School God keeps! What an excellent syllabus He has arranged! How incomparable is the education He provides! He educates His pupils for Eternity; for Omniscience! He trains them for Kingship for the highest Throne! He dedicates them for a Priesthood—to succour untold millions "who are out of the way!" He moulds them to be replicas of Himself, to be channels of His Great Love, of Infinite Mercy and tender Compassion.

This is all so wonderful, but—(is there a "but" in this overflow of grace?), yes indeed,—this glorious accomplishment is contingent upon the keeping of "His covenant and testimonies."

God requires as the condition of His oversight in our lives, first, a covenant of sacrifice—a vow intelligently and solemnly sworn—and then obedience to His Sovereign Will throughout our days. Disobedience would dam the refreshing streams of mercy and grace. Forwardness and headiness would blight the fruitage of His Truth. His word would cease to satisfy, and soul hunger, such as no plenty on earth could gratify, would set in. But if His children keep His Covenant, and observe His testimonies, then "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature" can interfere or block one single path of the Lord's mercy and truth in their lives.

Do we know that this is true? Then happy indeed are we!

THE CRITICS' MISTAKE

"This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."

Matt. 24: 34

Many attacks have been made by Atheists, Freethinkers, and Higher Critics upon the bonafides of our Lord as a teacher sent from God on account of His words in verse 34. Looking at the long category of events foretold in this Olivet conversation, and not noting with sufficient carefulness what proportion of these forecasts were included in the scope of "all these things" they have claimed that Jesus' words were falsified by events. This is a serious charge to lay against One who said "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away."

They have included all the signs and portents

connected with His second advent in the scope of "these things." Manifestly that was a wrong thing to do. The "All these things" of Matt. 24: 34, must be governed and defined by the meaning of the same words, from the same lips, as recorded in Matt. 23: 36. "All these things" refer only to the crimes perpetrated upon the Prophets by the fathers; and to the "filling up of the Cup" by that generation as it slew the Stephens, and the James and Peters and Pauls, who came in Jesus' Name. And the retribution that came for "All these things" could fall only on that people, and only while they were unrepentant concerning their crimes.

Jesus spoke of many things associated with His return which lay outside the scope of "All these things." It will not be forgotten that Jesus was answering "three" questions, not one. It would therefore be most improper to place all His words in reply to the one question "When shall these things be." Even the sign of the budding fig-tree—the return of the Jewish favour—should not be included; for that indicates punishment ending and restoration begun.

Again, the signs apply to peoples other than the Jew should not be included; for they were not the children of those ancient fathers who had slain God's prophets. Further, the particular signs applicable to the Christian Church, in verses 42-51, must obviously be omitted from "All these things."

However, when we have cleared the ground of our enquiry from all these mistakes and misunderstandings, there yet remains one other point to be cleared up, and set in order. That point has to do with the word "fulfilled" in verse 34. It is generally understood that this word should have the same meaning as the words "accomplished" or "completed." But the word used by our Lord does not mean "come to pass" in the sense of being ended; but "come to pass" in the sense of beginning to happen, or beginning to take place.

One Greek Scholar and writer says on this word "The Lord concludes this special prophecy of the tribulation by adding, 'Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all these things begin to take place.'" He then explains that the Greek word **Genetai** used by our Lord here is a derivative of the Greek **Ginomai**, which has a wide variety of meanings, few of which are so definite as the thought in our word "fulfilled." He further says "The word is **genetai** from **ginomai** and means 'to begin to be; to come to be; and is quite different from **pleroo** which does mean to fulfil.'" In Luke 21: 32 which is the parallel passage, we have the former word "begin to be," while in verse 24, we have the latter word "fulfilled" (referring to the Times of the Gentiles). Professors Young and Strong, in their concordances verify this suggestion regarding **ginomai**. Young shows it to be translated "be"—(the verb "to be") 249 times; "come to pass" 82 times, and many other forms which show a present and not a past fulfilment. Strong says **ginomai** (to cause to be; "to become")—is used with great latitude. He then gives a list of words which include "arise" "be assembled;" "be" "be brought to pass," "con-

tinue" and many more indicative of a present happening. As an instance we may note a form of **genetai** in John 13: 2, which in our Authorised Version is translated "and supper being ended." It is quite clear from verses 26-28, that supper was not ended but was only just beginning. The Revised Version renders it "and during supper." The Diaglott translates it "as supper was preparing."

What the Lord really said was "This generation shall not pass till 'all these things' **'begin to happen.'**" And they did begin to happen to that very generation! As if to show that this is the correct thought the Lord throws in a very illuminating phrase when He said "THE END is not yet"—"these are the **BEGINNING** of sorrows."

This throws a new light on this baffling passage. The cup of Divine retribution was placed to the lips of that generation, and they drank deeply of its bitter draught, but that generation did not empty the cup. The great tribulation only **BEGAN** in their days. The overthrow of their city and nation was only the beginning of those special curses incorporated in the terms of their national Covenant. Warning the fathers of the penalties which the forsaking of their Covenant would entail (Deut. 28: 15-68.) he told them God would pluck them out of their land and curse them in field and home, and cast them into the wide places of the earth. Nowhere, not even in the Papal catalogue of cursings, are such terrible words to be found; and in their infliction there is nothing so terrible to be found in the records of history. That it had a portion of its fulfilment in the siege of Jerusalem is certain when we read verses 49-57; and that the nation from far is the Roman nation seems to admit of no doubt whatever. Then verse 64 says "The Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth to the other." Jesus said "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations" (Luke 21: 24.)

Evidently then, while the sack of Jerusalem saw the beginning of their "great tribulation," yet, terrible as it was, it was only the beginning of sorrows and not the end. It was to continue till they should repent and be prepared to say "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Our Lord calls it "the tribulation of those days." "Those days" span an Age—the period that lies between Jerusalem's destruction, and that happier day when God pours upon them the spirit of supplication, when every family shall weep apart. (Zech. 10: 12.)

When therefore the Lord said "this generation shall not pass till all these things begin to come to pass," His words were not intended to cover all the signs and portents associated with His Parousia, but had reference only to the retributive measures due to be inflicted upon that rebellious nation, and to have their beginning with that then present generation. For centuries they had rebelled and shed innocent blood, but retribution was long delayed.

For their national crimes no adequate recompense had been made, but Justice had kept its account, and at long last, when the "cup" was filled to the brim by the murder of the Son of God and His faithful Apostles, the account was presented. It was due for recompense, and it was due at the hands of that wicked and perverse generation, and thenceforward, till they should "mourn" for Him who they then rejected.

THE LAND OF PROMISE.

Be glad, thou thirsty desert: let the wilderness exult, and flower as the lily. And the desert places of Jordan shall blossom and rejoice; the glory of Libanus has been given to it, and the honour of Carmel, and my people shall see the glory of the Lord and the majesty of God.

Be strong, ye relaxed hands and palsied knees. Comfort one another, ye faint-hearted; be strong, fear not; behold, our God renders judgment, and He will render it; He will come and save us. Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall hear. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the stammerers shall speak plainly; for water has burst forth in the desert, and a channel of water in a thirsty land. And the dry land shall become pools, and a fountain of water shall be poured into the thirsty land; there shall there be a joy of birds, ready habitations and marshes. There shall be there a pure way, and it shall be called a holy way; and there shall not pass by there any unclean person, neither shall there be there an unclean way; but the dispersed shall walk on it, and they shall not go astray. And there shall be no lion there, neither shall any evil beast go up upon it, nor at all be found there; but the redeemed and gathered on the Lord's behalf shall walk in it, and shall return, and come to Sion with joy, and everlasting joy shall be over their head; for on their head shall be praise and exultation, and joy shall take possession of them; sorrow and pain, and groaning have fled away.

(Septuagint translation of Isa. 35.)

CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE.

There is no preaching of the truth more forcible than the silent influence of a consistent Christian character, bearing in richness and luxuriousness the fruits of the Spirit, which are

love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, and self-control. And no preaching of the truth, however eloquent, reasonable, and logical, is likely to be productive of results to the glory of God, if not backed by the silent yet potent influence of a consistent Christian life.

Here is a way of preaching the gospel which may be measurably overlooked by some who are anxious to do more active service in the cause we love. Let us not forget that golden opportunities lie all about us. Ye are indeed living epistles, known and read of all men. Our families, our relatives, our neighbours, are judging of the truth by its effects upon us. Let us not forget this. We must be transparent and let the light of God's truth shine through all our doings.

"IN THAT DAY"

The Scriptures clearly teach that a part, at least, of our work in the future will be to officiate as the priests of God. As the work of a priest is one of intercession and of instruction in righteousness, they clearly prove that the glorious work of evangelisation will go on after the resurrection has taken place. The fact that these offices of "king" and "priest" will exist, logically implies that there will be subjects to rule and learners to teach; otherwise the names would be meaningless and the titles an empty sound.

It is held by some that the reign of the saints will consist of a very brief "reign of terror," during which—with Jesus at their head—they will trample their enemies into the dust and utterly destroy them. We thank our dear Lord for a better hope. Our work will not be one of destruction but of salvation. We shall rule as kings, and the grand object will be to teach the nations, and so fit them for the reception of truth. "For, when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." Isa. 26, 9.

VALUE OF THE PRESENT LIFE.

Is life worth living? What a question! Who would die? gladly youth replies, buoyant with hope, unfettered with care, the ruddy cheek glowing with health, the eye sparkling with pleasure. How sweet to be, to think, to move, to drink of joy on every hand. Oh, who could part with life?

Is life worth living? 'Tis youth again gives answer, but hope has fled. The pale face, emaciated form, and sunken eye betoken affliction's heavy hand, with days and nights of anguish and unrest. Oh what is life to me!—to be, and suffer. Life is a synonym of pain, and time means torture.

And what has life for you, O man of riper years! busy from early morn till close of day. Has labour aught of joy that one should care to live? Talk not to me of giving up to plan and do, gaining of knowledge, wealth, honour's wreath, and fame's fair title. 'Tis true, life has its trials, cares, its stormy days, but these are only fleeting shadows that serve to gild the intervening time with brighter splendour. But again an answer comes from him who has reached the meridian of life in our day. Misfortune on the right hand and the left. Life to me means toil for naught. Affection has no sooner settled firm around earth's fairest blossoms than death puts an end to all our cherished hopes. Friends are gained but to be lost again. Honour is a bubble to be bursted by the first foul breath of jealousy. The cup of pleasure scarce is lifted to the lips till dashed to earth again. To judge the future by the past, what has life in store that I should crave it?

And what of life? 'Tis now the gray-haired veteran gives reply. The weight of years has bent the once proud form, furrowed the cheek and brow, and robbed the senses of their acuteness. Alone, and trembling on the verge of the grave, memory of younger days is all there is left of comfort. The days of the years of my pilgrimage have been few and dull of sorrow. The beacon lights of pleasure, wealth and glory are as fleeting as the moments we employ in their pursuit, as changeful as the firefly, and if secured are only vanity. Humanity's portion is, to be, to hope, to hover between its fruition and despair, and end in death, fitting finale of the fitful dream.

But Christian, what say you of life? It is our first and greatest blessing, the preface to eternity, the time in which true happiness may be forever gained. I look not for the present earthly joy, knowing full well that the afflictions, trials and temptations which abound are means by which God proves me, whether I will do His sovereign will. What virtue in obeying Him if there are no desires of my own to disregard? How may I prove Him to be the chief object of my affections and not be called upon to deny myself for His sake? Life affords the opportunity to battle for immortality, to struggle for an existence that shall prove eternal. They who use it for a baser purpose are void of understanding. The curse of God now rests upon the land. We need not think to find our heart's desires where such a blighting curse exists. But He has promised to remove all evil in His own good time, when, with His blessing here instead, happiness shall be ours. Rejoicing in His love so freely manifested in the gift of His only Son, who even died to redeem us from our present sin-cursed state, gladly do I seek to follow Him, scorning all that earth now has in store, and present my body a living sacrifice to God, a reasonable service. I am made conformable unto His death, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection. I rejoice in His self-denial, and partake of His sufferings, that I may share in His joy and glory. Glory to God in the highest! for the being and time by which I may work out so great a destiny. Whatever may be my portion now, I praise His name for life; for I look not at the things that are seen, they are temporal, but at the things that are not seen, which He has promised, for they are eternal. "He that loveth His life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Those who live to make the most they possibly can of earthly objects through their present fleshly nature, are doomed to bitter disappointment. This life can prove a blessing only when lived for God.—P. W. Pope.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ANONYMOUS.

With very sincere appreciation is joined the acknowledgment of anonymous donations of 9/- and £1 respectively.

NEW BOOKLETS.

One or two friends have suggested that the two series of articles recently appearing in the "B.S.M." and entitled "The Beauty of Holiness" and "Concerning them which are fallen asleep," should be reprinted in booklet form. As an aid to a decision on this suggestion we would be glad to have word from friends who would like to see either or both of these books published. A postcard within the next two weeks would be much appreciated.

ANNUAL REPORT.

The Annual Report and balance sheet of the Committee's activities will be ready during August. Copies will be sent to the Secretaries of classes with whom the Committee has been in touch during the past year, for distribution to their members. Isolated friends and others who wish for a copy are requested to send a request in to that effect and one will be posted direct as soon as they are available.

THE NEW CREATION.

Our stock of the books offered last month is now exhausted and this offer is therefore withdrawn. We tender our regrets to a number of friends who were disappointed, their applications having come in too late.

ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY.

Many friends will remember the booklet "God's Covenants," published by the Committee about ten years ago. It is not intended to reprint this booklet, and in order that the remaining stock may be put to some useful purpose by those who esteem the booklet we are prepared to send packet of 15 copies for one shilling post free while the stock lasts. Early application would be appreciated.

A REQUEST.

The office will be pleased to have the benefit of knowledge possessed by any of the friends regarding farms and agricultural establishments where openings are likely to exist for some of our younger brethren who are now under obligation to obtain such work. Such information will be very sincerely appreciated and will be of considerable help.

KINGDOM CARDS.

Notwithstanding the announcement in last month's issue, Kingdom Cards continue to arrive insufficiently stamped, necessitating one penny surcharge on each card. It will be much appreciated if friends distributing these cards take care to alter the stamp corner to 1d. in black ink in order to assist in the elimination of this unlooked for expense.

REPRINTS.

The Bookroom has in stock a few odd volumes of Reprints—Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7, but insufficient to form a complete set. They will be despatched to anyone for 2/6 post free per volume whilst the stock lasts.

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Charts of the Tabernacle, linen, coloured, 30" x 22", are available while the stock lasts at a special price of 2/6 each post free. After the present stock is exhausted it is not proposed to stock these charts any longer. The same charts, not coloured, will be sent for 1/- each post free.

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Cambridge Bible Dictionary
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1913 " "
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BIBLE STUDENTS' MONTHLY



haph hinc - jmdan cap
ay. Tohr agenu he com

Blessed are ye when men revile
persecute you / and shall falsly say
of you sayinge theye are
Ist men

All battels shalbe crafte
mountayne and hyl lapyd
sois trobed shalbe made be

ye seed of Abraham his servan
Jacob his chosen.
is the Lo R. o our God: his is

And God shall wipe away all
tears from their eyes: and there
shall be no more death, neither
mourne, nor crying: neither shall
there be any more pain: for the
former things are passed away.

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SEPTEMBER, 1940

THREEPENCE

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THE ASSOCIATED BIBLE STUDENTS OF GREAT BRITAIN.

An undenominational Christian fellowship devoted to the study and dissemination of Bible truth in the light of present-day knowledge and to the deepening of personal Christian life and experience. Its members stand unreservedly for the teachings of Jesus Christ as a complete solution to humanity's problems, and believe in the eventual establishment of a new order of society upon earth in which the principles of love, equity and righteousness will prevail and evil be eliminated; and that under the spiritual rule of Christ and His Church the dead will be restored and mankind live in eternal harmony with God.

Bible Students Monthly

This periodical is published under the supervision of the Bible Students Committee, the articles appearing therein having been read and approved by at least five members before publication.

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Bible Students who, by reason of old age, infirmity or other adverse circumstances, are unable to pay for this journal may have it free of charge if annual request is made to that effect. This expense is met by voluntary donations from those interested.

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C. G. Sears, 52 Huxley Road, Welling, Kent.

PILGRIM SERVICE

Renewed consideration has been given by the Committee to the question of Pilgrim Service.

The conditions of to-day differ very materially from those of twenty or even ten years ago, and with travel restrictions and food rationing difficulties, the increasing difficulty many brethren experience in offering accommodation (though we know their spirit and desire is as zealous as ever) and the greater financial difficulties of these days all combine to make pilgrim service after the time honoured fashion virtually impossible. One or two brethren do find it possible to continue a few visits at their own expense, making their arrangements privately, and we are glad for this manifestation of zeal and love for the Lord's cause on their part. In the main, however, the pilgrim visits of past times are no longer possible, and it does not seem as though the way is likely to open up for their resumption.

In view of these circumstances, the Committee would much appreciate suggestions from the brethren as to what they would like to see in the form of a substitute. There are many capable brethren who are free at week-ends and willing to travel to serve the interests of the Truth. Restrictions on railway travel make it easier for such brethren to proceed to the larger towns rather than to country places, and it may well be that if friends could arrange to foregather at a convenient railway centre, the Committee could arrange to book a suitable hall for special Sunday meetings. Will friends who feel their need of visits of this kind please discuss with each other such suggestions and ideas as occur to their minds, and write to the office with conclusions on the subject. We shall then perhaps gain some indication of our Master's leading in this matter as to future service, and will gladly do all that lies within our power to minister to these needs amongst the brethren.

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worth;
Age to age, and shore to
shore,
Praise Him, praise Him
evermore!

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A LIVING SACRIFICE

"By the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice." Rom. 12, 1.

The attitude of consecration to righteousness and truth in word and act, is an attitude which God will one day claim the right to command. God will no longer adopt the passive or permissible attitude to the sinner or his sin. Failing to respond to the imperative claims of the Divine Law-Giver, the sinner will forfeit his opportunity to enter into life—and death will overtake him.

But during this present permitted reign of evil, God's relation to consecration is that of an "Inviter," not of a "Commander." He has not yet said that any man "must" consecrate, but He has made it known that under certain definite conditions a man "may" consecrate himself. Concerning this advanced stage of consecration the Apostle says "No man taketh this honour unto himself but he that is called of God . . ." (Heb. 5: 4.); and many are the Scriptures which speak of God's prerogative to call and choose whom He wills for this or that part in His Eternal purpose. Even "Christ glorified not himself to be made an High Priest" (Heb. 5: 5.) but accepted the opportunity in response to His Father's invitation and call.

Thus, there is a limit to what man, by the free swing of his own will, can aspire to accomplish in the plans of God. No man can find himself a "place," or thrust himself unbidden into the ranks of those whom God will be delighted to honour in the special specific places, in the outworking of His purposes. (Mark 10: 40.)

In the higher Christian life, as in the case of Aaron's call, every member of the body of Christ must be "called according to His purpose." Otherwise, if God has not called, no man has any special consecrated standing before God. Now, if acceptable consecration to-day calls for something more than the swing of any man's own will, it is also evident that the observance merely of the righteous balance and just measure is likewise not sufficient for the higher stage of consecration. It is not enough under these present conditions, merely to pay twenty-shillings-in-the-£, or to be strictly just and upright in the "give and take" of the daily round and common task. The present requirement in the consecrated response is that of self-sacrifice and self-denial—the voluntary yielding and surrender of something

which no feature of either Divine or human law can compel, but which can be yielded only at the invitation of One, who, while maintaining the claims of Universal Law, can legislate above it, and thus solicit a degree of surrender and propose a degree of reward not incorporated in the general laws of His dominion. It was thus in God's dealings with His Well-beloved Son. He who had been with God from times eternal, was not compelled to leave that glorious estate to come to earth and die for man. He was a willing volunteer. He accepted with ready heart the opportunity God set before Him, and bowed humbly down to death so that His Father's purposes might be accomplished. There did not rest on Him (any more than on other holy angelic citizens of Heaven) any obligation to cast aside His heavenly riches in order to taste earth's racking poverty; but because He did willingly humble Himself even unto death, God hath highly exalted Him above every name or authority, now and for all time.

The same treatment above the law of righteousness is held out by promise to those who willingly follow in His steps, and lay themselves down before God in whole-hearted surrender and sacrifice. "If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me" was Jesu's invitation, on His Father's behalf, to His little band of followers. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God . . ." is the way the zealous Apostle continues and presses home the same invitation.

"A living sacrifice!" almost a contradiction in terms! unless there be a deeper way of reconciling the differences. All animals, when become a "sacrifice" were no longer alive, but prepared for the altar flames. There is a way, thank God, whereby these differences can be reconciled.

"Let him deny himself!" that is, let him deny his self-hood,—his self-choice, his self-desire, his self-effort,—clasp himself to a cross, willingly and voluntarily. A cross is the symbol of death. This, beyond all controversy is a call and invitation greater far and more exacting than the do-good-to-my-neighbour standard of consecration which will be operative and

imperative in the Age to come.

A singular thing about the New Testament writers is that they do not once describe this deeper response to God as "Consecration." In fact, that word occurs in our Authorized Version but twice; and both cases are in connection with our Lord. One of these is in Heb. 7: 28., where we read that the word of the Oath made the Son a Priest, "who is consecrated for evermore." This word, however, would be better translated (as in the margin) "perfected." It reveals the fact that the Exalted Son had been fitted and prepared for His Priestly work, to a degree that He could have never known as a man. God wrought upon Him, and developed Him according to the ideal which God had in His own omniscient mind; and the "perfecting" work had accomplished its designed end, for the Son was "perfected" for ever.

The other occurrence is in Heb. 10: 20. "... a new and living way which He hath consecrated for us . . ." This word means "to make anew—to renew." An old "way" into the presence of God had been found faulty, because of the frailty of man. Through Jesus' sacrificial death, that way to God was renewed on a better surer basis.

There is no other actual occurrence of the word "Consecration," but there are many instances where the actual idea embodied in the Old Testament sense of the word occurs. Romans 12: 1, is a case in point. The sacrifice that does not terminate in a few moments of time, but which yields itself up just as fully, yet in constantly repeated acts of surrender and self-denial, over a life-time's span, is the thought connected with the Old Testament act of consecration. The same thing is set out in Peter's words (1 Pet. 1: 15-22.) He exhorts his brethren to purify their souls, even more than they had done, and enjoy their freedom from their old "vain conversation" (or manner of life) obtained for them by the precious blood of Christ, and in doing so, become more *holy*, even as He that had called them was *Holy*."

In order to understand the life of consecration, it is necessary to go back to Old Testament days, and pick up the thought there. Then, with this thought defined by the circumstances under which both the word and the attitude it stands for before our mind, it will be possible to trace these passages from Old Testament to New Testament times, and to realise what they mean in the higher Christian life.

The origin of this idea is found in Lev. 8, though prior to this particular day of ceremonies, God had given to Moses, on the summit of Sinai, the outlines and details of, as well as the reasons for, all this ceremonial. The idea of consecration thus originates with God Himself. God set the standard of life, which He was pleased to call "Consecration"—and He outlined the installation ceremony to express the idea He wanted to teach. ". . . thou shalt gird . . . Aaron and his sons, and thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons" (Ex. 25: 9.) Then (verses 19-37) the instruction is given to Moses how to proceed with the consecration ceremony.

Then in Lev. 8, we have the record of the consecration ceremony, based on the instruction given to Moses on the holy mount.

Reading the account through carefully, it will be seen that the consecration ceremony was one ceremony among others which led to a certain definite conclusion at the end of the day. "As He hath done this day, so the Lord hath commanded to do, 'to make an atonement for you'" (Lev. 8: 34.) On account of thus being brought into at-one-ment with God, Aaron and his sons must abide at the door of the Tabernacle for seven days, to keep the charge of the Lord.

The tabernacle had just been erected, and everything set in its place. This was done on their New Year's day, exactly one year after leaving Egypt. (Ex. 40: 1-17.) Some nine months had been spent in making ready so that the whole structure could be erected quickly and promptly when the New Year's day had come.

No sacrifices of the required kind had therefore been previously offered, for there had been no Priest to make them. The first thing therefore to receive attention, was the dedication of the Tabernacle and all its furnishings. This was performed by Moses as the Law-Giver-representative of God. All this is recorded in Ex. 40. The brief reference to the sanctifying of Aaron and his sons (Ex. 40: 12-15.) is expanded and amplified in Lev. 8, where the whole ceremony of sanctification and consecration is described.

The story of the washing and robing of Aaron and his sons, of their anointing with oil; of the slaying of a bullock for a sin-offering; of one ram for a burnt-offering and another for the consecration offering is set out at length, culminating with the reminder by Moses that all that had taken place was to make "an atonement" for them. The cere-

mony of consecration was thus one item among others, which brought them into "at-one-ment" with their God. That they were not accounted unclean sinners at the beginning of this day is evidenced by the fact that they were robed in their special vestments before any blood was shed—in Aaron's case, he was clothed in the robes of glory and beauty. That investiture is sure proof that God already accounted them as separated from Israel, and enjoying a special relationship to Himself. But, though thus separated, they were not sufficiently at "one" with the Holy One of Israel to enter into His purposes. They were not yet fitted and prepared to represent Him, nor co-operate with Him before their fellow-men. He would require proof of their fidelity to Him, and of their obedience to the "charge of the Lord" which He was laying upon them. Hence their participation in all these ceremonies constituted a test of their obedience. If obedient throughout, they would then be accounted to have reached the "end" God had in view in arranging their participation in all these ceremonies. They would be "at-one" with Him. In New Testament language they would be "teleioo" (Heb. 5: 9.)—"made perfect." They would have reached the "end" or "consummation" of the sanctifying experience. They would have reached the standard (on the typical plane) which God set before Himself and them, to fit them to express and exemplify His own Spirit to Israel, and through Israel to the fundamental principles of holiness and sin.

The form of the ceremonies revealed to them the primary object of their call. First, Moses was instructed to bring a bullock which was to be slain in the manner prescribed for a sin-offering. Aaron and his sons were instructed to lay their hands on its head. Then Moses was to slay it. The act of Aaron and his sons, in the oft-repeated language of the tabernacle, represented their identification with the bullock. This principle of identification (by laying on of hands) was practised in all cases where a man presented his offering to the Lord (Lev. 3: 2, 8, 13. Lev. 4: 4, 15, 24, 29, 33.) and its language was intended to say "This represents me."

When Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the bullock's head, it was as though they said "This represents us—what happens to this, is accounted as happening to us." The slaying of the bullock would then represent the sacrifice of the whole priestly company. Its sacrifice,

according to the law and practice of a "sin offering" would proclaim the fact that the primary object of this priesthood was to offer collectively, a sacrifice for sin—whereby to bring cleansing to those for whom they were called to minister—i.e. Israel. This is a point which should have careful attention, for its language is unmistakable. The under-priests had equal participation in all this ceremony with their glory-robed High Priest. But the fact that it was performed on behalf of Israel only, puts the question on an altogether different basis from that of Adamic sin, and of the "Ransom for All."

In this sacrifice (slain by the Law-Giver, Moses) the Holy One of Israel showed most unmistakably what the Divine Law required of those who had previously been called and appointed to the Priesthood in Israel. It was a pictorial representation that God—after accepting them into the Priesthood—required of them the full and total surrender of their lives, not singly, but as a whole; as a united company of priests without distinction as to which was most important or least important.

Next followed the whole burnt-offering. Again Aaron and his sons placed their hands on this victim's head. Every vestige was burnt in the fire on the Court Altar. This taught them that everything must be surrendered to God—without reservation. Then came the ceremony which represented their consecration. Again Aaron and his sons placed their hands upon the victim's head. Then after Moses had killed it, he took some of its blood, and with it touched the tip of Aaron's right ear, then the thumb of his right hand, and after that the great toe of his right foot. Then Moses did exactly the same to each of Aaron's sons. The remainder of the blood he sprinkled round the altar.

Then Moses took certain parts of the animal, and all its fat, and one unleavened cake, and a cake of oiled bread, and one wafer, and placed all these together into Aaron's hands, who waved them before the Lord. Taking them from Aaron, Moses placed the whole pile upon each of Aaron's Son's hands in turn, who likewise waved them before the Lord. That accomplished, Moses then burnt all these things together upon the Altar-Fire, as a sacrifice of consecration; as a sacrifice of sweet savour unto the Lord. Thus the essential meaning of consecration is brought out. It means a "filling of the hands."

Now, let these ceremonial details be con-

sidered relatively to each other. First, the ram was set before the Lord and "devoted" to Him. The object of its life and existence was thus, once for all, determined. The ram may not henceforth be set free to mingle with its fellows, nor to feed its fill in luscious meadows, nor to become the sire of frolicsome lambs. It was separated from its kind to be "devoted" to the furtherance of God's designs. Here we find correspondence with the commonly accepted definition of consecration, i.e. it was devoted to a holy purpose. Then Aaron and his sons placed their hands on its head, thus associating themselves with its object and destiny in life. This act placed them before God in the same light.

The ram represented themselves, or rather, they were represented in the ram. Its death represented their death sacrificially—yet under such conditions that it could be represented as a "living sacrifice" held up and waved to and fro before the Lord for the requisite time. Something was accounted dead, yet in some sense they who were accounted dead (in the limbs and inwards parts of the victim) were also accounted alive in the persons of the Priests, and able to present their members to God, by waving them to and fro. They were the custodians of their sacrifice, which filled their hands to the full. Of the sacrificed victim a portion was returned to them, so that by it, they might "wave" it in the presence of their God. This was representative of an acceptable sacrificial service before God, until the time came for their mutually-concerned sacrifice to be burned.

This is the germ, and at the same time, the basis of all truth underlying consecration. Its primary thought is "the hands filled full"—the hands filled full "by God!" the hands filled full by God with the very thing sacrificed to Him! The application of the blood to ear-tip, thumb and great toe, indicates the members particularly involved in the sacrifice and subsequent Stewardship. The ear represents hearing, the thumb, service, the toe, the "walk" and deportment through life. Thus Aaron and his sons were devoted to hearing the instruction of God, to engaging in the service of God; to walking in the way of God. Consecration then,

meant the yielding up to God the devoted life in tiny dribblets; day by day and hour by hour, through a right understanding of His Will, and a right exercise of service, through a right walk in life. Thus that stewardship which He returned to His anointed ones as a sacred charge, when first they surrendered themselves to His Will, was yielded up bit by bit.

But to have all this unique experience true in their lives, they must first have been called of God; and having been called they must have been anointed with holy oil, and thus separated from their brethren; and thus separated unto God. They are therefore represented as dual identities—one represented in the sacrificial animal, the other represented in the anointed white-robed priest.

Herein are the germs of truly wonderful truths—but true only of those who are New Creatures in Christ Jesus. None else stand before God as having made sacrifice of themselves, and yet as being alive. None else have received from God their "two hands" full as a sacred charge to be returned and yielded up to Him bit by bit in kindly act and loving deed; in sanctified hearing; in holy service; and in a consecrated walk through life. None else are yet being thoroughly "at-oned" (or attuned) with God, with His loving spirit, with His wide gracious purposes, and with His unsullied holiness. None else are yet being made perfect by their sufferings. None else are yet being developed so as to attain to the "end" (the *teleioo*) which God has in view.

How beautifully Paul catches up all these ancient things in his mighty appeal to his brethren to live the consecrated life, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice (as dead, yet alive) holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed (made over to God's design) by the renewing of your mind (the blood-tipped hearing) that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God (that ye may be attuned to Him in perfect measure, and not only know, but be ready to express the spirit of His great eternal designs).

From vintages of sorrow
Are deepest joys distilled
And the cup outstretched for healing
Is oft at Marah filled;
God leads to joy through weeping,
To quietness through strife,

Through yielding unto conquest,
- Through death to endless Life.
Be still He hath enrolled thee
For the Kingdom and the Crown.
Be silent! Let Him mould thee,
Who calleth thee His own.

THE QUIET TIME



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

MARKS OF RIPENESS.

What are the distinguishing marks of a ripe character? One mark is beauty. Ripe fruit has its own perfect beauty; as the fruit ripens, the sun tints it with surpassing loveliness, and the colours deepen till the beauty of the fruit is equal to the beauty of the blossom, and in some respects superior. There is in ripe Christians the beauty of realised sanctification, which the Word of God knows by the name of "beauty of holiness."

Another mark of ripe fruit is tenderness. The young, green fruit is hard and stone-like. The mature Christian is noted for tenderness of spirit.

Another mark of ripeness is sweetness. The unripe fruit is sour. As we grow in grace we are sure to grow in sympathy and love. We shall, as we ripen in grace, have greater sweetness toward our fellow-Christians. Bitter spirited Christians may know a great deal; those who are quick to censure may be very acute in judgment, but they are as yet immature in heart.

Another and a very sure mark of ripeness is a loose hold of earth. Ripe fruit parts easily from the stem.

(C. H. Spurgeon.)

PRAYER.

In respect of this matter of prayer our Lord gives us a cue. It is this: "If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye may ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." (John 15:7). How broad a statement this is! It might seem at first as though we might ask for anything, but it has very particular limitations. Who are these who may pray thus? These are such as have already become members of His body—such as have made a full consecration of themselves, and have received the begetting of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore the word abide means not only that they have entered into this relationship, but that they are remaining there, dwelling there; that they are members of the body of Christ in good standing with Him.

Life is now a lucid story,
Once so dark and dim;
All is bathed in light and glory,
When I walk with Him.

"WITHIN THE VEIL."

Homesick for Heaven? and longing for its rest?
And does the way seem long that leads thee there?
Lift up thine eyes! The "veil" is growing thin
That separates us from its glories rare.
But yesterday a dear one passed beyond—
"Within the veil"—and entered into rest;
And as she passed we caught a radiance glimpse,
As sunset glory shineth in the West.

Another link is added to the chain
Of precious gold that draws us surely Home,
Another strand is twined with the cord
Of love that holds us so we may not roam.
Yes, one by one His saints are passing o'er,
His loved, from shadows into Heaven's pure light,
Into the joy of His dear presence, where
They feel no more the darkness of earth's night.

But sweeter, grander still, "within the veil"
That grows almost transparent to our gaze.
We see our Master, our beloved Lord,
And lift to Him our rapturous songs of praise.
So near we are, we almost catch the strains
Of Heavenly music from celestial choirs.
Can we not bide with patience one more hour?
We've almost reached the goal of our desires!

Then let us not go mourning on our way,
But let our hearts be light, our faces glad,
These pressing burdens we shall soon lay down
Forevermore; why, then, should we be sad?
"A cloud of witnesses" behold our course
With interest intense, and shall we fail?
Our race is almost run;—Lord, nerve our hearts,
And scatter every doubt that doth assail.

So clarify our clouded vision, Lord,
So lift our thoughts and hearts to things above,
That earthly woes shall have no power to vex,
Nor separate us from Thy grace and love.
While still we toss on life's tempestuous sea,
Shield from the rocks our tiny barques so frail,
Stand at the helm and guide us safely till
We, too, are anchored safe "within the veil!"

(Alice G. James).

ESTABLISHED, STRENGTHENED, SETTLED.

"The God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you."—1 Pet. 5: 10.

The above words were penned by the Apostle Peter who, after years of experience in the Master's service and under His discipline, through much tribulation had evidently reached the blessed experience of one established, strengthened and settled in the faith and in the practice of the principles of the gospel. Peter had much to suffer and endure in his continuous effort to overcome. In common with all our Lord's disciples, he had much to bear from without, in the way of reproach, and sometimes of persecution, for the Truth's sake. But he had probably much more to contend against from within, his disposition was naturally impulsive, wavering and difficult to bring under restraint, even when the Truth was clear to his mind and when his affections were fastened upon the Lord.

It should be the aim of every truly consecrated saint to reach this desirable state of strength and settled establishment in the faith. This condition cannot be reached at a single leap; it is gained by a gradual steady growth under the discipline of suffering—as the Apostle says, "after ye have suffered awhile." "Now," as Paul remarks (Heb. 12: 11, 12), "no chastening for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceful fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." "Wherefore" with him we would add, "lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way."

Are you weary and disheartened in the journey, discouraged at your slow progress, and almost overwhelmed with the cares and various besetments of this life. Is a lethargy and indifference creeping over you, cooling your ardour for the Master's service, relaxing your energies in that direction, and enlisting your interest more and more in other matters? Then beware! It is high time to wake up. Be sober; be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour. Sometimes he goes about as a roaring lion, and sometimes as a skulking serpent in the grass.

Sometimes, lion-like, when we are off guard

he springs upon us unawares, stirs up the devil of the old nature, and unless desperately resisted he will take full control and drive us on to ruin. Or he will endeavour at least to turn us off the track of the narrow way. Sometimes, serpent-like (2 Cor. 11: 3) he assumes a pleasing and seemingly reasonable aspect, and endeavours to beguile us from the way. If we permit ourselves to be so off guard either by neglect to feed upon the truth, or by indifference to the reception and cultivation of its spirit, we may be sure that our ever vigilant adversary will gain an advantage over us which we may not be able to resist.

Our only safety, then, is in giving earnest heed to the Apostle's counsel. Be sober, be steadfast in the faith, be vigilant, and resist the adversary. We find foes within as well as foes without with which we must not deal too gently. The human nature which we covenanted to crucify must not be too sensitively regarded by ourselves, though we should be careful and thoughtful in our dealings with others. We must let the human nature die, and rejoice to see the new nature triumph over it. We must look our old nature squarely in the face, and thankful for a brother's or a sister's kindly showing of the same; and even the heartless rebuke of an enemy, or the impatient criticism of an unwise but well meaning friend, should be soberly considered and profited by, though it may severely wound the sensitive flesh. All this is a part of the crucifying process, a part of the humbling under the mighty hand of God—under the discipline of His truth. If we study it carefully and cultivate its spirit day by day, seeking constantly to purge out all that is contrary to it, our characters will mature, ripen and grow more and more like the glorious model given for our imitation. Our convictions of the truth will become more settled and clear; our faith in God and in the power of His love and grace will be more and more established; and our constant effort to learn and to do the will of God will harden into habit, and thus we will grow strong in the Lord and be able to strengthen and confirm the faith of others.

If we have cares, we are invited to cast all our cares upon the Lord, knowing that He careth for us. We have the encouraging assurance in the midst of present trials that we shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away, if in steadfast sobriety and humility we work

out our salvation with fear and trembling, having first been redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, and thus through faith having gained the privilege of working it out. We are comforted in the midst of trials with the blessed assurance that while God resisteth the proud, and they also resist Him, He giveth grace to the humble. Let us humble ourselves therefore, dear fellow members of the called and Anointed Body, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt us in due time. Let us bear in mind that not all of the suffering and cross-bearing comes from the world's opposition to the truth, but that much of it

must necessarily come from our faithfulness, not in excusing and cultivating but in humbling and subduing the evil propensities of our fallen nature. "If any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass; for he beholdeth himself and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whosoever looketh unto the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he, being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word this man shall be blessed in his deed."—James 1: 23-25.

THE CROSSING OF JORDAN.

(Josh. 3: 7-17)

"The fact that we may now know with considerable certainty just how this miracle was performed should not in the least detract from its value. With God nothing would be a miracle, since He of His own power is able to accomplish His will in every respect. Many things are miracles simply because we do not understand the Divine processes. We are miracles ourselves, fearfully and wonderfully made. The growth of the plant, the flower, or even a blade of grass, is a miracle to us—something wholly beyond our power, and in a general way considerably beyond our comprehension as a process.

The account tells plainly that the heaping up of the waters was in the direction of the city Adam. This place has been located certainly by Professor Wright as situated seventeen miles above Jericho, on the Jordan. The waters became in a heap, a lake, the Professor assures us, by reason of a land-slide which choked the narrow passage of the river where there were steep banks. The character of the soil in that vicinity would be favourable to the blocking of the narrow channel of the Jordan there by the slipping of the hill sides. Indeed history tells us that a similar slide took place in the same vicinity in A.D. 1267, damming up the Jordan for several hours and leaving the bed

of the river below quite dry, the waters draining off to the Dead Sea.

Professor Wright says, "So striking is this conformity of the facts to the conditions indicated by the Biblical account, that geologists can find but little difficulty in believing the written record. At the same time, the written record is so precise itself, and so free from fantastic elements that the literary critic cannot well consider it as anything but the original, unvarnished tale of an eyewitness."

The marvel of the story is that the Divine marching orders were so timed as to suit the circumstances and conditions exactly."

The above words were written a generation ago. In our own day the drying up of Jordan has occurred again, at exactly the same place. At this district Adam, now known as El Damieh, the river flows between clay banks forty feet high, and landslides into the river are frequent. During the earthquake of 1927 these banks collapsed and dammed the river so that no water flowed down for more than twenty-one hours. As is remarked above, the essence of the miracle is not the drying up of the river, but the Divine oversight which caused it to happen at just the time Israel needed a means of making a safe passage across the river.

"Tis but a little and we come
To our reward, our crown, our home!
Another year, or more, or less,
And we have crossed the wilderness;
Finished the toil, the rest begun,
The battle fought, the triumph won!

We grudge not, then, the toil, the way;
Its ending is the endless day!
We shrink not from these tempests keen,
With little of the calm between;
We welcome each descending sun;
Ere morn our joy may be begun!

THE SPIRIT OF TRUE REFORM.

There is nothing more essential to the success of any work of reform than that it be conducted in a manner which will recommend it to those whom it is seeking to influence. In other words, those who engage in such a work must do so with a proper spirit, in order to reap the result which is desired. This consideration is an important one, and especially so to us, engaged as we are in a great reform work which so vitally concerns the welfare of the human race.

What should be the spirit which should accompany the efforts of those engaged in the promulgation of the truths of the Plan of the Ages? From the nature of things, this work involves one in perpetual controversy with the ideas and forms of the theological world around him. It requires some discrimination and forbearance to confine the controversy to the ideas, and prevent its involving persons who hold them. There is a strong tendency to forget that we are not combating persons but the false beliefs which they teach. How easy under such circumstances to be led by the natural promptings of human nature, and fall into the error of the two disciples who wished to call down fire upon the ungrateful Samaritans, and to whom Christ rebukingly said, "Ye know not what spirit ye are of."

The true reform spirit is never anything but a Christian spirit, leading its possessor to ever take an inoffensive attitude toward those whose erroneous opinions he feels called upon to oppose. It does not lead him to make use of ridicule and contempt, or to indulge in sharp drives at an opponent for the mere sake of showing his acuteness. It never leads him to show a lack of respect for those in positions of authority, albeit their characters may not be of the best, not to forget that degree of deference which is due to those in every position of eminence; but with all men to render "honour to whom honour is due." Firm and uncompromising in its zeal for the truth, it

combines with this a proper humility of self, and charity toward all. It is, in short, that spirit the possession of which will lead one to manifest "the fruits of the Spirit," among which are, "long-suffering, gentleness, . . . meekness."

It is a mistake to suppose, as many people evidently do, that absence of moral principle in an individual, however conspicuous and fraught with evil results, render him a proper subject of hatred, ridicule and contempt. There is a certain respect which is due to all in positions of earthly eminence, regardless even of character. Just as "Michael the archangel, when contending with the Devil he disputed concerning the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee," so with us. It cannot be proper to bring any railing accusation against an earthly opponent, whose motives we cannot judge, and with whom we stand upon a level as the recipients of God's unmerited favour. Such a course is not in keeping with Christian dignity and integrity of character, and the cause of truth has no need of such doubtful aids to the advancement.

The study of the spirit and methods of the Lord and the Apostles would doubtless be profitable to those who are actively engaged in an important work of reform at the present time. In their forbearance under great provocations and persecution, the moderate and respectful language in which they addressed those in positions of authority, their strict regard for the truth, and their carefulness against giving needless offence, they have left an example worthy of our imitation. With an uncompromising zeal for the truth they combined that Christian charity which led them to abstain from judging the characters and motives even of their bitterest opponents. It is by such a spirit and by such methods that the truth can be best commended to thinking minds.

"All confirm one conviction, that we are now at the verge of the pouring out of the Seventh Vial. Our children, if not we ourselves, are destined to see events and manifestations which sceptics may sneer at, and even reluctant Christians undervalue; but thereby they only confirm the truth, 'For as it

was in the days of Noah, so shall it be at the Advent of the Son of Man.' 'Behold I come as a thief,' is the watchword of the present hour. God grant 'the Lamb's wife,' may make herself ready."

(Rev. John Cumming, D.D., 1848)

THE STUDENTS' PAGE

Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet (John 7; 53).

"Search, and look," cried the scornful Pharisees. Had they been such genuine students of the ancient Scriptures as they professed to be, they would not have missed noticing that at least two prophets **did** arise out of Galilee. Elijah the Tishbite came from Tisbe and Jonah came from Gath-Hepher, both of which places were in what afterwards became Galilee. The Pharisees, blinded by expectations of Messiah arising from Bethlehem, entirely overlooked the fact that He was both of Nazareth in Galilee and Bethlehem in Judea.

* * *

"Man did eat angel's food." This expression occurs in Psa. 78; 25 and refers to the manna sent as food for the Israelites in the wilderness. In the past, some thought that manna was indeed the food of angels, on the strength of this verse. The word here translated "angel," however, is "**abbir**" which is nowhere else rendered "angel" but is rendered "bull" four times, "strong" or "strong one" (referring to bulls) four times, and "chiefest," "mighty," "mighty one" and "valiant." The verse in Psa. 78 appears to mean that man ate mighty or strength-giving food—the food of the mighty; thus contrasting the Divine provision for Israel with the poor provision they would have to depend upon if the power of God had not been exerted on their behalf.

* * *

Moses' Age. Moses died at 120, his eye not dim nor his natural force abated. (Deut. 34; 7) He was not the only one to live to such a ripe old age in his day. Aaron his brother was 123 when he died (Num. 33; 38-39) Miriam his sister at least 110, Joshua and Elisheba about 110, Amram and Levi 137 (Exod. 6; 16, 20) and Joseph 110 (Gen. 50; 26.) It was five hundred years later that the Psalmist fixed the span of human life at the proverbial three-score years and ten. The human race had travelled farther along the downward path during those five centuries.

* * *

The Soul. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man **became** a living soul." The Hebrew **nephesh** has the primary significance of "breath" and points back to the account of man's first appearance on earth as a creature dependent on breathing in order to continue life. The use of **nephesh**, translated "soul," as a word descriptive of a living creature, is constant throughout the Old Testament. Animals are described as souls in Num. 31; 28. Souls are said to eat (Lev. 17; 18) to eat blood (Lev. 17; 12) to eat dead bodies (Lev. 17; 15) and to have a longing to eat flesh (Deut. 12; 20.) They can be thirsty (Prov. 25; 25) and have a longing for strong drink (Deut. 26; 16). They may on the other hand have an abhorrence for meat (Job 33; 10). It is conceivable for souls to swear or to touch unclean things (Lev. 5; 2 and 4) and although all these operations denote life and that the soul is a living entity, it is also possible for the soul to be smitten by enemies (Josh. 11; 11) and to die (Ezek. 18; 4 and 20). References such as these can be found scattered all through the Old Testament and help to refute the old familiar lie "Thou shalt not surely die" in its guise of the alleged immortality of the soul. The word occurs seven hundred times in the Old Testament and is translated "soul" 471 times, "life" or "living" 150 times, and also by such words as man, person, self, they, me, him, any one, breath, heart, mind, appetite, this body, lust, creature, and beast. Twenty-eight times is the word applied to the lower animals. The New Testament word corresponding to the Hebrew **nephesh** is **psuche** and this is translated "soul" 59 times, "life" 40 times, as well as mind, us, you, heart, and heartily; occurring one hundred and fifty times altogether of which two references are to the lower animals.

* * *

The Bible.

Whence but from heaven could men unskilled in arts,
In various ages born and various parts
Weave such agreeing truths? Or how or why
Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie?
Unasked their plans, ungrateful their advice,
Starving their gains and martyrdom their price.

(Dryden)

LIGHT AT EVENTIDE.

" . . . and it shall come to pass that at eventide
it shall be light." Zech. 14: 8

In these beautiful words the prophet Zechariah sums up the strange sequence of events which take place in what he calls "the day of Jehovah." It is an astonishing picture which he draws, for the whole earth seems to be involved in its mighty happenings, apparently not knowing what they do, nor yet understanding the meaning or purport of their actions.

The prophet depicts events moving on from stage to stage, until they reach their grim climax in a day that has been "not clear nor dark"—in a period that has not the clear light of day, nor yet the black darkness of night. It is only as the strange day ends, that the reason and purpose of its extra-ordinary course of events is made clear enough for men to understand. Only at eventide would it become light!

The "eventide" here mentioned is not at the ending of the Millennial day—the Restitution day—but the ending of an intermediate day, lying between the close of the Gospel Age, and the beginning of that era of blessedness for the nations of the earth. This shorter day finds the Jews resident again in Jerusalem, an event which could not take place during the run of the Gospel Age. On the other hand the returned inhabitants are so little informed concerning the events about to transpire, and so lacking in conviction and trust that they would flee as their ancestors fled before an earthquake. Fear and uncertainty characterise their actions.

That in the end the Lord comes forth to deal with their merciless plunderers makes this Scripture a companion text to the statement of Isaiah when speaking of the day of the Lord's vengeance (Isa. 61: 2.) It seems to be a day when the Lord calls to account not only the rebellious nations of the Gentile peoples, but also the Jews who had returned to their Holy Land.

The difference between the ending of the Millennial day and this shorter day of recompenses may be seen by comparing the words of Isa. 30: 26. with these words of Zechariah. At the close of the Millennial day "the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days." No longer will any doubt or uncertainty on God's purposes

prevail, for "all shall know Him from the least unto the greatest" and every living soul sincerely desiring to know and understand the way of the Lord may have a perfect knowledge of the Divine Plan. Instruction will be given by heaven-instructed teachers all through that Millennial day, and men will not be left in ignorance of God or His ways.

But the light that will come only at the end of the Day of recompenses, bespeaks a lack of well-informed teachers, as well as a dearth of hearing ears, as the day speeds on. It is only at its end that a beam of light will be thrown backward along the pathway of events which will have transpired since the eternal God arose "to shake terribly the earth." Out of the half-light—the uncertainty of twilight—will come, when that strange day is done, an understanding of the purpose of all that has been permitted or accomplished by the hand of God.

What a strange sequence of events is outlined by the Prophet's words. There can be little doubt that he is addressing his own people—the Jews. He says ". . . ye shall flee like as ye fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah King of Judah" (verse 5.) Though many years had passed since the earth rocked in Uzziah's day, the people whom Zechariah said would flee would be of the same people (ye) as those who fled in Uzziah's day. They were to be of the same stock, and the same tribe—the tribe of Judah.

That it was a generation of Judah's descendants living at a very much later time in Jerusalem is shown by the statement that immediately following its day of distress "the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." Other translations render these words "the Lord thy God shall come, and all the Saints with Him;" and that these would be Jewish (or Hebrew) saints and not Christian saints seems a reasonable deduction from the context—in other words it seems to be the Ancient Worthies, and not the followers of the Lamb, who will come with Jehovah their God to the deliverance of their children.

A long span of history and of crucial experience was to lie between the day when Zechariah spake, and the day when his prophecy would be fulfilled. The Jews who

had returned prior to Zechariah's day, from Babylonian exile were to be scattered yet again by Roman arms, and spend long agonising years in banishment from their holy land. Then, when the long fore-ordained centuries had passed, they would return again to the land dear to their own and their father's hearts. When Zechariah's words were due to be fulfilled they would again be finding habitation within its cherished borders.

In their return they would apparently bring great wealth, for they had "spoil" for the invading enemy to "divide." They would have erected costly houses, and filled them with choice goods, for their habitations were to be "rifled" by the plundering hosts. They seem to have been living in some measure of rest and peace, and apparent comfort, with their wives and families around them.

Against their city and land the Prophet then proceeds to say that God would gather all nations to battle, to take their wealth as "spoil," and themselves as captives. Their treasures should be rifled, and their wives and daughters suffer humiliation worse than death. From all the four points of the earth would come the invading hosts—the armies of the West, the hordes of the North, the crowds of the East, and the tribes of the South, converging on the ancient City where had dwelt the Name of the Holy God. One common purpose would animate them all. Divine compulsion or direction would prompt them all to come, for God, through Zechariah, had said "I will gather all nations against Jerusalem."

To-day, we see revealed in many places strong antipathy against the Jews. Anti-Semitism is growing in many lands, and many harrowing stories have been told of ruthless and frightful treatment meted out to them. The Prophet's words visualise a situation when all these scattered spasmodic rivulets of passion shall have merged in one mighty stream, and which, with a sudden brutal rush will launch itself upon the people who have returned to dwell in the land and city of their fathers. All Jew-haters and Jew-baiters will have formed common cause in their evil scheme.

It could be no mean or local grievance which could incite all nations in such a project. It could be only the pent-up hatred of centuries past that could gender such an unholy crusade. Nothing less than a universal grievance or an international complaint would be adequate to make all the warring nations of the earth forget their own minor quarrels and unite in such an

international venture. It might be the case that one mighty driving force—some one dominant ruthless nation—could be the causative and directing reason for it all. However, whatever the reason and whatever the means that will have contributed to this universal attack, the Prophet shows it to have its origin in some feature of the Divine Plan. It is God who gathers the nations against Jerusalem! It is God who permits their attack almost to achieve success! It is not just human strategy or generalship which wins the day. It is because "the day of the Lord" is come, and while He permits them partially to succeed, the permission is not passive, as in earlier Ages. Now it is strategic permission, and by it the Divine Commander will be able to accomplish a dual purpose. He will use the nations to chastise the Jew, but He will use the occasion to destroy the nations. It is a day that is "known unto God," not only in its dating, but also in the sequence and purpose of its events (see verses 1 and 7.) Behind all the strange events of this unprecedented day is the outworking of some deep feature of God's special designs.

When the attack has almost reached complete success, Jehovah (or His deputy) intervenes. "And in that day His feet shall stand upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem . . ." (v. 4.) This is usually understood to have reference to the descent of our Lord Jesus, and that the warring hosts of the nations will witness His appearance on the very spot from which He ascended into heaven. But the text does not state the matter just like that. It is of Jehovah of whom the context speaks. It is "the LORD my God" who is said to come, accompanied by Hebrew Saints. It may be true that Jesus may be the LORD'S messenger or deputy for the occasion, but even if that is so, the difference between Jesus' descent to gather His own saints (1 Thess. 4: 13-17.) should be kept distinct from any later manifestation on behalf of Jehovah. To come "with" all the Saints, is a much later event in the revelation of our Lord, than His coming "for" His saints, even supposing these saints to be New Testament saints.

No wonder the Prophet styles it a day "not clear nor dark"—"not day nor night." How strange and inexplicable it will seem to the returned Jewish resident in Jerusalem! To have been allowed to return to the land of their fathers in fulfilment of the Divine promises (as it will seem to them) and then to be subjected by God's permission, to such a cruel and

ferocious attack will constitute a problem far from clear. To have been permitted to return at all must be an indication which they cannot fail to understand that the period of banishment is ended. That much would seem clear. But to suffer overthrow and captivity again after return, would, for a time, be dark, not clear! Then when the deliverance came, and the invader lay broken by the hand of the Lord, the meaning and purpose of it all would break upon their bewildered minds. At the end of the day, the light would break forth, and much that had seemed dark or only of twilight clearness, would stand out in clear revelation as that particular Day of the Lord drew to its close, to give place to the better day of restitution.

Had they been mistaken in returning to the Holy Land? Had they gone back too soon? Had they gone back to the father's land without the protection of their father's God? Had they been carried to that cherished land on the wings of their golden wealth rather than on the wings that bare their fathers thither long ago? (Ex. 19: 4.) Even to-day, these questions are not clear. The present return of the Jew to Palestine may not be quite the clear-cut phenomenon many have supposed it to be. It may not be quite as God had designed it. There may be something more, something deeper than the present Zionist movement intended, if Isaiah 11: 11-12, be our guide. And perhaps the gracious God who owns that good land, may not intend them to buy their way into it, but to receive it again as a gift from His hand; and because they have preferred their own time and way of entry into possession, He who controls the destinies of all peoples, may yet see fit to administer

the sharp rebuke of the alien's sword to break the sons of Judah to His Will and way. Of one thing we may be very sure; there will be "Light at Eventide" and both "the outcasts of Israel" and "the dispersed of Judah," as well as the Gentile invader will come to understand what they have done, and why!

Over and above this contextual application, how aptly these beautiful words lend themselves to Christian experience. How often the Christian has to walk in the dark trusting to the direct guidance of his God. There are many things in the over-ruling of Divine Providence we cannot understand. At best we seem only to see through a glass darkly. More often we walk as in a mist, or as in twilight hours, and see not the way before us. We comprehend not why the chastisement falls, nor why the testing comes. We know not why the wound is probed, nor why the tears must fall. We do not understand why the pruning hand must cut away the tendrils which would wind themselves around some cherished thing—but we have learned to "wait"—to watch and pray—to bear with patience the whole day through—for "afterward" the testing yields the fruits of righteousness in peace.

It is in the dark tangled thickets that the pilgrim learns to trust his Guide—in broad sunshine he might stray away or exercise too much of his own understanding. It is better far for him to walk close to God, even though this means walking in the dark; but darkness does not last always; days of trial are not unending; there comes the break at "eventide" when the Light streams back over the way we have come, and we see and understand why we have been led that way. Let us thank God for Light at Eventide.

EVENING REST.

When the day seems long and weary,
When the day is o'er at last,
Then the stars, which shine so clearly,
Sweetly speak of rest at last.

Jesus whispers, oh! so gently,
Deep within our inmost breast,
Of His Love, so true and tender,
Which will guide us to our rest.

Safe in His sure care and keeping,
'Till that Blessed morn shall break,
When with joy we'll soon be reaping,
Even for His Own Name's sake.

One with our Divine Redeemer,
We will sing that song of Love,
Which will sound in Heaven for ever,
When we reign with Him above.

(A.E.S., 1940)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ANONYMOUS.

We would acknowledge, with very sincere thanks, the receipt of an anonymous gift of 10s. towards the work.

GONE FROM US

Bro. A. G. Blanc, of Carshalton, Surrey, has finished his earthly course. Known chiefly to the London friends, he was respected and loved for his quiet confidence and unassuming nature, and it is our confidence that he will not be found ashamed "in that day."

Bro. J. Morrall, of London, formerly of Morecambe, has also gone home. He was a natural brother of Brother W. H. Morrall, a former member of the Committee. It is our trust that he too has fought a good fight and finished the course and kept the faith. The prayers of the brethren will ascend on behalf of our Sister who remains behind, that she may be given strength and grace sufficient in her time of sorrow.

"THE TIE THAT BINDS"

Two evidences of the love of the brethren in other parts of the world have reached us and will be mentioned here. Even those of us who have no necessity to take advantage of the generous offers will rejoice in the knowledge that our brethren in other parts have that thoughtfulness and desire to help which makes our familiar hymn of such tremendous significance.

Some brethren in Australia have offered to receive two or three children of brethren who would like to send their little ones out of this country for the duration. These brethren are in Adelaide, South Australia. We quote from our brother's letter: "Brethren grieving to part with their youngsters will be consoled to know that we had their interests at heart at this end."

We also have an offer by a Brother and Sister in New York, U.S.A., who would willingly make a home for one child, preferably a girl, for the duration of the war.

Should there be any brethren interested in either of the above offers, we shall be pleased if they will write to the office upon the subject in the first place, and we can then put them in direct touch with the overseas friends concerned.

"A LINK WELL FORGED."

The many friends of Brother Carter, of Tunbridge Wells, will enjoy reading this characteristic note, an extract from a recent letter, which is being passed on to the brethren through the medium of these columns.

Brother's address is—"The Haven"
Woodlands Road,
Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

"My intention is to keep the link from rusting so I just ask you to tell all the dear brethren and Sisters I am rejoicing in the truth and my chief concern is to help all my brethren and sisters to "Hold on," as it is very evident we are living in an evil day, and we cannot afford to lose the companionship, no, not for a moment. How we would like to meet together in the flesh; but while at present that is very difficult, thanks to our Heavenly Father we can in spirit, and I think perhaps Father sees that is the best experience for us. Perhaps He wants to strengthen our spiritual life. If our warfare consisted *only* in cups of tea and those very pleasant convention experiences we might not be quite ready for the "Welcome Home." So, dear Brother, tell any dear Brother or Sister who has a little time to spare I would rejoice to hear from them, and give them this message, that is: "pray for me," for how we do need to be kept by this only way we can cause our Father to rejoice to see His children united in love. What a privilege to serve one another in love. God be with you, dear ones, till we meet."

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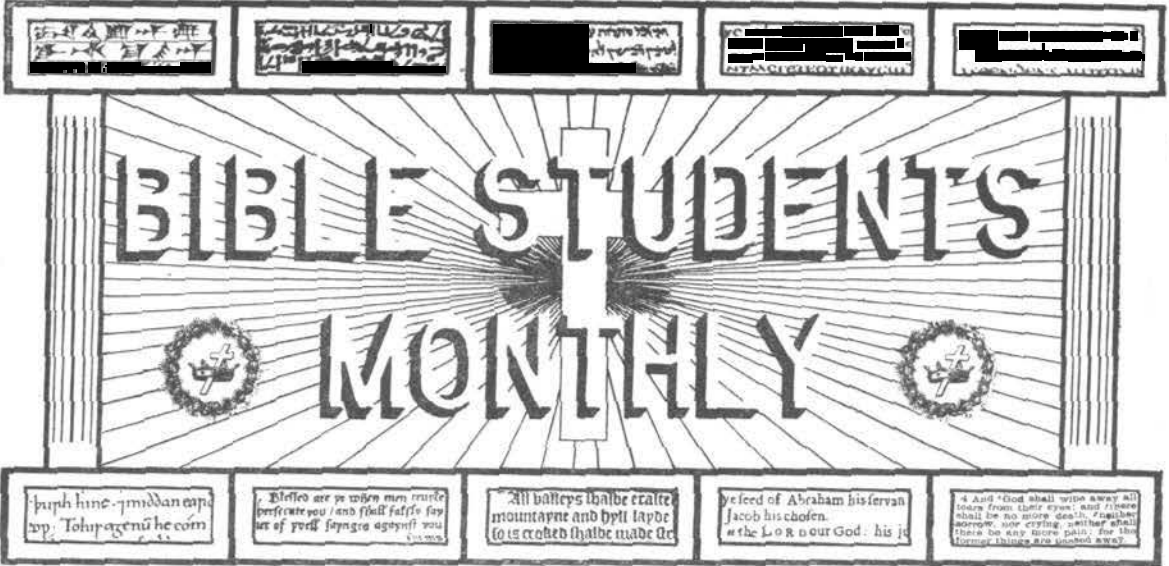
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- Studies in the Psalms (Rotherham)
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THREEPENCE

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THE ASSOCIATED BIBLE STUDENTS OF GREAT BRITAIN.

An undenominational Christian fellowship devoted to the study and dissemination of Bible truth in the light of present-day knowledge and to the deepening of personal Christian life and experience. Its members stand unreservedly for the teachings of Jesus Christ as a complete solution to humanity's problems, and believe in the eventual establishment of a new order of society upon earth in which the principles of love, equity and righteousness will prevail and evil be eliminated; and that under the spiritual rule of Christ and His Church the dead will be restored and mankind live in eternal harmony with God.

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An announcement of more than passing interest

The PHOTO-DRAMA of CREATION

is remembered by many as a wonderful stimulus to faith and activity. Brethren who saw these pictures often wish they might see them again; others, who never saw them, at times express regret that the Photo-Drama is a thing of the past.

As a means of witnessing to others with our message the Photo-Drama was unrivalled. Some who read these lines first learned of the Truth through its instrumentality.

* * * * *

NOW IN THE FULNESS OF TIME THE DRAMA FILMS WILL (D.V.) AGAIN BE SEEN IN ENGLAND.

Prayer has been ascending, and there has been a waiting for our Master's leading. As a first step toward a new “film witness,” the friends will be able to see, on the screen, some of the pictures which thrilled them in years now past.

* * * * *

The first picture to be shown will be that well-remembered Resurrection story

THE RAISING OF THE SHUNAMMITE'S SON

It is hoped to display this picture in London during December. Further details will be announced in the November B.S.M. A warm invitation is extended to all friends to “Come—and see.”

It is planned to make the films available to any class or group of friends so desiring. If you can provide a small hall or large meeting-room in your town, write to the office with your request and if at all possible, arrangements will be made. There will be no charge, and the brethren who have this work at heart will provide all apparatus, operators, etc.

* * * * *

“The Clouds hang low, and human hearts are breaking
O'er all the earth to-day
Yet, through the gloom, a low, sweet song awaking
Breaks through the shadows grey.
Gladness is come, hallelujah, it is coming. Gladness is on the way.
God will unveil the fulness of his mercy. Gladness will come to stay.”

THE CHARACTER OF PAUL.

Paul, in his natural character, before his conversion, resembles Bonaparte more than any other man—I mean both in his intellectual development and energy of will. He had the same inflexibility of purpose, the utter indifference to human suffering when he had once determined on his course, the same tireless unconquerable resolution; the same fearlessness both of man's power and opinions, and that calm self-reliance and mysterious control over others. But the point of greatest resemblance is in the union of a strong, correct judgment, with rapidity of thought and sudden impulse. They thought quicker, yet better than any other men. The power, too, they possessed was all practical power. There are many men of strong minds, whose forces nevertheless waste in reflections, or in theories of others to act upon. Their thought may work out into language but not into action. They will plan better than they perform. But these men not only thought better, but they could work better than other men.

The same perfect self-control and perfect subjection of his emotions to the mandates of his will are exhibited in his conduct when smitten to the earth, and blinded by the light and voice from heaven. John when arrested by the same voice on the Isle of Patmos, fell on his face as a dead man, and dared not to stir or to speak till encouraged by the language, "Fear not." But Paul (or Saul) showed no symptoms of alarm or terror. The voice, the blow, the light, the glory, and the darkness that followed, were sufficient to upset the strongest mind; but he, master of himself and his emotions, instead of giving way to exclamations of fear, simply said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me do?" With his reason and judgment as steady and strong as ever, he knew at once that something was wanted of him, and ever ready to act, he asked what it was.

From this time on, his track can be distinguished by the commotion about it, and the light above it. Straight back to Jerusalem, from which he had so recently come with letters to legalise his persecutions, he went to cast his lot with those he had followed with violence and slaughter. His strong heart never beat one quicker pulsation through fear, when the lofty turrets of the proud city flashed on his vision. Neither did he steal away to the dark alleys and streets, where the disciples were

concealed, and tell them secretly his faith in the Son of God. He strode into the synagogues, and before the astonished priests preached Christ and him crucified. He thundered at the door of the Sanhedrim itself, and shaking Jerusalem like an earthquake, awoke a tempest of rage and fury on himself. With assassins dogging his footsteps, he at length left the city.

But, instead of going to places where he was unknown, and where his feelings would be less tried, he started for his native city, his father's house, the house of his boyhood, for his kindred and friends. To entreaties, tears, scorn and violence, he was alike impervious. To Antioch and Cyprus, along the coast of Syria and Rome, over the known world, he went like a blazing comet, waking up the nations. From the top of Mars' Hill, with the gorgeous city at his feet, and the Acropolis and Parthenon behind him—on the deck of his shattered vessel in the intervals of the crash of billows—in the gloomy walls of a prison, on the borders of the eternal kingdom, he speaks in the same calm and determined tone. Deterred by no danger, awed by no presence, and shrinking from no responsibility, he moves before us like some grand embodiment of power. The nations heave around him, and kings turn pale at his presence. Bands of conspirators swear to neither eat nor drink till they have slain him; rulers and priests combine against him; and people stone him; yet over the din of conflict and storm of violence his voice of eloquence rises clear and distinct as a trumpet call, as he still preaches Christ and Him crucified. The whip is laid on his back until the blood starts with every blow, and then his mangled body is thrown into a dungeon. But at midnight you hear that same calm, strong voice, which has shaken the world, poured forth in a hymn of praise to God, and lo! an earthquake rocks the prison to its foundations; the manacles fall from the hands of captives, the bolts withdraw of themselves, and the massive doors swing back on their hinges.

One cannot point to a single spot in his career where he faltered a moment, or gave way to discouragement or fear. Through all his perilous life, he exhibited that intrepidity of character and lofty spirit. With his eyes on regions beyond the ken of ordinary mortals, and kindling on glories it was not permitted

him to reveal, he pressed forward to an incorruptible crown, a fadeless kingdom. And then his death, how indescribably sublime. Napoleon, dying in the midst of the midnight storm, with the last words that fell from his lips, a battle cry, watching in delirium the torn heads of his mighty columns, as they disappeared in the smoke of the conflict, is a sight that awes and startles us. But behold Paul, also a war-worn veteran, battered with many

a scar, though in a spiritual warfare, looking not on the earth but on heaven. Hear his calm, serene voice ringing over the storms and commotions of life: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that day."

CHRISTIAN GROWTH.

"If the Spirit of Him that raiseth up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raiseth up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Rom. 8:11).

There is a philosophy in the growth and development of Christian character, just as truly as in the growth and development of vegetation; and the more thoroughly we acquaint ourselves with the natural processes and conditions of development and growth in either case, the better we will understand how to cultivate and to secure the desirable end—maturity and luxuriant fruitfulness. The farmer who puts into practice only what he has learned by accident, and that in a haphazard way, and only goaded to effort by sheer necessity, cannot expect the fruitful fields, abundant harvests and well-earned approbation of the enterprising, thrifty farmer who has made a study of the business and brought knowledge, carefully gleaned, together with enterprise and energy to his assistance in the work.

Take for example a tree. If you know nothing about its cultivation, do not realise the necessity for it, and simply plant it and let it alone, its strength instead of producing fruit, will generally go to making wood and leaves; worms and decay may attack its roots, insects may sting and blight its scanty foliage; and if it continues to stand, it will only be a useless, fruitless lumberer of the ground, an advertisement of the farmer's negligence, and worthy only of having the axe laid to its root. Had it been pruned and trimmed, and kept free from insects, under the blessing of God's air and rain and sunshine it would have been a fruitful, creditable tree; for the laws of nature are true and faithful in all their operations.

None the less true are the operations of moral law in the growth and development of moral character. Under proper conditions and with proper diligent cultivation, the character will grow and develop in accordance with fixed laws, and will become beautiful and fruitful in blessings to self and others; or, lacking the necessary cultivation, even under favourable

natural conditions it will be deformed, worthless and fruitless.

When we presented our bodies as living sacrifices to God, holy and acceptable through the merit of our Redeemer, we there received the spirit of adoption to the spiritual plane, as spiritual sons of God; and from that time the faculties and dispositions of our mortal bodies were reckoned as our new being, now under the direction and control of the Spirit of God. The faithfulness with which we cultivate this reckoned new nature, by persistently weeding out old habits of thought and action, supplanting them with new virtues, and training them to activity in the Divine service is to prove our worthiness or unworthiness of the actual new nature to be received at the resurrection, to which perfect spiritual condition our present reckoned condition stands related as embryonic; and of course, the disposition and character of the embryo new creature will be the disposition of the perfected new creature when born in the resurrection.

The Apostle in the above text affirms that if we really have the spirit of God in us—unless we quench or put it away from us—it will quicken our mortal bodies, make them alive toward God, active in growing into His likeness, and fruitful in Christian graces and activities. Again he adds, "If any man have not the Spirit of God he is none of His," and that, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."—Rom. 8:9, 14.

It is our business, therefore, to grow, to cultivate in ourselves those dispositions which are worthy of us as spiritual sons of God, called to be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.

The Apostle Peter tells us how to proceed in this matter of cultivating Christian character, intimating that we cannot do it all in a day, or in a few days, but that it must be a gradual

daily life-work, a process of addition—adding virtue to virtue and grace to grace, day by day and hour by hour, saying:

"Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperateness, and to temperateness patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity." And then he adds, **"If ye do these things, ye shall never fall."**—2 Pet. 1: 5-7-10.

This is a very strong assurance—that if we do these things we are sure to stand approved of God. We do well, therefore, to consider them with special care. Here are eight elements which must go toward making up the Christian character, the one to be added to the other and assimilated by the spiritual germ of the new nature, until the embryo new creature is formed, and then it must continue to grow and develop. Look at them again. They are:

Faith,	Patience,
Virtue,	Godliness,
Knowledge,	Brotherly kindness,
Temperateness,	Charity — Love.

Now for a little self-examination: Let each ask himself: (1) Have I the faith to which the Apostle here refers?—not faith in every thing or every person, but faith in God—in His plan of redemption through the vicarious or substitutionary sacrifice of Christ, and in all His rich promises built upon that sure foundation? Do I trust Him implicitly? Is a "Thus saith the Lord" the end of all controversy, the solution of all doubts and the restful assurance in every perplexity?

(2) Am I endeavouring to lead a virtuous life? This to the child of God consecrated to be a living sacrifice, implies much more than merely abstaining from evil. It implies living truthfully, that is, true to His covenant, which to wilfully violate would be equivalent to swearing falsely. How we need to invoke the Divine assistance here! and how critically to judge ourselves!

(3) Am I endeavouring from day to day to gain a more thorough and complete knowledge of God, of the great plan revealed in His Word, and of the special features now in operation, that I may co-operate with Him in its execution, and of His will concerning me in the particular relationship and conditions in which I now stand—irrespective of my own will and disposition in any matter.

(4) Am I temperate—moderate in all things?—in eating, and drinking, and dressing, and home-arrangements, and conduct and

thoughts, and words, and deeds, and looks? "Let your moderation (temperateness) be known unto all men," says the Apostle. Let men see, by our thoughtful, not rash and hasty, but careful and considerate demeanour, in every affair of life, that we honour our profession.

(5) Am I patient under trial and discipline, keeping my feelings always under the control of enlightened reason, letting patience have its perfect work in cultivating the character, however severely the plough and harrow may break up the subsoil of the heart, meekly submitting to the discipline in every case?

(6) Am I carefully observing and endeavouring to pattern my character and course of action after the Divine model. If a parent, or one in any position of authority, am I using my authority as God uses His?—not for selfish purposes, to make a boast of it or to in any way oppress or trample upon the God-given individual rights of those under such authority, but for the blessing and advantage of those under it, even to the extent of self-denial—with patience, dignity and grace, and not with boastful imperiousness, which is the attitude of tyrants?

If a son, or one under authority to any extent, do I consider the example of loyal and loving obedience furnished in the example of our dear Lord? His delight was and is to do the Father's will at any cost to Himself. As a man under the kingdoms—authorities—of this world, and as a youth under the authority of earthly parents, He was loyal and faithful (Matt. 22: 21; Luke 2: 51), yet all of this earthly authority was exercised by His personal inferiors, though they were His legal superiors. How beautifully we will be able to grace and fill whatever station we occupy in life, if we carefully study and copy godliness—God-likeness, whether we be princes or peasants, masters or servants.

(7) Does brotherly kindness characterise all my actions? does it make due allowance for the inherited weaknesses and circumstantial misfortunes of others? Does brotherly kindness deal patiently, and helpfully so far as wisdom in view of the correction of those faults, may dictate? and that, even at the expense of self-interest, if necessary and prudent?

And if, as I look myself squarely in the face, I recognise deformity of character, do I thankfully accept a brother's proffered aid and meekly bear reproof, determining that by the grace of God I will overcome such dispositions, and prove myself a help rather than a

hindrance to others, if it should even cost my life to do it, and that I will no longer foster my old dispositions, but plunge into activity in the service of God with those who should have my co-operation in service, instead of my burden?

(8) Have I charity—love unfeigned—for the unrighteous and unlovely, as well as for the good and the beautiful?—a love which is ever ready to manifest itself in wise and helpful activity for saint and sinner; a love which pities, and helps, and comforts, and cheers, and blesses all within its reach; which longs for the grand opportunities and power and glory of the incoming age, chiefly for its privilege of scattering universal blessings; and which, in harmony with that sentiment, utilises every present opportunity wisely, and in harmony with the Divine plan, for the accomplishment of the same end—thus manifesting and cultivating the disposition which must be found in every member of that glorious company which shall constitute the King's Cabinet in the incoming age? If this disposition is not begun, cultivated and developed here, we will not be considered worthy of that honour and office then.

Just as in the cultivation of vegetation, watchfulness and the necessary precautions to prevent blight and decay and to guard against the intrusions of evil powers and influences calculated to sap its life; pruning, trimming and cultivation are necessary to accomplish the desired end of fruitfulness. By resisting the Devil he will flee from us, and by patient continuance in well doing, an increasing measure of development will result.

"If these things be in you and abound," says Peter—That is, if you have them in some measure, and keep on cultivating them, so that they abound more and more and rule in you, **"they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."** The truth is for such: "Light is sown for the righteous," and they are sure to get it. They shall not walk in darkness. If any man will do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine. (John 7: 17.) **"But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and has forgotten that he was purged**

from his old sins."

"Wherefore, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things (if you diligently cultivate this disposition) ye shall never fall." Being justified fully by faith in the sacrifice of Christ for your redemption, and thus sanctified (set apart from the world and devoted to the service of God) by the truth, your final selection to that position of glory, honour and service, to which you are called, shall be sure. And **"so, an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."**

"Wherefore," again says our beloved brother Peter, **"I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things. Yea, I think it meet as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance . . . Moreover, I will endeavour that you may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance."** This he did, and the church to this day may profit by his brotherly counsel.

With all our striving and watchfulness, however, we shall not be able, in our present condition, to reach our ideal. Perfection is something which can only be approximated in the present life. The measure of our effort to attain it will prove the measure of our faithfulness and earnest desire to do so, and that effort will not be unfruitful. If no fruit appears, we may be sure that little or no effort is made at cultivating or pruning. The fruit will not only appear in the development of the Christian graces of character, but also in increasing activities. We must not wait for our spiritual and immortal bodies, promised us in our resurrection, before our activity in God's service begins. If we possess the spirit (the will, the disposition) of that new nature our mortal bodies will be active in the service of God's truth now. Our feet will be swift to run His errands, our hands prompt to do His bidding, our tongues ready to bear testimony to the truth, our minds active in devising ways and means to do so more and more abundantly and effectively, and thus we shall be living epistles known and read of all about us.

In perils by day

"He shall give His Angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways."

Psa. 91, 11

In perils by night

"I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep; for Thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety."

Psa. 4: 8

THE QUIET TIME



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

OUR BLESSED HOPE.

What though this earthly house of clay
Sink into ruin and decay,
Though health and vigour pass away,
Christ is *my life*.

What though fond dreams of youth be fled,
The light that shone upon my head
Extinguished and forever dead,
Christ is *my light*.

What though bright hopes now withered lie,
Like autumn leaves, all sere and dry,
Or meteors vanished from the sky,
Christ is *my hope*.

What though rude billows round me roll,
His voice the tempest can control;
They ruffle not my tranquil soul,
Christ is *my peace*.

What though dear friends I once caressed
Within the silent grave now rest,
The valley clods above them pressed,
Christ *ever lives*.

What though perplexing paths appear,
God's Word, a lamp, makes all things clear;
Onward I pass, nor evil fear,
Christ is *my way*.

What though the darkness deeper grows,
And foes more active to oppose,
God's truth provides a sweet repose,
Christ *shall appear*.

(Poems of Dawn).

THE SOCIETY OF ENCOURAGERS.

Some one has spoken of the great "Society of Encouragers" who do so much to help encourage and uplift the footsore and weary in the pathway of life. It is not a great society so far as members are concerned, but it is a great society from the Lord's standpoint and from the standpoint of all who have been helped and encouraged by it.

Spikenard Mary might have been said to have been a prominent member of this society of encouragers. We may well imagine that as our dear Redeemer was thinking of the severe trials, including the cross, of the week already begun, Mary's manifestation of love and devotion would come to Him as a special encouragement and refreshment of spirit. So few seemed to understand Him! even His disciples did not appreciate the situation. Here was one who at least loved Him, had confidence in Him. No doubt it gave Him courage for the remaining days of His journey.

MARY'S VASE.

How oft we, careless, wait till life's sweet activities are
past,
And break our "alabaster box of ointment" at the very
last!
O, let us heed the living friend, who walks with us life's
common ways,
Watching our eyes for looks of love, and hungering for
a word of praise!

The heart of each truly consecrated child of God is like the alabaster vase.—a receptacle for the Holy Spirit, the spirit of love, the choicest perfume and most precious to the Lord and to men. It is expensive, because it cannot be gathered rapidly, but requires patient perseverance in well-doing to be "filled with all the fulness of God." Again, it is like Mary's vase in that it gives forth its odour not before, but after the seal is broken and the contents poured forth. It differs from hers, however, in the fact that it may be continually poured forth and yet its fulness all the while increase.

AMEN, AMEN.

I cannot say,
Beneath the pressure of life's cares to-day,
I joy in these;
But I can say
That I would rather walk this rugged way,
If Him it please.

I cannot feel
That all is well when dark'ning clouds conceal
The shining sun:
But then I know
God lives and loves; and say, since it is so,
"Thy will be done."

I cannot speak
In happy tones; the tear-drops on my cheek
Show I am sad;
But I can speak
Of grace to suffer with submission meek,
Until made glad.

I do not see
Why God should e'en permit some things to be,
When He is love;
But I can see,
Though often dimly, through the mystery,
His hand above.

I may not try
To keep the hot tears back; but hush that sigh,
"It might have been;"
And try to still
Each rising murmur, and to God's sweet will
Respond—"AMEN."

(F. G. Browning).

THE HIGHER CONSECRATION.

"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me" (Matt. 16 : 24).
 "I beseech you . . . brethren . . . present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God . . ." (Rom. 12 : 1).

The call of God to the higher consecration came to us through the words of our dear Lord Jesus Christ. Himself devoted and consecrated to His Father's Will, Himself the highest embodiment of the self-denying life, Himself the bearer of the world's heaviest cross, He voices forth the invitation of the Holy One of Israel to those who will venture forth to follow in His steps. If any man desires to associate with Me (says the lonely Lamb of God) let him deny himself, let him take up his Cross; then let him follow Me! Let him deny himself! What does that mean? To appreciate it properly let its opposite thought be set out. It would then read, "Let a man permit himself" or "Let a man satisfy himself." And what would this mean? Here within the compass of a half-dozen words is set the whole course of unregenerate man.

Here is a miniature picture of a world in sin, of a world at variance of the ruthless aggression of the tyrant, of a race in rebellion against God. "Satisfying himself" has been the cause of all the heartlessness and cruelty of man to man, of all the steep descent into the slime of sin, and of departure from the ways of God. "Permitting himself" has been the cause of the break-down of the human will, of the casting away of all righteous sanctions and restrictions, and of unholy riot in the heart and affections of man. Man has permitted himself to drift with the stream—to run with the crowd—to take the easy course; and the huge aggressive powers of the world to-day are the logical outcome of all the "permitting" and "satisfying" tendencies in fallen man, and have brought the terrific consequences which face fearful trembling men, in these dark days.

How vast a field of human experience is thus covered by the Lord's words, "Let him deny himself." Let a man deny his self-hood—his self-satisfying desire, his self-permitting desires, his self-permitting ways! That short statement drives right through the heart of things. It cuts its way to the very core of all self-acquisitiveness, self-possessiveness, and self-satiatedness. It strips man of all his exaggerated sense of self-ownership and proprietorship.

He who voiced this invitation on God's behalf, owned no place wherein to lay his head,—when required to pay the Temple dues,

the coin was taken from the fish's mouth. He who had been rich in heavenly wealth had denied Himself to become extremely poor on earth. How fittingly then, that He should say "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." Self-denial!—death to self!—self nailed to a cross to die! "And follow me!" Not through Palestine's pleasant land, but into death, by being baptised into Him and into His death. No wonder Jesus says "If any man will come after me!" Not every man would want to follow where He led. Not every one would want to end his life upon a cross!

The Apostle Paul also sets out the exacting nature of the consecration call in Romans six. He describes it as death to sin. The degree of a Christian's death to sin will depend entirely upon the measure of his death to self, for self has always been the citadel of sin. Paul's statement makes most remarkable doctrine. After enlarging upon God's abounding grace (Rom. 5 : 17-21) he asks the question "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" "God forbid" is his reply. Then he continues "How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein!" "Dead to sin!" Dead TO sin! Further along, speaking of our beloved Lord, Paul makes a similar statement (v. 10.) "For in that He died, he died unto sin once." "He died unto sin once!" Here is no reference to the great Gospel fact that Jesus died on account of human sin. Though that blessed truth is asserted and attested in a score or more of other Scriptural statements, it is not the subject of Paul's discussion at this point of his letter to Rome. It is not Jesus' death FOR sin, but His death TO sin that is the Apostle's theme.

Thus he links his first query and answer concerning themselves with this tremendous fact in the Saviour's own life and experience. "We who have died unto sin" have had (or are having) exactly the same experience which He had when "He died unto sin once." It is for that reason that the faithful follower of the Lord, in being baptised into Christ, is being baptised into His death. "His death" was a death unto sin,—therefore all who are baptised into "His death" likewise experience a "death unto sin." But at the same time that He was

dead unto sin, He was intensely alive unto God, and for that reason the Apostle exhorts "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 11.) This is an amazing point of doctrine, but it is the very doctrine that sets out Christian consecration at its proper value.

In what way did Jesus' "die unto sin?" Was He not always without sin? Was He not "holy, harmless and undefiled, separate from sinners?" How then could He die to sin?

It should not be thought because Jesus was sinless and remained sinless throughout all His life, that He was never subjected to temptation to sin. We have only to think of His temptation in the wilderness, and of Satan's subtle challenge to the verity of His Sonship, to realise that that was a temptation of very considerable magnitude. Nor was this the only occasion when He was assailed by the forces of evil, prior to the time of His cruel death; but from the very commencement of His ministry (yea, from His very boyhood) His mind was positively and resolutely set to do only His Father's Will. He had no ear for any other voice,—He had no response for any other "call."

The same two "magnet" forces of Holiness and Sin—of God and of Lucifer—which exercised their "pull" upon all the sons of men, also exerted their "pull" upon our beloved Lord. But our Lord had no affinity and made no response to the magnet of sin. To it, He was "dead." He had no self-satisfying desires to fulfil. He had not come to "get" for Himself but to "give" Himself. Thus, the ways and aims of sin found nothing in His heart to stir it into life; but our beloved Lord was no automaton in His response. Of Him it is written that He "loved" righteousness and "hated" iniquity (Heb. 1: 9.) Because of this He was anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows.

Thus the worthy Son's love for righteousness constituted an affinity for Righteousness and Truth. Likewise His vehement hatred of iniquity constituted a tremendous de-magnetising factor against the pull of the magnet of sin. This response came about by personal choice. Hence, of His own free will, He chose to be as dead to sin as though his body was devoid of life. Again, of His own free will, He chose to be alive—intensely and zealously alive—to the drawings and leadings of His Father's Will. Because, therefore, He was so

completely dead **TO** sin, throughout all His days, He was able to offer Himself a perfect sacrifice **FOR** sin, and win redemption for fallen men.

It is an amazing point of doctrine enunciated by Paul when he associated us with our beloved Lord in this deadness to the power of sin. Like Him, we are desired by God, to be also dead to the "drawing" of sin, and alive (increasingly alive) to the drawing power of righteousness and holiness and truth. Is it possible for us to be like Him? Can we really live the sinless life? Unfortunately we cannot live free from sin. But God has made full provision for that. By accepting us in the beloved Son, all the excellencies of His life are attributed to us, to counter-balance our demerits, so long as we are striving daily to mortify our members which are in contact with the earth and the world of sin. We are not so free in the swing of our will as was our beloved Lord, and sometimes, if only for a moment, the pull of the sin magnet may draw us in that direction. But if we have learned to love righteousness and holiness we shall not stay with the sin. Our corresponding hatred for sin will interpose, and by the help of God, will break the connection with the sin. We shall confess our lapse to God, and in that subdued holy atmosphere, our heart will recover its free swing, and go right over to the other "pull"—the drawing power of God.

Thus Paul goes on to exhort his brethren not to **YIELD** their hearts to sin and unrighteousness, but to surrender themselves to God and righteousness which will lead on to holiness (Rom. 13: 22.)

This is where this whole experience corresponds with the life of consecration. As individuals and as a whole, the Church of Christ has devoted itself to the Will of God. First its human life was set before the Lord God (like the Ram of Consecration) and the Anointed Priest (the New Creature in Christ Jesus) stood with its hand upon the dedicated humanity, and pledged itself to do the Will of God at any cost.

Then, that humanity, which had been devoted to the Lord, was given back, as a sacred stewardship,—as a charge from the Lord, to be used only to His Praise. In every act of life, in every thought and word the offering should be "waved" before the Lord. The interference of the power of sin should grow weaker every day; the response to the Holy Power of God should become stronger every hour, and our **yielding** to our God should

be more intensive and extensive with each succeeding act and thought. Thus will life become one continued and unbroken chain of consecrated experience—the yielding of each member—head, heart, hands and feet—fuller, deeper and readier every day.

Is there any wonder then, that when the theme on which the Apostle was engaged reaches its noble climax, that he should put all the hallowed fire of his own consecrated heart into that searching moving appeal of Chapter 12: 1 and 2. "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, . . . your reasonable service."

Consecration, therefore, means "a living sacrifice;" a daily sacrifice; a complete unreserved sacrifice of all that in us is noblest and best. But there is another side of the consecrated life that tells of satisfaction too; of satisfaction too deep for words. The priestly life was not all sacrificing; there was more in it than that. Into that mysterious dark abode the white-robed priest went betimes, still with his "two hands full" to stand at that Altar adorned with gold, and there raise fragrant odours in the air. For whom were those precious spices burned? Who saw and noted the deep reverence of that ministrant priest, as the perfumed spiral rose aloft? Who watched the holy fire eat up the crumbled incense, as the "two hands full" were given to the flames?

One eye alone saw all this service—the eye of that mysterious Light which hung between the Cherubim, just beyond that separating Veil.

What meant this lonely service before the Lord? Why were those odours released by burning flame?

This was communion sweet—soul-changing, transforming, sanctifying communion—at the place where the Holy One in Israel had promised to meet His chosen ones (Ex. 25: 22.) But there was even more than that. "Consecrate . . . and sanctify them that they may minister UNTO ME in the priest's office" said the Lord God concerning Aaron and his sons. (Ex. 28: 41.)

" . . . they shall minister unto Me!" That was the purpose of that fragrant ministry. It was no ornate ritual, nor was it waste of consecrated time to minister unto the Lord. The holy incense was not lost because it was eaten by the fire. The heart of the Eternal had been made glad. The ministry brought satisfaction to the Holy One of Israel. He it was who saw, accepted and appreciated that

holy ministration. Thus the white-robed priest was consecrated to perform sacrifice before the Lord, and also to hold "communion with the Lord." Consecrated to sacrifice! Consecrated to commune!! Consecrated to minister to the Lord! What a blessed privilege it was to be chosen of the Lord for this three-fold end!

The substance is far better than the "shadowy" thing. Participation in the "better things" is more satisfying to the "inward man" than all the glories of the type. Those who follow Jesus in the way of death, walk also in His steps along the way of life. It is not all renunciation in the consecrated life. "Self" must go. Sin must cease to charm; and the New Creature in Christ Jesus must yield his members as servants of God and righteousness, day by day, and act by act. But there is another side. There are depths of experience from which well-springs of satisfaction flow. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our Spirit" (Rom. 8: 16.) Yes! from the Shekinah Throne of grace comes that surging flow of Holy Power which floods our souls with joy and transforms the drabness of our earth-life into communion sweet. Each consecrated child of God can retire away from the busy throng of life into a "secret place" apart, and there, enjoy a privilege such as Aaron did not know. The incense of his heart (Psa. 141: 2.) may rise morning, noon and night, as fragrance richer far than myrrh, or cassia, cinnamon, or calamus; and the Holy One of Israel will see and hear and appreciate the sacrifice of praise (Heb. 13: 15.) which thus will rise from the Altar of his heart—an Altar more precious than gold.

Each follower of the worthy Son has been called and justified that he might offer himself in sacrifice. To that end he is set apart. But his consecration vows bring opportunities more than this. He too, as Aaron was, but on higher ground, is consecrated "to commune"—consecrated to enter the chambers of his God, and "minister unto" Him who dwells therein, and there, in that secret place, feel within his heart that soul-transforming power that will attune him to his God, and to His universal purposes.

Brethren, beloved in the Lord, let us enter into our glorious privilege. Let our consecration be real and true; deep and abiding. Let there be no withholding of the sacrifice. Let it be waved with diligence before the Lord, until it is time for it to be taken from our hands.

✻ THE STUDENTS' PAGE ✻

Joseph in Egypt.—"Only in the throne will I be greater than thou." (Gen. 41, 40.) The description of Joseph's exaltation to power at the right hand of Pharaoh is well illustrated by tomb paintings found in Egypt. Joseph had evidently been raised to the position of "Prime Minister," and in the short passage from verse 40 to 45 of Gen. 41 we have a vivid description of an induction into office which was repeated with every successive Grand Vizier or "Prime Minister" in the land of Egypt. The ring upon Joseph's hand and the placing of the gold chain around his neck was the repetition of an ancient ceremony which betokened the highest possible honour which could be conferred upon the recipient. This ceremony was practised 300 years before the time of Abraham and Joseph became one of a long line of men who were thus raised to the most exalted position Egypt could offer. His marriage to Asenath, daughter of the High Priest of Heliopolis, brought him into intimate relationship with the priestly caste, and thus, like Daniel in a much later day, the simple Shepherd boy from Judea became the virtual leader of a great nation, and discharged the responsibilities of his office with that integrity and diligence which should characterise every true believer in our God.

"Coats of Skins."—"Unto Adam also and to his wife the Lord made coats of skins, and clothed them." (Gen. 3, 21.) There is no necessity to assume, as commentators of a century ago did assume, that a beast was slain in order to provide the garments referred to in this passage. From the succeeding chapter it is seen that man's first essay in the pastoral field was the tending of sheep (Gen. 4, 2). Herds of cattle were not kept until much later, in the days of Jabal (Gen. 4, 20) probably several centuries after the days of Eden. It would appear reasonable to conclude that these garments of skins were of wool or goat hair, and as such did not demand the slaying of the animal for their production. There is something inappropriate in the idea of even animals dying a violent death within the lovely precincts of Eden that makes it much more in keeping with the spirit of the narrative to conclude that not until Abel brought the firstlings of his flock to the altar of sacrifice were violent hands laid on the brute creation; and by that time the rapidly increasing human race was probably already manifesting those seeds of violence which became so tragically manifest at length in the first recorded human death—that of Abel, slain by his brother.

"I fell at His feet to worship Him." (Rev. 22.9.) This act of worship so often mentioned in the scriptures was in fact merely a humble obeisance or act of reverence. Even to-day in the Holy Land the recipient of a favour will throw himself on his knees, bow his head to the ground, and kiss the lower part of his benefactor's clothing. Thus did Cornelius fall down and worship Peter (Acts. 10.25) and the servant in the parable worship his Lord (Matt. 18.26) and the three wise men worship the infant Jesus (Matt. 2.11). To the Philadelphia Church came the promise that our enemies would come and "worship before thy feet" (Rev. 3.9) and probably this is what is meant when Satan desired Christ to fall down and worship him (Matt. 4.9) to submit to him, to engage in his service, and to acknowledge him as overlord.

"A fire of coals" (John 18.18). The "coal" of scripture is charcoal, made chiefly from the root and trunk of a tree found in the desert. Amongst the well-to-do a brazier of copper about two feet high, bearing a chafing dish for the glowing mass, was usual. The charcoal was lighted outside the house in the chafing dish and burnt to a white heat until the worst of its fumes were given off, and was then brought indoors and used both for cooking and heating purposes. It was such a fire that the servants had lighted in the court of the High Priest's house and where Peter stood and warmed himself on that memorable night when the Lord was betrayed.

On Hell. "There was a valley near Jerusalem called Ge Hinnom, the valley of Hinnom, where, it is said, the refuse of the city was burnt; and its name was used as a metaphor by the Jews in later times for the place of future punishment of the wicked. Rabbis differed as to its finality, and instances were collected half a century ago of some who limited its operation to short periods of time. Many modern Jewish writers have indignantly denied that there is any support in their ancient writings including the Old Testament, the Mishna, and the Talmud, for what one of them called "the modern Christian doctrine of everlasting woe." (Rev. Percy Dearmer, 1929).

"YE ARE CHRIST'S!"

"YE ARE CHRIST'S!" oh yes; I know it! for He bought me with His blood;
And I never can forget it, all the way His feet have trod,
In His hands are strength and healing, in His face eternal love.
How I long to be just like Him in the Father's house above!

"LIFE IS YOURS:" oh yes; I have it—having all in God's dear Son;
He began "the life" within me, and He'll work till all is done.
His eternal mind inspires me, breathing through His holy Word,
So I'm resting in the keeping of the Spirit's voice I've heard.

"DEATH IS YOURS:" oh yes: but vanquished—for "the Son of God" has died:
With His righteousness I'm clothed: in His life I'm sanctified.
He is coming soon to take me, so I'm watching at His gate;
As I long for His appearing, I am serving while I wait.

"PRESENT THINGS!" oh yes: I use them as I cross the ocean's foam,
On the voyage of life's journey to my Lord's eternal home.
His own guide-book is my treasure, and His life boat cannot sink;
Christ, the Captain, gives me daily more than I could ask or think.

"THINGS TO COME:" O depths of riches! all God's promises are sure;
And through these I'm made partaker of the life which shall endure.
In the "Times of Restitution" of the "all things" He hath made,
I shall evermore behold Him in the light which cannot fade.

"IN THE WORLD:" I live above it—all the mammon with its load;
For I've found the "Enoch" secret—how to walk along with God;
Christ is risen. He lives in me; and all power to Him is given;
Thus, He'll use me for His glory till He takes me home to heaven.

THE WAITING ONES.

There are some among the faithful,
Waiting, watching every day,
Peering through the misty shadows
To the clear and lighted way;
Listening in the dusky twilight,
Waiting even in the night,
"Mid the toil and heat of noonday"
Bending forward to the light.

And they speak in eager whispers—
"Can we see His chariot yet?"
"Will the Master come this evening?"
"Will the Heavenly Friend forget?"
So they stand, these earnest servants,
Waiting, watching evermore
For the clouds to part asunder,
And reveal the open door,

There are troubled ones among them,
Looking through the weary night;
Some are God's dear little children
Watching for the dawning light;
Some are aged pilgrims, longing
For the Master's spoken word;
There are some in every country
Waiting, watching for the Lord.

So they take their daily duties,
And perform them as for Him;
And they read His living message
When their eyes are tired and dim.
They are living lives of blessing—
Lives of love for His dear sake,
While they wait with eager longing
For the morn of joy to break.

Now He doth no longer tarry;
Soon He'll fold them to His breast;
He will make His watchers happy
In this everlasting rest.
He will give them satisfaction
For their days of waiting here;
And their joy shall be unceasing
When they shall His glory share.

TO LIVE OR TO DIE

Phil. 1; 20

In moments of high courage, when fired by a noble purpose, fearless men have been known to say "It is not necessary that I should live, but if I do, life can have but one object for me." It is no light thing to say, nor is it an easy attitude to have reached. Most men on sober reflection would agree that the world would still go on without them, but few sit down to face that uninviting situation. Most men are of a cowardly spirit on the question of "passing out" from the known to the unknown. They face the last issue with something of the resignation of fatalism, because they must. Even Christian people, long buoyed up by expectations of winging their flight to "a better land" at death, fight shy of the moment of departure. The doctor is expected to do his utmost to put off that farewell moment as long as possible, and many thanks are extended to him if he is successful in winning a respite for the "embarkee."

Those unhappy folk who "pass out" by their own hand are generally considered to be "of unsound mind," not able to weigh over properly the blessings of life against the dark uncertainties that lie ahead. Such unhappy souls are counted exceptions, beaten down by contrary forces till they find no desire in life. Not only would the majority of men not "pass out" in that way; but could they really have their choice, they would not "pass out" at all.

"Had he his way, would rather stay
Right here, than go to heaven."

is the way one wit of seventy-five summers expressed himself. There is nothing censurable in this attitude. Man was made to live originally, and had he not sinned, he would not have had to die. The entrance of sin did not destroy the desire to live, and except where adversity or unremitting pain rob existence of all its joys, the desire still persists. It is the enforcement of the penal decree of God against sin which makes death, thus far, inevitable. The "needs be" comes from the Divine side of the question, not from man's. The interruption of those subtle cosmic forces which come into our mundane sphere from outer spaces — vitalizing life-promoting forces — cause man to wither and decay and die, long before he has had enough (as a rule) of this mundane world. It is accordant with nature to desire to live, and it is true that man only dies because he must.

It is not fair nor reasonable to judge this question from the stand-point of these war-fevered days. These are days of mass-madness and hypnotic dementia. With the fearful things looming ominously near, thousands—perhaps millions—might say it were better to be dead than alive, but, could the reign of peace return, the balance of their judgment would quickly be restored. The attitude of man in every land could be summed up in one short phrase—"Man wants to live as long as he can, and will face up to death, only when he must."

This general attitude of the mass makes the attitude of the exception only the more remarkable, and when the "exception," still blessed with health and strength, still unworn by adversity or pain, looks out dispassionately on life and death, and says "It is not necessary for me to live, but if I do, life can have but one object for me," it may be taken as a veritable certainty that such an one is consecrated to the noblest things he knows. The "object" is greater than the man, and greater than his life—so great that life is something to be spent in its behalf; so great that if life may not be spent in its behalf, life has no worth in itself at all. Some men reach this Alpine height, and conquer self and circumstance, but these rare souls are few indeed. There are but few objects within this mundane sphere which are worthy of such consecration and devotion, and where such consecration has been seen the object has been universal, as a rule. Men will set themselves apart in this supreme sense more readily when it is for "all" than when it is for a few—for a scientific, or humanitarian, or universal end.

When the Church of God was young her experience was blessed by the utterance of one who reached not only Alpine heights, but Himalayan heights of self renunciation and utter consecration. If ever human lips said truly "It is not necessary for me to live, but if I do, life can have but one object before me" it was said by this man's lips. "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" said this fully surrendered soul. "For me to live is Christ, to die is gain" he said on other occasion to his perturbed and wondering brethren. These words were not uttered in the thoughtless flush of youth but in the years when judgment was mature. The

man himself was getting well on in years, yet not so old that he was senile and worn-out. There was yet much vital force, and driving force left in his fervent soul. He had not reached "retiring" age. He was not ready for his "easy chair," yet with all this unspent reserve of capacity to "do," he was ready to subjugate his whole interest in life for his Master's sake—and "live," if his Master wished for him to live; or "die" if that were his Master's will.

It is not possible here to trace the full outline of his circumstances save only to say that it was a "crisis" time in his life. The man was in chains, under arrest, and waiting verdict from Caesar's Court. Brethren in Philippi were perturbed about this situation, and wondered why it should have come about. They could not understand why Providence should have permitted the Gospel's most zealous ambassador to be put in chains; but that ambassador was under no uncertainty himself. He had no need to be uncertain. He had committed himself—as man and as New Creature—into Jesus' hands, to serve Him just as long as Jesus desired, and to lay his ambassadorship down and go to "sleep" just when his Master pleased. There were no "second causes" in his life. No other hand than Jesus' could mark out his path. It did not lie with Imperial Caesar, nor with the Imperial Caesar's Satanic master to interfere with his life's destiny. His life's objectives were not contingent upon the whim or mood of any man—no matter whether that man wore purple or fustian.

The decisions which affected his life were made in heaven; were made by his own Lord, and none could say Him nay. This man was his Master's chattel, his Master's slave, his Master's voice, and his Master could do His Will in every sense, alike "in" Him, and "for" Him, and "by" Him. He knew His Master had lived and died, and by the Father's power had mounted up on the hither side of death to glory, honour and immortality. His Master received "All power in heaven and earth" and was merely marking time, "from henceforth expecting" till the whole world should be made His footstool. Death could have no further dominion over that exalted One, and if to-day, to-morrow, or any day, his Master should decide his journey done, his service at an end, there was nothing else to the question—he would lay himself upon the headman's block as readily as on his nightly couch. There is something delightful in this utter abandon to

the Master's Will. To have no choice of this or that apart from Him is rest and peace. To care not if we live, or if we die, if thus His Will be done is victory indeed. To yield one's self to His embrace with infant-like dead-weight in mother's arms, is ever His delight.

We need to take stock of these things to-day. The hazards of war are with us every day—grim death may be rained from above at any hour. God has not made any promise to preserve in unconditional physical safety any child of grace. The story of the faithful Church has been one of death and suffering, from the beginning of its career. Stephen was crushed with stones; James was slain by Herod; the catacombs of Rome were filled with heroic dead; the Waldenses, the Albigenses and Huguenots were ruthlessly cut down. Germany was deluged for a hundred years with blood. The saints were given into one persecutor's hand for "a time, times, and the dividing of a time." Jesus said ". . . I send unto you prophets and wise men and scribes . . . some of them ye shall kill and crucify . . ." God promises no immunity from violence to the followers of the Lamb, but He does promise grace enough to help them bear their lot.

But though no complete immunity has been proclaimed, no man nor other agency can lay God's children low till His due time has come. "They sought to take Him, but no man laid hands on Him, because His hour was not yet come" (John 7: 30; 8: 20.), but later on the Blessed One said "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified" (John 12: 23.) "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I to this hour"

In these troubled days the child of God who sits loose to earthly things, and begins each day with resignation to finish his course that day with gladness should the Lord permit, can find rest and peace of heart even in the midst of war. The child who knows he cannot end his days till God's due time has God Himself at the helm of his life, and with God at the helm his life cannot be wrecked by any storm until God pilots him into port. But if any saint of God thinks that the world (or any small part of it) cannot go on without his oversight, and that it is essential for him to live on its behalf, that saint has much to learn. He has not yet realised that the only object of the Christian's life is "Christ," and should he live, or die, he is the Lord's.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GONE FROM US.

Brother L. Scott, of Dundee, passed to his rest on 4th August last. Our brother had been for many years in the way of the Lord, and it is our trust and confidence that he is numbered among those who have fought a good fight and finished the course. The many friends who knew our brother will remember Sister Scott in their prayers that she may receive that consolation from on high which can soften the sharpest blow.

SHOTTON HOME-GATHERING.

The Fifth Annual Home-gathering of the Shotton Bible Students took place on the 25th August and proved a great spiritual uplift to the brethren assembled. At a time when the country is passing through the agonies and tribulation of war, the peace and blessing of our Lord upon the gathering was a cause of praise and thanksgiving.

At the morning session Brother Boyce (Dewsbury) took for his subject Psalm 23. In the afternoon Brother Smallman (Warrington) spoke upon the "Good Fight of Faith," and in the evening Brother Sydney Smith gave an address on "From tribulation to Triumph." So closed a very happy day of spiritual instruction and good fellowship in the faith.

COMMITTEE ELECTION.

A leaflet in connection with this year's election was sent out with the September "B.S.M." but due to entirely unavoidable delays the "B.S.M." was sent out so late as to leave little time for the friends to give the matter the consideration its importance demands. It is announced therefore that friends may send in their comments up to October 21 next and that all communications received up to that date will be taken into consideration. Friends who may have missed seeing the leaflet are invited to apply for a copy now and will still be in time to make their wishes known. Replies to the leaflet should be sent to Bro. G. Absalom, The Square, Beeston, Notts, by Oct. 21.

IMPORTANT NOTICE.

In consequence of the increasing difficulty of keeping the office work up-to-date due to wartime dislocation, it is becoming necessary to conduct certain sections of the work from different addresses. We feel sure that the friends will willingly co-operate in this arrangement and would ask them to take careful note of the following:—

As from October 1, all *subscriptions* for the "Herald," "Dawn" and "B.S.M.," and all inquiries relating thereto, should be sent to

Mr. E. Allbon,
20 Sunnymede Drive,
Ilford, Essex.

Other correspondence, including orders for literature, donations, etc., should be sent to 24 Darwin Road, Welling, Kent, as hitherto.

REFERENCE LIBRARY

Please note that all requests for books and correspondence in connection with the library should be sent to—
Bro. C. G. Sears, 52 Huxley Road, Welling, Kent.

Translations

Emphatic Diaglott (N.T.)
Ferrar Fenton
Leeser (O.T.)
Moffatt (N.T.)
Rotherham (N.T.)
Variorum
Weymouth (N.T.)

Study Helps

Berean Bible Students' Manual
Cambridge Bible Dictionary
Oxford Students Helps

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History of the Jews (Milman)
History of Latin Christianity (9 vols.) (Milman)
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Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History (2 vols.)
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Expository, etc.

1910 Convention Report
1913 " "
1914 " "
1915 " "
1929 " "
1930 " "
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Outlines of the Divine Plan
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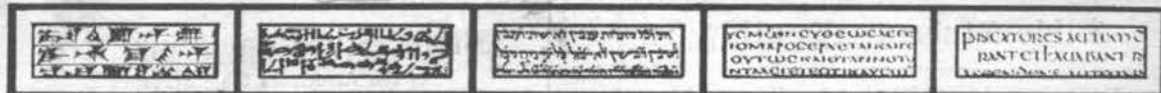
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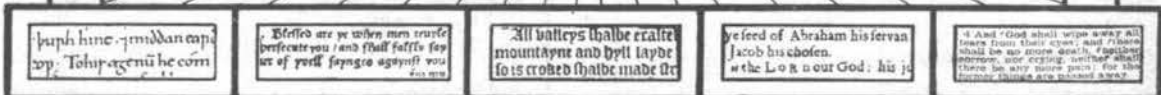
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BIBLE STUDENTS' MONTHLY



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THE ASSOCIATED BIBLE STUDENTS OF GREAT BRITAIN.

An undenominational Christian fellowship devoted to the study and dissemination of Bible truth in the light of present-day knowledge and to the deepening of personal Christian life and experience. Its members stand unreservedly for the teachings of Jesus Christ as a complete solution to humanity's problems, and believe in the eventual establishment of a new order of society upon earth in which the principles of love, equity and righteousness will prevail and evil be eliminated; and that under the spiritual rule of Christ and His Church the dead will be restored and mankind live in eternal harmony with God.

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IMPORTANT NOTICE.

On and after Monday, November 12th, the Office and Bookroom at 24 Darwin Road, Welling, will be CLOSED for several weeks and until further notice is given in the B.S.M. Letters received after this date will probably remain unacknowledged until after the office has reopened.

Magazine subscriptions should be sent to 20 Sunnymede Drive, Ilford, Essex, as previously announced.

Urgent communications on Committee matters, and personal letters for Bro. Hudson, may still be sent to 24 Darwin Road, but unless they are of such a nature as to require the Secretary's personal attention, it is preferred that they be sent to the Chairman of the Committee, Bro. G. A. Ford,
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PROVE ALL THINGS

"Prove all things: hold fast
that which is good:"

I Thess. 5; 21

A wise suggestion, Paul, says one, but not altogether practicable in my case. I am a plain man with little education and many pressing cares which leave but little time or mental vigour to grapple with the theological questions which exercise the minds of many, or to prove or disprove the leading dogmas which characterise the various religious factions. Why, it seems to me it would require a life-time given exclusively to the work, to prove all things. There are the scores and hundreds of sectarian creeds of Christendom with their great and multiplied volumes of theology and fine-spun theories each pushing its claim to the front; and in these days the new factions and theories coming up are legion. Every day's mail carries thousands of religious journals advocating the claims of some theories, claiming to be truth; and if a man were to do nothing else, he could not possibly read the thousandth part of such literature.

Now what is a plain man like me to do? I want the truth, but how shall I find it and prove it? I believe the Bible to be indeed the Word of God given to us through His inspired apostles and prophets. I believe in the God of the Bible and have long trusted in the salvation provided through the sacrifice of His dear Son. But while I hold these precious old doctrines and will not relinquish my interest in them, my Bible teaches me to expect an increase of light, and especially in the last days of the age, in which all Christians admit we are living. Daniel (12: 4, 9, 10) says that in the time of the end, the wise shall understand, and that knowledge shall be increased. I am looking for this promised increase of knowledge, for the light "shining more and more unto the perfect day," but how shall I prove which is advanced truth and which the error, against which the Apostle forewarns, saying, "In the last days perilous times shall come?" Is it possible, I ask, for a plain, common sense Christian man, without any special learning, to comply with the Apostle's injunction and prove all things? and if so, how shall I go about it?

Yes, we reply, it is possible. If the desire for truth is paramount to every other desire, so that the enquirer will so bend his circumstances as to make opportunities for study and investigation of the truth, as it becomes due, he shall find and rejoice in it. Although at

a cursory glance the wide field of investigation is indeed formidable, there is a short and feasible process by which the learned, and the unlearned, if simple-hearted and sincere, may arrive at clear and positive convictions, and henceforth be able to give to every man that asketh a reason for the hope that is in them.

We find our infallible rule for measuring and proving all things in the Bible. By its testimony every doctrine having any claim upon our attention must be measured. If any system presented to us finds its main support outside the Bible, it must at once be labelled suspicious, even though it call in occasional Scripture texts to support its theories; for we well know that every pernicious doctrine has claimed Bible support by quoting passages and perverting them.

Bear in mind that the doctrine of the Lord and the apostles clearly accepted the account in Genesis—of man's creation in the likeness of God, pure and sinless, "very good;" of his fall into sin and the consequent penalty of death, entailed not only upon himself, but also upon all his posterity whom he represented in trial. Then it set forth the remedy for sin and its consequences, showing that the death of Christ on Calvary was the appointed means for the world's redemption. To this fact all the Old Testament prophets testify, showing that without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sins.

The doctrine was first enunciated in the promise of deliverance given in Eden and typified in the clothing for Adam and Eve. It was foreshadowed in the sacrifices of Abel and all the early patriarchs, and by all the blood of bulls and goats and rams that for centuries flowed around the typical altars of the typical tabernacle. It was foretold by the prophets who prophesied of the "Coming One" as the lamb for slaughter, and foretold all the painful circumstances of His sacrificial death. See Isa. 53; Zech. 11: 12; Psa. 27: 12; 35: 11; 109: 2; Zech. 13: 7; Psa. 22: 14, 17; 89: 45; 102: 24; 69: 21; 34: 20; 22: 18; Isa. 53: 9, 12; Zech. 14: 4, 6; Amos 5: 20.

Then, the accomplished fact was recorded by the Evangelists who were His disciples, the companions of His ministry, and eye-witnesses of His sufferings and death. This was the foundation stone upon which the whole super-

structure of the apostles' doctrine was systematically built up. Paul, the great builder of the Christian system, gathering the data of his arguments from the law and the prophets and the notable events of the ministry and sacrifice of the Lord in his own day, weaves the whole into a grand and logical system of faith, of which Christ crucified is the foundation stone, and Christ glorified, the hope of the world's restitution, is the crowning feature. Then, so confident is his faith in this divinely attested truth, that he adds, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other doctrine, let him be accursed;"—for he should know better in view of all the Divine testimony herein furnished—Gal. 1: 9.

This foundation doctrine, therefore, is the first measure by which we must test every religious system presented to us which is at all worthy of our consideration. If it is not built squarely upon this foundation, it is utterly unworthy of further investigation, whatever may be its claims; but if built upon this foundation, it is worthy of at least some further attention.

In applying this first test, the work of proving all things is quickly simplified. We do not need to examine into all the intricacies of every elaborate system concocted by diseased human imaginations, which would be a worse than useless waste of time. Simply looking at the foundation will decide the matter in very many cases. If they are wrong here, further examination is unnecessary; they cannot be true, and however plausible they may appear, they can only be the efforts of thieves and robbers who attempt to show men how to climb up some other way into the sheepfold. It is only idle curiosity to see what human ingenuity can suggest as another way of salvation. **Bear in mind that fundamental principle of all sound reasoning, that the superstructure of any system can only be brought to the same level of credibility as the premise or foundation with which it starts, and upon which it is built.** If, therefore, the foundation is wrong, the whole superstructure is erroneous; and every moment of precious time spent in studying the fine-spun theories of such a system, which one has thus already proved to be erroneous, is time taken from the study of the truth, from putting on the armour of God; and is filling the mind with subtle sophistries of the Adversary, instead of the sound logic of Divine truth, and thus preparing the way for the overthrow of faith instead of establishing it in sound doctrine.

By promptly applying this rule you can quickly determine what is of God and what of man, prompted by the seductive spirit of our great adversary. It may come to you even from the hands of an angel of light—a messenger of truth, a brother in Christ who has not discerned the sophistry of error and who therefore needs your assistance to discern it. It may come clothed in the garments of light—with smooth and pious phrases about the wonderful love of God and the spirit of His word, and the glorious hope of the world; but all these are often merely the cloaks of that pernicious no-ransom, evolution doctrine, which denies that man was created in the image of God; that he fell from that high estate, and that through the fall of that representative one sentence came upon all men to condemnation as Paul declares (Rom. 5: 18); which consequently goes further and denies the necessity of a redeemer, or that Christ came for any such purpose, claiming therefore that Christ was the Saviour of the world merely by setting a good example for men to copy, and not by giving His life a ransom. Then they laud this Saviour of the world (who saves them by His good example only, but whose precious blood availed nothing for them); and they talk loudly of the wonderful love of God, while they remove from under His love the firm support of His justice which the Scriptures declare could by no means clear the guilty, until the handwriting of the law, which was against us condemning us to death, was cancelled by "the precious blood of Christ." (Col. 2: 14). In their zeal to magnify His love and make their theories look plausible, they run to an excess which denies man's free agency and God's expressed purpose of destroying the wilfully disobedient ones in the second death. Thus they misrepresent the love of God as a weak and fickle element of the Divine character, falsify the real spirit of His Word and build up a false and delusive hope for the world—a hope founded upon a supposed weakness of the Divine character.

Thus the stones of our faith-building may be received through whatsoever channels the Lord may be pleased to send them. They must all have been quarried out of the Bible mine, but God may send one or another of His blessed angels (ministers, servants) to point them out to you or to help you to place them. He may be a very humble servant and one through whom you would least have expected the enlightenment of God's truth; but no matter if

he be ever so insignificant in the estimation of men, remember that God hath chosen the things which in the world's estimation are foolish and weak to confound the things which are mighty, and the things which the world counts mean and despises as unworthy of notice, to bring to nought the things that are—the great and long established systems of error.—1 Cor. 1: 26-29.

Thus systematically built up, stone by stone, proved and carefully fitted together and founded on the solid Rock of ages, your faith will be a symmetrical, harmonious structure, strong, secure and beautiful, which the winds and the floods cannot damage or overturn. "My sheep hear my voice," said our Master, "and they follow me, and a stranger they will not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers." (John 10: 1-5; 27.) They shun all profane babblings of science, falsely so-called (2 Tim. 2: 16; 1 Tim. 6: 20), and being close students of the Divine word—living very close to that fountain of truth and drinking deep of its spirit—they are prepared to quickly detect error, even though it lurk behind a very plausible semblance of truth. The Lord who puts forth His sheep and goeth before them, and calleth them all by name, will not leave His obedient ones in doubt and fear, and they will ever beware of the thieves and robbers who attempt to climb into the fold in any other than the appointed way which God hath ordained.

A very great mistake which some have made, in view of the conflicting ideas as to what is truth, has been to discard every human instrumentality and expect God's guidance through the Bible alone. Such forget that God gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ; that we are exhorted to

build one another up in the holy faith and to esteem the servants of God for their work's sake. Ever since the Church has had an existence, God has raised up from its midst as special servants of the body, some who have special teaching ability. Blessed is that servant who at the Master's appearing is found giving the meat in due season to the household of faith. (Matt. 24: 26.), and no less blessed are they of the faithful household, who, like the "noble Bereans" of old, search the Scriptures daily to see if these things be so—who prove all things, as the apostle exhorts, and hold fast that which is good.

Both in searching for truth ourselves, and giving it to others, we need to take heed to these methods and instrumentalities used for the edification of the early Church, because books and general education were not the privileges of the masses of the people, and the New Testament Scriptures were not completed and compiled until after the close of the first century of the Christian era. In the days of the great Reformation, while oral teaching was most largely used, the newly invented printing press came in for a large share of the work, in placing in the hands of the people, not only the Bible, but also stirring exhortations and teachings and various helps of brethren in the faith. In the present time by far the largest part of the work in disseminating knowledge is through the agency of the press.

Thus, through humble instruments, who as the angels of God quickly and quietly do their work and disappear, God Himself is honoured, and they await His appearing and kingdom for their exhortation and reward. The proud and unworthy ones esteem them not and will not hear their message, but those who hunger and thirst after truth and righteousness are filled. God bless His faithful messengers and all the elect who are being sealed through their ministration.

ISRAEL'S YEARNING.

"Thou art the land of all my dreams—
Thy wanderer's heart is thine,
And oft he lingers by the streams,
O holy Palestine!

"A stranger in a stranger's land,
O'er hill and vale I roam;
But hope forever points her hand
Toward my father's home.

"I know that Israel's weary race
Is scorned on every shore.
They scarcely find a dwelling place
Where they were lords before.

"Yet 'mid the darkness and the gloom,
A light begins to break;
O Israel, from the dreary tomb
Thy buried hopes awake,—

"And lips that raise the fervent prayer,
'How long, O Lord, how long?'
Shall change the wailings of despair
To the triumphant song.

"And I may live to see the hour—
The hour that must be near—
When in His royalty and power
Our Shiloh shall appear,

"Till then my prayers will rise for thee,
Till then my heart be thine,
O land beyond the stormy sea,
O holy Palestine."

JACOB AND ESAU IN A NEW LIGHT

A traveller and lecturer acquainted with the habits and customs of the Arabs throws a fresh light upon the transaction between Jacob and Esau respecting the birthright and the deception practised upon Isaac. It is claimed, and apparently on good grounds, that the customs of the Arabs in Mesopotamia to-day are in all respects what they were thirty-five hundred years ago, when Abraham dwelt there and was a great sheik, with flocks and herds and servants. Hence the ideals and customs prevailing amongst them furnish a good criterion as regards those in vogue in the days of Isaac, Jacob and Esau.

It is declared that to this day the first-born son of the family is the heir of the estate, with full authority next to his father. It is the custom amongst the Arabs that the elder shall recognize by fast the birth day of a celebrated ancestor, from whom he has received patrimony. On the other hand, other members of the family celebrate such a day as a festival. For the elder son to partake of the feast on such an occasion would mean the renouncement of his birthright to the next one in succession.

Applying this to Esau and Jacob; presumably the occasion was a celebration of the birthday of their grandfather Abraham, from whom proceeded the great blessing of God, which, as the elder son of the family, Esau had inherited. It was a day, therefore, in which it was incumbent to fast, but a holiday and special lentil festival to Jacob. As the elder son it would not have been necessary for Esau to purchase victuals from his brother, for, as the head of the home next to his father, he could have commanded whatever he desired.

On this occasion, however, when he asked Jacob for the savoury food, the latter was astonished and practically said, "Do you mean it, or are you joking? Do you really mean that you wish to abdicate your rights as the

firstborn by partaking of food? If you do mean it, I shall very gladly assume responsibility and I will do the fasting as the firstborn." Esau replied, "Yes, I mean it, why should I fast? I have no confidence in the old Scripture promises anyway, and have serious doubts if God had any more communication with father Abraham than with others." Still doubting his sincerity, Jacob, after the manner of the people of the east to this day, said, "Swear it and I will believe it." So Esau swore that he voluntarily voided his rights to his brother Jacob, who was glad to go under the conditions because of his faith in the promises made to Abraham.

Our informant further declares that amongst the Arabs it is still considered entirely proper to deceive the aged, for the purpose of saving them from sorrow. For Isaac to learn that his firstborn son had so disesteemed his privileges, it was surmised, would cause heartache and sorrow. Hence his wife and Jacob arranged to deceive him. Esau was dishonest in attempting to take the blessing which he had forfeited and that with an oath. He seems to have feared that the blessing of the firstborn would carry the bulk of Isaac's estate to Jacob. Apparently it was the earthly things that he desired and not the spiritual blessing of God through Abraham. So soon as Jacob left all the earthly inheritance in Esau's hands the latter was satisfied. And Jacob, too, was satisfied, because he got the portion that he specially desired and prized above everything else.

In full harmony with this, the Scriptures denounce Esau as a profane, worldly minded person, who sold his birthright share in God's special promises for a mess of pottage—for temporal, earthly refreshment. The Scriptures similarly praise Jacob because of his willingness to deny himself earthly comfort for the heavenly promises.

(The "People's Paper.")

CHRISTIAN MATURITY.

Made lowly wise, we pray no more
For miracle and sign:
Anoint our eyes to see within
The common, the Divine!
'Lo here, lo there,' no more we cry,
Dividing with our call
The Mantle of Thy presence, Lord,
That seamless covers all.
We turn from seeking thee afar
And in unwonted ways,

To build from out our daily lives
The temples of Thy praise.

And if Thy casual comings, Lord,
To hearts of old were dear,
What joy should dwell within the faith
That feels Thee ever near!

And nobler yet shall duty grow,
And more shall worship be,
When Thou art found in all our life,
And all our life in Thee.

(F. L. Hosmer, 1840-1929).

THE STUDENTS' PAGE

Mark's Gospel.

The Gospel of Mark was the first of the four Gospels to be committed to writing. Recent scholarship points to a date about the year A.D. 65 for its composition—or about 35 years after the crucifixion of Jesus. If, as is generally thought, John Mark was a lad of about 14 at the time of Jesus' ministry he must have been nearly fifty years of age when he wrote his Gospel—and Peter, who is thought to have inspired much of Mark's writing, an old man indeed, perhaps seventy or eighty years old. The structure of the language used in this Gospel shows it was written by one who thought and wrote in Aramaic—the common language of the peasantry of Palestine—and this fact accords with what we know of Mark. It is evident too that Matthew and Luke, who both wrote later, had Mark's gospel before them when they prepared their own. There is something appealing in the thought of this fourteen-year-old boy, probably always on the outskirts of the band of disciples surrounding our Lord, listening to all that went on and in his boyish fashion endeavouring to take it all in, becoming the one who in after years should first give to the Church of Christ a written record of the earthly life of He who "spake as never man spake."

When Joseph Shaved.

The brief reference in Gen 41: 14, to Joseph being shaved upon being taken out of prison and prior to being brought before Pharaoh would not at first sight convey much to the English reader. There is a world of significance in the words, however. The peoples of Palestine esteemed beard and flowing hair a sign of dignity and manliness; to be shaved was the mark of prisoners and slaves, and was a thing of which to be ashamed. (See II Sam. 10; 4 and Isa. 7; 20.) In Egypt, on the other hand, every good class citizen was habitually carefully shaved and hair well trimmed; the profession of the barber was an important one. Joseph therefore was required to be conformed to customary usage before appearing before the Pharaoh, and this passing allusion is a valuable testimony to the authenticity of the record—had the story been a compilation of a much later date as asserted by some critics, an allusion like this would have never appeared.

Man's primeval perfection.

"Neither in Egypt nor in Babylonia has any beginning of civilisation been found. As far back as archeology can take us, man is already civilised, building cities and temples, carving hard stone into artistic form, and even employing a system of picture writing; and of Egypt it may be said, the older the country the more perfect it is found to be. The fact is a very remarkable one, in view of modern theories of development, and of the evolution of civilisation out of barbarism. Whatever may be the reason, such theories are not borne out by the discoveries of archeology. Instead of the progress we should expect, we find retrogression and decay; where we look for the rude beginnings of art, we find an advanced society and artistic perfection. Is it possible that the Biblical view is right after all, and that civilised man has been civilised from the outset?"

(Dr. R. Bell Dawson, F.R.S.)

Blind leaders of the blind (Matt. 15; 14-15)

The force of our Lord's words "Let them alone; they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" is better appreciated when it is explained that this expression "blind leaders of the blind" was an everyday catchword in Israel. The Pharisees and Rabbis were often referred to—quite respectfully—as "leaders of the blind" in recognition of their reputed ability for leadership in things of God. The fact that these dignitaries had moved largely out of touch with the common people and their problems resulted in their being often referred to in popular conversation as "blind leaders of the blind" and Jesus quoted this everyday proverb in His teaching, adding thereto His own telling comment "And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." Elsewhere (Matt. 23) He calls them "blind guides" and it would almost seem from the words in John 9: 40 that the Pharisees, knowing of this customary saying aimed against them, asked Jesus if He supported the proverb or not. It is certainly clear that Paul in Rom. 2 : 19 makes allusion to the same proverb, which he, as a Pharisee, must have had good reason to remember; and Isaiah (56 : 10) shows plainly that the same traits of character were manifest in his day, although the Pharisees as a class had not at that time come into existence.

"BY FAITH . . ."

Heb. 11; 4

Most modern civilised nations keep a roll of honour on which is inscribed the names of their most illustrious sons. Their deeds of daring or works of achievement are woven into the story of the nation's own development, so that he who later reads the story of one of these worthy sons reads at the same time the history of his nation. For later generations "his story" becomes "History." The illustrious name, graven on the scroll of fame, stands forth as an enduring inspiration and incentive inviting the generations succeeding him to follow in his steps. As years and centuries pass the honours list extends, as this or that change of circumstance throws another leader to the top—another gifted son who serves his day and nation as trustee of its inheritance, and hands it on when dying, more glorious than when he took it up.

Israel had its scroll of fame. Israel, too, inscribed the names of those who served her well upon the records of her story. Their story was her story. Later generations treasured up their names, and learned at mother's knee, or poet's glowing tongue, the exploits they performed. To stimulate his brethren's flagging zeal a Christian penman draws upon his kinsmen's thrilling deeds, reminding them that they were born of noble blood and worthy sires, and that, by birth, they were endowed with capacity to bear up under stress and strain, to fear dishonour more than death, to count those happy who endure. He would not have them bring discredit upon the worthy dead, nor drag in dust or mire the glorious standard of their race, and though a new allegiance had been sworn, and Christ had been accepted as their High Priest, yet they had been shaped in Hebrew mould—they were of Hebrew fibre, with Hebrew blood still in their veins. Those old worthy sires were their sires still, whose lives bore witness yet what godly power within could do.

With us it is Shakespeare's glowing tongue, Nelson's daring deed, or Handel's massive sound, or Raphael's skilful brush that wins admission to the scroll of fame; or else Grace Darling's dauntless trip, or Florence Nightingale's unwearied wound-soothing, or this heroic deed or that, that wins a niche in this or that nation's Pantheon.

Great deeds indeed these Hebrew ancestors had wrought, worthy to rank with the whole world's best, yet it was not the mere great deed

which drew the Apostle's praise, but the great faith that gave it birth. Heroic act bespoke heroic faith. That only, in God's eyes, could give it worth. No rout of foe, nor bath of fire, nor contest with the lion's mouth meant anything to God if faith were lacking from the act.

Some of these men were cast in rugged mould—as Jephthae, Samson and Gideon. No gallant knight nor polished courtiers were these, but rough and rustic countrymen, quick to draw blade and wound or suffer wound as the hour might need. Others were of kingly state, or poetic tongue, or prophetic sight, as David, Daniel and many more. But rich or poor, taught or untaught, it was the faith they held that gat them favour in God's sight. To obey the Lord their God, that was their rule of life. To obey when obedience was hard, to do the work **when** God wanted it to be done; to do the work **how** God wanted it to be done; that was all, but that mode of doing it was everything. That was true faith, a pleasing faith, a faith of heart and hand.

It mattered not if God's instructing words were few, nor if He spake by word or dream, nor if the task were great or small. The test of every case was in the readiness to obey. Saul thought he could improve on Samuel's word, and kept the beasts alive. He fondly hoped that altar-flames and spate of sacrifice would win the Lord's "well done." "Not fat of rams nor blood of bulls" was what the Lord required. "To obey is better than sacrifice"—"to hearken than the fat of rams." That was the Prophet's stern rebuke. Not all the rams and bulls on all the hills were equal to one faithful act before the God of Israel. To obey, and then obey . . . and still again to obey, that has ever been the test, from Eden's day to this.

That has ever been the stumbling-stone along the way on which so many human feet have tripped. In Israel and in the Christian Church, so many thought to do God's work in their own way. Some thought to build the kingdom of the Lord before His own appointed time. Others thought to convert the world, before its due time had come. The motives prompting both these vain attempts may have been of the very best,—that matters not. That there was need for both none will gainsay,—but that is not the point. To seek to do God's work save in God's own way, at God's own time, is not a work of faith—it is to disobey.

When work is not of God it prospers not, no matter what men think, no matter how men strive. The service that is owned of God can never fail, though frail the servant be. Five small smooth stones, and David's sling—that was enough with God. One Prophet dared four hundred priests, and saw his watered sacrifice licked up by the fire. Three hundred lea^h-hearted men, when Gideon's sword and God's were one, sufficed to beat the foe. The untrained men of Abraham's tent, when braced by Abraham's faith, were quite enough to rescue Lot. When men will do God's work in God's own way they cannot fail; but first each man must know his God,—as Abraham knew, as Gideon knew, as Elijah knew, as David knew; and then to work, to fight, to act, to wait when God commands, is faith. Obedience is faith—a living faith, the faith of heart and hand. It is the product of many days; of days when God revealed Himself more clear, when understanding grew mature. God would be found good as His word in all He undertook to do. Maturing confidence said "He helped me yesterday, and He will keep me now," and thus when duty called the confidence was there, and gave assurance for the newer task. Behind each obedient act is found maturing confidence which grows and thrives in turn with each obedient act. Thus it is that faith which is not dead obeys and acts, and in obedience grows still more strong.

It is not amplitude of knowledge which gives faith. Away back when the world was young the world's first martyr showed his faith. He had no word of Holy Writ such as we now possess, yet had of God's revelation enough to be obeyed. He showed his faith in what he knew, and made appropriate choice of sacrifice. His faith was comparable with any faith in these or other times. Where less had been vouch-safed, less only was required, yet Abel's act of sacrifice was counted "faith" to him—his faith was counted not less faith than Abraham's, though revelation was scant. It lies not in the measure that is known but in the response such knowledge brings, and so we read "By faith Abel offered unto God a . . . sacrifice . . . by which he obtained witness that

he was righteous . . ." Heb. 11: 4.

Just as it is not amplitude of knowledge which brings true faith, no more will mere assent to abstract Truth produce true faith. It is not mere assent to even Present Truth that makes true faith. True faith springs from the heart (Rom. 10: 10.) and activates the hands. Unless this comes to pass cold storage of the Truth takes place. We (tick) it off by mere assent, and pack it into ice. The refrigeration of intellectual consent may keep its Truth unspoiled, but no man feels its warmth. Its definition may be all correct, but it gives out no heat—it generates no zeal.

A faith like that does not obey—it is no use to God. God's Truth is not enriched by any man's assent. Its verity stands unassailed, let men agree or disagree. But if a man's assent prompts him to obey then that man's faith is of some use to God. God can make use of him to serve His ends. God can invite such man to co-operate with Him. He can command, knowing the man is ready to obey, and that is what God seeks in man since earliest days. Those worthy men in ancient days had this obeying faith. It was a faith of hands and feet, as well as of the head, and thus it prompted them to exploits of renown whose story later ages love to tell. "By faith Abel offered; . . . by faith Noah . . . prepared an ark; . . . by faith Abraham . . . went out; by faith Sarah . . . was delivered of a child; . . ." (Heb. 11:), and so the story runs, embracing Isaac, Jacob, Jochebed, Moses, till the whole scroll of Israel's honoured names is made complete. ". . . these all obtained a good report through faith, . . ." and thus, pro tem, the story ends.

Search the wide world around in every age since time began. No worthier list of honoured names can anywhere be found. No scroll of fame in any land has ever borne the record of God-honoured names like that of Israel. It is unique. It stands alone. It is the register of the early age's choicest souls. Its ground of worthiness is unique too.

These unique men scaled these unique heights by the unique path of faith. They obeyed the word of God, and, obeying God, achieved imperishable renown.

In perils by day

The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him, and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between His shoulders.

Deut. 33: 24

In perils by night

When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid; yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy rest shall be sweet

Prov. 3: 24

THE QUIET TIME



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

I WILL GIVE THEE REST.

Almighty God, the Lord of Heaven and Earth,
O Thou, the Source and Centre of each sphere;
The Lord of Being, throned afar, Whose hand
Upholds the weight of worlds, yet, wondrous thought!
Nor day nor night too occupied to note
E'en when a sparrow falls to earth; Whose eyes
A watch-care keep o'er every child of Thine;
Whose guardian angels daily shape the course
Of those who love Thee more than life itself;
Whose chastening rod doth guide them in the way
That leads to endless life!—How sweet to feel
THY PRESENCE EVER NEAR, to know that
Thou

Dost never sleep nor slumber while Thy child
In time of need doth feebly cry to Thee.
O Thou, in Whom no shade of turning lies,
Thou changeless and unvariable One!
Though ALL unfaithful prove, yea, though the earth
And heavens depart, by faith we clasp Thy hand,
We calmly rest our weary hearts on Thee,
Assured that Thou will NE'ER FORSAKE, that we
Shall be FOREVER PRECIOUS in Thy sight!

GOD SO LOVED.

Pliny declares that Cicero once saw the Iliad of Homer written in so small a character that it could be contained in a nutshell. Peter Bales, a celebrated calligrapher, in the days of Queen Elizabeth, wrote the whole Bible so that it was shut up in a common walnut as its casket. In these days of advanced mechanism even greater marvels in miniature have been achieved, but never has so much meaning been compressed into so small a space as in that famous little word "So," in the text which tells us that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

KEEP—KEPT.

Those that Thou gavest Me I have kept.
John 17, 12.

The motto of Spurgeon's College shows a hand holding a cross. "Teneo et teneor": "I both hold and am held." It is fine to hold the cross; it is far finer to be held by it. Jude's word "keep" (v. 21) is a necessary injunction, but Peter's word "kept" reveals the grace which makes the other possible.

We hold the cross, but we are held by the cross. We keep ourselves in the love of God, but we are kept by the power of God.

No more strangers . . . but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God." Eph. 2 : 19.

Let me remember my privileges and responsibilities as "a fellow-citizen of the saints," and as a member of "the household of God." God has made no provision in the Bible for isolation. Everything points to the contrary. We are "branches" in the vine, "members" in the body, "brothers and sisters" in the family, bearing a close connection to each other. We must desire not only to serve our Lord and Master, but "by love to serve one another" (Gal. 5: 13) to help forward the interests of the whole "household" (1 Cor. 12: 25-31). Why is it we know so little of our household privileges? Why do we grasp so feebly our family heritage? We are too low down.

Too many of us are on the plain, always in the dust of the level. The hedgerows are high, the walls of separation appear insurmountable, and we walk on somewhat wearily and often fretfully, in our own little beaten path. There is many a child of God, entitled to reign like a prince, who continues to live like a miser. Why not climb to the higher ground, get from the lowlands to the highlands, above the mists and fogs (Isa. 40: 9)? The air is purer as we get closer to HIM, and as we get closer to Him we shall surely get closer to one another!

"Far above the mists 'tis clear,
Though the earth-clouds seem so drear,
Faith can whisper even here—Jesus knows."

NO BARRIER TO GRACE.

Grace makes itself equally at home in the palace and the cottage. No condition necessitates its absence, no position precludes its flourishing. One may compare it in its power to live and blossom in all places to the beautiful blue-bell of Scotland, of which the poetess sings:

"No rock is too high, no vale too low,
For its fragile and tremulous form to grow:
It crowns the mountain
With azure bells,
And decks the fountain
In forest dells.
It weathes the ruin with clusters grey,
Bowling and smiling the livelong day."

He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord;
and that which he hath given will He pay him again.
Proverbs 19 : 17.

THE OPEN HAND

"These wait all upon thee . . . thou openest
thine hand, they are filled with good"
Psa. 104; 27-28

One of the most persistently reiterated themes of Holy Writ is man's utter helplessness to direct his life without God. At every turn of life man comes up against his NEED, though it is but rarely that he either knows or realises the extent of that need.

The absoluteness of this need is not brought home to the heart or mind of man, because of the universal generosity of Almighty God. Only if God withdrew His activities from this planet entirely would man come face to face with the absoluteness and universality of his needs. If God kept back the rains, which fall impartially upon the just and the unjust; if He withheld the fruitful seasons (Acts 14: 17.) with their bounteous harvests; if He locked up His winds in their treasuries; then man would realize the utter helplessness of his position in this scheme of things. The effects of local famines have been serious and have brought ruin and destruction to man and beast. But these famines have usually been local only: there has mostly been abundance elsewhere, and relief has usually been despatched from the region of the abundance to the place of want. God has never withheld his gifts world-wide. He has never caused the universal harvest to fail. So unfailingly, yet naturally has the bountiful God bestowed His gifts, that men sow, doubting not for a moment but that they will reap, and call the sowing and reaping Nature's common round. But should God withhold His hand, their sowing would be vain—man may plant, and man may water but without God there would be no increase.

The other side of the question, obverse to man's need is God's ability and disposition to GIVE. These two factors in universal life are complementary to each other. God is the source of unending abundance, man the creature of unending need. (Psa. 104; 10-15.)

Not less is this so in the religious life of man. Here again the persistently reiterated theme of Holy Writ is man's utter helplessness and universal need. Again the other side of the question, obverse to man's need, is God's ability and disposition to give.

The beginning of God's generosity to fallen men dates from Eden days, when in the act of imposing the sentence required by His broken Law, God promised Mother Eve that her seed should eventually bruise the Serpent's

head—God gave her there a promise—His first Gift. This form of gift He repeated to Noah, in that He promised summer and winter, seed-time and harvest. To Abraham God gave that most wonderful promise which is the basic feature of the whole Plan of redemption. By the gift of His promises God also gave hope to fallen man. God said to man "I will bring blessing to you"—man, musing on the promise said "God will bring blessing to us some day," and so hope and expectancy were born.

God gave Abraham a seed—first a son, then a nation. To this nation God gave His Word and His Law, those "lively oracles" (Acts 7: 38.) which Moses received at Sinai. That Law was the most advanced moral standard of its day, and had it been received and obeyed would have raised Israel high above the nations around. That sacred gift from Sinai forms one important section of the Holy Book we treasure as the Word of Life. He gave Israel a Tabernacle so that He might give them the benefit of His presence in their midst. He gave them the good land on which the eye of God rests with holy delight (Ex. 3: 8., Deut. 11: 12.) He gave them judges and deliverers when they fell into captivity—reformers who led them back to their "oracles;" and "seers" who carried their minds forward to higher expectations. God gave them advancement and prominence among the nations, under David and Solomon, when the fame of Israel's king spread to the distant quarters of the world. The dual nations which later came about were given the benefit of God's patience and long-suffering, though they were fast becoming vessels fit only for destruction. Becoming in veneration idolatrous, Israel first, and Judah afterwards were given the spirit of slumber (Rom. 11: 8.) Under the conditions this was a boon to them, for the blindness which came minimized the degree of their responsibility, and because God thus concluded them all in unbelief He will be able in Millennial days to have mercy upon all, "and so all Israel will be saved."

Isaiah, commissioned to deliver the message of rejection said ". . . the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep and hath closed your eyes . . ." (Isa. 29: 10-16.) yet he concludes his denunciation with the statement "Is it not yet a little while and Lebanon

May "time of service" L: time of sorrow

shall be turned into a fruitful field . . ." (v. 17.) The gift of slumber, while it deprived the two nations of their land for centuries, and of the privilege of supplying all the Body-members of Christ, will have kept the national spirit in a state of hunger for the appearance of Messiah as an exalted King.

In due course God gave to the returned remnant nation in Jerusalem His greatest and best gift—His well-beloved Son. This was the gift that lay dearest to His own heart. He came to earth bearing the tidings of the Almighty's great Love for men, especially for those who were children of God's Friend (Jas. 2: 23., Isa. 41: 8.) What tremendous possibilities God set before that generation in Jerusalem when Messiah came to them (Dan. 9: 25.) In the first place God purposed to give repentance for their national sins to Israel through His Son (Luke 1: 68-79. Acts 5: 31.) God desired to touch the deeper springs of their hearts by the ministry of His well-beloved, and thus to lead them to repentance.

Again, Jesus was destined to be a bringer of light to His people—God desired to bestow the gift of understanding upon that generation, so that it might comprehend what His higher purposes were—that the heavenly things were about to begin to displace the earthly carnal things. To those who were responsive to the new teachings God gave an understanding of the mysteries of the Kingdom (Matt. 13: 11. Mark 4: 11.) "Unto you it is given to know" what was "hidden" from other ages.

Again, God gave Jesus to that people, to be to them as Bread of Life. In manner similar to wilderness days when God strewed the earth morning by morning with manna, so again, in another forty-year "To-day" (Heb. 4: 7.) God provided Living Bread for the children of Abraham (John 6: 27-65.) In some supernatural way the words of the Lord would have sustained their deeper life (John 6: 63.) and eventuated in eternal life. In some supermundane way His flesh would sustain the life of the world. God gave Living Bread to those who could eat. (John 6: 32.) Again (to vary the "sustenance" figure of speech) God gave Jesus as the Water of Life—of which, if one should drink, it should satisfy his thirst forever. (John 4: 10-15.)

God gave Israel a shepherd, who would have guided and pastured the flock of God in paths of righteousness (John 10: 1-16.) But there was no beauty about Him that they desired Him. They wanted a King—a conquering Messiah; He came a sufferer, a Man of sorrows;

an offering for sin. The nation rejected Him—but to as many as did receive Him God gave the privilege to become His own Sons (John 1: 2.) To those whose hands were open to take, God gave many other gifts along with and through His beloved Son! Giving! Giving! GIVING! all the time, to those who knew their NEED.

Even after they had despised and crucified His Son, God still kept the door of opportunity open for such as needed more than the ritual and ceremonial of the Temple sacrifice. To many among them the words of Jesus had opened a new world of possibilities—He told of opportunities and privileges, of which their fathers had never heard—(Matt. 13: 35.) He set new longings rising in their hearts, but because they had been powerless against the Sanhedrin and Priests, and had not been able to veto their schemes nor their fearful deed, He had been slain. How readily they listened on that wonderful morn when "Peter stood up with the eleven" and told the people that God had raised Him from the dead, and again desired through Him to "give repentance to Israel." (Acts 5: 31.)

But only a remnant were found, who desired that gift of repentance. To fill the place vacant by this hard-hearted race, God turned to the nations to take out of them a people for His Name. To these also God gave repentance unto salvation. "Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as He did unto us who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I that I could withstand God" spake Peter in defence (Acts 11: 17.) "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" was his brethren's response. Repentance, the gift of God? Yes, verily! They who received the word into good hearts are such as are "opened" by the Lord (Acts 16: 14.) No man comes to the Son save those whom the Father draws (John 6: 65.) The "faith" that saves is God's gift (Eph. 2: 8.) through the operation of His word (Rom. 10: 13-17.) and of His Spirit in their hearts. The "peace" that garrisons their hearts comes from God too. (Phil. 4: 7. John 14: 27.) This is a precious gift to those who dwell in a tempestuous world. Perfect peace is bestowed upon all who dwell upon the Rock of Ages (Isa. 26: 3-4.)

And Love—that most desirable God-like trait? Yes, that is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which He gives us (Rom. 5: 5.) We cannot add so little as one inch to our spiritual stature by taking thought. It is not impossible to spend too much time talking

over the necessity for our growth in Love and be all the time forgetful of the fact that Love is a fruitage (Gal. 5: 22-23) and is more a matter of the husbandman's concern than that of the branch in the vine itself. God is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those that ask Him, than any earthly father is ready to give his children food (Matt. 7: 11.) And more Holy Spirit power in the heart means more Love to shed abroad in the life. This Love also, is a gift from God for we love because He first loved.

Again, not only is the bestowment of the Holy Spirit the basis of character development (2 Cor. 3: 18.) but it is also God's pledge-penny of the inheritance we hope to receive. It is the token that God has taken us into His service, and that the final reward will be sure, if we discharge our duty faithfully, "... God ... hath sealed us, and given the earnest of the spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor. 1: 22. 2 Cor. 5: 5.) Moreover this Holy Spirit gift is an energising and stabilizing power. It is not a spirit of fear,—but of cool reasoned courage, and of a sound mind. It produces the spirit of sanctity blended with sanity in our minds—a well-balanced properly-ordered sanctification of life. This too is a gift of God—and is by no means the outcome of psychological self-effort. It is God who hath wrought us for our resurrection change (2 Cor. 5: 5.) The transformation is wrought by His Spirit (2 Cor. 3: 18.) And then for the day-to-day struggle He giveth grace to such as repair to His Throne of Grace, humbly beseeching assistance in their time of need. (Heb. 4: 16. Jas. 4: 6.) 1 Pet. 5: 5.) Thus the whole range of the Christian's life and experience is called into being and sustained by His gracious gifts, but it does not end even at that, for He will give the complete victory over death, and over the grave. When that which is mortal is swallowed up in immortality, and death is swallowed up in victory, the faithful footstep follower of the Lord will see Him and be with Him for evermore. "Thanks be unto God which giveth us the

victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15: 57.)

From first to last, the Christian's life is one of receiving; for what has he that he has not received? It is a life of faith with an open hand—with a courage to ask and take. It is the story of a great need,—which grows as it feeds, and which is more pronounced at the end of the way than at the beginning. Thank God, even its deepest need does not exhaust the capacity of the bounteous Giver. Though its demands are presented every day—yea, many times a day—the riches of His grace are of ample store for each and all that call upon Him.

The story of Divine grace is the record of One who has been disposed to "give," and "give," and "give" again, because it pleases Him to dispense of His fulness to helpless needy men. He created man with a great "need," so that He might play the part of a great giver. Man has but to open his hand to take of that bountiful fulness which God opens His hand to give (Psa. 104: 27-28.) If God withheld not His well-beloved Son "shall He not also with Him freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8: 32.) Christian experience of this and other days shows without fail that they who are most developed in grace are the ones most conscious of their need. The more one has grown in the things of the Lord, and the more tender and sensitive the heart has become the more such saints become persuaded of their need for God. The ultimate end of every quest of the maturer heart, is not merely to accept the gifts of God, but to receive with open heart the giver too.

It is good to accept with open hand the gifts of God; it is better far with open heart to accept the Giver Himself. No wealth of earth is so desirable as the gifts of God; the whole world itself is but refuse indeed in comparison with possessing God.

Beloved in the Lord, cultivate with diligence your NEEDS, then shall you find that God can more than supply them all to-day, tomorrow, and to the end.

GOD IS OUR REFUGE AND STRENGTH

The flimsiest of air raid shelters becomes an impregnable fortress when the occupants have put their whole trust in God; for nothing can penetrate the defences if He has said "Thus far shalt thou come, and no further." And if in His providence the home-call comes to some of His children amid the crash and tumult which man's wrath and

wickedness has let loose, it can only be because in His Love and wisdom He knows that it is time for them to lay aside the puny instruments of service which pertain to discipleship in this world, and prepare for that greater work of service which will commence when He "speaks peace to the nations."

THE EASY YOKE.

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."—Matt. 11: 28-30.

To take Christ's yoke upon us is to become a yoke-fellow with Him, and to patiently walk with Him. The yoke is a symbol of servitude, and he who submits to the yoke thereby submits to the will and directing of another and quietly plods on for the accomplishment of an appointed task. This our Lord Jesus did in willingly submitting His will to the will of the Heavenly Father. God did not impose the yoke upon Him, nor does He upon any; but He cheerfully took it and patiently bore it, not esteeming it a menial service, though it cost Him the deepest humiliation; but delighting to do God's will.

The invitation to us is to be yoked in together with Christ in the same service and under the same Master. The yoke, He says, is an easy one, and the burden light. But we cannot be yoked in with Christ unless we have His spirit. Two that are yoked together must of necessity be of one mind; and that which makes the yoke set lightly upon us is the fixedness of purpose which does not chafe under it or try to get away from it, but which delights to bear it in view of the end to be gained, as well as in the communion and fellowship of a kindred mind, a true yoke-fellow.

What a blessed invitation, to come under the same yoke with Christ! and what an excellent opportunity to learn the way in which our Heavenly Father would have us walk! How, indeed, could we miss the way when yoked in with such a leader? From Him we learn the way; in company with Him we catch His blessed spirit; we learn of that meekness which despises no humiliation, however great; which is not only content and happy in any situation, but which is always rejoicing in the privileges of treading the way, as well as in the hope of the glorious end to which it tends. Thus we find rest unto our souls—rest from the vain and fruitless works and plans which other taskmasters would force upon us. O! that all who labour under other yokes and are heavily burdened would cast them off and learn with what ease and delight they can wear the yoke of Christ.

All of the greatest toilers in God's service gave the same testimony. Jesus said, "It is easy and light;" Paul said, "These light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," James said, "Brethren, count it all joy, for the trying of your faith (under this yoke) worketh patience," Peter said, "We rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." All the true yoke-fellows of the Lord in the present day also bear the same testimony. They can rejoice in all circumstances, and in everything give thanks.

THY WILL BE DONE.

We see not, know not; all our way
Is night; with Thee alone is day.
From out the torrent's troubled drift,
Above the storm our prayer we lift,
Thy will be done!

The flesh may fail, the heart may faint:
But who are we to make complaint,
Or dare to plead in times like these
The weakness of our love of ease?
Thy will be done!

We take with solemn thankfulness
Our burden up, nor ask it less,
And count it joy that even we
May suffer, serve, or wait on Thee,
Whose will be done!

Though dim as yet in tint and line,
We trace Thy picture's wise design,
And thank Thee that our age supplies
The dark relief of sacrifice,
Thy will be done!

And if in our unworthiness
The sacrificial wine we press,
If from Thy ordeal's heated bars
Our feet are seamed with crimson scars,
Thy will be done!

If, for the age to come, this hour
Of trial hath vicarious power,
And, blest by Thee, our present pain
Be liberty's eternal gain,
Thy will be done!

Strike, thou the Master, we Thy keys,
The anthem of Thy destinies!
The minor of Thy loftier strain,
Our hearts shall beat the old refrain,
Thy will be done!

. (Whittier).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WELLING MEETING.

The Welling friends announce that Berean Hall, Welling, will be closed for meetings after Nov. 17. Regular class meetings will continue after that date, and details of same can be obtained upon request addressed to the Class Secretary, Bro. J. E. Humphrey, 17 Lowfield Street, Dartford, Kent.

FOREST GATE MEETING.

Friends not already aware of the fact are asked to note that the Forest Gate Church has transferred its meeting place from Earlham Hall, and now holds its meetings at the Y.M.C.A. Hall, Woodgrange Road, Forest Gate, E.7, only a few minutes from Earlham Hall, and adjacent to Forest Gate station. The usual warm welcome will be extended to all who visit the Forest Gate friends in their new home, and further information will be gladly supplied on request to the Secretary, Brother F. H. Guard, 74 Princes Avenue, Woodford Green, Essex.

The Sunday morning meeting is at 11 a.m. and the afternoon meeting during November at 3.30 p.m. (3 p.m. on Nov. 3). There is no Sunday evening meeting.

"THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS."

This, the latest booklet to be issued by the Committee, has been published in a limited edition only and it is thought that some of the friends would be glad to have copies for loaning or giving to Christian friends. It is not expected that the booklet will be found suitable for ordinary public witness activities.

The demand for the series "Concerning them that are asleep" in booklet form was insufficient to justify the publication of same.

THE "SHUNAMITE" FILM.

Following the announcement made last month it was hoped to give more definite details in this month's issue. Certain unforeseen delays, however, have occurred and it is not yet possible to say what arrangements will be made for the first showing of the film in England. We do ask, however, that those whose hearts are turned toward this avenue of service will keep the matter before the Throne of Grace, that all obstacles may be removed and the gospel be preached with effectiveness and power by this means, in our Master's own due time.

CHRISTMAS CARDS AND CALENDARS.

It is not intended to stock the usual Christmas items this year with the exception of Christian Art Calendars. Block tear-off calendars will not be available. The Christian Art Calendar in its usual attractive form will be in stock at 1/3 each (1/5 post free).

We have a quantity of Christmas Cards on hand from last year and these will be sent while they last at 1/3 per dozen. This is last year's price and is good value since all prices will be higher this year. When this stock is exhausted we shall not have any new ones in and so early application is desirable.

KINGDOM CARDS.

One of the most effective means of awaking interest in the message of the Kingdom is by the use of "Kingdom Cards." These cards carry a short comment on the significance of world events and the Divine solution, and invite recipients to return them to the office with name and address, suitable literature being then sent to the applicant. Facilities are provided for any who are interested to be put in touch with local meetings. The cards may be distributed in any manner desired and friends can "follow up" enquiries resulting from their efforts, if they so desire, and make request to that effect. A proportion of the donations received by the Committee is set aside to meet the cost of this work in order that Kingdom Cards can be supplied in any quantity free of charge, the friends being perfectly free to contribute to the cost, or not, according to ability.

REFERENCE LIBRARY

The Reference Library is temporarily closed, and will be re-opened in about two months.

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Emphatic Diaglott (N.T.)
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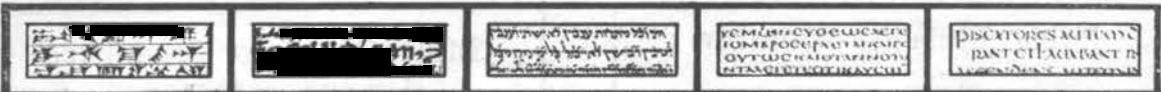
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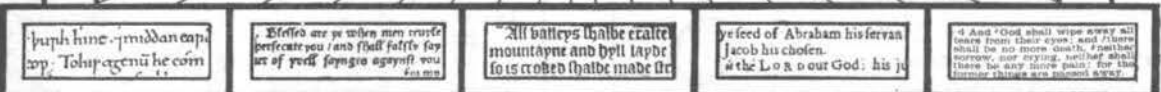
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BIBLE STUDENT'S MONTHLY



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THREEPENCE

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THE ASSOCIATED BIBLE STUDENTS OF GREAT BRITAIN.

An undenominational Christian fellowship devoted to the study and dissemination of Bible truth in the light of present-day knowledge and to the deepening of personal Christian life and experience. Its members stand unreservedly for the teachings of Jesus Christ as a complete solution to humanity's problems, and believe in the eventual establishment of a new order of society upon earth in which the principles of love, equity and righteousness will prevail and evil be eliminated; and that under the spiritual rule of Christ and His Church the dead will be restored and mankind live in eternal harmony with God.

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NOTICE TO THE FRIENDS.

NEW B.S.C. ADDRESS.

On and after Thursday, December 12, the B.S.C. office will be located at
20 SUNNYMEDE DRIVE,
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All correspondence formerly sent to 24 Darwin Road, Welling, should now be sent to the new address, except letters for attention of Committee or Secretary, and articles and news intended for the B.S.M., which should continue to be sent to 24 Darwin Road.

The Bookroom will be re-opened on Dec. 12 and orders for all literature and books should be sent to Sunnymede Drive.

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* * *

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CHASTISEMENT & AFFLICTION IN THE FAMILY OF GOD.

Lo! how happy is the man whom GOD correcteth! Therefore the chastening of the Almighty do not thou refuse; For He woundeth that He may bind up, He smiteth through that His own hands may heal. In six troubles He will rescue thee, and in seven there shall smite thee no misfortune. (Job 5; 17-19.)

"Train up a child in the way it should go" is the injunction God lays on us, and it is the principle on which He Himself is acting with His Church. He is training up His children here; this is the true character of His dealings with them. The education of His saints is the object He has in view. It is training for the Kingdom, it is education for eternity. How momentous, then, is this training. It is the Church that is the subject of it, and it is to prepare her for an everlasting Kingdom.

In bringing many sons unto glory it was needful that even the Captain of their salvation should be perfected through suffering. Surely then God lays vast stress upon this discipline. Knowing this the Apostle quotes Proverbs and exhorts us on this very point. (Heb. 12 and Proverbs 3.) It is too solemn to be despised, too momentous to be overlooked. The education of God's family is concerned in it; the preparation of an heir of glory depends on it. This discipline commences the moment we are taken into the family. It is not always visible, neither are we at all times conscious of its operation. Nevertheless from the very day we are begotten again to a living hope it begins. It ends only with life. It is a whole lifetime's process, it is a daily, an hourly discipline which admits of no cessation.

1. It is the **Discipline of Love**. Every step of it is kindness. There is no wrath nor vengeance in any part of the process. The discipline of the school may be harsh and stern, but that of the family is LOVE. We are sure of this and the consolation it affords is unutterable. Love will not wrong us, there will be no needless suffering. If we could but realise this there would be fewer hard thoughts of God even when His strokes are most severe.

2. It is the **Discipline of Wisdom**. He who administers it is the "God only wise" (Rom. 16; 27). What deep wisdom, then, must there be in all His dealings! He knows exactly what we need and how to supply it. He knows

what evils are to be found in us, how these may be best removed. His training is no random work, it is carried on with exquisite skill. The time and the way and the instrument are all according to the perfect wisdom of God. The fittest time is chosen, just the very moment when it was called for and when it will be most profitable. The surest and at the same time most gentle method is devised. The instrument which will be surest yet safest, most effectual yet least painful, is brought into operation. For all is Wisdom in this discipline of God.

3. It is the **Discipline of Faithfulness**. "In faithfulness Thou hast afflicted me," said David, and again, "It is well for me that I was afflicted that I might learn thy statutes. Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now Thy word have I kept." All is the doing of a faithful God, a God who is faithful to us as well as faithful to Himself. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend" and the child of God finds in trouble the faithfulness of the truest of friends. He is so faithful that He will not pass by a single fault that He sees in us, but will forthwith make it known that it may be removed. He gave this command to Israel, "Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour and not sin upon him," and He Himself acts upon the command He gave. He is too faithful a Father to suffer sin upon His children unrepented. He is true to us whether in sending the evil or the good; shall we not say more true and more faithful when He inflicts the evil than when He bestows the good? It almost at times seems to break the heart of a loving friend to be obliged to say or do anything severe towards the friend he loves, yet for love's sake he will do it. In faithfulness he will not shrink from it, and in so doing is he not his true friend? So with a chastening God—He is faithful when He blesses, more faithful when He chastens. This surely is consolation. It may well allay all murmuring and establish our hearts in peace.

4. It is the **Discipline of Power**. He who is carrying it on is not one that can be baffled or forced to give up His design. He is able to carry it out in the unlikely circumstances and against the most resolute resistance. Everything must give way before Him. This thought is one of the most comforting connected with

the discipline. If it could fail, if God could be frustrated in His designs after we have suffered so much! To be put to pain by one who is not able to make good to us the profit of this would add bitterness to the trial. And then our hearts are naturally so hard and our wills so stubborn and inflexible that nothing save an Almighty pressure applied to them can work the desired change. When the soul is at strife within itself, when the flesh rises up in its strength and refuses to yield it is most blessed to think upon God's chastening as the discipline of POWER. It is this that assures us that all shall yet be well, and it is in the strength of this that we gird ourselves for the battle, knowing that we MUST be "more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

There might be love in the dealing—love to the uttermost—and yet all be in vain. For love is oftentimes helpless, unable to do anything for the beloved object. There might be wisdom too, and yet it might prove wholly ineffectual. There might also be untiring faithfulness and yet no results, it might be altogether impotent even in its most earnest attempts to bless; but when it is infinite POWER that is at work we are sure of every obstacle being surmounted and everything that is blessed most surely coming to pass. My sick bed may be most lovingly tended, most skilfully provided for, most faithfully watched, yet if there be no power to heal, no resistless energy, such as sweeps all hindrances before it, then I may still lie hopeless there, but if the power to heal be present the power that makes all diseases fly at its touch, the power that if needs be can raise the dead, then I know of a truth that all is well.

Oh! brethren it is blessed indeed to remember that it is the discipline of POWER that is at work upon us. God's treatment MUST succeed even in reference to its minutest objects. It is the mighty POWER OF GOD that is at work within us and upon us, and this is our consolation. It is the grasp of an infinite that is upon us and nothing can resist its pressure. All is LOVE, all is WISDOM, all is FAITHFULNESS, yet all is also POWER. The very possibility of failure is thus taken away. Were it not for this Power there could be no certainty of blessing, and were it not for this certainty how poor and partial would our comfort be! He who chastises us is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the Power which doth energise itself within us. (Eph. 3: 20.) Hence to a soul conscious of utter helplessness and

weary of the struggle within between the spirit and the flesh, there is "strong consolation" in remembering the Power of Him whose hand is grasping him so firmly on every side.

It is God that made the heavens and stretched them out in their vastness and majesty, who moves the stars in their courses, the framer of light and darkness, the builder of the everlasting hills, who raises and stills the mighty deep, who is the God that is chastening. Each aspect of Jehovah's Power becomes a new source of consolation in the day of chastisement and sorrow.

Such then is the nature of the family discipline when viewed in reference to God. Love, Wisdom, Faithfulness, and Power unite to devise and carry it out. It must then be perfect discipline, the completest and most successful that can be thought of or desired. It is well to look at it in this light, for it is thus that we become entirely satisfied with ALL that comes to pass and feel that "It is well."

Now let us consider it in another aspect. We have seen what it is when coming from our Heavenly Father. Let us see what it is when operating upon us. As we observed before, God's object in chastisement is the education of His children, the training up of His chosen family, and it is their imperfect spiritual condition that makes this necessary. Let us enquire in what way it is set to work upon the mind—the will—the heart—the conscience.

1. It is the training of the mind. We are naturally ignorant and unteachable in the things of God which the ease of prosperous days increases, but God at length interposes and compels us to learn. "A rod with rebuke giveth wisdom." (Prov. 29: 15.) He sends trial and that makes us willing to learn (we become aware of our ignorance and seek teaching from above). God begins His work of instruction. We learn now the deep meaning of words which we had hitherto used but as familiar sounds. Every promise stands out in illuminated splendour. How fast we learn in a day of sorrow! It is as if affliction awoke our powers and lent them new quickness of perception. We advance more in the real practical knowledge of our Father's word in a day than in years before. A deeper experience has taken us down into the depths of Scripture and shown us its hidden wonders. As David said, "How happy the man whom thou correctest, O Lord, and whom out of thy law thou instructest." What teaching, what training of the mind goes on upon a sick bed,

or under pressure of grief! And Oh what great and wondrous things will even some little trial whisper in the ear of a soul that is "learning of the Father." In some cases the profit is almost unfelt during the continuance of the process. We think we are learning nothing, disaster stuns us. We become confused and nervous, we seem to derive no profit, yet before long we begin to feel the blessed results. Maturity of judgment, patience in listening to the voice of God, a keener desire for His word, a quicker discernment of its meaning, these are soon realised as the gracious results of chastisement. The mind has undergone a most thorough discipline and has made wondrous progress in the knowledge and spirit of Divine Truth.

2. **It is the training of the will.** The will is the seat of rebelliousness. In actual practical experience, brethren, do we get opposition from our old will? Here the warfare is carried on. "The flesh desires the contrary of the Spirit and the spirit the contrary of the flesh;" these are opposed to each other, so that you do not perform the things which you wish. At the time of our entrance into the Family the will is bent in the right direction, but it is still crooked and rigid. Rebelliousness is still there. Prosperous days may sometimes conceal it, so that we may be almost unconscious of its strength, but it still exists. Furnace heat is needed for softening and straightening it, no milder remedy will do, yet it must be done. The will is the soul's citadel or fortress, hence it is the will that God seems so specially to aim at in chastisement. Fire after fire will He kindle in order to soften it and blow after blow will He bring down on it to straighten it. He will not stay His hand till He has thoroughly marred our self-formed plans, and shewn us the uselessness of our self-chosen ways. This is specially the case in long continued trials. The bending and straightening of the will is often a long process during which we have to pass through waters deep and many. Long drawn out trials seem to be specially aimed at the will. It is only by degrees that it is brought into harmony with the will of God. We can at a stroke lop off the unseemly branch of a tree, but to give a proper bent to the tree itself requires time and appliances constantly applied for months or years. Yet the will must give way, however proud it must bend. God will not leave it till He has made it one with His own.

3. **It is the training of the heart.** In fallen man the heart beats false to God. When first we come to appreciate God's gracious invitation to surrender ourselves to Him it becomes in some measure true. "My son give me thine heart." Yet it is only so in part. It still clings too fondly to the dust, it is not wholly God's, and this cannot be; God must have our heart beating truly towards Him for He said, "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God." It is our true hearted or zealous love that He wants. False throbbings of our heart after other objects than Himself He cannot suffer, but must correct, or else forego His claim. Hence He chastens and spares not till He has made us fully aware of our failing in this respect. He strips the leaves whose beauty attracted us, He cuts down the flowers whose fragrance fascinated us. Then when He has shewn us each object of earth in its nakedness and deformity He presents Himself to us in the brightness of His own surpassing glory. And thus He wins our heart, thus He makes it true to Him.

*Show me Thy face—one transient gleam
Of Loveliness Divine
And I shall never think or dream
Of other love save Thine;
All lesser light will darken quite,
All lower glories wane,
The beautiful of earth will scarce
Seem beautiful again.*

*Show me Thy face—the heaviest cross
Which then seem light to bear,
There will be gain in every loss,
And peace with every care.
With such light feet the years will fleet,
Life seem as brief as blest,
Till I have laid my burden down,
And entered into rest.*

Yet this is no easy process. The training is hard and sore; the heart oftentimes bleeds under it, yet it must go on, no part of it can be spared, nor will it cease till the heart is fully won. If the chastener should stay His hand before this is effected, where would be His love? He knew this when He said to Israel, "Let them alone," it was the last thing His love consented to do. One of the sharpest words He ever spake to Israel was, "Why should ye be smitten any more? Ye would again turn aside." (Isa. I: 5.) Let us remember this and not faint even though the heart has been long bleeding. Let us remember it and seek to make the sorrow shorter by gladly joining with

Him in His plan for getting possession of our whole heart. His love will be the sweeter and it will abide and satisfy us for ever. And how wonderful it is for us to be thus trained up to love Him here with whom, in love and fellowship unbroken, we are to spend the everlasting day.

4. **It is the training of the conscience.** God's desire is to make it altogether tender. He wishes it to be sensitive in regard to the very touch of sin and earnest in its longings after his holiness. To effect this He afflicts, and affliction goes directly home to the conscience. The death of the widow's son at Sarepta immediately awakened her conscience and she cried to the prophet, "O man of God art thou come to call my sin to remembrance?" So God by chastisement lays His finger upon the conscience and forthwith it starts up into new life. We are made to feel as if God were now looking into our hearts and commencing a narrow search. Further, we see in this affliction God's estimate of sin. This teaches the conscience by making the knowledge of sin a thing of experience, an experience that is deepening with every new trial. In these last days how little there is of tenderness of conscience. The world seems to know nothing of it save the name. It is a world without a conscience, and brethren, we ourselves know to what extent we lack this tenderness of conscience. For this God is chastening us; this training of the conscience is of greater moment than many deem it. God will not rest until He has wrought it. Let us not overlook it but continue to strive against everything that would tend to produce insensibility. "Quick as the apple of an eye, O God, my conscience make."

Such then is the family discipline! We have seen it as it comes forth from our Heavenly Father, and we have seen it as it operates upon

us; and is it not all well? What is there about it that should call forth one murmur of lip or heart? That which opens up to us so much more of God and lets us more fully into the secrets of His heart must be blessed, however hard to bear. That which discovers to us the evils within ourselves, which makes us teachable and obedient, which trains up our whole being for the glorious kingdom; that must be PRECIOUS indeed. Besides, it is our Father's will, and is not this enough for the trustful child? Is not chastisement one of the methods by which He intimates to us what He would have us to be? Is not His way of leading us to the Kingdom the safest, surest, shortest way? It is still our Father's hand that is guiding us, though it has to lay hold of us with a firmer or may be rougher grasp. It is still our Father's voice that speaketh to us as unto children, though may be in a sharper tone to constrain our obedience. It is not designed even for a moment to separate between us and our Father or to have one suspicion of our Father's heart. Is it not one of the tests of sonship, and shall that, without which we are not accounted sons, make us doubt our sonship or suspect the love of our Father? That love claims at all times, whether in joy or sorrow, our full hearted peaceful confidence. It is at all times the same, and chastisement is but a more earnest expression of its infinite sincerity and depth. And shall it cease or sink low at the very time when it ought to be loudest and strongest? Should not trial draw from us the Apostle's triumphant boast? "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (Rom. 8: 35 and 37-39 Diaglott.) For is it not just when we are brought under chastening that we enter upon the realities of consolation, the certainties of love and the joys of heavenly fellowship in ways unknown before?

LOOKING FOR HOME.

I am looking beyond this abode of strife,
With its burden of tears and sighs,
To the radiant realms of eternal life
Where the summits of glory rise;
Where the fields of Paradise open to view
As humanity's lasting home,
And the higher bliss of a faithful few
Assuredly have come.

I am looking away to mansions fair,
Prepared for the bride of the Lamb;
For those who the cross now faithfully bear
Shall soon share the crown and the palm

O! the rapturous bliss of Bridegroom and bride,
When the long waiting season is o'er,
When hearts so faithful and loyal and tried
Are united to sever no more.

I am looking away, for the day-star brings
Its promise of glory rare—
Till the rose-tipped finger of morning flings
Her banner upon the air.
I heed not the scourge of the tempests breath,
I reckon not the surges foam,
For beyond the sad vistas of sin and death
I am looking for home—sweet home!

(Selected).

TRANSFORMED

"We all with unveiled face reflect as a mirror the glory of the Lord and are transformed into the same image from glory to glory."

The Lord's people are not the only ones who would like to be better men and women. Professor Huxley said, "I protest that if some great power would make me always think truth and do right on condition of my being turned into a sort of clock and wound up every morning, I would instantly close with the offer." "Oh, that I could only think right and do right" has been the desire of great men right down the ages.

This is our inheritance if we are the Lord's people. This is shown in the Word of God and can be obtained under the right conditions. It is as natural for the character to become beautiful as for flowers to become beautiful: the same Creator who instituted laws for the production of beautiful flowers instituted laws for the creation of beautiful characters.

Some claim that the only way to be transformed into the likeness of the Lord is to resolve by sheer will power to overcome sin in our bodies and minds. There is nothing wrong in resolving to overcome sin, but that is not the vital point. Suppose we were on a ship which, when in the middle of the ocean, refused to go, and those on deck tried by pushing at the masts to move it. It would not move however much pressure they used; their strength would be used in the wrong way. They need to go down to the engine room the real seat of power, and use their energy to put right what was wrong. Effort is useless unless exercised in the right direction. A drowning man cannot pull himself out of the water by his own hair.

Some say, "Our idea is to tackle one sin at a time and thus eradicate sin from our hearts that good may work." That would be a very big task for any man, to get sins one by one out of his life. That is the wrong way; sin is only overcome by something taking its place. The evil spirit discharged from the man must be replaced by the Lord's spirit or the last condition becomes worse than the first. The tackling of one sin at a time is therefore not the right method.

Still another method is to copy Christ's virtues. The word "Copy" suggests the thought of an artist in wax or paint trying to reproduce

a beautiful flower. Many believe in Christ as the standard to be copied, but very few are able to copy Him. The power that is used is a power of self—a power within themselves instead of a power from without.

Again, some say, "How about self-examination"? Setting up a code of rules to which we must keep. A watchmaker once made a present of the parts of a watch, but when they were put together the main spring was missing. The vital thing is the power, or mainspring.

The Scriptures give us a valuable formula for our sanctification. There are laws of science and art, and if we would produce anything correctly we must use a formula. We are told that God's thoughts are higher than man's, and if the wisdom of men sees the necessity for a formula, God has not left us without one. II Cor. 3: 13-18 provides this formula, and in verse 18 reveals three laws: ① The law of reflection, ② assimilation, and ③ influence.

Notice that it does not say we are transforming ourselves into the same image from glory to glory. No, we do not transform ourselves, we are changed or transformed. The changing power is something that does not naturally belong to ourselves, it is a power that comes from without. Throughout the New Testament we find that the verbs used in connection with our sanctification are passive. As far as the power of sanctification is concerned it is a power from without. We can come under the influence of His Spirit and so be transformed. The barometer is made to tell us the condition of the weather, but it does not itself register the condition of the weather. The weather does that, the barometer responding to changes in the weather. So our responsibility is to bring ourselves into the attitude of susceptibility in which God can work on our minds. That is our part of the work, to get our hearts into that attitude of full consecration: take out anything and everything that would hinder the working of His Spirit. The Word of God must be received into our prepared hearts and the whole being must be yielded as members of righteousness. That is the thought in this text. We, beholding Christ with unveiled face, in our study of the Lord's Word and His example and teaching, see the glory of God. We see the beauty of God. He

exemplifies to us the character of God, and as we set our affections on that lovely character, our love for God and our study of His Word is so close to our hearts, we cannot but reflect it. A man is shaped and fashioned by that which he loves. We find two young people coming together, they see something they love in each other. They marry and live together for fifty years, and during that time a reflecting work is going on; one would speak as would the other; their very appearance becomes alike. If we are in love with the Lord, the things He says are the things we would say, the words He has given us are the words which express the sentiments of our hearts. We take them into our hearts and reflect them. Beholding Christ, we reflect His image, and we are changed from glory to glory. This word "glory" is rather a crude word to express the thought here. The Psalmist says, "The heavens declare the glory of God." There is a demonstration of the glory of God, His power, His wisdom and the grandeur of His mind. In other words, Gods' glory is His character. So, we, beholding Christ, reflect His image and are transformed from character to character, from one character to a better character, then to a still better one until we are ready for our final change. We are all mirrors, we cannot help it, and we are all reflecting, whether we know it or not.

Now, what is it we reflect? We reflect what we have gained from our environment. If we choose an environment that leads to a depraved life, we shall reflect that depravity. We shall also reflect if we have been reading uplifting books and have been in uplifting company. Are we living in an environment of the Spirit? Do we read the Word of God? If so we shall reflect it. Do we keep the company of the brethren? Then we shall reflect the spiritual effect.

This reflection is not merely a matter of mind or memory. The impressions we have gained are made on our very beings, so much so that a man is shaped and fashioned like that with which he comes into contact. Where we cannot change our circumstances, we can use them. It will either be a matter of our circumstances using us or we using them. This is important. We may find one who goes through a trial and the result is a stronger faith in God than ever before, whilst another may pass through similar circumstances in a spirit of questioning, murmuring and complaint, produc-

ing a very different result. By taking Christ's precepts, no matter what experiences we go through, they will all work out for our good; whether painful or pleasant, they can be used for our sanctification. We not only reflect what we receive from our environment and experience, but we receive these impressions into our own beings. This we have referred to as the Law of Assimilation.

Now, influence: Our study of great men's works, or our contact with individuals, have the effect of changing our lives. David and Jonathan had a great influence on each other. How about the influence of Christ? If the influence of good people is great, and yet they are only a very small part virtuous in comparison with Christ, what would be the influence of Christ on those who make Him their companion? Some may say that there is a difference, that there is something tangible in a friend. But we do not love our friend because of a nice face; it is because of his virtues. So it is with Christ. It is His life and influence that does the work of transforming. It is by the begetting of the Spirit of God that the Christian is in receipt of a power that the world cannot know or comprehend.

There are certain laws governing the Christian. Except a man be born from above. We must receive a power from above before we can be transformed. There are laws governing the material world, organic and inorganic. A mineral is inorganic and must remain so, for it cannot by any power from within itself cross into even the lowest form of life. Plants are also governed by laws of growth, which are peculiar to themselves. While the mineral cannot reach up into the organic, we find that a plant can reach down its roots into the mineral and by absorbing it, transform it to part of itself. The mineral has been "born from above" and entered the Kingdom just above it. No law governing the human can make the human spiritual by effort or power from within itself, but God can take hold of us if we yield ourselves to Him, and so we can be transformed into His image. The power is the power of life and we derive that life from the Word of God, for the Word of God is living, and we have been begotten of the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever, and by imbibing that Word we are transformed. If we study His Word and character and take His Word into our hearts, we receive a power that changes us from glory to glory.

This is the one thing worthwhile in life. In an Art Gallery in Paris stands a famous statue, the last work of a great genius. He was very poor and lived in a garret. When the work was all but finished, a sudden frost came, and as the poor old man lay awake in the fireless room he thought how the water would freeze in the clay and destroy the dream of his life. He arose from his couch and reverently heaped the

bedclothes around his work. In the morning the sculptor was dead, but the precious statue had been saved. So let there be one thing in our lives, to win Christ, and be found in Him, though it may mean losing the comforts, and even the necessities of life. Let the image of Christ be formed in our hearts, for this is the only thing worthwhile.

MOODY AND THE BIBLE.

At one of his meetings in New York, Dwight L. Moody, the evangelist, quoted this sentiment in beginning his address: "The Bible is a lamp to direct us; a bit to restrain us, a sword to defend us; water to wash us; fire to inflame us; salt to season us; milk to nourish us; rain to refresh us; treasures to enrich us; and a key to unlock for us heaven's gate." All this it is, he said, and much more. The man who came to a meeting to get an anointing that would last a lifetime was compared to the man who ate a breakfast to last a lifetime. Daily, hourly feeding on the Word is necessary, if the soul would grow.

The higher critic and the scientific sceptic did not receive much encouragement at his meetings. From cover to cover Moody believed the Bible. A man brought a difficult passage to him with this question:

"How do you explain that, Mr. Moody?"

"I don't explain it."

"Well, how do you interpret it?"

"I don't interpret it."

"How do you understand it?"

"I don't understand it."

"Well, what do you do with it?"

"I don't do anything with it."

"You don't believe it, do you?"

"Certainly, I believe it. There are lots of things I believe that I don't understand. There are a good many things in astronomy, a good many things about my own system that I don't understand, yet I believe them. I am glad there are heights in that Book which I haven't been able to climb. I am glad there are depths I haven't been able to fathom. It is the best proof that the Book came from God."

"But you don't believe in the Old Testament just as you do in the New Testament?"

"Yes I do. We have one Bible, not two. The very things in the Old Testament that men cavil at the most to-day are the things the Son of Man set His seal to when He was down here, and it isn't good policy for a servant to be above his master. The Master believed these things."

The stories of the Deluge, the destruction of the cities of the Plain, Balaam's ass, and Jonah and the Whale, were considered at one of his meetings, the objections to them considered, and Christ's references to these very matters given. Mr. Moody advised every one of his hearers to buy a concordance before luncheon, and then to take up the study of the Bible systematically, prayerfully. He commended highly a study of prophecy, especially those given by the so-called Minor prophets. Glancing hastily at the prophecies concerning Babylon, Nineveh and Tyre, he showed how one after another had been fulfilled, and added:

"The best way to convert an infidel is to take him to the prophecies fulfilled. Look at the prophecies concerning Christ. There are over two hundred about Him in the Old Testament. Think of those which concern His life on earth; His miraculous birth, not at Nazareth, but in Bethlehem, 'that the Scriptures might be fulfilled'; His dwelling at Nazareth, in Egypt, His riding into Jerusalem, His cruel treatment, His death. The Bible is not worn out, any more than the sun is worn out. Let us study the Book more and ourselves less."

* * *

Dwight Lyman Moody was born in 1837 and died in 1899. Converted at the age of nineteen, he lived to be a great spiritual force felt throughout the Christian world, and it is calculated that his voice and pen reached one hundred million people. His zeal for the study of the Bible was not characteristic of his early career, but was due to the influence of a young English evangelist, Harry Moorhouse, who preached on one occasion at Moody's church at Chicago, and with such effect that upon Moody's return he found all his congregation attending the services carrying their Bibles. From that day Moody became a Bible student, and that fact changed the whole aspect and power of his message.

THE QUIET TIME



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

REST—Matt. 12 : 28.

My Saviour, Thou hast promised rest,
Oh! give it then, to me,
The rest of ceasing from myself,
To find my all in Thee.

This cruel self, oh, how it strives
And works within my breast,
To come between Thee and my soul
And keep me back from rest.

How many subtle forms it takes
Of seeming verity,
As if it were not safe to rest
And venture all on Thee.

O Lord, I seek a holy rest,
A victory over sin!
I seek that Thou alone should reign.
O'er all without, within.

In Thy strong hand I lay me down—
So shall the work be done :
For who can work so wondrously
As The Almighty One ?

Work on, then, Lord, till on my soul
Eternal light shall break;
And in Thy likeness perfected,
I 'satisfied' shall wake.

(Rev. H. C. G. Moule).

A LOST OPPORTUNITY.

He said, "Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet."

(John 13 : 13-14).

In their fear to be the least, all the disciples had shunned the opportunity of service for the Master and for each other. Our Lord, their acknowledged Head and Master, the Messiah, had humbled Himself to serve them all, and had thus rebuked their inhumility, and at the same time set them an example that would apply to every affair of life, namely, that they should be glad to serve one another on every proper occasion, in the high things or in the common affairs of life. This washing of one another's feet we may readily see applies to any and every humble service of life, any and every kindness, though specially to those services and kindnesses which would be along the lines of spiritual assistance and comfort.

THE HEAVENLY GUEST.

Our Lord enters as a guest, and at once becomes the host. At the wedding-feast the wine ran short, and He said to the servants: "Fill up the water-pots to the brim." He is telling the servants what to do; He is providing wine for the feast; He has taken command; He was invited as a guest and He has become the host. Again, when the two on the road to Emmaus came to their home, they constrained Him and said: "Abide with us." And He came in. He was their guest. But look, He is breaking the bread; He is at the head of the table; He is asking the blessing. Invited as a guest, He has become the host.

THE CONTINUAL BATTLE.

"Life is a battle," some one has truly said. We see amongst the brute creation a constant struggle for existence, and it is the same with humanity. In business competition it is a battle; in politics the strife goes on continually; in the family, between the parents and the children, there is frequently strife for mastery; and throughout the world it is largely each family for itself and each individual for himself, all this strife being along the lines of ambition and selfishness, sometimes almost to the extent of necessity.

The Lord's soldiers were recruited from these miserable conditions, but to another and different warfare—a war against selfishness, avarice, covetousness and all unrighteousness, all unloving methods, all sin. The Captain of our salvation is our exemplar, whose methods of warfare we are to copy. Although He was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners, He was an inveterate foe to sin, and laid down His life in opposing it. All who would be accepted as followers of the cross must follow His example—"faithful even unto death"—if they would have the great prize, the crown of life.

SIMILE OF PRAYER.

Prayer pulls the rope below and the great bell rings above in the ears of God. Some scarcely stir the bell, for they pray so languidly; others give but an occasional pluck at the rope but he who wins with heaven is the man who grasps the rope boldly and pulls continuously, with all his might.

✻ THE STUDENTS' PAGE ✻

"I have found a Ransom." Job 33: 24.

Elihu's discourse to the friends of Job includes a reference to the redemptive work of Christ so remarkable for so early an age that many commentators refuse to interpret the words according to their plain meaning. It is only when the knowledge of the Divine Plan reveals the literal truth of Elihu's statement that as a result of this "ransom" the flesh of man shall be fresher than a child's and he shall return to the days of his youth, that the beauty of this passage is fully appreciated. "If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness, then he is gracious unto him and saith "Deliver him from going down into the pit. I have found a ransom." The word translated "deliver" means "to buy back for a price," having much the same meaning as "anti-lutron" in the New Testament; and the word "ransom" has the significance of "atonement." Thus in these far off days when the world was young we have a plain statement of earthly restitution to be effected as a result of a giving of a "Ransom for All."

* * *

Our daily bread. (Matt. 6: 11)

The word used by our Lord in His wonderful model prayer for "daily" provides a hidden link with the every day cares of the housewife. It is a word not used elsewhere in the Scriptures and not found at all in the language of the educated sections of society in our Lord's day. It was a word in popular use among the peasants and fishermen referring to the provision of mundane necessities for the day, and has been found to have been used in Egypt at the same time by the women to head their list of commodities to be purchased in the market for the day's needs. It is as though a wife to-day in making out her "shopping list" were to head it with a word such as "dailies" and enter below it the list of vegetables and other things she must shortly buy for the household's current needs. So our Lord, with His intimate knowledge of the lives of His followers, gave the promise of Divine provision for our temporal needs by the one word which could fitly describe how truly every little and seemingly insignificant need of ours is provided for by our God.

The Promised Land.

It is not always realised that the land promised to Abraham considerably exceeded in size the greatest extent of the territory occupied at any time by the children of Israel. It was defined as extending from the great river, the Euphrates, to the river of Egypt (not the Nile, but the Wady-el-Arish, the river running from the heart of the Sinai peninsula to the Mediterranean Sea). This tract of land would be about one hundred miles broad at its northern end, and one thousand miles at its southern extremity, from Egypt to the mouth of the Euphrates where it enters the Persian Gulf. From north to south the length of the land would then be about six hundred miles. This makes a country about twelve times the size of England, and when it is remembered that England alone has at present a population of forty millions, it can be seen what possibilities exist in the "Land of Promise" for that regathering and for a blossoming and budding that will fill the face of the world with fruit, to use the figure of speech coined by Paul. Without doubt the great desert which at present occupies much of this area of land will become fruitful under the industrious labours of those who are to build the old wastes and repair the former desolations.

* * *

"That He might fulfil all things." Eph. 4: 10

There is a world of meaning in the Apostle's words here. The Greek is *plerose ta panta* "fill the all-things"—i.e., the universe. *Plerose* means to fill by diffusing a thing throughout, as by filling a room with smoke, for instance, and also to furnish abundantly, as by filling the sky with stars or furnishing a garden with plants. It is derived from a word which has the significance of filling a vessel or a hollow place. Consider the aptness of the word. Christ, after His ascension, is to fill the universe, but not with stars, for that has been done already. What more appropriate than that He shall furnish it with living beings all in harmony with God and living to His praise. The universe as we see it through our telescopes is but the empty framework of that which shall be when the work of Christ as regards this earth is finished and in company with His glorified Church He commences His eternal work of "filling the all-things."

"TALKING WITH GOD."

(Ex. 32: 7-14)

(The following words were written with due appreciation of the sacred character of the conversation, and as a reverent attempt to re-construct the scene and the thread of discussion which passed between the Most High and Moses on the mountain top. It seeks to set forth in dialogue form the reason underlying God's reputed repentance as recorded in the text. (Ex. 32: 14.)

Scene. At the top of Mount Sinai. At its foot the children of Israel have made a golden calf, and are worshipping it.

The Most High: "For forty days and nights, O Moses, thou hast been with Me in this mountain top. I have given thee all the particulars and patterns of the sacred tent, the holy altars, and of the curtained Court, which I have desired thee to build. Thou hast these patterns in thy mind! I have given thee also My laws, graven by My own hand, on the stone tablets which I have put into thy care—but now, what serves it all? The people which thou broughtest out of Egypt, and with whom, as it were but yesterday, I entered into sacred covenant, have defiled themselves. So quickly have they turned out of the way of My commandments! They have made for themselves a golden calf, and even now are worshipping this abominable thing. They have presented their offerings before it, and are extolling it for their deliverance from the Egyptian land, and are praising it for their safe passage through the sea. 'Of such as this be thy Gods, O Israel—for it is such as this that has brought thee out of the land of thy bondage! The High God whom thou thoughtest had called thee has deserted thee. He has removed the leader with the wonder-working rod. These forty days He has been gone, and we know not where he is nor what has become of him. From henceforth our God must be seen by us, and dwell with us; he must be tethered down in our midst, so that he cannot leave us or abandon us, as Jehovah has done. This golden calf shall lead us all our journey through.' So speak thy people, whom thou hast brought out of Egypt!"

Moses: "Say not so, O my Lord Jehovah! Tell me not that the sons of thy friend Abraham have so soon proved faithless! And why callest Thou them 'my' people? Are they not the people whom Thou didst send me to demand from Pharaoh, as Thy firstborn? Surely they are Thy people! Wilt Thou not be merciful to them in their weakness, and pity them for

Thy covenant's sake?"

The Most High: "It is indeed even as I say. It is but yesterday I brought them forth from Egypt and brought them in this wilderness unto Myself. I made bare my holy arm in their sight, and made Pharaoh let them go. And now, while they do not forget, they give the praise for all they have received to this mass of gold! Base, ungrateful people—unworthy of their fathers! unworthy of My choice! unworthy of the purpose I had in view! How can I now proceed to cleanse the peoples of the earth from sin, through such a wayward people? I will blot them out entirely, and begin My task over again! Now, O Moses, listen thou to Me! I cannot go back on My promise to My faithful friend, to bless all the peoples of the earth through his seed. I must and will perform all My good promise, for my heart is touched by the plight of fallen man. I must and will perform My good pleasure through the seed of Abraham's surrendered son, but I do not think the wayward, idolatrous crowd at this mountain's foot is worthy of my purpose. I will pass them by and let them die in this wilderness. I will take thy seed, O Moses, and mould it for my purpose, and will make of thee a great nation."

Moses: "Say not so, O mighty Lord; surely Thou canst not so lightly cast off Thy people whom Thou hast so mightily redeemed! In yon oppressive land Thou hearest their bitter cry and Thou camest down to deliver them. Surely, then, they were precious in Thy sight! Thou didst not free them from Pharaoh's hand merely to destroy them Thyself in this wilderness! Bethink thee, O Most High, of all that Thou hast done for them, and forgive Thou this their sin! Wilt Thou not remember they have lived, these many years, in an idolatrous land, where Thou hadst left them in sorrow, and alone. And but three moons have passed since their bondage ceased! So long they lived in that land of a thousand gods—so short the time since they were set free! Wilt Thou not give time for them to forget what they so long have seen—and time to learn and understand what Thou wouldst have them do?"

The Most High: "Now hush thee, Moses, and hear what I have to say! Wilt thou not call to

mind the course of these last few weeks? Wilt thou forget that I proposed a covenant to them, and that **thou** wast the man who passed between Myself and them? Wilt thou forget they pledged themselves to do My will, and to obey my commands? And wilt thou not recall that our covenant was sealed by blood? Does it escape thee what that sealing meant? Quite well thou knowest that all contracting parties, bound by blood, must keep good faith or meet the like fate which befalls the sealing victim! The blood thine own hand sprinkled calls for this people's death! It is but just that they should die, and become as those beasts whose blood joined them and Myself together in solemn pact. Now therefore, Moses, let Me alone and say no more while my displeasure waxes hot! It is needful that I uphold my Law and assert my high claims of what is just! I will destroy them quickly that they suffer not unduly, for, by My great Name, they are not worthy of my care, nor of my call! Then I will take thy seed, O Moses, and shape it for my purpose and will make of thee a great nation. Thou hast served me well since I called thee in Midian's wilderness—now I will place thee in company with thy worthy sires, and thy name shall be linked with theirs! I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as I told thee at the bush. I will also be thy God, and to all future generations the honoured roll of my chosen friends shall read . . . Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, . . . Moses! Thus will I fulfil my promise and my purpose, and in thy seed, O faithful Moses, shall all the families and peoples of the earth be blessed!"

Moses: "Say not so, O Thou Most High! It cuts me to the heart to hear such words! Why wilt Thou be so wroth with this erring people? Hast Thou not brought them forth from Egypt by Thy mighty arm! Didst Thou not hear their anguished cry by day and night? Didst Thou not see some good within their hearts what time their groanings reached Thine ear? Is not the blood of Abraham, Thy friend, in their veins, and will not blood **tell** in the end? Wilt Thou destroy them for this single sin? Is Thy Divine heart touched for all the nations round—for Canaan's wicked hosts and Egypt's tyrant bands and the other evil peoples in the wide places of the earth, and hast Thou no spark of pity for the children of Thy friend? Are those more deserving of Thy pity and compassion than these? If Thou wilt not take pity on these for their father's sake, then think thee of Thy own great Name! Why should

the proud Egyptians drag it in the mire? Will they not say that Thou hast spent Thyself in showing wonders in their land; that Thy power now is gone, and that no other people need ever be afraid of either Thy threat or act? Will they not say Thou hast deceived this people by the promises which Thou couldst not fulfil, and now Thou hast perforce to destroy them because Thou hast exhausted all Thy resources? Wilt Thou not turn Thee from Thy stern resolve, and let Thy mercy triumph over Thy just Law? Wilt Thou not remember Thy great promise to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to whom Thou swarest by Thine own great Name that Thou wouldst take their seed to be Thy people, and that Thou wouldst give to them the good land of promise as a possession for ever? And are not these people at this mountain's foot their seed, their sons, the fruit of their own bodies, now grown into a goodly seed and ready to Thine hand? Wilt Thou not repent Thee of Thy wrath, and leave to my care the requital of this sin? Surely Thou wilt not destroy the good with the evil—the innocent with the guilty—the deceived with the deceiver? I will go down from hence, and make enquiry about this sin, and if Thou wilt leave it to my care, I will recompense the sin upon the heads of those that have provoked their brethren to do this thing! If Thou wilt permit I will require their blood, and it shall be with them as with the slain beasts, whose blood was sprinkled to confirm their covenant with Thee! I will enquire who is on Thy side, and who is not! Wilt Thou not hear my prayer and let Thy mercy temper Thy just claim? If Thou shalt slay them out of hand, and for Thy people take my seed (as Thou hast said) may it not be that when my seed is grown, they too may likewise fall, and fail Thy purpose yet again? And wilt Thou then begin again and yet again? Wilt Thou be angry if my heart has no desire to see my Seed displace the people at this mountain's foot? Is it not better that Thou shouldst spare this host—this people greatly grown; which carry Egypt's bitter memories in their minds, and Abraham's blood within their veins, a people ready to Thy hand? Wilt Thou not send me hence from this sacred place, and from before Thy Holy face, to right this wrong, and chide them for their sin?"

The Most High: "It shall be even as thou hast said, O interceding Moses! Thou shalt go down thence from before My face, and thou shalt vindicate my Law! He that hath done

this thing thou shalt not spare; he that hath been misled into sin thou shalt chide! I will not slay this people, root and branch, for Abraham's sake; and, notwithstanding this, their sin, my promise with him and his seed shall stand unchanged!

As for thee, O Moses, know know that thou hast high regard for My great Name, and that

thou hast loved this wayward people, and hast no desire to profit thyself or enrich thy seed, by their sin. This greatly pleases Me, and wins for thee My high esteem! Go thou and do as thou hast said, and stay this rebel rot, before it spreads too far, that I may not need again to think to blot them out! My peace go with thee!"

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,

As the swift seasons roll.

Leave thy low-vaulted past.

Let each new temple, nobler than the last,

Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,

Till thou at length art free,

Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

GONE FROM US

The home call came to Sister Audrey E. Spain, of Swanscombe, on November 5 during an air raid. Our sister was well known to and loved by many in the London district and there are many whose sympathy and prayers will go out on behalf of our brother who mourns the early loss of his wife and also on behalf of Sister Reynolds in her grief at the loss of her daughter. May our God the God of all comfort, give these our brethren that consolation in their present loss which only He can give, and a confident expectation of the re-union which will be theirs one day when "the rains are over and gone."

ANONYMOUS

We would acknowledge with sincere appreciation the receipt of anonymous gifts, 10/- and £1 respectively; toward the work.

THE "SHUNAMMITE" FILM.

Work is proceeding on the preparation of this film and the friends may look forward in confidence to the day when it will be available in England. It is hoped that this will be the first of a number of films which will serve a two-fold purpose; first, to awaken the interest of the brethren in their privileges of service and fellowship together by providing yet another meeting-point of co-operation in service, and secondly, to present to many who are looking for a reasonable explanation of the Divine attitude to present distresses with the answer to their questions. The picture is on sub-standard safety film and can be shown in any hall or large room provided electric light is available. Classes wishing to have it shown in their own locality are requested to write to the office at once.

BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS.

The following can be supplied from stock. Prices include postage.

Emphatic Diaglott	13 6
Moffatt (New Testament)	3 6
Weymouth with notes	5 6
do. without notes	4 0
Rotherham New Testament	13 6
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Youngs Literal Translation	11 0
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Margolis Old Testament	5 6
Cruden's Concordance	6 6
400 page Bible Concordance	1 10
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Life of Jesus Christ (Four Gospels arranged as continuous narrative)	2 9
Cross and Crown badges, pendant	1 3
do. pin and catch	1 6
do. brooch	2 6

CHRISTMAS CARDS AND CALENDARS.

It is not intended to stock the usual Christmas items this year with the exception of Christian Art Calendars. Block tear-off calendars will not be available. The Christian Art Calendar in its usual attractive form will be in stock at 1/3 each (1/5 post free).

We would like the friends to note that Christmas Cards are not being stocked this year, and we shall not be able to supply.

REFERENCE LIBRARY

(Temporarily closed)

Translations

- Emphatic Diaglott (N.T.)
- Ferrar Fenton
- Leeser (O.T.)
- Moffatt (N.T.)
- Rotherham (N.T.)
- Variorum
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- Cambridge Bible Dictionary
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- Life of Christ (Neander)
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- 1910 Convention Report
- 1913 " "
- 1914 " "
- 1915 " "
- 1929 " "
- 1930 " "
- Daniel the Beloved of Jehovah (Streeter)
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