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NOTES



With the dawn of the New Year we are commencing several new features in the Monthly and sincerely trust that they will prove interesting and useful.

"The Story of the Book," the opening instalment of which appears in this issue, is planned to trace the history of the writing and translation of the Bible from the very beginning down to the present day. Commencing with the manner in which the earliest narratives of Genesis came into being, passing on through the times of the Israelitish prophets and the completion of the Old Testament as we know it, several centuries before Christ, thence to the First Advent and the writing of the Gospels and Epistles, it will go on to the translations into Latin and early English, and finally to the modern translations we have in our own day. It is hoped that the series will enhance the reverence of many for the Book which has survived so many centuries.

"By Way of Remembrance," also commencing in this issue, will go back over some of the fundamental doctrines of Scripture, things in which all Christians should be equally interested, and will present these matters in crisp and concise form, with a wealth of Scripture references, so that the articles may be used if desired as a basis for Bible studies. Next month's article in this series will tell of the pre-human existence of our Lord Jesus Christ and the manner of His "becoming flesh."

Next month we hope to commence a descriptive exposition of the Book of Jonah. The story of the great fish is not the only and by no means the most important aspect of interest in the Book, and since the series is written in such a fashion as to describe nature of the times and places concerned, it is hoped that most of our readers will find real interest in this story of the man who ran away from God—but had to come back to God in the end.

We had hoped that the heavy hand of the Paper Controller would be lifted a little this year—but it was not to be. We shall look forward, though, to the day when the "Monthly" can appear again in a style more suited to the majesty of its theme.



THE STORY OF THE BOOK



A history of the written Word.

***** 1. Beginnings *****

We do not know when the Bible began to be set down in writing; its origin is lost in the mists of time. The earliest documents of Genesis can be traced back to a time a little after the Flood, before Abraham was born, while Shem the son of Noah was still alive. There is evidence in the first few chapters that the Hebrew version was itself translated from an older record written in the Sumerian language, the tongue of Sumer, of which country Ur of the Chaldees was a principal city. The fact that Abraham's ancestors for several generations lived in that land makes it a reasonable assumption that these early chapters are copies of records treasured by the family and brought out of Sumer by Abraham when he accompanied his father Terah to the city of Haran, ultimately obeying the Divine call to leave the Euphrates valley and its civilisation and go into a land which God would show him.

It was fashionable among modern Biblical scholars of a generation or so ago to say that no part of the Bible existed in written form before the eighth century B.C.—about the time of Isaiah—because, said they, writing was unknown before then. That confident assertion has been effectually disproved in more recent years by the discovery of written records which go back to two thousand five hundred years before Christ—well before the time of Abraham. There is in existence to-day a beautifully sculptured statue of an Egyptian scribe having a roll of papyrus on his knees and a pen in his hand, over four thousand years old, testifying to the antiquity of writing in Egypt.

But there are no relics of the antediluvian world from which we may gather some idea of how men wrote, if they did write, in the "world that was." Sir Leonard Woolley has indeed found just one tablet, inscribed with an unknown kind of picture-writing, which he believes to have been written by the men that lived before the Flood, but in the present state of our knowledge we cannot be sure. And in any case the writing is too archaic to be deciphered. We must turn our attention then to a time, perhaps a few centuries after the Flood, when so far as we know at present

the first eleven chapters of Genesis were set down in writing.

Although the Book of Genesis has been rightfully accredited to Moses from time immemorial, and the modern critics' pronouncements that Moses did not know how to write have gone where all exploded theories go, it has only lately been realized that Moses did in fact compile Genesis from ancient historical documents which had come down to his own day from times past. He acted as an editor, putting the various accounts together, adding explanations and comments where necessary, and bringing the story up-to-date to his own time. It must be acknowledged here that the preservation of these documents through the ages has been by the power of the Holy Spirit, which from the dawn of history has moved holy men to speak and write, and has then preserved what they have written, for the instruction of future generations.

The work of archaeologists has thrown a flood of light upon the manner in which these Genesis narratives were originally written. For many years the thousands of clay tablets found in the ruined cities of Mesopotamia, and written in Sumerian, Assyrian and Babylonian "cuneiform" characters, have been studied and translated, and the knowledge thus gained, applied to the structure of the first eleven chapters of Genesis, has led to the conclusion that they comprise a succession of probably six separate accounts, each dealing with a specific phase of early history and each complete in itself, the construction and language of these accounts indicating that they were written in the cuneiform characters and the Sumerian language on clay tablets, soon after the Flood. Although in the Hebrew and consequently the English versions they run on from one to the next with no apparent division, each can be recognized quite easily by virtue of the fact that the "signature" of the writer or owner of the tablet appears at its end.

This signature, or "colophon," as it is technically called, appears in Gen. 2; 4, 5; 1, 6; 9, 10; 1, 11; 10 and 11; 27. The word in these texts translated "generations" is the Hebrew "toledoth" and means properly "histories" or "origins." It is so used in Hebrew literature. The use of colophons is frequent on cuneiform tablets, and where the text runs, for example as in Gen. 11; 10. "These are the generations (histories) of Shem," it indicates that here is the conclusion of an ancient tablet written by or under the

direction of Shem, or describing events connected with Shem. In this particular instance, the record commences at chap. 10; 1 and concludes at 11; 10. The geographical place-names in chaps. 2 and 4 point to these earlier accounts having been written by a dweller on the lower Euphrates, and those in chap. 10 by a dweller in Canaan or Arabia.

It would appear probable then that these six accounts, covering the story of the world from Creation to the Tower of Babel and the death of Terah, were written and collected by Abraham's ancestors and passed into his possession before he left Ur of the Chaldees. The last account, ending with the death of Terah, Abraham's father, must have had that ending added by Abraham himself. On this understanding, we can picture Abraham in Canaan as being in possession of the very first written Bible, comprising the first eleven chapters of Genesis. This collection would consist of a few baked clay tablets, each probably no larger than eight inches by six, inscribed upon both sides with details of the wonderful happenings that took place when man first walked the earth. How Abraham must have conned those precious tablets over and over again in the intervals of his communion with God! He had so little of the written Word: we have the whole sixty-six books of the Bible: he had only the first eleven chapters of Genesis.

Here, then, are Abraham's six tablets listed in detail.

TABLET 1. (Gen. 1; 1 to 2; 4.)

"In the beginning." That is the sublime commencement of the story of the seven days of creation, leading up to the time when God saw all that He had made, and rested.

This tablet concludes:

"These are the histories of the heavens and of the earth, when they were created."

A fitting conclusion! No man was witness of the events. This story must have been revealed by the Holy Spirit to some chosen instrument who recorded that which was revealed to him.

TABLET 2. (Gen. 2; 4 to 5; 1.)

"In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens."

This account opens with a statement of time:

It repeats, in fuller detail, the story of man's coming to the earth, but does not touch upon the seven creative days. It goes on to tell of Eden, the Fall, the sin of Cain; of the first city and the first city-dwellers, the first nomads and cattle-keepers, the first musicians and the first metal-workers. It goes on to the seventh generation and to the birth of Enos, three and a half centuries after the Fall, and then stops abruptly with the concluding colophon "*These are the histories of Adam.*"

There is no history of the antediluvian world after this point until we come to the time of the Flood. The third tablet was perhaps written by Noah. Here it is:

TABLET 3. (Gen. 5; 1 to 6; 9.)

Looking back over the centuries, the writer opens with a short introduction "*In the day that God created man*"—He made him in His own image and likeness and made them male and female. With that introductory remark he goes on with the genealogy, father to son, from Adam to Noah, mentions the three sons of Noah, and gives a short sketch of the state of the world just before the Flood. Modestly (if indeed the writer was Noah), he says, "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" and inscribes the usual signature, "*These are the histories of Noah.*"

TABLET 4. (Gen. 6; 9 to 10; 1.)

This story, which covers the full account of the Flood, is strangely enough not credited to Noah but to his three sons. It was evidently completed after the birth of Canaan the son of Ham (chap. 9; 15) and might very possibly have been the work of Noah so far as the Flood story is concerned, being completed by his sons after his death. In such case we can see a filial respect and esteem in the opening words, perhaps inserted by his sons "Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God."

Appropriately then this tablet is signed "*These are the histories of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth.*"

TABLET 5. (Gen. 10; 1 to 11; 10.)

This is in many respects the most interesting of the six documents. It claims the authorship of Shem, who is one of the most interesting although one of the most mysterious of the ancient patriarchs. Its main purpose is to tell of the distribution of the nations of the earth after the Flood, and to do this it takes up the story where the previous account leaves it. It seems as if the time of writing the document

might very well have been in the days of the sons of Joktan, but before their cousin Kcu, ancestor of Abraham, was born, five generations after the Flood. The histories of Nimrod and of the Tower of Babel are included, and the genealogy from Shem to Peleg. Then, after telling of the dispersion from Babel, the story stops abruptly with the now familiar expression, "*These are the histories of Shem.*"

TABLET 6. (Gen. 11; 10 to 11; 27.)

The last tablet was compiled by Terah, the father of Abraham, and bears his name. Ignoring the tablet of Shem, it goes back again to the Flood and commences a genealogical table which starts with Shem and finishes with Terah. Without giving any information whatever about the events of those many centuries, he mentions the birth of his three sons and simply signs his tablet, "*These are the histories of Terah.*"

So Abraham came at length into the Promised Land, bearing with him the first chapters of a Book that was destined to grow as age succeeded age, to become at last not only the stirring record of a nation's history but the very Word of God, living and abiding for ever, finding its way into every corner of the earth and making its message known in every language and dialect of mankind. Abraham's small store of tablets gave their message in one tongue only; to-day that same Book has spoken in over seven hundred and fifty different forms of speech. The unknown writer who sat down in his dwelling beside the placid Euphrates four millenniums ago to impress the soft clay tablets with his stylus was but the forerunner of innumerable copyists and translators who in all ages have played their part in preserving the oldest Book in the world.

We have the book complete. Abraham saw it only in its beginning, but even in that beginning was enshrined the promise of deliverance which was expanded and amplified a thousand-fold in later days. In his six tablets Abraham could read of God's purpose in creation, of man's rebellion and sin, of the entry of death, of Divine judgment against a guilty world and of Divine deliverance of the righteous, of God's restraint of human pride and ambition when it threatened to burst all bounds, and in those dry-as-dust old genealogies, he could surely see some indication of a Divinely-ordained line through which the promised Seed should come. The thread connecting all those tablets was

the line from Adam to Abram, and in that quiet intimation of a Divine purpose working itself out through the centuries Abram the citizen of Sumerian Ur must have perceived the Divine leading, pointing to his own self, a chosen vessel, called to become the means of preserving and developing the eternal purpose of God.

❖ "My meditation of Him shall be sweet" ❖

BEHOLD

"Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace." (Psalm 37; 37.)

"Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed." (Psalm 84; 9.)

"They looked unto him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed." (Psalm 34; 5.)

"Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that, whereas they speak evil against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." (1 Peter 2; 12.)

"We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory." (2 Cor. 3; 18.)

"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." (1 John 3; 1.)

"The righteous Lord loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright." (Psalm 11; 7.)

"As for me I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake, with thy likeness." (Psalm 17; 15.)

"One thing have I desired of the Lord . . . that I may dwell in the house of the Lord . . . to behold the beauty of the Lord." (Psalm 27; 4.)

"Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." (John 17; 24.)



THE QUIET TIME



"Feed My Sheep." (John 21; 17.)

This is love in the making. The love of God is un-made, it is God's nature. When we receive the Holy Spirit it unites us with God so that His love is manifested in us. When we are united with God by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that is not the end; the end is that we may be *one with the Father as Jesus was*. What kind of oneness had Jesus with the Father? Such a oneness that the Father sent Him down here to be spent for us, and He says, "As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you."

After Peter had testified how much he loved his Lord, he was instructed to spend it out—"Feed My sheep." And Jesus had some extraordinarily funny sheep, some *be-draggled, dirty sheep, some awkward butting sheep, some sheep that had gone astray!* It is impossible to weary God's love, and it is impossible to weary that love in me if it springs from the one centre. The love of God pays no attention to the distinctions made by natural individuality. If I love my Lord I have no business to be guided by natural temperament; I have to feed His sheep. There is no relief and no release from this commission.

MARVELLOUSLY HELPED.

"Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." (1 Sam. 7; 12.)

"He was marvellously helped." (2 Chron. 26; 15.)

"Marvellously helped," my Master,
May the words be true of me,
Through the days that lie before me
Thou Thyself my Helper be.

Only Thou canst help me, Master,
Other help may I disown;
On the strength of Jesus trusting,
Leaning on His arm alone.

Crown these moments with Thy blessing,
Lord, my eyes are unto Thee;
Through the long day I most surely
"Marvellously helped" shall be.

"The people lust for flesh" (Num. 11; 31-35.)

The people wanted more meat, expressing themselves as wearied of the manna, so God sent them quails. An immense flock of quails was blown by a providential storm from the south and east over the Elantie Gulf into their camp. A writer on Eastern subjects says: "These quails cannot sustain themselves long on the wing, and after crossing the desert 30 or 40 miles they would scarcely be able to fly . . . when exhausted they would easily be taken as they flew at a height of about two cubits (3 or 4 feet) from the ground." The people got an abundance; but ate so greedily that a pestilence broke out among them, which cost the lives of many, so that they called that place Kibroth-Hattaavah—"Graves of Greediness." Thus the Lord permitted their discontent and spirit of rebellion to work out a severe penalty in a natural way.

Is it not sometimes after the same manner with spiritual Israelites? Do not some after being well fed on spiritual manna permit a selfish, craving spirit to interrupt their fellowship with the Lord to some extent—hankering for earthly, fleshly, good things;—forgetting the wisdom of our Leader, the Lord, and that His love which thus far has delivered us, and fed and led us, is still with us, as wise and good as ever? Sometimes it is a repining against our lot in life, a desire for more ease and comfort and wealth, sometimes it is a protest against our share of the aches and pains of the groaning creation and our inability to get rid of these.

How unwise! Should not those who have been fed on the spiritual manna realize that all of our affairs are under the Lord's care and supervision? (Heb. 12; 10.) Some have found that the prayers of murmurers, even when answered, as were Israel's, sometimes bring unexpected drawbacks.

The lesson to Israel was that they should trust the Lord implicitly; and accepting and using all that they had, all that the surroundings would supply, they should have used it as wisely and as thoroughly as possible—accepting all things, natural as well as miraculous, as God's gift. There-with they should have been content, thankful, and happy. So we, likewise, should wisely use such things as are within our reach—accepting all as God's gifts with thanksgiving.

"I am of . . ." (Serious thoughts for those who labour for Christian unity)

A discourse on I Cor. 1 : 12

One of the deepest and most elusive aspects of the believer's standing in Christ is the fact that all such believers are members of one Body—a Body over which the Lord Jesus has been constituted the Head. The statement of the Lord Jesus that ~~He~~ is the true Vine of which every spirit-united believer is a branch has stood (together with Paul's illustration quoted foregoing) before the Christian Church since its earliest days, yet in all the years of the Church's pilgrimage, it may not be too much to say, the truth of that blessed fact has never yet been fully realized. From those early days the tongues and pens of her ablest sons have tried repeatedly to explain what that sacred "One-ness" means, but never yet have they made the outward organization of the Church agree with the deductions drawn from the Holy Word. It has been (and still is) one thing to hold this doctrine as an article of faith; it is quite another thing to realize it as a matter of experience. Even in those purer days when the disciples had all things in common, the early company of believers, with the Apostles in their midst, failed to realize that full degree of Christian unity. An Ananias was found among them—a token that other interests had crept in. Again, the widows of the homeland Jews were getting more attention than the widows of the Grecian Jews and dissatisfaction and murmuring arose. While these symptoms were of no great severity and were promptly put right, yet they were as the small occasional bubble rising to the water's rim which showed that there was fermentation down below.

Nor has that idealistic One-ness been more than a mirage throughout the Age. Ever as the pilgrims came to the spot where hope would seem to materialize, the vision disappeared and only desert sands remained.

The Roman Church long claimed to hold the bond of unity. Men had only to betake themselves to the repose of her cloistered community and accept as their credo what she was pleased to define, and all was well. There could thus be one fold, one flock and one Shepherd and Vicar of Souls.

But no sooner had she pushed her claims to the ultimate, *that restless and non-consenting men spoiled the serenity of her fold—clear proof that they were not at one.*

Reform followed reform, and many creeds displaced the one. *All of them read the same Master's words—"that they may be one, even as we are one,"* but how to fulfil them was beyond their power. Every new advance of truth made former differences more acute, and made more subtle modes of defining "one-ness" necessary. To join the broken fragments into one whole stick was seen to be impossible, but, if they could not be "one stick," at least they could be one "bundle" in which every separate chip could lie alongside its fellow-chips and thus lose its identity in the aggregate of one greater whole. "We are not divided, all one body we," they sang, as they surveyed the bundle of chips, but consistories here and synods there ruled and governed each its part separately. They were not "One," either in form or purpose, and as things are, they cannot be "One" in the Christian sense. "I am of Rome," said one, "I am of Luther," said another; "I am of Calvin," said yet another, and so *ad libitum*, the whole professing Christian Church had, and still has, its varying party-cries.

We find the microscopic pattern of the whole Christian Church within the walls of the Corinthian ecclesia. It had not reached the unity of Christ. "It hath been signified unto me concerning you, my brethren . . . that there are contentions among you. Now this I mean, that each of you saith, 'I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ'" (1 Cor. 1; 11-12) R.V.) Who and what these divisions were may be gathered from careful scrutiny of Paul's epistles to his Corinthian friends. Phrases here and whole paragraphs there describe the peculiarities and differences of this party and that, so that it is possible to construct an outline of these hostile elements pretending to fellowship as one whole.

The churches resulting from Paul's earliest missionary labours were composed of two hostile and incompatible elements—that is, they contained both Jews and Gentiles. Long-standing hereditary animosities had to be overcome in the converts from either side, and, so long as outside adverse elements did not introduce themselves, these animosities were greatly curbed, if not suppressed, by the

exalted thrill of belonging to the same Lord, and by the mutual participation in salvation through His blood.

The first disturbing influence to break into these happy scenes proceeded from the mother Church at Jerusalem. In that then unholy city many thousands who, in some measure had believed (Acts 21; 20) still remained zealous of the Law, and strove hard against Paul to maintain the rites and practices inherent in the Law. Learning of the large influx of Gentiles into some of the distant churches, they sought to compel them to submit to circumcision—telling them "Unless ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved" (Acts 15; 1). Certain emissaries from James and the mother-Church followed in the wake of Paul, and crept into the little companies he had gathered, and in his absence sowed these seeds of disturbing thought. This had happened everywhere where Paul's intensive labour had gathered a little nucleus of believing souls, and rent the perplexed companies in twain.

The baneful influence of Jerusalem had been felt in the Corinthian Church. At least two sections of this divided Church had been created by this influence. These were the parties professing to follow Peter and Christ. These parties held themselves aloof from the uncircumcised Gentile converts, and, where the influence from Jerusalem was strong (as at Antioch, see Gal. 2; 11-13) would not deign to eat with their Gentile brethren. This separation of the Jewish element had its reaction on the Gentile element also. Greece had long been notorious for its speculative philosophies—its communities, as at Athens (Acts 17; 21) always seeking to learn some new thing. As at Jerusalem, where over-zealous souls sought to blend the Gospel into the Law, so at Corinth enthusiastic tutors sought to amalgamate the Gospel with native philosophy and teach things which the Jewish section could not accept. These were the men who lined themselves behind the name of Apollos, who himself was a native of Alexandria, where Oriental philosophy had established its principal school. It was from this section that denial of the resurrection of the dead arose (1 Cor. 15). Then there were some who misinterpreted Christian liberty. Taking as their warranty Paul's teaching that the true believer in Christ was set free from the Law, they stretched this teaching to mean that they were not under any law or any restraints of any kind, and that no act was to be accounted sinful or censur-

able. All kinds of gross immorality was tolerated and excused—such immorality as was not sanctioned even in the unbelieving Gentile world (1 Cor. 5).

In addition to these were others who understood Paul aright and sought, like ~~the burden-bearer in Corinth~~, to live holy and upright lives—some, who, from among the Jews, had found the burden of the Law intolerable; some also from the Gentiles who rejoiced in the salvation brought into their lives through Jesus' sacrifice. What a strange admixture of outlook and teaching was gathered together in this one ecclesia at Corinth! Truly it seems as if that Church was the dumping-ground for all the theological and philosophical ~~garbage of the earth!~~

Together with the proclamation of the pure Gospel of Grace and the Cross of Christ, there was the enunciation of Mosaic claims, and the propagation of Oriental mysteries, interspersed by the impudent clamour of those brazen enough to excuse the blackest sin. With diversities such as these is it to be expected that anything but division could ensue? Had it been possible to blend the Gospel and the Law, Christianity would have degenerated into a mere Jewish sect; the association of the Gospel with Oriental philosophy did succeed (at a later time) and produced—~~XXXVII!~~

Without doubt every section could offer (at least satisfactorily to itself) some justification for its attitude, and for its separateness, and throw on some other group the blame for the disunited state of the Church. Seeing that neither Paul nor Peter, nor even Apollos, were resident elders in the Corinthian Church it stands obvious that every group must have had some leading man or men at its head, around whose dominating personalities the members of each party were ranged. Apostles and evangelists paid no more than flying visits, then went on their way. Resident elders remained to carry on from where Apostles left off.

This was where the trouble usually began. Division was not engineered nor sanctioned by the Apostolic visitor, but no sooner had he left than comparisons were drawn and preferences expressed concerning the nature of their several ministries. And they who became the most readily articulate were just those who should have deprecated such comparisons and rebuked such preferences. Thus, as the forefront brethren expressed their preference for this or that style of utterance and for this or that view of the outworking

of the Divine Plan, the rank and file ranged themselves in alignment with this or that leading elder in his approval and support of this Apostle or evangelist, and his attack upon the rest of the visiting ministers. The rank and file were not much to be blamed for this—they only followed where they were led. The fault was in the supposed shepherds of the flock who, forgetful of the sacred task laid upon them by the Lord, turned away from the ministry of holy things to discuss personalities with their merits and relative demerits. Of course, each group could justify its attitude and make out a good case for the position it assumed.

"If only Paul would be content to be like Peter, and not open the door widely to the Gentile dogs, there would be far more of our own kith and kin embrace Gospel truth." "Paul does not seem to realize that what he gains from Gentile lands he more than repels from among his own people." "If only he was content to be like Peter and James—men who really saw the Lord, and heard the Gospel from His mouth, there would be thousands more who, though still remaining zealous of the law, would accept Jesus as the Messiah of Israel." Thus spake the supporter of Peter's claims.

More violent and dangerous than these were the "holier-than-thou" "go-to-the-fountain-head" zealot who said he was "of Christ." Is it assumed that here, at least, was one party beyond reproach, and which knew where its allegiance should be placed? Not a bit of it! Headed, presumably, by some venerable patriarch who had visited Jerusalem in the Master's earthly days, and who, hearing the discourse of Him who spake with such authority, had accepted and believed His testimony direct, then carried it away to this foreign soil, there to forget much and mistake more of what the Blessed One had spoken, so that now it was but a travesty of what it should have been.

It is to this group Paul refers when he writes again (2 Cor. 10: 7). "If any man trusteth in himself that he is Christ's (of Christ) let him consider this again with himself, that, even as he is Christ's, so also are we." Of Paul, this section had not one good word to say. They challenged his Apostleship, first, because he never saw the Lord in the flesh, and next, because he did not presume to live upon the brethren, but laboured with his own hands. Though admitting that his letters were weighty and strong, they held in ridicule both his personal presence and his speech. Here

was "strait-laced", "not-as-these-other-men", Phariseeism masquerading in a supposed Christian garb, and justifying it all in the name of Him who accepted all.

What was here amiss? Why did all this fleshliness of outlook prevail? Exactly because they had not understood the purport of the Gospel call. It was a new thing in the world. Judaism had been divided into rival schools, Heathenism had had its myriad cults, and they could not just conceive that the Gospel call was of a different nature altogether. Every leader lived for and fostered the interests of his own following. Each one was partisan and sectarian. No single one could labour for the good of all. Not one amongst them could or would say "We are all of Christ," or viewing the broken ranks, say, "Let us all together strive to be of Christ." That was their fault—they were myopic, hard-hearted, suspicious, and uncharitable. They scrupled not to interdict, to slander and defame those for whom Christ had died, and who had been sent forth in His Name.

There was a little truth, or some semblance of a truth, in the teachings of each group. What they would not see was the truth held by the rival groups. They did not realize that they saw only "in part", and not the whole truth. They did not see that truth must be progressive and grow from bud to bloom. Each section thought it had "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth," and would not for a moment allow that any rival section subscribed to truth. Each rival leader thought he had all the truth and ministered what he had for his own following alone. To one group and its leaders Cephas possessed the hallmark of the truth—to another group Apollos was the criterion, to still another Paul, and to the straitest group of all, an earthly Christ. And—as at Corinth, so has it been throughout the Age. So truly has the glorious ideal of Christian Unity been at once both mirage and morass—a mirage to draw onward, and a morass to engulf.

There may have been some true saints in every section of the Corinthian Church, but no single elder or leader therein was able to minister to all such saints, because the deeper and profounder things of the Christian faith had been overlaid and obscured by lesser and shallower things. Nor, so long as the dividing boundaries were observed could saint reach out to saint over the barriers. But—and this is the great fact outstanding in true Christian relationship—while

their sense of one-ness was dulled and impaired, it made no difference to the actual One-ness in the heavenly Courts. That actual One-ness is an other-worldly spiritual thing, registered in heaven above. It is a mystic union of kindred souls, joined to the Lord, who died with Him in His death, and were raised with Him in His Resurrection, and are accounted alive because He lives, yet running their earthly course, centuries apart, perhaps, with whole continents or oceans lying between their habitats—and found one here, and another there; one then, another now,—but spite of all earthly handicaps, linked, and joined up to their Lord and Head. The Shepherd of the flock knows all His sheep and no man plucks them from His hand, no matter how that man despoils the pasture, or fouls the flowing streams of truth.

It is not easy to maintain the sense of unity, even to-day. While the real interests of every sheep is in the great Shepherd's hands, the sense that we are of one calling can be blurred and dulled by an elder's unhelpful ministry. Too much insistence upon secondary things can upset the balance of the mind concerning more important things and tend to divert attention from the all-essential relationships. Such over-insistence may suit a "following," but it does not minister to the needs of the whole flock. It tends to apply itself to only a "part"—and that is Corinth over again!

Mistakes in theology may indeed need to be corrected, and a stand may have to be made for Truth, but the Christian cannot live on negatives or on denials of another man's theology. He must have the positive affirmations of the Word as his provender. And more than that, while "truth" must be, at times, defended and proclaimed, "Truth" is not the greatest thing in the Christian economy. The proclamation of Truth is but a means to an end, and the end is greater than the means. God revealed His Truth to win for Himself a family—and every son and daughter to-day is greater in God's sight than any spoken means that led them into that relationship. The child is more precious in the Father's sight than even the most correct definition of a truth. Let us never forget that fact.

This conclusion remains. There are some aspects of Truth which separate the flock and divide its interests. There are some other aspects that unite, and deepen the present sense of unity. Insistence on secondary things can work present injury to sensitive souls, and draw barriers down the ranks,

keeping saint from kindred saint. Only when minds have been dulled by deprivation of essential truth do they reach the point where they begin to say "I am of . . ."

Is it not the duty then of every pen and voice to seek the interests of all the flock—of all the brethren known and unknown, both inside and outside our present fellowship and seek to feed the wearied sheep with such provender that will make the sense of oneness keen and sharp? Then, as any modern Paul may plant or some present-day Apollos water, God can use both to produce increase to the flock.

-- A. O. Hudson, Eng

By Way of Remembrance.

Study outlines for the confirmation of faith.

I.—THE ETERNAL FATHER

"Canst thou by searching find out God?" asked Job (Job 11; 7). He is for ever incomprehensible to human intellect, but well within reach of every human heart. The Scriptures tell how men in all ages have worshipped Him, coming step by step nearer to personal relationship with Him.

In the world's earliest days He was known and worshipped as the "Most High God" (*El Elyon*). Melchizedek was "priest of the Most High God" (Gen. 14; 18). The Ras Shamra tablets, found in Syria in 1929, show that the "Most High God" was worshipped in Canaan before the Israelites under Joshua took possession. The Tel-el-Amarna tablets, found in Egypt in 1887, show that at the time of the Exodus kings reigned in Jerusalem claiming to be, like Melchizedek, kings and priests by command of the "Most High God," and Adonizedek, king of Jerusalem in the time of Joshua (Josh. 10; 1) was probably the last of a line of priest-kings which held sway in Jerusalem from the days of Melchizedek several centuries previously. Nebuchadnezzar, a pagan king, knew Daniel's God as the "Most High God" (Dan. 3; 26) and so did Balaam at an earlier date (Num. 24; 16). It is significant that the evil spirits in the time of our Lord also used this term as though they retained it from the earlier days when they were on earth (see Gen. 6; 1-2). Thus, in Mark 5; 7 and Luke 8; 28 they addressed Jesus as "thou Son of the Most High God," and again in Acts 16; 17 the Pythoness damsel, obsessed by

the spirits, declared Paul and Barnabas to be "servants of the Most High God." Lucifer, uttering aloud his daring plans, said, "I will be like the Most High" (Isa. 14; 14), and Gabriel, announcing the manner of Jesus' birth to Mary, used the same title when he said, "The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee" (Luke 1; 35).

This was apparently the earliest approach of man to God. They sensed His majesty, His remoteness, the overwhelming fact of His mastery of His creation. To angels as well as to men He was "God Most High." There was nothing that man could do but bow down in blind obedience. But God purposed a closer and dearer relationship than that, even although men must attain that relationship by stages.

The patriarchs before the time of Moses knew God as *El Shaddai*—God Almighty (Gen. 17; 1, 28; 3, 49; 25, Job 5; 17, 6; 4, 8; 3, 13; 3). Even although Abraham was called the *Friend of God* (Jas. 2; 23, Isa. 41; 8) there was as yet no approach to the relationship of a Father. The great power and sovereign rule of God was displayed in the title of God Almighty, and yet He was not thereby so remote as He was to those who knew Him only as the Most High God. In the time of Abraham, who knew Him as God Almighty, Melchizedek knew Him as the Most High God, and Abimelech, king of Gerar, knew Him too and revered Him (Gen. 20; 4). In Isaac's day another Abimelech also worshipped Him (Gen. 26; 28). A little later, when Jacob served Laban for his two wives we find that Laban worshipped false gods (Gen. 31; 19, 29, 34, 49 and 53), but recognized the power of Jacob's God. The ancestors of Abraham had served other gods (Josh. 24; 2), but when Abraham came into Canaan he found men there who worshipped the true God as the "Most High." Jacob made a clean break from the idolatry of Laban's house when he brought his family into Canaan (Gen. 35; 2). It is remarkable that from these earliest times the land of Canaan is associated with purity of worship and the knowledge of the true God.

A great advance was made in the time of Moses, to whom God said, "I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob by the name of God Almighty (*El Shaddai*), but by my name *Jehovah* was I not known to them" (Exod. 6; 3). Several meanings of the name rendered in our Bibles "Jehovah" have been put forward; perhaps the best is

"the Eternal." To God's Kingship as the Most High and His power as the Almighty is added the fact of His eternity. "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God" (Psa. 90; 2). "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty" (Rev. 1; 8).

Throughout Israel's national existence it was this aspect of God that stayed in the forefront. The one eternal God beside Whom there could be no other gods; that was the belief firmly fixed in the minds of those of Israel who did hold to the covenant made with their nation at Sinai. But as time went on there were strivings toward a deeper and more intimate knowledge of Him. Hannah, in the time of Samuel, knew the God of Israel as one by Whom actions were weighed (1 Sam. 2; 3) and David, a little later on, declared "His way is perfect; he is a buckler to all them that trust him" (2 Sam. 22; 31). It was left to Solomon to enunciate the great truth which was destined to be unfolded more fully when the Gospel Age was opened, viz., that God is a Spirit Who dwells not in temples made with hands, and yet is ready at all times to hear the prayers of men from on the earth (2 Chron. 6; 18, John 4; 23). The Psalms breathe some recognition of this truth on the part of David too; God will surely hear prayer (Psa. 34; 17 and 65; 2). And Samuel in a rare flight of inspiration perceived that faith and obedience is more acceptable to Him than sacrifice (1 Sam. 15; 22).

Thus did God prepare the way for that fuller revelation of Himself which came in the Person and teachings of Jesus (John 1; 18). No longer the remote and unapproachable Most High, the terrifying and awesome Almighty, the mysterious and unfathomable Eternal, but One Who has come near to man in a close and enduring relationship, that of Father. "Your Father in Heaven," said Jesus. That is the final revelation. When all things in heaven and earth have been made complete in Christ (Col. 1; 20) then will the Son deliver up the Kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all (1 Cor. 15; 24-38). True, during this Gospel Age it is only those who have come into Christ by burial with Him into His death (Rom. 6; 4) that can claim the privilege and right of being sons of God (1 John 3; 1). No others may call Him Father as yet. But when those who have been received by Him during this Age by virtue of

length defined by the sand it sucked up from the dry wadi bed. In the centre of this arena was a large thorny acacia, the only tree which grows in these regions. The sun had for some minutes been hidden behind a long bank of cloud. It remained hidden until the cyclone reached the acacia. Then in the moment the cyclone possessed itself of the tree, their separation from the world (2 Cor. 6; 17-18) experience their "change" and are manifested as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father (Matt. 13; 43) then will the invitation to sonship go out to all the world. Then will the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15; 11-32) find its richest fulfilment, and all men "whosoever will" shall become the sons of God and know Him as their Father.

THE BURNING BUSH.

"And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt." (Exod. 3; 2-3.)

It was "in the backside of the desert" somewhere in the wilds of Sinai, that Moses saw this strange thing. A more recent traveller through that same district, Louis Golding, in his book "In the steps of Moses the Law-giver" has given a vivid description of something he himself witnessed which may have been the very means used by God to reveal Himself to Moses those many years ago.

"I am at this point compelled to quote the apparition of a Burning Bush which was so exact a rendering of the strange and lovely marvel described in the Bible, that I quite literally was afraid to trust my eyes. The apparition lasted several seconds, and though I was aware of its exact rationale while it endured, I still said to myself it was mirage or inward fancy. The thing happened "in the back of the wilderness" in one of the wadis under the flank of Sinai. It was the evening of a hot and windy day. As we approached the arena where two or three wadis debouched, the winds met, and, joining forces, became a cyclone, a tall pillar of air violently rotating on its axis, its whole

the sun hurled its rays obliquely upon their embrace. The whole tree went up in flame. The smoke of it soared in golden gusts. Every thorn was a spit of fire.

"It continued so for several seconds. It seemed as if the cyclone were impaled on the sharp spikes of the branches. It turned and thrust and thrust again. The bush burned with fire, and was not consumed. Then at last the cyclone freed itself, and went hurtling along one of the wadis. The tree was no more than a thorny acacia again, arid and lonely in the centre of the hills."

WHAT HAPPENED TO NOAH'S WORKMEN?

What happened to Noah's workmen? There must have been a vast army of men engaged upon the construction of the great vessel which became the means of Noah's deliverance. The transportation of the necessary material to the site of building must itself have been a task for many men; then the erection of the vessel, its interior rooms and fittings, living quarters for the family, store rooms for food, and so on. What became of these people who laboured so diligently to complete this great structure?

They all perished!

Not one of those, outside the family of Noah, who helped to build the vessel accepted the opportunity of deliverance which it afforded. There can be no doubt that the opportunity was theirs, if they would accept it in faith and belief. But no one, apart from Noah and his family, did believe. And they all perished!

We may spend a lifetime working zealously and tirelessly in the service of the Lord, helping Him build some system or organization through which His work can be performed for a while, but that of itself does not guarantee our acceptance with Him. We can so easily become of those who have done many wonderful works in His Name, and yet be disowned by Him at the last. There is not really any salvation by works. Our acceptance with Him depends upon our own personal oneness with Him, our "deadness" with Him, our submission to His moulding of our life and character into His likeness. These are the things that will endure when all our outward organizations and works, like Noah's Ark of ancient time, have disappeared into nothingness. For when they have served their purpose, and are waxing old, then are they ready to vanish away.

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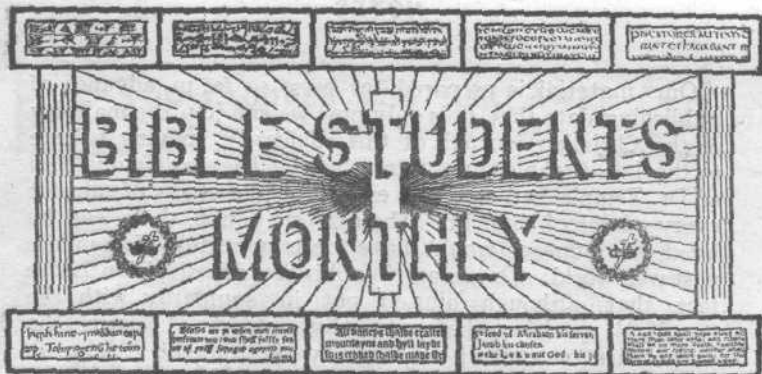
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Our material is prepared for press so far in advance of publishing date that it is only now we can join the majority of the Christian journals of this country in paying tribute to the late Archbishop of Canterbury. The sterling qualities of Dr. Temple had won the esteem of Christians of almost every school of thought. There is no doubt that, had he lived, his influence would have been powerfully felt in the post-war world. One example of his breadth of vision is the fact that, although himself not in sympathy with the "pacifist" position, he personally intervened with the authorities on behalf of Stanley Hilton, the "Jehovah Witness" who had been court-martialled five times for his steadfast refusal to undertake military service.

People speak as though his death had ended his usefulness to mankind. We can dare to think otherwise. In the day when Jesus Christ sets up His Kingdom on earth, calling all men from the grave, and the conversion of the world commences, it may well be that men like this will return, and with minds clarified by a better understanding of God's Plan, use their powers in harmony with the new order of things. God will use all men of goodwill in that day, and there can be no doubt that Dr. Temple was a man of goodwill.

Our promised examination of the Book of Jonah commences in this issue. The first instalment is of necessity in the nature of an introduction, a foreview of the subject and a survey of the criticisms that have been directed against the story. Next month we hope to reconstruct the scene at a certain Mediterranean seaport some three thousand years ago, when a merchant captain, about to sail for distant lands, was accosted by a stranger, a prophet who was running away from God.

It is hoped to commence in our next issue a series entitled "A revelation and its sequence," bearing particularly upon the Apostle Paul's experience recorded in 2nd Cor. 12; 1-70, and drawing a few analogies with present day problems. This excursion into a theme generally little touched upon should be of interest to many.

Λ The Prophet who Ran Away. Λ

An exposition of the Book of Jonah

I.—Jonah and the Critics.

Jonah the son of Amittai was in many respects the most remarkable of the Hebrew prophets. He was unique, in that he preached to a people who were outside the commonwealth of Israel, that his preaching was eminently successful, and that he conducted his mission, not with the burning ardour of his fellow-seers, but reluctantly and without enthusiasm. His achievement was greater than that of any of the other prophets and yet alone of them all he dared to question the wisdom of God. There is a striking likeness between the experiences of Jonah and that of his predecessor Elijah. Both had their lives preserved miraculously; both men converted a nation; both manifested impatience and stood in need of Divine correction; both, at the summit of their success, were seized with despair and besought God to take away their lives; and both received vivid object-lessons from God to teach them that which they needed most to learn.

The story of Jonah is the favourite butt of many adherents of so-called "modern Biblical scholarship." It could hardly be otherwise. To those who have no faith in the Bible as the Divine revelation to man or in its preparation and preservation as being supervised by the Holy Spirit of God, and who see in it only a collection of interesting ancient literature, this story of a man who was swallowed by a giant fish and escaped alive is amusing—nothing more. We shall try in the following chapters to look more deeply into this "amusing" story and perhaps will realise anew the truth of Paul's saying "how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11; 33).

It is well, however, to take a glance at some of the stock objections made by the critics. To do so is to appreciate the shallowness of this pseudo-wisdom which Paul so trenchantly describes as being foolishness with God. (1 Cor. 1; 20).

The "modernist" claims that the same methods of

criticism should be applied to the Bible as to any other ancient literature and this is the cardinal error. No other literature has had the oversight of the Divine Spirit as has the Bible. It is because this wonderful compilation of books has God Himself as its "editor," even although various fallible men were the authors of its various sections, that we cannot possibly apply the same methods of criticism that are appropriate to other literary works. Let us see what the critics have to say about Jonah.

Says one—"The book neither claims to be by Jonah, nor gives any proof of coming from an eye-witness of the adventures which it describes One verse implies that when it was written Nineveh had ceased to be a great city Nor does the book, written so many centuries after Jonah had passed away, claim to be real history."

Now the same critic points out elsewhere that Jonah's prophecy is unique in that it is the only one written throughout in narrative form. The unbiased reader, allowing the story to sink into his mind as he reads, surely has no need of an authenticated certificate at the end to assert its claim to be "real history." The whole tenor of the book shows that. If these things did not really happen, the story is pointless. It is recorded to point a moral, and if the experiences that befell Jonah have no basis in actual fact there is no moral and the whole production is vain.

This quotation touches on a point which has been copied by every critic from his predecessor. The statement "Now Nineveh **was** an exceedingly great city of three days journey" is asserted to imply that when the story was written Nineveh had ceased to exist. If this is so, the book certainly could not have been written for at least two hundred years after Jonah's death; which would go to support the critic's assertion that it is nothing more than a work of fiction written by some pious Jew not long before the days of Christ Jonah being introduced merely as the supposed hero. Now Hebrew scholars with no "axes to grind" have repeatedly pointed out that the grammatical construction of the sentence does not bear this out; the writer uses the expression just as we would do when in telling a story and finding it necessary to throw in a word of explanation. There are

numerous similar examples in the Scripture. To name but one—"Now the serpent **was** more subtil than any other beast of the field." (Gen. 3 ; 1). Not even the critic claims that the serpent had ceased to be "subtil" at the time of the Fall ! The student may care to turn to similar examples in Deut. 3 ; 4 and Ruth 1 ; 7, and half a dozen others could be cited.

The critic returns to the attack. There is no record in the Assyrian inscriptions, says he, of any such mass repentance as is described in the Book of Jonah. That is so. Had there been a broken piece of clay found in the ruins of Nineveh telling of such a repentance, and no reference at all in the Bible to the event, the same critic would probably hail that clay tablet record as a marvellous piece of true history and incorporate it in his next book on Assyria. It is not at all surprising that there is—as yet, at least—no Assyrian record of this event known. It may indeed exist, yet to be deciphered from one of the many untranslated tablets still in the world's museums. The fact remains that there **is** a record, and that in the most reliable history the world can show—the Bible.

There is one very interesting evidence of the authenticity of the book, and the early date of its writing generally overlooked by the critics. They themselves consider that at about the time of Nehemiah the Book of Tobit, one of the books of the Apocrypha, was written to narrate the story of an Israelite who was said to have lived at Nineveh in the time of Shalmaneser, who took the ten tribes into captivity (II Kings ; 17 ; 6.), about eighty years after Jonah's time. Whether the critics are right in this, or the Book of Tobit was actually written nearer in time to the events it professes to relate is of little consequence to us since it is not included in the canon of Scripture, but the point of interest is that the book contains a striking reference to Jonah's preaching at Nineveh. This is proof positive that that the story of Jonah was known at least when Tobit was written and therefore much earlier than is thought by the critics. The passage concerned (Tobit 14 ; 3-4) represents Tobit himself advising his son to leave Nineveh. "Behold, I am aged, and am ready to depart out of this life. Go into Media, my son, for I surely believe those things which

Jonas the prophet spake of Nineveh, that it shall be overthrown; and that for a time peace shall rather be in Media."

The position of the Book of Jonah in the Prophets, which position was assigned when the Old Testament writings were collected together, probably in the days of Ezra, testifies to the belief of the Jews in the antiquity and authenticity of the book. Clement, third bishop of Rome, in the document known as the First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, avows his belief in the Book of Jonah and its story, and the early Church was solid in its belief as to the literal truth of the narrative. The fish that swallowed Jonah became a favourite subject of early Christian art and figures prominently in the Roman Catacombs. The critics, however, are ready with an explanation of the fish story.

It was derived, say they, from the Babylonian myth of Bel and the Dragon. The Dragon, it is explained, was the symbol of the chaotic waters under the earth and the casting of the prophet into the sea suggested the image of the monster as personifying the waste of waters into which he was cast. Canon Cheyne has drawn attention to Jer. 51; 34 which, he says, is the intervening link between the Babylonian myth and the application made of it in the story of Jonah. This verse reads "Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon hath devoured me, he hath crushed me, he hath made me an empty vessel, he hath swallowed me up like a dragon he hath cast me out." Now in this passage the dragon is represented as destroying the nation of Israel, whilst in the story of Jonah the great fish is the cause of the prophet's deliverance. This discrepancy does not worry the critics. "This is true" says one "yet it only means that our author has **still further adapted the very plastic material offered him by this much transformed myth**" so that with the critics it becomes a case of "heads I win, tails you lose." If the alleged mythical basis of the story corresponds with the application the evidence is held to be conclusive, whilst if it contradicts, it only means that the author has adapted his "plastic material." These are the lengths to which men will go in their desire to find a "rational" explanation which does away with the necessity of acknowledging super-human handiwork.

The critic's ingenuity is, of course, taxed to the utmost in explaining our Lord's own attitude to the story, for Jesus was so emphatic in His references to Jonah and his experiences that His testimony cannot possibly be ignored. One M.A. takes his courage in both hands and tries the following, "Jesus spoke the language of His time, using the terms of current knowledge and current thought it was no part of His work to anticipate the march of science It is therefore beside the point to ask. Why did Christ . . . speak as though the Book of Jonah were literal history?" Another improved on this by suggesting that "If Christ spoke these words He used language adapted to the knowledge and beliefs of His hearers **though it implied ideas which our Lord knew were wrong.**" A third avoids the issue by suggesting that "**Upon the general question of our Lord's authority** in matters of criticism, His own words with regard to personal questions may be appositely quoted. "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you? I am come not to judge, but to save?" Such matters our Lord surely leaves to ourselves, and we have to decide them by our reason, our common-sense, and our loyalty to truth."

The famous evangelist, D. L. Moody, was approached on one occasion by a group of newspaper reporters for his observations upon the growing body of criticism being levelled against the historicity of Jonah and his Book. The old man squared his shoulders, and uttered just four words; "**I stand by Jonah!**"

That Jesus had no personal doubts about the story of Jonah is evident, for he made it the basis of two of His most solemn asseverations. The first related to His own burial and resurrection. It is only in the story of Jonah that the Old Testament foretells that Jesus would lie three days in the tomb and on the third day rise again. "Thus it is written" He said "Thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day." (Luke 24; 46.) Paul too adds his testimony to the same effect "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures." (I Cor. 15; 3-4). Where are these scriptures which foretell His rising again the third day? They are not in our Old Testament, if not

in the Book of Jonah. It seems perfectly clear that Jesus Himself took Jonah's sojourn in the great fish as a prophecy in action, foretelling the period that He Himself would be held fast in the grave, from His death to His resurrection. With this knowledge, how clear is the meaning of the words recorded in Matt. 12 ; 39-40. "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly ; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

Leaving aside the question of what precise time was spent in the grave, turning on whether our Lord was crucified on Thursday or Friday, and which is outside the scope of the present subject, a careful examination of the Scriptures show that no other text can be held to indicate the length of this period. The conclusion is irresistible, then, that Jesus, in His study of the Old Testament prophecies, did accept this one as relating to His own death and resurrection, and if this be so, there can be no possible question as to the truth of the story. Fulfilled prophecy cannot be founded on fiction ; whether the prophecy be spoken or acted, it must have had an objective existence ; and in this case the only possible view of the matter is that the events happened precisely as related.

Jonah, then, was definitely a prophetic type of Christ in his being sacrificed by men in order to effect their salvation, in his entombment for three days and his subsequent miraculous deliverance, and in the unprecedented and completely successful outcome of his preaching. Sacrifice, death, resurrection and conversion ; these are the salient features of this acted prophecy and no others are referred to by our Lord in His teaching. No other features of Jonah's character and experiences need therefore be introduced in the picture. His deliverance by means of the great fish and the success of his preaching are the only parts of the story certified by our Lord to be the "signs" for His own generation, and ours. Both "signs" are connected with resurrection. Just as the "great fish" sign prefigured His own resurrection, so the "preaching" sign prefigures the resurrection of mankind, for, said Jesus, the men of Nineveh shall rise in the

judgment together with the generation of the First Advent and shall condemn that generation. Whilst the Ninevites did repent at the preaching of Jonah, that other generation rejected the preaching of a greater than Jonah (Luke 11 ; 32). In all of this we have a vivid picture of the great Millennial judgment day, when all that are in their graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth, some to the resurrection of life, and some to the resurrection by judgment (John 5 ; 28-29). "God hath appointed a day" said Paul to the men of Athens "in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained ; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." (Acts 17 ; 31). So in the coming day when the Kingdom of God is established upon earth the men who listened to Jonah and turned from their evil ways will, by their very presence on earth, be a living reproof to these other awakened ones who in their own day and generation would not come to Him, that they might have life.

So we come to the story of Jonah in full confidence that we have here true history of the highest order. In the following pages we shall examine the story in detail and endeavour to reconstruct for ourselves the events as they actually happened. No matter how we may explain or understand, on a basis of natural or psychological law the things that seem strange or incredible, the fact remains that throughout this book, more so perhaps than in any other book of the Old Testament, there is an atmosphere of the Divine presence, closely watching and guiding the action and interaction of events that a very definite pre-ordained sequence of happenings should occur. We view this Book aright when we see in it a crystallisation of the Holy Spirit of prophecy ; not a spoken prophecy, given through the mouth of one being led by the Spirit, but an acted prophecy, in which all the actors, unknown to themselves, were the instruments of the Holy Spirit, players in a drama the significance of which they themselves never understood, but which, recorded in a setting of unequalled vivacity and beauty, has honoured Jonah for all time by making him peculiarly the prophet of the Resurrection.

(To be continued)

THE STORY OF THE BOOK

A history of the written Word.

2. *Stories of the Patriarchs.*

Throughout the long lifetimes of the four great patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, the writing of these early chapters of the Word of God proceeded. Here in the Promised Land the sacred oracles were finding a fitting home, although long centuries were yet to elapse before a nation, chosen and separated from the peoples around, and bound to God in covenant relationship, could be formally entrusted with the sacred duty of custody of the oracles of God (Rom. 3 ; 2). At this earlier time the servants of God were engaged in writing history—history that would be of infinite value when God came to give the deeper revelation of Himself which was to distinguish the later chapters of His Book. Therefore Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph, were used to record the dealings of God in their own lives, and to continue the tracing of that thread of promise which was given at the very beginning in the words "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head."

The second part of Genesis, that covering the history of the four patriarchs, comprises six distinct accounts, written partly in Canaan and partly in Egypt. Between them they include the whole period from the call of Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees to the death of Joseph in Egypt. As in the earlier part of Genesis, there are indications of the authorship of these different accounts.

Account No. 1 (Gen. 11 ; 27 to 25 ; 12) is the history of Abraham from his call to come out from Ur and from Haran at the age of seventy-five to his death at one hundred and seventy-five when Ishmael was eighty-nine, Isaac seventy-six, and Jacob and Esau lads of fifteen. It thus records the events of just one century. During this time Abraham met Melchizedek, Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, Abraham made his expedition into Egypt, Eliezer went to Haran to find and bring back Rebekah, the bride of Isaac, and Ishmael was at the head of a rapidly growing tribe destined to become the Arabs of later days. An interesting point to note is that

Ishmael, as the elder son, appeared to have the custody of the family history, for at its end, after the notice of Abraham's death and burial by his sons Isaac and Ishmael, in chap. 25, the document concludes with the words "These are the histories of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bare unto Abraham." The son of Hagar evidently retained his filial respect for his father to the last, and both sons are found sharing in the last rites over the tomb of their father.

Forty-seven years later Ishmael died, and this time it fell to the lot of Isaac to add a short document to the family history. He did this by writing a few words regarding Ishmael's posterity and Ishmael's death (Gen. 25 ; 13-19), closing with his own signature "These are the histories of Isaac, Abraham's son." Note here how the superior position of Isaac is recognised and recorded by consent of both parties. In Ishmael's signature, he is careful to record that he was the son of the handmaid and therefore not the heir. Isaac signs himself Abraham's son—he is the heir. This short document subscribed by Isaac is therefore *Account No. 2*, added to the collection of tablets which had passed from Abraham to Ishmael and thence to Isaac.

Account No. 3 (Gen. 25 ; 19 to 36 ; 1) tells the story of events between Isaac's marriage and his death, going back therefore eighty-four years prior to the end of the previous account and covering a period of one hundred and forty-one years. During this period Abraham and Ishmael died, Jacob and Esau were born, Isaac went down into Egypt and returned, and Jacob went to Padan-Aram to find his wives, returning to Canaan in time to see his father before his death. And here again the rights of the first-born son are seen to be respected. Although Jacob had the birthright, Esau, who was first born, had charge of the history, and when Isaac gave up the spirit and died, Esau came from his dwelling in the east to join with Jacob in the burial, just as Isaac and Ishmael had buried Abraham; and Esau signed the history with his own name. "Now these are the histories of Esau, who is Edom." (Gen. 36 ; 1).

Probably Isaac, Esau and Jacob had all collaborated in writing this account, and now Esau, as the head of the

family, would take it in charge together with the preceding records handed down from earlier times. To this collection he seems to have added a short one giving details of his own posterity. This is "Account No. 4, consisting of Gen. 36; 2 to 36; 9, ending with Esau's own colophon. "These are the histories of Esau the father of the Edomites in Mount Seir."

As with Isaac, so to Jacob did it fall to record the death of his elder brother. The family records would then come to Jacob as the new head of the family when Esau died, and Jacob, writing his own version of Esau's posterity, (Gen. 36; 10-37 12) added it to the collection, and signed it. "These are the histories of Jacob."

So it came about that when Jacob went down into Egypt with all his family to Joseph, he carried with him the precious collection, six accounts of the beginnings of things, brought by Abraham from Mesopotamia, and five histories written in Canaan. It is probable that those five histories were written in archaic Hebrew, for Hebrew was the language of Canaan long before Israel entered the land.

Account No. 6. (Gen. 37; 2 to 50; 26) tells the story of Joseph, commencing with his seventeenth year when he was sold into Egypt and concluding with his death at the age of one hundred and ten. This must have been written, in the main, by Joseph himself, after he had risen to power in Egypt, the account of his death and burial being added by the next custodian of the collection. It is probable too that this story was written in the Egyptian language and style of writing, in ink, on papyrus sheets. (Papyrus was the paper-like material made from the stalks of the papyrus reed, and which was used by the Egyptians as a writing material).

There is no hint as to who took charge of the histories after Joseph's death. Reuben, as the firstborn of Jacob, should be the one to guard them. We know no more about them until Moses, two hundred years later, came into prominence and led the children of Israel out of Egypt. We do know that at this time Moses held the entire collection and that during Israel's sojourn in the wilderness he welded these various accounts together into what we now know as the Book of Genesis.

Can we picture the grand old man, now nearly one

hundred and twenty years of age, sitting in his tent poring over his task? All around him, for many miles stretched the camp of Israel. Not far away, perhaps, stood the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, and near by the tents of the priests and Levites. For thirty-eight years the camp stood thus while the sentence, that none save Caleb and Joshua who were above twenty years of age at the coming out from Egypt should enter the Promised Land, was in process of execution. Five books, the first five books of the Bible, did Moses complete whilst there.

It was there, then, on the east side of the Jordan, that the Book of Genesis as we know it was written. Moses learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, was well fitted for the task of translating the ancient records, and we can imagine him holding in his hand perhaps the identical tablets Abraham had brought out of Ur of the Chaldees, studying the cuneiform characters and rendering into the Hebrew of his day the stories they told. Here and there he would have to add explanations. An example occurs in Gen. 14, where, after each place-name mentioned, he added the name by which the same place was known in his day. ("The king of Bela, **which is Zoar**" "The vale of Siddim, **which is the Salt Sea,**" "En-mishpat, **which is Kadesh**" and so on). After having arranged the early stories he would turn his attention to the Canaanitish documents, the histories of the patriarchs, and since the language of Canaan had changed considerably since the days of Abraham and Isaac he would have to render these histories into the "modern" Hebrew of his own time. Finally he would take up the story of Joseph, and, translating it from the Egyptian in which it was written, make it the conclusion of his book.

So, at length, the Book of Genesis was complete in the language of God's own people. The Hebrew characters of that day were vastly different to those of modern Hebrew Bibles, and the story was destined to be translated and re-translated, from age to age. But there, in the wilderness of Kadesh, where Israel was gathering its strength for its march into Canaan, their book of history saw the light. When they crossed the River Jordan, and went up into the Land of Promise, they were already what Mahomet was to call them two millenniums later, "the People of the Book."

By way of Remembrance.

Study outlines for the confirmation of faith.

II—THE LOGOS MADE FLESH

It seems so simple, this relationship of Father and Son, so understandable, yet for centuries Christian theology has made of it an incomprehensible mystery. There was no mystery about it in the mind of Jesus of Nazareth. He declared, quite plainly and quite positively "I am the Son of God." (Luke 22; 70-71, Jno. 10; 36, 17; 1, 19; 7, Matt. 11; 27, 26; 63-64, 27; 43, Jno. 3; 16-36, 5; 19-27, Mark 14; 61-62, Luke 10; 32). John the Baptist added his testimony (John 1; 34), and so did Peter (Matt. 16; 16 John 16; 69), Mark (Mark 1; 1), Martha (John 11; 27), Nathanael (John 1; 49), the angel Gabriel (Mark 1; 35) and even the demons (Matt. 8; 29, Mark 3; 11, 5; 7, Luke 4; 41, 8; 28). Above all these, the Heavenly Father Himself declared Jesus to be His firstborn Son (Matt. 3; 27 Mark 9; 7). In the face of all this testimony we can surely accept the statement, stripped of all theological trimmings, to mean exactly what it says. The relationship between God Most High and the One Who came to earth as Jesus of Nazareth is that of Father and Son.

On this basis the Scriptures referring to our Lord's pre-human existence become very clear. "Now, O Father" He said "glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." (John 17; 5). What was that glory? The eighth chapter of Proverbs gives some indication. Under the pseudonym of "Wisdom" that chapter presents a picture of the work of One Who was "set up from everlasting, or ever the earth was;" One Who was present during all the works of material creation and "was by him, (God) as one brought up with him, . . . daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." There are many references in pre-Christian Hebrew literature to this personification of "Wisdom" as an intelligent agent of God, and when John came to write his gospel he alluded to that general belief. Adopting the Greek word "Logos" to denote this same personification, he declared that Jesus of Nazareth, whom all had seen and heard in the flesh, was in fact this One, made man and visible to men

as such. "Wisdom," the "Logos," had come to earth and was dwelling among them. "In the beginning" says John in the first chapter of his gospel "was the Logos, and the Logos was with God . . . and the Logos was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of an only begotten (term meaning the first born) of the Father" (John 1; 1-14). To this agree our Lord's own words "I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I myself, but he sent me" (John 8-42). "I am he that came down from heaven" (John 3; 13). (John 6; 51). "No man hath ascended up into heaven, but he that came down from heaven" (John 3; 13). "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" (John 6; 51), and that statement which so angered the Jews "Before Abraham was, I am." (John 8; 58).

The Apostle, knowing all this, was able by inspiration of the Holy Spirit to say "being in God's form, (he) did not meditate a usurpation (like Lucifer) to be like God, but divested himself, taking a bondman's form, having been made in the likeness of men." (Phil. 2; 6 Diaglott trans).

Our Lord's pre-existence went back to the very beginning of things, for the pre-human Logos was the "beginning of the creation of God" (Rev 3; 14), "the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature" (all creation) Col. 1; 15). Another hint of those early times is given in Job 38; 7, where it is said that at the creation of the earth the "morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." There were many sons of God, angelic beings living in harmony with their Creator, and just two "morning stars," the Logos, and Lucifer, the latter as yet perfect and sinless. These "morning stars" are referred to as such elsewhere in Scripture; the Logos in Rev. 22; 16 and Lucifer in Isa. 14; 12.

The word "Lucifer" is the Latin term for the morning star, Venus, and came into our Bibles from the Latin Vulgate version. The celebrated expression in Genesis "Let us make man." "The man is become as one of us" (Gen. 1; 26, 3; 22), surely indicates that the Most High God had with Him a companion at the time of creation, which is exactly what Prov. 8 declares.

It was this glorious heavenly being Who came to earth as Jesus of Nazareth. From before the beginnings of all other created beings and created things He had rejoiced in the presence of His Father. Now in the fulness of time He came to earth; but in order to do so He renounced His spiritual glory and became a man "for the suffering of death" (Heb. 2; 9). Here again the creeds of Christendom have enshrouded a beautiful truth in a fog of mystery. John says quite plainly "The Logos was made flesh." The inspired writers of the New Testament declares "since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection "of the dead." (1 Cor. 15; 21). "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God" (1 John 4; 1-3). "Put to death in the flesh" (1 Pet, 3; 18). "He took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham" (Heb. 2; 16). Clearly, then, the Heavenly One Who had moved in the Father's presence since the beginning of creation divested Himself of His spiritual, heavenly nature and glory, and became man—not God dwelling in human flesh as in a kind of house; not a materialised spirit such as did walk the earth in the days of Noah (Gen. 6; 2); but man, perfect and sinless, worthy and able to become the Saviour of mankind.

How did He take hold of human nature? The angel Gabriel explained that to Mary, in response to her question, in words of unparalleled beauty and delicacy. "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that Holy (One) which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1; 35). Luke, who recorded these words, was himself a physician but even he could hardly be expected to fully understand how it came about. All that we know, even now is that even as Gabriel was speaking to Mary, the heavenly Logos, in full submission to His Father's Will, was closing His mind to the receptiveness of those heavenly senses which attuned Him to the celestial world, in preparation for a great change. As that world faded from His perception He became "found in fashion as a man" (Phil. 2; 8) and in the fulness of time was born as a babe at Bethlehem, thereafter attaining consciousness of this material, earthly world in which He now found Himself.

So He increased in stature, and in favour with God and man (Luke 2; 52), until at length He knew Himself for Who He was, and what He had been; and realised what mission lay before Him. So did He move among men, a perfect man, His memory recalling that prior life in the celestial world when He was ever the Father's right hand companion. That was the knowledge which assured Him of His mission and of His Father's approval, and in that consciousness He went forward proclaiming a message and a way of life led Him at last to the Cross.

XXXXX THE QUIET TIME XXXXX

A PRECIOUS PROMISE

Rely upon God's promises and grow more and more Christ-like!

"It is by means of these that He has granted us His precious and wondrous promises, in order that through them you may, one and all, become sharers in the very nature of God, having completely escaped the corruption which exists in the world through earthly cravings."

(2 Peter 1: 4. *Weymouth*)

WORDS WHICH HAVE CHANGED THEIR MEANINGS

It is noticeable that the brethren usually avoid using greeting cards containing the word "merry," because it has come now, in common usage, to refer to light and noisy pleasure. The word did not always convey this idea, for James 5; 13 says "Is any merry? let him sing psalms." In the Scriptures, the word properly denotes cheerful pleasant, agreeable, and is applied to a state of mind free from trouble—the opposite of affliction—happy. As Proverbs 15; 13 says, "A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance."

The word used here in James means literally, **to have the mind well**, happy and free from trouble, to be cheerful. James advice to this "merry" heart is:—"Let him sing psalms," let him express his joy in notes of praise; Paul, expressing the same thought in Eph. 5; 19 says, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;"

The sentiment in this verse is well expressed by the poet who said :—

In every joy that crowns my days,
In every pain I bear,
My heart shall find delight in praise,
Or seek relief in prayer.

God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts. 2 Cor. 4. 6.

We are not meant continually to lose our radiance. How wonderfully the early Christians kept theirs ! They departed from hostile councils rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer hardship for "the Name." They filled prison cells, at darkest midnight, with triumphant song. Though there was so much against them, they kept the glow. If this is lacking in our spiritual life, there is something wrong.

† The Early Christian Fathers. †

A historical note of interest.

Knowledge of history enables one to understand the present in the light of the past while at the same time obtaining some measure of guidance in relation to the future. Knowledge of sacred history is no exception to this general rule ; it provides valuable lessons for the present and the future and enables us better to appreciate the circumstances of those who trod the same "narrow way" when conditions in the world were vastly different from those which now obtain.

We can gain much information to our profit by study of the so-called "early Christian Fathers" who lived in the opening centuries of the Gospel Age, in times of severe persecution at the hands of Pagan Rome, culminating in the ten years 303-313 A.D. under Diocletian. Coins were struck to record the fact that the "Christian superstition" was utterly exterminated. In the light of these facts, we can easily recognise their witness as characterised by severe sufferings for Christ in times when **religion**, as the term is to-day understood in Western Europe, was not tolerated ; that is to say, the nations were not even nominally Christian.

It might perhaps be asked how those early Christians, among whom the Christian Fathers stood out prominently, could endure such sufferings. The answer is, of course, that according to our needs so is strength given, and quite apart from this there is no doubt that the race was physically stronger than it is to-day, after a further two thousand years of accumulated sin and death. This, however, does not in any way minimise their faithful witness for Christ, but it is well to remember that if the "feet members" are called upon to suffer physically ere they are changed, the promise that "as thy days thy strength shall be" will surely be fulfilled.

Their **intense zeal** for Christ calls forth our admiration. Many who lived in the first century had actually seen the Lord when on earth, while some of those who lived later would be the children of those who walked with Jesus Christ when on earth. The mystery of iniquity already worked in those days, but it had not come into power. Indeed, it did not rise proper until 539 A.D. The truth, in consequence, was comparatively pure, for this was prior to the "Pergamos" period, when the world entered the church and self-seeking men began to pervert the Gospel to their own ends, withal introducing investments, incense, and other features to attract the natural mind in to the church services.

The errors with which we are familiar to-day were not established. Eternal torment, for instance, gained its hold at a later date, coupled with the immortality of the soul, so essential to the former error. Christians knew the truth of the Apostle's words when he said that not many mighty men were called, but the poor of this world to confound the wise. (1. Cor. 1., 26-27).

In those early times there was intense love for the Bible, which was accepted as the inspired Word of God. Higher Criticism and evolution were unknown. So real was their love for the Word that it permeated their writings. The story is told that many years ago, a party of scholarly men attended a meeting in the course of which the question was asked—"if the New Testament had been entirely destroyed and every copy of it lost by the end of the third century, could it have been collected again from the writings of the early Fathers of the second and third centuries?" Two months later, one of

the company called on Sir David Dalrymple who had been present and who, pointing to a table covered with books said, "Look at these books. You remember the question about the New Testament and the Fathers? That question aroused my curiosity, and as I possessed all the existing works of the Fathers of the second and third centuries, I commenced to search, and up to this time I have found the entire New Testament, except eleven verses." Naturally, only a few of their writings, comparatively speaking, have reached us, and this demonstrates even still more forcibly how often they drank at the fountain of all Truth. In the books of Origen alone (born 185 A.D.) it is said that two-thirds of the New Testament are contained.

Remember, of course, that books were not easily obtained as has been the case since the art of printing was discovered. Books were then written by hand (as were the Scriptures themselves) on papyrus or on parchment. This fact alone should help us to appreciate more dearly the sacred Word of God in this day when we are so favoured with the Scriptures in our own tongue and when we have countless translations to which we may easily refer with concordances to help us locate any particular verse that we may require.

By way of illustration and in order that we may learn valuable lessons, we briefly refer to six of the early Fathers—Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Papias—who were Apostolic Fathers—and Irenæus, Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria who lived a century or so later.

Clement of Rome. It is usually thought that Clement of Rome is the one referred to by the Apostle Paul in Phil. 4; 3. He wrote an Epistle to the Corinthians which is bound up with the New Testament volume of the Alexandrian Manuscript (Codex A). In it are copious references to passages in the New Testament and the general tenor bears a striking resemblance to Holy Writ. This, incidentally, is a very valuable chain of evidence in relation to the authenticity of the Scriptures for it proves that the New Testament as we know it was in existence at that time.

Polycarp. His name is probably one of the best known of the Christian Fathers and was Bishop of Smyrna which was not very far from Ephesus. He was

born in A.D. 70 and martyred at the age of 86 in the year A.D. 156. The witness before the Roman Pro-Consul who tried to persuade him to recant is well known "Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He never did me any wrong: how can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour?" Only one of his letters remains, but it throws much light upon his character and pious outlook. He was a disciple of John and had had the advantage of early Christian training like Timothy who had from a child known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make wise unto salvation. Here is an extract from his letter (to the Philippians) "Polycarp and the presbyters that are with him, to the church of God at Philippi: Mercy unto you, and peace, from God Almighty, and the Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour, be multiplied. . . . Wherefore girding up the loins of your mind, serve the Lord with fear, and in truth; laying aside all empty and vain speech, and the error of many, believing in Him that raised up our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, and hath given Him glory. . . . But He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also raise up us in like manner, if we do His will, and walk according to his commandments, and love those things which He loved; abstaining from all unrighteousness inordinate affection, from evil speaking, false witness, nor rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, or striking for striking, or cursing for cursing; but remembering what the Lord has taught us, saying, "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; forgive, and ye shall be forgiven."

Papias. He was another saint of the early period of the Gospel church, who knew at least two of the Lord's disciples and also the daughters of the Apostle Philip. We do not know so much about him as of the others because his works are only found by extracts from those of others—the actual writings being either hidden or destroyed. It is evident, however, that he was well versed in the Scriptures and boldly took his stand on the Lord's side.

Tertullian. This Christian came of heathen parents in the days of Pagan Rome; his father was a centurion, that is, the commander of a hundred men. He was brought up and educated along orthodox lines and was skilled in law and history.

Like the Apostle Paul, he was not converted until of mature years; he was probably forty years old when this vital step was taken and he was not "disobedient unto the heavenly vision." It cannot be over-emphasised that he and those like him were intensely earnest or they would never have espoused the cause of Christianity, for it entailed so much suffering and loss of reputation. He wrote much, often in Latin, and those writings reveal his deeply spiritual outlook, for he brought his great scholarship to bear upon the mine of Christian truth which is available to those who are guided by the Holy Spirit. Incidentally, it appears that Tertullian was the first to introduce the phrase "New Testamnet."

Irenæus. This Father was a disciple of both Papias and Polycarp and was born about A.D. 130 in Asia Minor. We associate him particularly with his Christian work at Lyons where he held office in the church during the fierce Pagan persecutions of Christians, especially under Marcus Aurelius towards the end of the second century. Pothinus was imprisoned and died in A.D. 177 and Irenæus succeeded him as Bishop of the church at Lyons. Once again, our insight into his character is obtained mainly from his own writings which are fully in harmony with the calling of this Age.

Clement of Alexandria. Alexandria was a very famous city in the world of that time being next in importance after Rome as regards wealth and after Athens as regards literature and science. Tradition has it that Mark preached the Gospel in Egypt and founded the church in Alexandria. It possessed a University and a famous library. Clement lived in these surroundings and was a scholarly man who contributed his due share to the cultural life of the city, being president of a noted school of thought. He embraced Christianity in adulthood and his conversion without doubt had a marked influence on many, just as Paul's testimony a century or so before when in front of King Agrippa was so convincing that "almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." His writings are full of references to the Scriptures and his life was brought fully in conformity thereto.

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Gone from us.—Violet Felicia Hudson, of Welling (mother of Bro. Hudson, of Leicester) answered the call in full confidence of faith on 1st January, at the age of 69, after a number of years' failing health and suffering borne with quiet fortitude. Sister Hudson had been associated with the brethren for thirty-five years and was instrumental in forming the first regular meeting in Welling. Among her last words was a message of love to all the brethren. The funeral took place on 5th January at Bexley Heath cemetery, Bro'. D. P. Vaughan (London) officiating.

Anonymous. We would acknowledge, with sincere appreciation, the receipt of anonymous donations of £1 (25th Nov.), and 10/- (7th Dec.)

Easter Convention.—The friends at Warrington advise that plans are in hand for the usual Easter Convention, to be held at St. John's Hall, Wilderspool Causeway. Further details will be published in due course, or may be obtained from Bro. D. Stanley, 42 Euclid Avenue, Grappenhall Road; Warrington.

Office Address.—Will friends please note that all correspondence, without exception, should be sent to the central address at **20 Sunny-mede Drive, Ilford, Essex.** The recent short-term changes are regretted but have been unavoidable, but we trust that it will now be possible to handle all the friends' correspondence at the usual address

Children's Story Book (Egermeir). We are completely out of stock of this book, although further supplies are on the way. Orders received will be accepted and booked for future delivery, but there may be up to two months' delay.

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BIBLE STUDENTS

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The brethren who administer the Benevolent Fund feel that the friends would be interested to know of the appreciation expressed by those to whom they minister. We are, therefore, printing a few very short extracts from some of the letters received, thinking that these simple words will themselves be a source of fresh encouragement to those who read.

"Will you please convey to all the dear ones of our love and thanks for all the prayers and help they have given us, such kindly acts help us both to continue in the way and to thank our Father for the honour of being in "His Family" "The sympathy and love are very much appreciated. This seems to be one way in which the Lord's kindly and comforting assurance is fulfilled 'When thou passest through the waters, they shall not overflow thee.' They have certainly been very deep lately but Faith so far has safely survived." "How good our Heavenly Father is to we His children, ever thinking of us and shaping our way under difficult times we find ourselves, but still pressing on towards the prize we hope will soon be ours, we do long for the Kingdom to come when all will know, as we know, the love of our Father towards all mankind." "I hardly know how to express my gratitude to you all for the sympathy shown to me in my bereavement, but this I know that God is ever a present help in times like these." . . . "Please give our Christian love to the brethren for their love, prayers and the gift. We do indeed thank our Father for all His goodness and for your labour of love."

Perhaps we do not fully realise what a privilege it is to be "members one of another," brought together into a family which is to be more enduring than any earthly family tie of which we know, for this family into which we have come endures for all time, throughout all ages in the era of glory that is to follow our earthly experiences. Let us each resolve to make that family relationship a real thing in our fellowship. So shall we be His disciples.

The second chapter of the series on Jonah, and the opening of the promised new series on Paul's mystic experience, have been deferred until next month's issue.

† 'Ye do Show the Lord's Death' †

✱ A meditation on I Cor., II; 26 ✱

To his Corinthian brethren Paul wrote in stern reproving terms about their supposed celebrations of the Lord's Supper. So greatly had their observance degenerated that it had come to be more in the nature of a general feast, than that of a sacred memorial. One, here, would be eating ravenously, like a hungry man; another, there, would be imbibing freely, even at times showing signs of intoxication.

"When . . . ye assemble yourselves together, it is not possible to eat the Lord's supper; for in your eating one taketh before other his own supper; and one is hungry, and another is drunken." Then he asks "have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?" If they must needs eat heartily or drink freely, or to excess, could not they do it within their own chambers? Why did they impose such a spectacle upon the Church of God, when gathered together for holy fellowship in the Name of the Lord? Paul describes their attitude as "despising" the church, and as 'shaming' their poorer brethren who, being slaves, lacked the privacy of a home.

He then proceeded to tell them again of the solemnity of the Lord's Memorial. From a source no less authoritative than the Lord Himself, Paul had learned the facts of that dark night when He was betrayed, and it was on this unimpeachable authority that Paul had initiated this Church into its sacred importance.

We should try to realise that there was no New Testament in those days. No more than three of Paul's letters had been written and despatched at this time—First and Second Thessalonians and Galatians. Nor had any of the four Gospels or the Acts been placed before the infant Church. Neither Peter nor John had written a single word. The general method of instruction was by word of mouth,—'sayings'—some 'faithful' (1 Tim. 1: 15; 2 Tim. 2: 11-13.) and some not so faithful to the truth.

It was in this way that the 'sayings' and 'doings' of our Lord were disseminated, and as they passed from

lip to lip, additions, subtractions and distortions were likely to creep in.

The story of the upper room and of what Jesus said could be told in the first person only by the chosen few who were present at that feast. Whether the story was repeated by other lips with the same care might have depended upon the veracity of those who heard it from Apostolic lips—certain it is that the unscrupulous could find opportunity to turn and twist the story to their heart's content.

Paul had not been satisfied with this fluid fund of information about his Lord, or about the institution of His solemn 'Remembrance-act.' He had sought the truthful facts from the Lord Himself, and as a faithful steward of such hallowed information, he had passed it on exactly as the Lord had given it into his care. This account was not dependent upon the agency of any human memory—good or bad—but was the testimony of the risen Lord Himself, invested as He was with powers of mind so far beyond the human range, and as such, not subject to human errancy.

Of the three Gospel accounts which give the description of the institution of this Memorial, Matthew only can speak from the 'eye-witness' standpoint. Mark and Luke relate it at second hand. Yet Matthew's account varies greatly from that of Paul. Matthew introduces the question of forgiveness of sins and omits that of remembrance. Mark states that the blood of the Covenant was shed for 'many'—but does not state how it would be applied. Mark makes no reference to the 'remembrance.' Luke's account repeats the thought that the Covenant blood was 'poured out for you' but it does bring out with emphasis the memorial nature of the act—"this do in remembrance of Me." (Luke 22; 19).

This variation in the records as set forth by the three evangelists and Paul leads to the thought that no one of them gives the full unabridged account of all that was said or done; each one using just so much of the 'sayings' and 'doings' of the Lord as his immediate purpose required.

The abridgement and selectiveness in Paul's account was the work of the Lord Himself, and must have been made with some specific purpose behind it. All reference

to the eating of the Passover again, as well as to the drinking of the fruit of the vine when the Kingdom of God was come, was eliminated by the Lord, and nothing more than that which applied to this present era of suffering was imparted by Jesus to Paul. This abridgement was intended for a mixed following—Gentiles as well as Jews—and was to be observed only during an interim period, during which all Jewish matters were to stand in abeyance and suspense—the Jewish mode of approach to God as well as the Jewish national constitution itself.

In the revelation of what He said and did during that important night (which He made to Paul), the Lord takes only so many of the particulars as pertain to this present 'waiting' interlude—to this present Gospel Age. Another use was laid down for the 'blood' which He was about to shed. Pending the time when it could be used to ratify the Covenant, it was to be absorbed by the faithful followers. His broken body was to be as 'food'; His drawn 'blood' was to be as 'drink,' and thus become as nutriment and life—sustaining provender—for the saint.

By an act of faith on the believer's part, the life that had been in Him—in His body and in His blood—was to pass into them and vivify them as it had done Him. In this way, He would always be 'in' them, as their source of life and energy, inspiring and prompting them to the same kind of surrender and self-sacrifice. This was intended to continue "till He comes"—to continue for every generation of faithful souls from the first to the last—until the whole Church of the Firstborn should be complete. Not until He shall be able and ready to come as Mediator between God and Israel will the 'blood' be separated from the 'Cup'—and not until then will the drinking from that Cup terminate. 'Till He come' means not merely till He come to awaken His "sleeping" Saints, but till His Church is complete, and the day of Israel is about to dawn.

Mindful of some forgetfulness or lapse of memory in His followers, the dear Lord wove the actualities of His great sacrifice into the texture of a very simple ordinance. A cake of unleavened bread was made to stand as equivalent to His sinless flesh; a portion of expressed juice of the grape was taken as correspondency

to His vitalising blood, and, in the quiet hush of some solemn retreat, was to be eaten and sipped in remembrance of what He had done. The transcending truth of His sacrifice—that sacrifice which, in due time, will ratify a Covenant—was for this present time, to be 'shown'—(Greek **Kataggelete**)—"down-messaged," that is, carried down from its higher spiritual sphere, to a lower ceremonial level) in the simple ordinance of breaking bread and drinking wine. How simple this ordinance, but how sublime the truth! How wonderful the power of a true faith, to take these simple elements, yet find thereunder such vitalising nourishment for the soul! No wonder Paul counsels that it be taken "worthily" and that each participant at the table of the Lord should 'judge' himself before presenting himself thereat.

In those early days of 'gifts' and 'signs' some unworthy participants had laid themselves open to the judgment of God—some had been stricken 'ill,' while others 'slept' (were presumably 'dead.'). It was thus no light thing to appear at the table of the Lord. The Spirit of the living God, which searcheth every heart, had found out the insincerity of some and had registered its disapproval accordingly.

That simple ordinance in memory of His death is a serious and solemn thing. It can be a searching test of heart and mind. Its sacred character can solemnise the deepest emotions of the saintly heart and intensify the ardent up-reaching longings of the brethren in the Lord for the closest and warmest intimacy with their Lord. It can accomplish something that no other "means of Grace" can do. In the presence of 'emblems' representing such holy things, that solemn hour can be almost sacramental in its effects upon the soul—for where deep sincerity and assuring faith look through the externalities to see and take what is within them (or beyond) some hallowed blessing will flow from the Heavenly Throne to fill the waiting heart which would not elsewhere or otherwise be received. Participation 'there' together with other brethren in the Lord, can take from its "down-messaged ceremonialism" a flood of such heart-enriching assurance, and deep soul-stirring gratitude as could not be obtained through any other means. With the eye

and hand we see and touch the 'show-materials,' but with the eye of faith we see the broken body and drawn blood of our beloved Lord. Thus, in this way, through the 'eye-gate' of our human personality, the 'ear-gate' receives such potent aid, that the 'remembrancing' takes on an atmosphere of the sublimest actuality. In this act faith takes its highest flight, and makes things which are of this earth the symbols of the heavenly verities. Faith such as this can reconstitute the scene in the upper room, and also bring the exalted person of the Lord into the presence scene, and make the little 'meeting-place' the vestibule of Heaven itself.

Even when the opportunity to 'assemble' is denied (by duty or ill-health) to the lonely isolated soul, it can, by its own specific and intentional act of faith, (in that it sets before itself the table of the Lord beneath its own homely roof,) take to itself the hallowed blessing and the approving smile of his Master and his Lord. That 'down-messaging' of the dear Lord's death will most surely give each faithful soul some token of His love, no matter where partaken of, because it is taken at an appointed hour,—the hour appointed in which to remember Him 'till He come.'

Does someone believing His Parousia begun, say it is not now meet nor needful to 'do this' thing in remembrance of Him? Let us remember the purpose for which this blood was shed—that it is intended (when a people—Israel—has been made ready), to validate, to ratify and seal a Covenant between God and Israel, and that until that happy time shall come His blood is enchaliced in the 'Cup,' and will so remain until He comes forth to bind the Most High God and Israel in solemn Covenant.

His presence with His Church 'may' or 'may not' be begun, but—all such questioning apart—most certainly He has not yet come forth to withdraw His blood from its temporary abiding-place in the Cup, to use it for the Covenant. And till He thus comes forth, or till His last follower becomes 'swallowed up of life,' it is the Lord's intention that all who revere His Name should 'do this in remembrance' of His death.

Brethren of the Lord, let us approach the table of the Lord in deep sincerity, expectantly, knowing that this simple little service and ceremony was ordained by our

beloved Lord to remind us of His death and in the greatness of His loving care over us, (to counteract our human weaknesses,) He has chosen to have His 'broken body' and 'shed blood' 'ceremonialised' before us in such simple elements as bread and wine.

May God give grace to each and all to partake worthily, and find that the link that binds to his Lord has been strengthened and vitalised thereby.

XXXXXX THE QUIET TIME XXXXXX

A PRECIOUS PROMISE

"Cherish beautiful Thoughts. Live noble Lives."

This admonition with its attendant promise was sent by Paul to the Philippians :—

Whatsoever things are true,
 Whatsoever things are dignified,
 Whatsoever things are righteous,
 Whatsoever things are chaste,
 Whatsoever things are lovely,
 Whatsoever things are of good report,—
 If there be any virtue, and if any praise
 The same be taking into account ;
 The things which ye have both learned and
 accepted, and heard, and seen in me
 The same practice ;—

And the God of peace shall be with you.

(Phil. 4; 8. *Rotherham*).

**The course of good men, like a ray of dawn,
 shines on and on to the full light of day.**

**The sun shall no more be your light by day,
 nor shall the moon shed light on you,
 but your unending light shall be the Eternal,
 your God shall be your splendour.**

(Prov. 4; 18 *Moffat*)

WORDS WHICH HAVE CHANGED THEIR MEANINGS

The expression "Good luck" is another instance of how words change their meanings in course of time; it now carries the thought of chance or fortune.

In Psalm 118; 26 we read "we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord." but in the Prayer book version this verse reads "we have wished you good luck, ye that are of the house of the Lord." "Wycliffe's Bible quaintly translates Gen. 39; 2 "And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a lucky fellow." From these it is plain that at the time of these early translations the expression "Good luck" meant the prosperity that came from the blessing of the Lord.

PAUL'S PRAYER FOR HIS CONVERTS

I have prayed the all-glorious Father, the God of Jesus Christ our Lord, to inspire you with wisdom and true insight through a fuller knowledge of Himself. I have prayed that your mental vision may be made so clear that you may know how great a hope is given by God's call, what a wealth of glory there is in store for Christ's people, and how surpassingly great is the power which He is able to exercise for us who believe in Him. It is the same mighty power as that which He exerted upon the Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and caused Him to sit at His right hand on high, exalting Him above all angelic beings, whatever their power or rank, and conferring on Him a name above any name that can be mentioned, either in the present age, or in the age which is to come.

(Eph. 1; 17-21. *Twentieth Century*)

Thy Word is true from the beginning. Psalm 119. 160.

The history of the Bible, with all its striking facts, furnishes a broad tributary stream to swell the tide of evidence. The history of its composition; the history of its preservation; the history of its translation from tongue to tongue; the history of its circulation throughout earth's wide domain—in a word, its entire history "surpassing fable, and yet true"—forms a powerful argument in defence of its divine origin.



THE STORY OF THE BOOK

A history of the written Word.



3. *The Legacy of Moses.*

Two years after their departure from Egypt the host of Israel pitched camp, for the second time, at Kadesh-Barnea. They had already been there once. It was from that vicinity that the twelve spies had been sent to explore the land of Canaan and, returning with the report that the inhabitants were too strong to be interfered with, had been the cause of Israel's loss of faith and their consequent condemnation to stay in the wilderness until the generation that left Egypt had passed away. "To-morrow turn ye" had been the sentence "and get you into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea." The people had dwelt for thirty-eight years in the wilderness between Kadesh and the head of the Gulf of Akaba, and in all that time Moses and Aaron had faithfully tended them while the old generation slowly passed into death and a new one, hardy, virile, developed in the wilderness and the desert, grew up to manhood in readiness for the task of conquest that lay before it.

It was during these thirty-eight years that Moses completed the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. Genesis, as we have already seen, had been compiled by him from existing records dating from very ancient times. The other four books came directly from his own pen. Within their compass he described all the events of the Exodus and the wanderings in the wilderness, all the dealings of God with His newly chosen people, and all those laws and ceremonies which henceforth were to mark Israel out as distinct and unique among the nations.

The Book of Genesis covers the events of over three thousand years—from Creation to the Egyptian oppression. The Book of Exodus, of almost exactly the same length, deals principally with the events of only three months, from the Exodus to Sinai. It seems that Moses, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, planned the book of Exodus to describe how the Holy Nation came into being; the manner of its deliverance from Egypt, its

journey to Sinai and the giving of the Law, the instructions for the construction of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, and ceremonials in connection with the cleansing of the people from sin. It is in Exodus that the first Biblical reference to the art of writing occurs, (Exod. 17; 14) (upon the occasion of Moses' being commanded to record the defeat of the Amalekites in a book). This reference, taken together with so many detailed descriptions of those stirring events, might justify the conclusion that Moses did in fact keep a "log-book" of Israel's daily journeyings and, later on at Kadesh, "write-up" the Book of Exodus from that log-book. When at Sinai, Moses, we are told, "wrote all the words of the Lord." (Exod. 24; 4). The very words that he wrote down on that momentous occasion are before our eyes to day.

The Book of Exodus, then, must be held to be the connecting link between the story of the chosen "Seed of the Woman" from Adam to Jacob's sons as outlined in Genesis, and the more intimate history of that "Seed" continued in the nation of Israel. Exodus is both a sequel to Genesis and a diversion of Biblical history into the channels of the chosen nation. A glance at the general plan of the Book shows this more clearly.

Chapter 1	From death of Joseph to birth of Moses.
2-11	From Moses' birth to the Exodus.
12-19	Exodus to Sinai.
20-24	The sojourn at Sinai.
25-31	Instructions for construction of the Tabernacle.
32-34	Israel's apostasy.
35-40	The constructing of the Tabernacle.

The Book of Leviticus was without doubt the legal code for Israel. It contains no history except a short account of the sin of Nadab and Abihu, the two sons of Aaron, and this is evidently inserted to give the reason for the prohibition imposed in Ch. 10 vs. 9. All these laws were given to Moses at Mount Sinai (Lev. 25; 1, 27; 34) and we can expect that they were set down as a permanent record there and then. The reference to the reading of the covenant in the audience of the people at

Sinai (Exod. 24; 7) would almost require that. Leviticus owes its place as the third book of the Pentateuch, however, to the fact that, its subject matter having been revealed to Moses at Sinai, it naturally comes between Exodus, which gives the history of Israel up to Sinai, and Numbers, which continues the story from Sinai up to the borders of the Promised Land.

The fourth book of the Bible, Numbers, contains several points of literary interest. It opens at Sinai, eleven months after the giving of the Law. The first ten chapters speak of solemn preparations made for the departure from the mountain. The people were numbered, certain final laws were given, the order of march settled and special offerings made before the Tabernacle. Twenty days later, when all was ready, the cloud which overshadowed the Holy of Holies lifted and moved forward, "and the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai." The journey to the Promised Land had begun.

The remaining chapters, up to Chap. 32, tell of the nation's experiences in all the thirty-eight ensuing years, culminating in their arrival in the land of Moab and their waiting to cross the river Jordan. The heart-breaking story of their unbelief and faithfulness, their unavailing attempt to take the land by storm, their utter defeat by the Canaanites, and the deaths of Aaron and Miriam, together with the story of Balaam, are all found in this book.

The last four chapters comprise a brief synopsis of the entire period of the Exodus, going right back to the departure from Egypt and tracing briefly the course of the wanderings until the nation had reached the borders of the Promised Land. Why this duplicate account has been added is not very clear although it does supplement the more detailed account by giving a few geographical names which do not appear in the latter. It is clear therefore that the Book of Numbers could not have been completed until the people had arrived at Jordan, and since it also was written by Moses it must have been completed immediately before his own death.

There are two interesting insertions in Chapter 21, the first almost certainly added at a date after Moses

death. As the account tells of the people's arrival at Arnon of Moab there is an interjection (verses 14 and 15) "Wherefore it is said in the Book of the Wars of the Lord 'What he did in the Red Sea, and in the brooks of Arnon, and at the stream of the brooks that goeth down to the dwelling of Ar, and lieth upon the border of Moab.'" There the quotation ends, and the chapter goes on to speak of Israel's next stage in the journey.

What was this "Book of the Wars of the Lord?" No one knows. From this, the only quotation from that book of which we have any knowledge, it would seem to have been an account of the battles fought by the Israelites on their way to Canaan and could not have been in existence until some time after the events which it relates. It was probably a literary work composed during the time of the Judges or Kings and which has now perished; but at some time a transcriber of the Book of Numbers saw fit to insert this one quotation from the Book of the Wars of the Lord, thinking it appropriate to the subject. The fact does at least constitute one evidence that the writing and reading of books was by no means an unknown accomplishment among the early Israelites.

So Moses closed the Book of Numbers there in his tent in the plains of Moab, with the Jordan before him and the hills of Judah in full view on the other side. He had seen the land with his eyes, but he knew that he would not go in thither, for the Lord had told him so only a short time before (Num. 31; 2). There was only a little while left, for the long, weary trek had reached its end, the forty years were expired, and the promised land was now but a few yards away, across the river.

Therefore it came about that Moses, inspired by the Holy Spirit, uttered his final exhortation to the people he had served so long and so faithfully; and those parting injunctions have been recorded for all time in what we call the Book of Deuteronomy. In the consciousness of approaching death, the knowledge that his own course was all but finished, this faithful servant of God wrote with steady hand until his last words had been committed to writing, and then, we cannot doubt, lifted his heart in silent thankfulness to God that he had been permitted to finish his task.

In the Book of Deuteronomy, Moses recapitulates all that had happened since the Exodus, dwells on the patience and forbearance of God and exhorts the people he had led for so long to continued faithfulness after they had entered the land. These speeches were written down immediately, and not after Israel had entered the land; this is shown by the construction of Chap. 1 vs 1 "These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel **on this side Jordan** in the wilderness, in the plain" Had the writing been executed after Israel was in the Promised Land the expression would have had to have been "on the other side of Jordan."

Moses' parting words were apparently given in the form of three separate orations, and the Book therefore is set out as follows:

The first oration (Chaps. 1 to 30).

Given on the first day of the eleventh month, in the fortieth year of the Exodus, the children of Israel being encamped in the plains of Moab, waiting to cross Jordan. Moses goes briefly over the stirring history of the Exodus and shows that God has fulfilled His promise to bring the people safely to the land of which He had told them (Chaps 1-3). He exhorts the people to be faithful to their covenant with God (Chap. 4). Then he calls aloud to all the host (see Chap. 5 vs 1) and calls upon them to listen once more while he recapitulates the statutes and judgments which were binding upon them. So he continues, interspersing his repetition of the laws with recollections of the Divine dealings in the wilderness and exhortations respecting the future, concluding his discourse with the memorable words (Chap. 30; 19) "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."

It was a long oration, and must have taken a long time to deliver. Perhaps Joshua, that faithful follower of Moses, wrote down what was said whilst it was being said; more probably Moses himself wrote it down that it might stand as a witness to the faithful performance of his duty in his commission before God.

The second oration (Chaps. 31 to 32).

This was made on the occasion of Moses' one hundred and twentieth birthday (Chap. 31;2) and it is plain that he now felt the shades of death closing around him. It could not have been long after the first oration, for ten weeks after that oration Moses was dead and the hosts of Israel had entered the land (see Josh. 4; 19). This second oration was more in the nature of a solemn ceremonial. After again assuring the people that their God would go before them into the land he delivered to the priests, the son of Levi, the books of the Law which he had written, enjoining them to read this law in the hearing of the people every seventh year at the Feast of Tabernacles. Thus the first four books of the Bible passed for the first time into the custody of the priests. The fifth was not yet completed.

It was apparently at this time that God appeared to Moses and warned him of his approaching death, bidding him compose a song and speak it in the ears of Israel as a witness. The song is recorded in Chapter 32, and once more warns the Israelites of the disasters that would befall them if they became unfaithful to their covenant.

But the man who loved his people with such unselfish love as to be willing on one occasion to be blotted out for their sakes could not leave them on this dark note. So we have

The third oration (Chap. 33).

in which Moses gives his blessing to the people he must so soon leave. It would seem that some other hand recorded this, judging by the expression used in the opening verse "This is the blessing, wherewith Moses the **man of God** blessed the children of Israel before his death." Moses never referred to himself in that way elsewhere in his writings. This blessing constitutes his last recorded words on earth; perhaps immediately after they were spoken he turned away, alone, no man daring to follow him,—for chapter 34 tells us that Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the top of Pisgah, and the Lord showed him all the land, and there he died, and the Lord buried him, and no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.

How did the account of that conversation between God and Moses in Chap. 34; 1-4 come to be recorded if there was no human witness? Perhaps the answer is simple. Joshua, or perhaps Caleb, knew exactly what kind of view could be had from the top of Pisgah; it was easy to climb. They knew too that Moses was destined never to enter the land, that he must die alone in Moab. When he went on his last pilgrimage, forbidding all men to follow, they knew exactly what was going to happen, what he was going to see; it was not difficult to know just what God would say to him, and Joshua would not be in any uncertainty when writing down his description of that last scene on the mountain-top, even although he may not have been there to witness it.

So the greatest of all prophets died; but his work lives on. When his faithful lieutenant had added his own glowing tribute to his dead leader "his eye not dim, nor his natural force abated," he delivered the book into the hands of the priests to add to the four they already held, and turned then to his task of leading the hosts of the Lord into the Promised Land. Joshua was not a writer; he was a soldier, and in the strength of armed might he went forward into battle. The sword of Joshua has long since rusted away; the armed might in which Israel trusted has been broken; the Book which the priests carried across Jordan that day has grown into a living Word which can never die, but abideth forever, and will stand supreme when the armed might of all the world has vanished forever.

I Will Not Eat . . . Until

Luke 22; 16

In addition to the very long description given by John (Chapters 13-17) of the doings and sayings of Jesus during His last night on earth, we have four other accounts of some of the incidents in general, and of the institution of the Memorial, in particular. Matthew, Mark and Luke have each written their separate accounts; while Paul also has a special account appertaining exclusively to the words and acts by which

Jesus introduced the ceremony of Remembrance. Each of these accounts has its own peculiarities occasioned by the purpose for which it was compiled. In the main there is agreement between them all, though there is enough difference also to warrant careful research to account for the reason why three separate accounts (excluding Paul's) should have been provided by the providence of God.

During the first twenty years or so of the Church's existence no need was felt for written records concerning the sayings and doings of the Lord. He was expected to return within the length of that then present generation, consequently none of the servants of the Lord deemed it needful to commit to writing the precious heritage of the Church. But, as the Lord still tarried, and because persecution arose, the need for maintaining the teachings of the Church underwent a change. When Paul wrote out his short account of the 'Remembrance-act,' there was no other written account thereof extant. Neither Matthew, Mark nor Luke had written their accounts, and all that was generally known was told by word of mouth. Those who had heard and seen the Lord were the first and most authoritative witnesses, but from their lips others also learned the story of the sinless life, and in particular, the story of that last anguished night. To meet the needs of a widely-scattered Church, then become resident in many lands, Matthew here, and Mark there, and Luke in another place set on record, in written form, the facts and evidences as they had come to know them, at first or second hand. Matthew wrote as one who had seen and heard, while Mark and Luke are thought to have recorded the story as seen or understood by Peter and Paul respectively. Concerning that last night's happenings, Paul's understanding was communicated to him by the Lord (1 Cor. 11; 23), and though his story of the Eucharist is the shortest of the four, it may be assumed—seeing that Luke was for some length of time his companion and co-worker—that he knew not one whit less than Luke the details of the Master's life in general, and of that last crucial night, in particular. And it is to be observed, by comparison, that Luke's account (Luke 22; 14-20.) agrees much more with Paul's account than either Matthew's or Mark's,

Matthew speaks of the New Covenant, but does not stress the need of the Remembrance act. The same is true of Mark. Luke's account records the statements concerning the New Covenant, and lays due stress on 'remembrance' too. He also states the time and circumstance under which the application of His blood to the New Covenant would become effective. In stating the particulars for his friend Theophilus (Luke 1; 1-4) Luke gives the fullest account then extant, while Paul, writing to explain the grounds on which the act of remembrance was based, confines himself exclusively to the few words and acts by which Jesus had established it.

Here we desire to survey the wider aspect of Jesus' sacrifice as narrated by Luke. Concerning that sacrifice—and Jesus' attitude thereto,—Luke puts on record Jesus' solemn words "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, for I say unto you that I will not any more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God" (Luke 22; 16). Continuing Jesus said, concerning the Cup, "Take this and divide it among yourselves, for I say unto you I will not drink of the fruit of the Vine until the Kingdom of God shall come" (v. 18). Matthew's account of this verse reads "I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the Vine until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's Kingdom." Mark says "Verily, I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the Vine, until that day that I drink it new in the Kingdom of God" (Mark 14; 25). Here we have the statements of the Lord (inversely stated) that when the Kingdom of God is come (my Father's Kingdom) He will drink of the fruit of the Vine again (with you,—Matthew) and also that He will then eat of the Passover again.

These are remarkable statements from the lips of the Lord, and gain great importance from the occasion when they were uttered. In those few momentous days immediately preceding this Passover night the Lord had uttered those fateful words which left the ancient House of God desolate and gave the wayward nation over to become the victim of its own cruel hate. As a people it was left forsaken, without the restraining hand of God to withhold it from its approaching fate. Thenceforward, for nearly forty years the blinded hardened people

continued to drift towards its doom, sinking ever deeper into moral depravity, till the sword of Rome put a cruel end to its own civil and fratricidal war. From that furious hour, the war-stricken nation was broken into bits, and scattered to the four corners of the earth by its mighty conqueror. Wrath had indeed come upon it to the uttermost (1 Thess. 2; 16).

Jesus' words explaining the purpose of His death are very explicit and precise. "This is My blood of the New Covenant which is shed for many." (Mark 14; 24). But in the very act of committing Him to death, the callous nation expressed its preference for the Covenant of Sinai. It revealed itself as unready for the new and better Covenant promised through Jeremiah. Not understanding the Grace of God, they registered through their very act (of crucifying Him) an emphatic "No" to God's appeal to enter into higher things. The miserable rudiments (the beggarly elements) of the Law, so held them in thrall that they could not grasp the opportunity to own God as 'Father,' and become His sons.

Yet Jesus looked forward to a better time, and beheld the Prophet's promise come true. He knew the Word of God would be fulfilled, He knew that, at long last, a new and better Covenant would be made, and Israel, restored, rebuilt and purified, would, with exultant joy, accept and embrace its opportunity in full. He knew that that Covenant was for Israel—the whole House of Israel (the House of Israel and the House of Judah; Jer. 31; 31-34; Heb. 8; 8-12). and not for any other people outside the pale of Israel. Jesus knew right well that ere that Covenant could be made, and His Covenant blood applied to seal its terms upon the contracting participants, another 'Passover' experience must take place.

When Jesus said He would eat the 'Pass-over' anew with His chosen ones, it was not to indicate that He or they would begin again to keep the memorial of the old Egyptian Passover. It must be another Passover which will bear the same relationship to the New Covenant, as the old Passover in Egypt did to the Old Covenant. The ancient experience leading up to Sinai will be the type or pattern for the new experience, leading to the establishment of a New Covenant, promulgated from Mount Zion.

(Heb. 12; 22-24). The people of the one experience will be (and must be) the people of the other better experience. As in the earlier experience the Covenant was made with the whole House of Israel (Ex. 19; 4-6; Deut. 5; 1-5). and was in the nature of a national Covenant, so in the later experience the Covenant is to be made with the whole House of Israel, (Jer. 31; 31-34). and will again constitute a national Covenant. That New Covenant is nowhere set forward as a personal Covenant based upon individual faith, but always as a national agreement between God and Israel, made sure and certain by the precious blood of the Lord.

But do we realise all that these forward-looking words of Jesus imply? "I will not (again) eat thereof till it be fulfilled in My Father's Kingdom." With an intense desire to eat the Passover on that crucial night Jesus had brought His loved ones into that secluded room and there He and they had followed the customs of former days; then, that participation being complete, Jesus told His participating disciples that He would not partake again till the Kingdom of God had come. What did He mean? A new 'pass-over' after the Kingdom of God had come? That ancient word had a most precise and specific meaning and application. It tells of God's people suffering captivity; of repeated requests preceding a Passover night to 'let them go'; of the Angel of the Lord flashing through the land, leaving a trail of death in every oppressing home, yet sparing the huts of Israel because he saw the blood upon the door. "When I see the blood I will pass over you." (Ex. 12; 13). For centuries that conception of the Passover had remained unchanged, and it remained unchanged even in Jesus' mind. But He had now finished with the 'past,' and was looking onward down the years, (be they few, or be they many) to the day when God's authority would again assert itself, and establish itself with 'all-power' throughout the earth. Is it then the case presented in the Word of God, that God's ancient people (the Houses of Israel) will be in bondage to a greater than Pharaoh after the Kingdom of God has come?

We do not refer to any power exercised by Satan (Lucifer) in his realm of sin. By our reference to a greater than Pharaoh we mean an earthly power

exercising civil authority upon the surface of this material earth. Satan may have been behind the throne of Pharaoh in the ancient days, but Pharaoh's identity was separate from that of Lucifer. So again, Satan will retain his own identity behind the scenes, but in the forefront other hands will wield the power and swing the oppressor's lash.

Another 'Pass-over' on a greater scale was indeed indicated in the Master's sorrowful remark; another and more grievous phrase necessitating another Divine interference to set His people free. "Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations. . . . He that scattered Israel will gather him and keep him as a shepherd doth his flock. For the Lord hath ransomed Jacob and redeemed him **from the hand of him that was stronger than he**" (Jer. 31; 11). "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty or the lawful captives be delivered? But thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered; for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee and I will save thy children. And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh, and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine, and all flesh shall know I, Jehovah, am thy Saviour, and thy redeemer the mighty One of Jacob." (Isa. 49; 24-26).

Even after Michael has stood up to deliver his people (Dan 12; 1.) a great time of trouble follows upon that people such as was not since this nation began to be—"but at that time, thy people (Daniel's people) shall be delivered." The power of a desolating Abomination would need to be broken to set them free. (Dan. 12; 9-13). **Even after the seventh Trumpet has begun to sound** (Rev. 11; 15). a woman wearing the insignia of Israel (the Sun, the Moon, and twelve stars—see Gen. 31; 9-10). is to be driven away into a place apart, (as Israel was at Sinai) while an evil dragon power persecutes the remainder of her seed. (Rev. 12; 17).

As in the days of old, so in the coming days, it is recorded in the Word of God that the people of the Covenant will be enslaved by an evil power 'stronger than they, but they will be redeemed and restored to their rightful relationship to God, and to their ordained place among the nations of the earth. This tragic

experience will be the time of Jacob's Trouble—a trouble that precedes the making of their Covenant (Compare Jer. 30; 4-7 with 31; 31-37). but out of it all God will deliver Israel.

In the triumphal Feast that follows Israel's release and the destruction of their enemies, Jesus and all His friends together with all the redeemed nation will participate—not by merely eating a morsel of bread but by becoming jointly united together into the instrument for blessing all the families of the earth, just as was intended for Israel when God met them at Sinai. (Ex. 19; 4-6).

But the words of Jesus envisaged not only a season of subjection to tyranny, but also an occasion of great rejoicing. "The Cup of blessing" and thanksgiving drunk by every house in Israel, also has its counterpart. "I will no more drink of the fruit of the Vine until that day when I drink it new in the Kingdom of God." After God has set His hand 'the second time' to recover His people from all those regions which were in Isaiah's day the uttermost parts of the earth, (Isa 11; 11) and Ephraim has learned not to envy Judah, and Judah is, at last, ready not to vex Ephraim (v.3.) and a highway has been thrown up 'like as there was for Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt' (v.16.) a song of thanksgiving will be sung by Israel.—"And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee; though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou hast comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and thou hast comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call upon His name, declare His doings among his people, make mention that his name is exalted. Sing unto the Lord; for he hath done excellent things; this is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee. (Isa. 12).

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Anonymous. We would acknowledge, with sincere appreciation, the receipt of a donation of £1 (Feb).

The Memorial.—The Memorial should be celebrated this year after 6 p.m. on Tuesday, 27th March. At that time the friends all over the country will be gathering together as one family, "in remembrance of Him."

We would remind the friends that it will not be possible to send emblems to isolated brethren as has been the custom in past years, and it will be necessary for all friends to make their own arrangements.

Easter Convention.—The friends at Warrington advise that plans are in hand for the usual Easter Convention, to be held at St. John's Hall, Wilderspool Causeway. Further details will be published in due course, or may be obtained from Bro. D. Stanley, 42 Euclid Avenue, Grappenhall Road, Warrington.

Office Address.—Will friends please note that all correspondence, without exception, should be sent to the central address at **20 Sunny-mede Drive, Ilford, Essex.** The recent short-term changes are regretted but have been unavoidable, but we trust that it will now be possible to handle all the friends' correspondence at the usual address

Children's Story Book (Egermeir). We are completely out of stock of this book, although further supplies are on the way. Orders received will be accepted and booked for future delivery, but there may be up to two months' delay.

"The Plan of God in Brief."—This booklet is now out of stock and out of print. We regret that there is no immediate prospect of its being reprinted, and no further orders for same can therefore be executed.

Sets of back numbers of B.S.M.—The offer of these, appearing in our January issue, is now withdrawn, no further sets being available.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Gone from Us. Brother James Carter, of Preston, passed away during February, at 78 years of age. He had been a Bible Student for nearly 60 years, and retained his confidence of faith steadfastly to the end.

Anonymous. We would acknowledge, with sincere appreciation, the receipt of an anonymous donation of £1 (March).

(Continued on page 3 of cover).



The Prophet who Ran Away

An exposition of the Book of Jonah

A.O.H.

2. *Running away from God.*



The great ship lay by the quayside, rising and dipping on the slow Mediterranean swell. Men thronged her deck, carrying bales of merchandise and boxes of goods to be stowed away in the capacious hold. Her bearded Phoenician captain stood on the quay arguing volubly with the merchant whose goods he was about to transport overseas, interrupting himself now and then to shout hoarse instructions to the labourers staggering across the gangway with their loads.

The blue sea with its fringe of golden sand, the white houses of Joppa, and the green hills behind the town, formed a picture of rare loveliness. The great waves rolled in from the ocean, flinging white spray over the jutting rocks which lay beyond the stone pier, lifting the ship gently as they passed under her keel, and raced in glistening foam across the flat beach. The brilliant sun of Palestine bathed the scene in a vivid white glare, the stone paving slabs reflecting the heat and causing little eddies and swirls of hot air to rise quivering here and there.

Into that bustle and confusion came Jonah the prophet of Gath-hepher, fleeing from his mission and his God. "Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah, the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me. But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord" (Jonah 1; 1-3).

The simple sincerity of the story stirs the emotions. Was ever flagrant defiance of God's command recorded with such candour and frankness? No attempt to excuse the action; no plea of justification or extenuation; just a plain, unimpassioned statement that a prophet, commissioned to perform a specific duty in a stipulated place, deliberately ignored the command, and sought to make its fulfilment impossible by taking himself off to the other end of the world!

Jonah came from Gath-hepher, in Galilee, three miles from Nazareth, where, eight hundred years later, Jesus lived. From 2 Kings 14; 14-27 it is known that he was a prophet of God and that he had predicted Israel's recovery of her lost territories, which prediction came true in the reign of Jeroboam II. Jonah must therefore have lived during the reign of this king, or shortly before, during the time that these territories were lost to Israel, and therefore not very long after the death of Elisha. Indeed, as a young man he may have known Elisha, and perhaps been one of those sons of the prophets who were disciples of the grand old man (2 Kings 6; 1), sharing with him his life in Galilee and the Jordan valley.

Such an environment would surely be the place for God to find a man for His purpose. The land which gave birth to men like Elijah, Jehu, Judas the Galilean (Acts 5; 37), and the turbulent Simon Peter has been proverbial throughout history for the fanatical zeal and grim tenacity of its children. When the revolt of Judas, the Galilean, was crushed by Rome during the boyhood of Christ, four thousand rebels were crucified by the Romans in the fields and on the hills of Galilee before the spirit of the people was broken. And that Jonah himself was not without courage is testified by the later events in the story. Why then did he make up his mind to flee to Tarshish? It was not that he was afraid of the mission. He was too true a prophet for that. Neither did he expect that by fleeing to Tarshish he would be out of the sight and reach of his God. He knew God too well for that. Well might he say with the Psalmist, "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there. If I make my bed in *sheol*, behold thou art there" (Psa. 139; 7, 8). Neither could it have been altogether national prejudice and reluctance to take the good news of God to a Gentile people, for his attitude to the crew of the ship, the vast majority of whom must have been non-Israelites, betokens a consideration for their welfare, even at the cost of his own life, which speaks volumes. A man willing to give his life for Gentiles, would surely be willing to preach the righteousness of God to Gentiles.

There is only one explanation that completely fits the circumstances, and to appreciate that explanation it is necessary to realise with what dread the nation of Israel re-

garded the Assyrians, whose capital city was Nineveh. The Assyrians were the most cruel and ruthless people of antiquity, and wherever their victorious armies went, ruin, desolation, suffering and death followed. Their unfortunate captives were treated with every imaginable form of barbarity, and those of the common people who escaped torture or death were transported long distances into strange lands, there to eat out their hearts in fruitless longing for the homeland they would never see again. It was under the Assyrians, nearly a century after Jonah's day, that the "Ten Tribes" were taken into the captivity from which they never returned.

Now at the time of Jonah the Assyrian empire was in a very unstable condition. It was being threatened on the north by the Medes and Scythians, and on the south by the Persians. The three great rulers, Tiglath-Pileser III, Sargon, and Sennacherib, who are mentioned in the Old Testament, had not yet arisen to restore Assyrian greatness, and the golden days of Assyria's earlier power had passed away. There is some uncertainty as to precisely which king of Assyria was reigning at this time, but for the whole of the period in question the successive rulers of Assyria were undistinguished men, occupied with internal troubles and revolutions, and powerful enemies on the north and north-east frontiers. In consequence the land of Israel was enjoying a time of rest from oppression.

At this time the Israelites were hoping that Assyria would never recover her former position, and be able to ravage and destroy as she had done, and their constant longing was that these troubles and tumults might culminate in the destruction of Assyria as a nation. With that fierce belief in the ultimate triumph of righteousness which characterised the people of Israel, they were sure that Assyria and its great city of Nineveh must inevitably come into judgment and be overthrown when it had filled up the measure of its wickedness, and they longed earnestly for the day to come. The prophet Nahum, who lived near Nineveh nearly two hundred years after Jonah's death, gave voice to this longing in vivid fashion. "God is jealous, and the Lord revengereth; the Lord revengereth and is furious; the Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies . . . with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies. . . . Woe to the city of blood!

it is full of lies and robbery . . . There is no healing of thy bruise; thy wound is grievous; all that hear the bruit of thee shall clap the hands over thee; for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?"

Jonah, sharing in these sentiments with all the depths of his passionate nature, was stricken with horror at receiving the Divine commission to go and preach repentance to the Ninevites. On the one hand he had cause for rejoicing in that their wickedness had come up before God, and that meant the time had come when destruction must be meted out—the destruction for which every true son of Israel longed. On the other hand, suppose his preaching was successful and Nineveh repented. What then? Jonah knew His God well enough to realise that He took no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, but was ever willing for the sinner to turn from his evil way and live. (Ezek. 18; 31, 32.) The threatened doom of Assyria could be averted by national repentance, and he, Jonah, would have been the means of that repentance. There would be no vengeance exacted for all the innocent blood which had been spilt in Israel by the Assyrians; moreover they would survive as a nation and might easily return to their old ways and inflict fresh suffering on Jonah's people. Jonah shrank from going to Nineveh, not because he was afraid of failure, but because he was afraid of success. He knew that God would be gracious, and he could not bear that knowledge.

There was only one thing to be done. He must go away; must put as great a distance as possible between himself and Nineveh; make the execution of the commission a physical impossibility, so that God might have time to think again, and relent, and inflict upon the Assyrians the punishment they so richly deserved. In any case, if he did not go to Nineveh, they could not have the message. If they had not the message, they would not repent. If they did not repent, God would most assuredly visit His judgment upon them. So Jonah resolved to flee unto Tarshish.

Tarshish was a mystery land to the ancients. The tribes of Dan and of Zebulun—in whose territory Gath-hepher was situated—knew all the stories about Tarshish. Dwelling as they did close to Tyre and Sidon, the cities of the Phoenicians, they could not but become involved in much that appertained to that nation of merchants. The peoples of Zebulun and Dan were themselves, many of them, sea-

farers, and joined with the Phoenicians in their voyages to the ends of the earth. That is the meaning of the prophetic allusion in Genesis 49; 13.

Many and fabulous were the stories told by seafarers about the marvels beyond the seas; the Pillars of Hercules, whose tops reached into heaven, twin sentinels at the gateway to the Western Ocean through which none but Phoenicians knew the way; the tropic land where were little men and women only four feet high, and great hairy men who lived in trees and could not talk, but had the strength of giants; of the great animals with tails at both ends and ivory tusks; of the Golden Islands in the middle of the Western Ocean, and the Sea of Mud which lay beyond, into which ships, penetrating, became fast and never returned. Up in the cold and mysterious North there were the Tin Islands, wrapped in perpetual cloud and fog, from whence came the precious tin so essential in the making of bronze tools and other goods. The Canaanites and the Philistines and the Israelites listened with awe to these wonderful tales, and never tired of watching the loaded merchant vessels set out on their long journeys to the west. "Ships of Tarshish" they called them, irrespective of their actual destination, and it is by that name they are referred to repeatedly in the Old Testament.

It used to be thought that the Old Testament "Tarshish" referred to the Phoenician colony in the south of Spain, known to the Greeks as "Tartessus." This latter word is the Greek form of the Syriac transliteration of the earlier word. At Tartessus the Phoenicians had established a great trading centre, which served as a kind of "half-way house" between the mother country and their remotest outposts in Africa and Britain. In later times there were reputed to be three hundred Phoenician cities in the colony, which must have embraced a considerable portion of what is now Spain; but the earliest historical mention of the colony is that of Herodotus, the Greek historian, who says that a Greek expedition visited Tartessus in about B.C. 650, and was hospitably received by Arganthonius, the governor of the colony. This must have been well over a century after Jonah's time.

There was another great Phoenician colony, known as Carthage, on the north-east of Africa, founded about B.C. 850. This would be a comparatively new colony in Jonah's day, and it is unlikely that Tartessus, lying farther afield,

was founded before Carthage. But the Old Testament refers to Tarshish as a place already well known long before these times. In the days of Solomon an Israelite fleet made regular journeys in company with a Phoenician fleet to Tarshish, taking three years over the round trip, and bringing back gold, silver, ivory, apes and peacocks. (1 Kings 10; 22; 2 Chron. 9; 21.) There seems to be no doubt that Solomon, king of Israel, and Hiram, king of Tyre (Phoenicia) were very close partners in this commercial activity. From Ezekiel 27; 12 we learn that Tyre also brought tin, iron, and lead from Tarshish. There is a very realistic touch here. These three metals are necessary for manufactured articles, and Solomon was interested more in the precious metals for his Temple and palace building, and evidently left the more uninteresting commodities to his partner.

David, in the 72nd Psalm, speaks of the kings of Tarshish as bringing gifts in the days of the Messianic kingdom; and again in Psalm 48; 7, refers to the ships of Tarshish broken by an east wind, the same wind which struck Jonah's vessel. There is little doubt then that the name "Tarshish" was applied to the lands far beyond Spain from which the riches of the Phoenicians were drawn.

There is one other indication which is interesting. In a number of texts (Exod. 28; 20; 29; 13; Ezek. 1; 16; 10; 9; 28; 13; Cant. 5; 14; Dan. 10; 6) the name of a certain article of adornment translated in the Authorised Version "beryl" is in the Hebrew "Tarshish." There is ground for supposing that the precious object thus denoted is not the stone now known as the beryl, but that it is amber, which is obtained from the Baltic Sea, and in ancient days, because of its great scarcity, was esteemed most valuable. It is easy to see that the amber obtained its name from the district from which it came, and since the Phoenicians did not penetrate any farther north than the south coast of Britain, it is probable that they traded it from the Britons, who in turn procured it from their Scandinavian kinsmen. Thus it became known by its country of origin, as we speak of india-rubber, or muscatels.

It would seem, then, that Tarshish was the general name given to all the lands lying outside the Straits of Gibraltar—Western Africa, the Azores, Western Spain and southern Britain. Since Britain was the most remote of all these countries, and moreover a land with which a regular

and heavy trade was conducted, it is by no means improbable that the ship upon which the prophet embarked on that fateful day was actually bound for our own shores. Had that wonderful intervention of God not taken place, Jonah might well have ended his days among the tin-miners of Cornwall, or the shepherds of the South Downs.

So it was that the captain turned from his discussion with the merchant to find a stranger waiting for an opportunity to bargain a passage on his ship. It would be no unusual request; in days when passenger ships were unknown, and travellers not numerous, it would be possible to make the journey only in some such manner. Quite often the would-be passenger was a fugitive fleeing from justice, or from the wrath of some powerful man; provided the passage money was good, and the applicant willing to make himself useful on the voyage, there would be no awkward questions asked. Jonah evidently had anticipated this, and had a sufficient sum with him to meet the captain's demand, for we are told in verse 3 that he "paid the fare thereof" upon boarding the ship. The word is one meaning hire, reward, or price, and is used in Zechariah 11; 12: "Give me my price," and of Jacob's wages in Genesis 30; 28. It is unlikely that a fixed tariff existed for such journeys, as would be implied by our own usage of the word "fare," but rather that a little bargaining took place as between Phoenician and Israelite. An agreement having been reached, Jonah would be free to go abroad.

Jonah had perhaps seen ships of Tarshish at the ports of Tyre and Sidon, so near his own home, but this was probably the first time that he had set foot on one. Surely he hesitated before crossing the gangway! Up to now there had been opportunity for repentance, and a turning back to execute his mission. Once the ship had sailed there could be no turning back. Rightly or wrongly, he must go on, away and still farther away from his mission and his God. What thoughts possessed his mind at that moment we do not know—only that apparently he stepped on board with unshaken resolution to "go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord."

We are indebted to the world of engineering research rather than to classical or Biblical scholarship for our knowledge of ancient ships. The academic scholar still thinks largely in terms of kings and battles, and ignores such things

as houses and ships, and the lives of common men. But in consequence of the labours of research workers interested from a technical point of view, there is quite a mass of detailed knowledge available regarding the ships of the ancients (Torr's "Ancient Ships" is perhaps the best authority on the subject). It is likely that the ship upon which Jonah set foot was a typical Phoenician merchant galley. Built especially for carrying merchandise, such galleys were about two hundred feet long, and rose some forty feet from water line to the deck. The bow and stern were curved upwards another ten or fifteen feet, the bow ending in a carved figure-head. One tall and immensely strong mast, rising from the centre, carried two spars supporting a great square sail. There were sometimes one or even two smaller masts with sails. The mainsail was relied upon when wind was available, and was manipulated by means of scores of ropes handled by men called in Hebrew "*chobbelim*," meaning "rope-men." (The "pilots" of Ezek. 27.) The Mediterranean, however, is a sea where there is sometimes no wind for days together, and therefore no vessel equipped only with sails could rely on making steady progress. Oars were therefore employed in addition to sails. In a ship of this size there could be as many as a hundred thirty-foot oars, requiring three hundred rowers, sitting on benches immediately beneath the main deck. It would be down amongst these rowers, if not, indeed, below them, with the cargo, that Jonah was found fast asleep during the storm.

Such ships were steered by means of two long paddles, fastened one at each side at the stern, and not by a rudder as in modern vessels. Somewhere near the stern there was also fixed a paddle wheel device by means of which the distance travelled could be ascertained. The ships were built of wood, the planks being secured together with wooden pegs and bronze nails, and the entire outer surface well covered with a paint made of wax and tar laid on hot. Sometimes the exterior was sheathed in part or in whole with lead or bronze plates.

According to records of actual ship performances which have been left by ancient writers, the best that such a vessel could do would be seven knots (eight miles per hour), and the average daily rate was five knots (nearly six miles per hour). It was customary to hug the coast, keeping within sight of land, for as much of the voyage as was possible,

and to cast anchor when darkness fell, resuming the journey on the following morning. Under these conditions the voyage from Joppa to Britain, allowing for a couple of weeks call at Carthage, would occupy four or five months.

And now there is growing excitement among the small crowd of people on shore. The loading of the ship has been completed, and the crew are going aboard ready for their long journey. It may be eighteen months before they see the home land again. Here come a crowd of swarthy Phoenicians who have been to offer propitiatory sacrifices in the Temple of Dagon, up on the hill in the middle of the town. Dagon will ensure them a favourable voyage and good trading. A knot of Israelites and Hittites, members also of the crew, have been to offer to Baal for the same purpose—for, alas, the worship of Baal was all too common in Israel in those dark days. And here come three men with light complexions, fair hair and blue eyes, to take their place among the rowers. They are Britons, fresh from offering to the British god Lud, a great deity indeed in their own far-off land, with a temple on top of a hill destined in later years to be known, in his memory, as Ludgate Hill; but an unknown god indeed in this land of Dagon, and Chemosh, and Baal, and Ashtaroth. So they had no temple in Joppa in which to worship Lud, but a small shrine in a corner of the quay on which they had placed their tribute, and trusted that he would take them back safely to their own land.

The captain had already made his private offering to Dagon, as befitted a respectable member of the community. He was probably a man who had knocked about the world a good deal, and seen many religions and forms of worship, and reserved the right to be a little liberal about them all. His words to Jonah a few hours later give the impression that he placed all gods on a more or less equal footing, and was prepared to judge by results. Probably his chief concern was to see that none of the gods had been omitted from their share of the usual observances, so that he could put to sea without apprehension that any of them thus slighted would show their displeasure by some form of disaster.

Jonah's fellow-passengers came aboard—let us suppose, two prosperous Carthaginian merchants returning home to Carthage; a government official on a political mission to the same city; a shifty-looking Hittite who was evidently glad to get away from the country, and would quickly make him-

self scarce at the first port of call. The captain, glancing with practised eye at sea and sky, took his stand at the stern, and gave the order to cast off. Mooring ropes were quickly thrown ashore; a signal made to the towing boats riding on the waves far ahead; and as the men in them bent to their oars, the tow-ropes tautened, and the great ship began to glide away from the land.

The "mallachim"—literally "ocean-sailors"—stood around the sides with long sweeps wherewith to ward the slowly-moving vessel away from the treacherous rocks which run out to sea at Joppa. Two more stood in the bows waiting for the captain's gestures, and signalling in turn to the rowboats ahead; the steersman bore heavily first on one steering paddle and then on the other, awhile the rowers waited with their long oars held close to the vessel's sides, and the rope-men for their time to hoist the great sail.

The rocks were cleared. A final signal and the towing ropes slackened and were cast off. The three small boats turned and began riding the billows on their way back to shore. A word of command, a hundred oars flashed in the sunlight, and dipped into the water with a quick splash; the mainsail unfolded steadily and billowed out in the wind; the ship turned her nose to the west and began to plough her way through the open sea. Jonah's voyage had begun.

The sandy beach, the white houses, the low green hills of Joppa faded into the distance and were gone. To the left, as Jonah leaned over the stern of the ship, rose the bluff headland of Mount Carmel. It was there that Elijah, not so long ago, had slain the priests of Baal, and then himself had most unaccountably run away into Sinai. But he had gone back. For Jonah there could be no going back. For the sake of his people he was deliberately going into exile. "It is expedient," he may have thought, "that one man should die for the people, and the whole nation perish not." What life lay before him he did not know. He only knew that the pleasant land of Israel, with its tender associations and stirring history, was gone from his sight for ever, that for the sake of his people, and to ensure the coming of Divine judgment upon the Assyrians, he must stay away and never come again into a position where he could be called upon to go and preach repentance to Nineveh.

So the afternoon wore on, until at last Carmel itself disappeared below the horizon. The rope-men sang their

sea-shanties as they manipulated the great sail to get the best out of the scanty wind; the monotonous call of the oar-master was echoed by the grunt of the rowers as they bent to their task, and the ship quivered and shook as she steadily made her way onwards into the west—on to Tarshish.

And Jonah, worn out by fatigue and grief, shrinking from the companionship and the conversation of his fellow-voyagers, made his way below deck into a secluded part of the vessel, and there, alone with his heartache, found peace at last in the kindly arms of sleep.

XXXXXX THE QUIET TIME XXXXXX

ALL DOUBTS DISSOLVED

There is nothing like faith to help at a pinch; faith dissolves doubts as the sun drives away the mists. The time for believing is always. Faith is the eye, is the mouth, is the hand, and one of these is of use all the day long. Let it rain, let it blow, let it thunder, let it lighten, a Christian must still believe.

John Bunyan.

CONFIDENCE

Captain of Israel's Host, and Guide
Of all who seek the Lord above;
Beneath Thy shadow we abide,
The Cloud of Thy protecting love:
Our strength—Thy grace,
Our rule—Thy word,
Our end—the Glory of the Lord.

By Thine unerring Spirit led,
We shall not in the desert stray;
We shall not full direction need,
Or lose our providential way.
As far from danger as from fear
While love—Almighty love—is near.

Tune as for—

"On Christ the solid rock I stand."

A PROMISE AND A PRAYER.

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you."

John 14 : 27

"Peace be with all you that are in Christ Jesus." 1 Pet. 5 : 14

*Though faith and hope awhile be tried,
I ask not, need not, aught beside ;
So safe, so calm, so satisfied,
Is the soul that clings to Thee.*

FRUITFULNESS. John 15 : 4-5

The outward growth of a tree must be aided by the inward and the influences of light, heat, moisture, etc., must be accompanied by proper exercise of vital force from within. So fruitfulness in the Christian is caused by the contribution of outward and inward means; the outward dealings of God's providence and the inward dealings of God's grace. We are pruned by chastisement and stimulated by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Affliction is not joyous but grievous yet it yieldeth the peaceful fruits of righteousness to those who are exercised thereby. Our light affliction-worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, not in itself but only while we look, not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen.

OUR COMFORT IN SORROW.

There is no book like the Bible for the sorrowful. It tells of the Comforter ; it points to the perfect plan according to which God is working out our blessedness ; it insists that all things are working together for good ; it opens the vista of the blessed future, where all the griefs and tears of men shall be put away for ever.

UNSEEN THINGS ARE ETERNAL.

We need to question ourselves with regard to these eternal realities. Are they more real to us than the visible things around? Which things govern us, the seen or the unseen? To live by faith is to live in the power of these unseen realities. To live by sight is to be governed by the things that weigh most with men of the world.

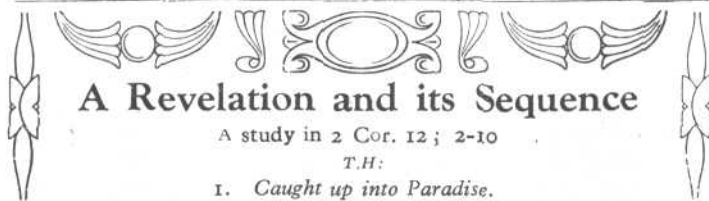
We walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Cor. 5. 7.

A SOBERING THOUGHT.

It is not often that worldly success comes to a Christian without degrading his high standard of character. David was "a man after God's own heart," but that was when he was a shepherd, sincere in his simple faith. In the later years of his life, when great sins made possible only by his exalted position had left their mark on his character, God told him he was a "man of blood," and for that reason, despite his service of the past, he was unfit to build the Temple of God. With all David's fame and achievements he failed to accomplish the dearest object of his life, and it was the corrupting influence of riches and power upon an originally noble character that caused his failure.

AMEN

"Amen" is a Hebrew word meaning literally FIRM, SURE, FAITHFUL. Revelation 3: 14 says "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness." Hence it came to be used as an adverb of confirmation, placed either at the beginning of a statement to give emphasis or at the end of prayer or some important statement where it is used as a sort of spoken signature by which the speaker or hearer attests and adopts as his own what has been said. An example of the word used to give emphasis is found in John 1: 51. "Verily, verily, (Amen; amen,) I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." Again in John 3: 3 we read, "Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." In 1 Cor. 14: 16 it is used as a signature. Paul here says in effect that if we use not our gifts so that they are easily understood "how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say, Amen, (add his signature), at the giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?" The Psalmist provides further examples of how we adopt as our own what has been said (Psalm 41: 13), "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting Amen and amen."



A Revelation and its Sequence

A study in 2 Cor. 12; 2-10

T.H.

I. Caught up into Paradise.

The lessons of Divine providence are usually difficult to learn and hard to understand. Especially is this so when they form part of the major developments and changes in the Divine Plan—while those changes are under way, and the over-ruled experience is still incomplete.

Many even of the smaller over-rulings of Providence have been difficult to comprehend, in the process of "opening-out," until some previously unseen climax was reached. For instance, Paul would not easily understand why he was forbidden of the Holy Spirit to take an eastern course when he desired to preach the Word in Asia, until, having turned west and proceeding to the Aegean Sea, the call from Macedonia for help reached his inner ear (Acts 16; 6-9). Nor would Philip, as he journeyed, comprehend why he had been sent to a desert rendezvous. Only when he heard the Ethiopian reading Isaiah's prophecy aloud would the purpose of his journey appear. Nor did Peter, spite of the vision three times sent, understand why he had been directed to a Gentile home, till he saw the tokens of the Holy Spirit light upon its residents. In all these instances the conclusion of the episode explained and illuminated the course employed.

But there are major providences in the Divine Plan where the climax is delayed, not for a few mere days or weeks, but for a whole Age. When these mighty changes are introduced, vast and perplexing problems are created for the servant of the Lord. When human institutions, previously considered permanent are about to pass away, Divine providence needs to pass through into human consciousness further information about the changing features of the Plan, and human limitations may easily impede the inflow of the new light. The finite mind has its bounds, and much time and experience may be needed before the Infinite can penetrate into it and teach the scope and nature of the change.

In the reminiscences which Paul narrates in our text, a hard and painful lesson had been set by the Divine control, and Paul had needed time to learn and understand. A time of "change" in the Divine Plan was under way. Not only were the institutions of an Age about to pass, but a people hitherto outside the pale of Divine recognition was about to be brought "near." Not only was it a time of major crisis for Paul's kin, it was also such a crisis for himself. To prepare Paul for the part he was called to play, an experience of intense illumination was bestowed, which, while it gave him moments of rare ecstasy, brought in its train agonising years of conflict and suffering. It made him realise keener than theretofore that the love for God's sovereign Will must run deeper than love for his fellow-man.

Let Paul outline the story of this controlling providence in his own words, and then we will try to elucidate its purposes: "*I knew (Greek word means "know") a man in Christ above fourteen years ago . . . caught up to the third heaven . . . I knew such a man . . . how that he was caught up to Paradise, and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter. . . . And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations there was given to me a thorn in the flesh—the messenger of Satan to buffet me lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me. And He said unto me: My Grace is sufficient for thee.*" (vv. 2, 4, 7-9).

In these few sentences Paul relates an experience which till his day had not been granted to any other man since time began. Not one of the far-sighted prophets of Israel had been carried so far along the stream of time as this man of whom Paul speaks. Not even Isaiah of the golden tongue, when speaking of a new heaven and earth, ever really saw in vision the sights of that perfect Day. All he did under the Holy Spirit's inspiration was to tell Israel that their name and seed would endure as long as that new heaven and earth endured. Apart from several Divine assertions, such as "As truly as I live all the earth shall be filled with My Glory," prophecy stops short of that perfect Day. It describes the constructive glory of the "perfecting day"—of "times of restitution"—but never of the eternal day beyond. It was reserved for this honoured man (and of course that man was Paul himself, see v. 7) to be carried

forward beyond the farthest bounds of prophetic understanding to see glorious things and hear unusual words such as had not been revealed theretofore. Paul was borne forward to that final state where God will be "all in all" and reign supreme for evermore.

This third heaven is not (as sometimes supposed) one of altitude—one of a series of heavens existing simultaneously, built upwards into the celestial heights. It is one of rotation—the third and last in a sequence of such heavens. Of these Peter speaks in 2 Peter 3; 5-12. It is a new order of governmental control in which righteousness will dwell, without the least trace of sin or evil or any such thing. Paradise is not some phantom place where disembodied spirits gather after their release from human flesh, and there enjoy the supposed delights or endure the restless wanderings of the land of shades! The term comes from a Persian word signifying "a park, or other shaded enclosure," and is frequently used to describe the luxurious grounds surrounding some Oriental prince's palace-home. In the Scriptures it stands for the "Garden of God," as it were a great enclosure in which God will erect His Great House, and into which He will bring His great united family. "In My Father's House are many mansions"—places of abode for undefiled angels and men. Over every gradation of rank and authority Jesus will be the Supreme Steward—into whom all principalities and power will be built up. Paradise, into whose eternal blessedness, the Lord, in the dark day of His death, promised right of entry to the dying thief, because of his penitence, will be the stately home of every beautiful human soul and every radiant celestial spirit dwelling together, each in its native sphere, with beauty and plenty everywhere, as one united family, obedient and submissive to Almighty God, whose joy and pleasure it will be to own Himself Father to so worthy a family.

It was to this enchanted scene that Paul was carried forward along the stream of time. There in the highest flight of ecstasy he saw and heard Creation at rest in God. All sin and impurity was gone, all pain and death removed and life in its fulness reigned everywhere. This was "God's own Garden" created and tended by His own right hand, for His own delight and for His household's happiness. It was Edenic bliss on a universal scale.

It is not easy to say with exact precision just when Paul had this unique experience. Some uncertainty abounds, because a portion of his life is lost to view after he was compelled to leave Jerusalem for his native Tarsus, some three years subsequent to his conversion on the Damascus way. (Compare Acts 9; 30: 22; 17-21 with Acts 11: 25, 26.) We know but little about these years, but we do know why this seclusion there was terminated.

This letter to the Corinthians is believed by competent authorities to have been penned about the year 57 A.D. If that is so, fourteen years measured backwards from that year would reach to the year 43 A.D. Can we say where Paul was working at this time? We can! The year 43 found him at Antioch. How do we know? There is a fixed chronological point at this stage of the narrative in the Acts of the Apostles. It is found in chapter 11: 27, 28. The year of universal famine predicted by the prophet Agabus to the Church occurred in the year '44 A.D. This date is fully established upon Roman historical evidence, and is accepted by all critical authorities.

In that year Paul had been at Antioch for a whole year (Acts 11; 25, 26). He had removed to Antioch at the solicitation of Barnabas, because a great work was taking place with which Barnabas and his fellow-ministers were unable to cope. Gentile converts were crowding into that Church, and the pastoral care was proving too exacting for the elders and deacons there.

From various evidences we know that Paul had not been inactive prior to the invitation of Barnabas reaching him. Churches existed in Cilicia—the upland country behind Tarsus—which none but Paul could have established. He had laboured mainly in Jewish synagogues, and had been punished several times for preaching the offence of the Cross. This we know from the catalogue of his sufferings recorded in 2 Corinthians 11; 24-27. The invitation of Barnabas constituted a call to the Gentile field. Already the Master had told him he was a chosen vessel to carry His name to the Gentiles—now the hour was come! With what attitude would Paul meet this call? How would he respond to the new leadings of Providence, as the Jewish nation was being set aside and the Gentiles accepted in their stead? Age-long privileges were being withdrawn, and new privileges coming in. For several years he had laboured independently

in a small secluded field, where opportunity was circumscribed—now he was being called to the centre of a larger field, which, for these new developments, was set at a place outside Palestine and Jerusalem. The evangelisation of the Gentile world was about to begin in earnest and Paul was the Lord's chosen instrument for the task. Great issues were at stake. For himself it was to mean much travail and suffering—suffering of far greater intensity than had befallen him in the earlier days of Cilicia. For his Jewish kinsmen it betokened the end of their exclusive privilege. Gentiles were to be accepted on equal terms with believing Jews, not as mere proselytes of the gate, but as brethren in the Lord. This, to a Jew, was a revolution on a colossal scale, overturning the institutions and sanctions of ancient days. In the new field of ministry Paul had to make these drastic changes known not only to a people outside "the pale," eager to enter in, but to a bigot nation within, desiring to keep the others out.

By conversation with Barnabas he would learn that certain brethren, scattered from Jerusalem, had dared to go much farther than the brethren of the mother-church, and had spoken to the Gentiles in Antioch of the "way of the Lord." These Gentiles had believed, and had received the tokens of the Divine approval. In this bestowal of the Grace of God, these open-hearted brethren discerned the leadings of the Lord, and set themselves to work in full accordance therewith.

Shall we wonder then, if, at this vital crisis of his life, Paul besought the Lord for guidance and instruction how to proceed? Can we marvel, if, before he lent his influence to this new development in the Gentile sphere, he went aside into some secret place to ask sincerely if the things transpiring at Antioch were really ordained of God, and if so, what such things could indicate?

Under these circumstances shall we be surprised that Jesus took this chosen vessel further into His confidence and made known to him what the ultimate end of it all would be! Already Paul's understanding would carry him as far forward as the prophet's eye has seen into future days, but it left the picture incomplete. Already Paul also had come to know that the Messiah of Israel was to be, in some way, the Saviour of the world, but the prophetic horizons were indistinct and ill-defined. Something more was needed to fill out

and illuminate the dim background of this universal work—need we then wonder if it was at this stage of the developments of those momentous days that the watching Saviour blessed His praying servant's eyes with that larger vision of Paradise—that distant consummation in which all these changes and developments would terminate? Though there were yet many steps and stages ere that consummation would be reached, it is not difficult to understand how great an incentive would be given to this special messenger for the new impending task, if the curtain could be raised for a little while and he could be assured, with certainty, what the end of the redemptive and restorative scheme was intended to be. At least he would know that his labours and sufferings in the Lord would never be in vain.

What a remarkable experience it must have been. Caught up and carried forward from these scenes of sin and woe to the unsullied bliss of that perfect Day, and given to see the whole creation at rest in God—no longer Gentile divided from Jew; no longer those "near" or "afar"; no longer sin and death, or hatred and prejudice, but a perfect family in which every perfect son bent the willing knee to the Well-Beloved Son, Who by His death had made the purpose of His Father possible. By this glimpse into Paradise the need of his valiant heart was met—and thus this little man—this one man in the whole wide earth—was fortified and strengthened for the colossal task to which he had been called.

At some point of time, so it seems, when called to quit Cilicia for the larger field at Antioch, the Lord most graciously took His "chosen vessel" deeper into His confidence, and made known to him an outline of that consummation of the great Plan, which God had revealed to Him after His ascent to His Father's right hand.

But that revelation was mainly for himself alone; it was made "unlawful" for him to pass the "words" along. What he saw and what he heard was for the comfort and assurance of his own loyal heart. They were not to be told in their fulness to other men—most certainly not to the faithless Jew—though here and there, in written words directed to his children in the faith at Thessalonica, Corinth, Philippi, and Ephesus, faint glimmerings of the great light, at times, break through.

Revelation had reached its farthest point in these confidential secrets locked in the chosen servant's heart, and stand forth a token of the supreme love the Heavenly Master bore towards the brand he had plucked from the fires of hate that seared the heart of old Jerusalem. But for this confidence there was a price to be paid. This unique experience had its fragrance, like the rose, but it also had its "thorn." The "Confidence" must be made complete, not only on the side of the enlarged understanding, but also in the suffering which would make the consummation possible.

We ought to thank God to-day for this special servant of the Lord. Next to that which we owe the Lord Himself, we owe to this intrepid soul more than we owe to any other man who has set foot on this sad old earth. His fervent pen, guided by the Spirit of the Lord, has brought wealth untold into every believer's heart—the gold and rubies of Divine Truth—and made them rich unto eternal life.

He treats us not according to our sins,
 He deals not with us as our guilt deserves;
 but, high as heaven is over earth,
 so vast His love is to His worshippers;
 as far as east from the west,
 so far He puts our sins away from us.
 Poor man!—his days are like the grass,
 at the breath of a breeze it is gone,
 and its place never sees it again.
 But the Eternal's love is everlasting,
 His loyalty goes on to children's children.
 Can a woman forget her infant,
 forget to pity her babe?
 Yet even were a mother to forget,
 Never will I forget you.

Psa. 103, 10-17. Isa. 49, 15. *Moffatt*)

An Explanation. Readers will have noticed an unfortunate transposition of type on page 19 of the January issue. Six lines from the foot of the page became changed to the top and there was probably some difficulty on the part of readers to "read fluently." For the benefit of those who keep their copies we enclose with this issue a loose sheet of page 19 correctly printed which may be pasted in position over the defective page.

News from Finland. Brother F. B. Edgell has received a letter from Brother Berghall, of Finland, known to some in this country, in which he says, "We are well, everybody, here in Tampere. The Lord has been with us in every way. No danger. No need." This fragment of news from some of our brethren from whom we have been cut off these past six years will be of deep interest to those who in the past have had contact with our Finnish brethren.

Wanted. We would like to purchase, on behalf of a brother, copies of the 1905 and 1906 "Convention Souvenir Reports." If anyone has copies they would be willing to dispose of, please forward same to the office and state price required.

A brother enquires for the loan, for a short time, of a book, "God's Plan in the Stars," known to the brethren some 20 or more years ago. If anyone has the book and is willing to lend, we will put them in touch with the brother concerned on receipt of a postcard at this office.

Whitsun Convention at Birmingham The Midland classes announce that their Whitsun Convention will be held at Birmingham and not at Leicester as was originally hoped. The venue is Digbeth Institute, Digbeth, Birmingham, near L.M.S. and G.W. stations and the "Bull Ring." Information and programmes from Bro. R. Walton, 14 Coniston Road, Coventry. For accommodation please write early to Bro. W. Burge, 46 Tillingham Street, Birmingham 12.

A Review of the Doctrines. We would remind the friends that this little book is still available, and we shall be happy to send copies to friends who have not yet seen the book. The price is 1/9 post free.

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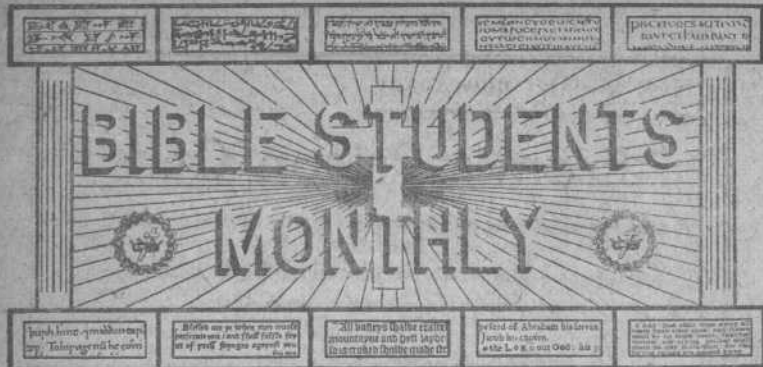
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The Fullness of Christ

An Exhortation to consecration

—: A.S. :—

The Apostle Paul's expressed desire for the saints at Ephesus was not merely that they should know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, but also that they might be “filled with the entire fulness of God” (Eph. 3; 19; Moffatt).

What is this fulness of God with which the saints are to be filled? As no man hath seen the Father at any time who can answer the question? Paul supplies the answer in Col. 2; 9 (Moffatt), “It is in Christ that the entire fulness of deity has settled bodily,” and again, “For it was in Him that the divine fulness willed to settle without limit” (Col. 1; 19, Moffatt). To the Apostle Paul was revealed the fact that this divine fulness settled without limit in Christ, to the end that, through Him, that same fulness should dwell in the saints.

Paul tells us that this is the sacred secret which “though concealed from ages and generations of old has now been delivered to the saints of God” (Col. 1; 26, Moffatt). Continuing, he says, “It is His will that they (the saints) should understand the glorious wealth which this secret holds for the Gentiles, in the fact of Christ's presence among you as your hope of glory.” This is the Christ we proclaim; we train and teach everyone the full scope of this knowledge, in order to set everyone before God MATURE in Christ.”

This maturity of which the Apostle speaks is nothing less than the “fulness of Christ,” for in Eph. 4; 13 (Moffatt) he speaks of us “reaching maturity, reaching the full measure of development which belongs to the fulness of Christ.” In the New Testament we read of that “perfection” which must be attained by all who would be part of the Christ, e.g. 2 Cor. 13; 11; Heb. 13; 21; 1 Peter 5; 10. The word here used means “to fit thoroughly, to adjust.” In other passages this “perfection” means “to end, or to make complete,” in other words to mature, to ripen.

So then, in order that we might reach that maturity which belongs to the fulness of Christ, we are being “adjusted” being “fitted thoroughly” (for a place in the body of Christ), and this process is illustrated in nature in the ripening of, shall we say, an apple. When the fruit

reaches its full size it ceases to grow, but it is far from ready for use. If plucked and eaten, it would be sharp and acid to the taste. After the fruit is fully grown, even after it is nicely coloured, the ripening or maturing must take place, and this takes the form of a chemical change within, unseen from without, which brings the fruit to perfection, or "ends it," brings it to maturity. Our Lord stood before John the Baptist at Jordan a perfect man, yet He was not "perfect" in the sense that the word "perfection" implies in the Scriptures. How then did Jesus reach "perfection," how did the fulness of God dwell within Him without limit? In Heb. 2; 10 (Moffatt) we read that "in bringing many sons to glory, it was befitting that He for whom the universe exists, should perfect the Pioneer of their salvation by suffering." Yes, Jesus was matured, completed, by suffering. It was His suffering and cruel death which revealed the fulness of God within Him, for, even as God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son; so that same love was manifested in its fulness in and by Jesus as He became a man and died for sinful men. Not only did He thus, in His life and death manifest the fulness of God, but He became the pioneer of other sons, in whom the same fulness must dwell. In Cor. 1; 15-18 (Moffatt) we read, "He is the likeness of the unseen God . . . He is prior to all, and all coheres in Him. Also, He is the head of the Body; that is, of the church in virtue of his primacy as the first to be born from the dead—that gives Him pre-eminence over all."

Although Jesus was the active agent in the creation of the world, and the Logos of God during the Jewish Age, he reached the highest pinnacle of perfection and power as a result of coming to earth and dying a criminal's death. All the attributes of God were seen (as far as it was humanly possible for them to be seen) in Jesus whilst He was among men. Throughout an experience of continued self-abnegation, of untiring effort for an ungrateful people, and a daily dying culminating in a cruel death, the fulness of God became more and more apparent in the loveliest character that ever found expression among men; then at the point of death Jesus had been so "adjusted" so "thoroughly fitted," so matured or perfected, that He became, in His resurrection, the First-born of a new creation. Paul, as an able minister of the Gospel, tells us that it was his aim in life, that all who should come to know Christ should be brought to this same perfection, this same advanced state of maturity or

ripeness, and he laboured with all his might to this end, knowing from his own experience that this could only be reached by the same process as perfected their Pioneer. Even as the apple ripens, as the unseen change takes place within, so we must be changed from within until we reach the full measure of development which belongs to the fulness of Christ.

Paul shows us how this is to be done in 2 Cor. 3; 18 (Weymouth), "And all of us with unveiled faces, reflecting like bright mirrors the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same likeness from one degree of radiant holiness to another, even as derived from the Lord—the Spirit." Here is another natural picture which is used to illustrate the same process of development in a somewhat different way. A rough, dark surface absorbs all the light which falls upon it, reflecting none; this may well represent our condition when first the light of Jesus falls upon us. If, however, the rough surface is polished it absorbs no light, but gives it all back, thus reflecting any image which falls upon it. This polishing is carried out by means of abrasives which rub or chafe away the roughness by friction. It is a long process; first coarse grains are used, then finer and finer grades, until finally rouge is used to give the surface a brilliant polish. If we are to reflect the glorious image of the Lord in its fulness, we must be subjected to the rubbing, the chafing experiences of life which will so polish us that we shall reflect that image undistorted. Sometimes we are pained and distressed by the frictions which we experience as we go through life; friends, brethren and relatives, as well as those we contact in the daily round, seem to "rub us up the wrong way" and we wonder why. Experiences are hard and unpleasant where we expected them to be smooth and easy, but if we are rightly exercised thereby, we shall more and more faithfully reflect the true image of the Lord. Even, as in the natural picture, the brilliance of the reflected image depends upon the intensity of the light falling upon the mirror, so our ability to reflect the perfection of our Pioneer will depend upon the extent to which we abide in the marvellous light of heaven.

To sum up, we see that the Christian life is one of constant change; there can be no standing still. The unripened apple is of little or no use, the unpolished mirror is neither useful nor ornamental, so an unfinished Christian life would be a signal failure, an abortive effort, worthy only to be

discarded. So let us, each and every one, strive to attain that growth in holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. Let us permit the sufferings of life to sweeten, to ripen us; let us accept the frictions and the chafings gracefully, that they may produce in us those qualities which will reflect the image of our glorious Lord, and above all let us dwell continually in the light of the Eternal; thus shall we reach that full measure of development which belongs to the fulness of Christ.

XXXXXX THE QUIET TIME XXXXXX

SANCTIFICATION AND ITS RELATION TO FAITH.

Faith in God's ability to accomplish the miracle of holiness of heart while we are still in the flesh, is stated as essential, but there must also be absolute faith in His willingness and certainty to perform the things He has promised. Against all the arguments of the flesh, faith must accept God's assurance that the blood of Jesus has made, even so poor an offering as ours, a sacrifice, holy and well pleasing to Him. This is not easy with the flesh reminding us of its imperfections, and would be impossible to one who is more aware of the frailties of his flesh than of the power of his Saviour.

Justifying faith hates the sin from which it cannot escape, but sanctifying faith is that which lays hold on the promise that we can indeed, as far as our hearts are concerned, attain that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. Many are willing to sacrifice something, but only one here and there gladly resigns all, never to take up again the self once laid at His feet, but the same God who works in us to will has appointed Jesus to be our strength. Our Prince Leader, though perfect, attempted no victory in human strength, saying, "the Father who dwelleth in Me, He doeth the work." God gives this power, as well as reckoned righteousness, to those only who exercise this degree of faith, for so long as any degree of our faith is in our own works, past or present, we cannot receive of His fulness.

WHAT TIME I AM AFRAID I WILL TRUST IN THEE.

Afraid? Who can harm thee
When covered by His wing?
Though storms may come to overflow,
By faith thou still canst sing.

His power is stronger than thy foe
So faint not, my dear child.
His promises are true we know,
Abide in Him and rest awhile.

Resigned, submissive to His will
Though flesh seems weak, faith small.
Now let the Lord for thee control
Then thou shalt find in Him thine all.

R.F.

DWELL UPON THESE TWIN PROMISES!

One negative and one positive, in their all-inclusive simplicity;

"No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Psa. 84; 11).

"Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good" (Psa. 85; 12).

DOTH GOD KNOW?

In the first few verses of Psalm 73, David marvelled at the way the wicked were allowed to prosper, indeed, he said in verse 3, "I was envious of their prosperity," for even in death it appeared that "their strength was firm," they had no particular pangs, they did not seem to suffer in proportion to their wickedness; they have lived in prosperity and they die in comparative peace.

In verse 11 the question is asked, "Doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?" A well-known commentator has said of these words, "How can these facts be reconciled with an all-knowing and all-seeing God? Why does He permit all this to occur and not interpose to prevent it? Can it be explained, can it be believed, that God sees all this, and that He calmly looks on, and does nothing to prevent it? If He sees it, why does He not interpose and put an end to it? These perplexities were not confined to the psalmist. They are such as have been felt by good men

in all ages; and no one yet has been able to furnish a solution of them that is wholly free from difficulty."

How heartily we can enter into the further expressions of David, for we, too, shared the common perplexity concerning the question, "Why does God permit evil"? "It was too painful for me until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end" (verses 16-17). We know that God is now taking out a people for His name, not dealing with the wicked or punishing them for their evil deeds, but the time is coming when, as Paul says in Rom. 2; 6, "God will render to every man according to his deeds." We need not be at all disturbed when evil appears to flourish, knowing that God is not mocked and He is not unmindful of those who are apparently unrewarded for their efforts to walk uprightly.

The Prophet who Ran Away

An exposition of the Book of Jonah
A.O.H.

3. The Storm.

It is an interesting fact that the only two stories of the sea contained in the Bible—one in the Old Testament and one in the New—are each concerned with the same locality and both tell of Divine intervention for the salvation of the helpless mariners. In both cases a great storm threatened to engulf all; in both cases not a life was lost. The narrative of Paul's shipwreck on his voyage to Rome (Acts 27) parallels that of Jonah's adventure, except that Paul's ship was wrecked whilst Jonah's apparently got back safely to port.

"But the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken" (verse 4). The exactitude of the words used enables us to reconstruct the scene with great accuracy. The prevailing wind in the Eastern Mediterranean, in spring-time, the season for the long-distance ships to commence their voyages, is E.N.E., blowing away from the land and speeding the ships on their way. Climatic conditions on the mainland sometimes cause this wind to increase to a veritable gale, blowing down from the mountains of Asia, and if this gale meets a hot south wind coming up from the African coast, the result is a raging whirlwind over the sea. This

is the "tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon" of Acts 27; 14, which caught and eventually wrecked Paul's ship nearly a thousand years later. (This same wind in the Mediterranean is to-day called the "Levanter" and behaves in precisely the same way, a striking testimony to the accuracy of the Bible narratives.) The word translated "tempest" in this 4th verse is one which means a whirlwind, and the Greek equivalent has given us our English word "typhoon." The expression "was like to be broken" is literally "to be shattered to pieces." The tremendous strain on the ship's structure by this terrific wind pressure upon the great sail and tall mast tended to strain the ship's timbers and cause her to go to pieces. The sailors would at once take the regular precaution against this threatened disaster by passing stout ropes over the bows, sliding them under the ship and securing them round the hull. This is the meaning of the expression in Acts 27; 17, "they used helps, undergirding the ship," for the Alexandrian corn-ship on which Paul travelled would have been a very similar vessel to the "ship of Tarshish" on which Jonah had embarked.

The next verse indicates that disaster had come to the vessel, for the mariners (the "ocean-sailors," or general crew of the ship) are found calling upon their gods for succour and throwing the cargo overboard in order to lighten the vessel. For Phœnicians to dispose of their precious goods in this salutary fashion indicates a definitely serious state of affairs. Since in verse 13 it appears that the ship's only hope lay with the rowers, who "rowed hard to bring it to the land," it is probable that the mainsail had been blown to ribbons by the wind, if indeed the mainmast had not gone and left the ship quite helpless.

So one might imagine the whirling clouds in the dark sky above, the wind roaring and screaming through what was left of the ship's rigging, the great sail in tatters billowing and sweeping from side to side to the danger of every man on deck, the vessel itself wallowing helplessly in the raging seas, pitching and tossing as if in its death agony and threatening to capsize at any moment. Below deck the rowers strained with their oars, while up above the steersman laboured to keep the ship head on to the wind, and the captain's hoarse voice spurred the men to renewed efforts as they jettisoned the cargo to lighten the vessel and enable it the more easily to ride the towering waves.

Amidst all this clamour and confusion, Jonah lay deep

down in the ship, fast asleep. This was not the uneasy tossing of a man haunted by a troubled conscience; sleep under such circumstances must surely have been the deep slumber of one who had made his resolve, even though at great personal sacrifice, and had sought relief from his grief and heartache in the land of forgetfulness.

"What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not." The shipmaster (*rab chobel*—chief rope-man—probably the captain of the vessel) had descended into the "sides of the ship,"—a technical term meaning the interior, or "below deck"—to seek out the sleeper. Perhaps he had been missed at a time when all had been summoned to assist in working for the vessel's safety. At any rate, Jonah was admonished to add his prayers to those of his fellows in distress. Perhaps his God could succeed where others failed; or would look with greater favour on his devotee than the other gods did upon theirs. The captain did not seem to be too sanguine—probably he had been in such storms before and found himself left to extricate himself and his ship by his own skillful seamanship—but still, any likely way of escape was worth trying.

It would seem that Jonah had no opportunity to call upon his God, for as soon as he set foot upon deck he found himself in the middle of an excited and probably badly-frightened crowd of men intent upon discovering the cause of their calamity. The sailors were evidently no longer attributing this storm to natural causes; with the superstition of their kind and indeed in line with the common state of mind in those days, they had decided that someone among their number had incurred the wrath of one of the gods and that he was being pursued by this form of vengeance. It became a matter of necessity to find out the guilty man.

"And they said every man to his fellow, 'Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is come upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah' (verse 7).

The casting of lots was resorted to in ancient times as a means of determining the answer of Heaven to a specific question. The "lots" consisted of two small tabs of wood or metal, one white and one black. Those used to choose between the "Lord's goat" and the "Scapegoat" at the Day of Atonement ceremonies were inscribed, one, "For the Lord," and one, "For Azazel." These lots which were

cast to determine who on the ship was the guilty man were probably plain tabs used by the sailors in games of chance. The scene can be imagined! The gale shrieking its violence and the ship shuddering and plunging like a mad thing; the rowers below pulling hard at their oars and the steersman at his paddles; an excited group on the deck oblivious to all but the matter in hand. The two lots were in the bag and the first cast was to be between the captain and the crew. The captain strode forward, put his hand into the bag and withdrew it. One of the crew stepped out and did likewise. The two men opened their hands and all crowded round to look. The mariner held the black lot!

Once again the process was repeated, between the crew and the passengers. This time one of the passengers held the black lot. So, eventually, the choice lay between one other man—and Jonah. The gambling instincts of the sailors would by now have been thoroughly aroused and a close circle formed around the two men facing each other over the bag. Who would draw the black tab?

"And the lot fell upon Jonah!"

"Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us?—What is thine occupation?—Whence comest thou?—What is thy country?—Of what people art thou?"

The excited questions rained upon him from all sides. Customary discipline was completely laid aside; the paramount need was to ascertain who this man was, what he had done to offend his god, and how that god could be appeased; and there was no time to be lost.

The "critics" object that these questions are ingrammatical and illogical, and not to be taken as a record of an actual occurrence. A most telling comment on this attitude has been made by one student of the Book of Jonah in the words "That a mob of excited and angry sailors gathered round Jonah, and feeling themselves in danger of being drowned and of losing their ship through his fault, one put one question, and another another, not in strict logical sequence, and not expressed in accurate literary grammar, is a difficulty that could hardly have occurred to anyone but a German professor who had, perhaps, never had any experience of a great storm at sea." ("Higher Criticism" originated in Germany.) Sailors are not the most grammatical or logical of men even at their best; and these men were not at their best.

And so, at last, Jonah was forced into full and frank

avowal of that faith which was in him all the time, but had been thwarted and suppressed by the specious arguments of worldly reasoning. He had been a greatly honoured prophet of God; his words had been received with respect away in Galilee before his ignominious flight; and we know that his prophecies came true (2 Kings 14; 25). But he had allowed what we would call the reasoning of the natural mind to take priority over the leading of the Spirit, and in consequence, instead of going on in his prophetic office to even greater works of service for his God, he found himself face to face with complete disaster, and—worse beside—he had involved other and innocent men in his ruin. In this crisis the true nature of the man comes to the top. The worldly wisdom with all its pretence falls away and he takes his stand, whatever the consequences, upon the only foundation left to him—his relationship to his God. *“I am an Hebrew; and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land”* (verse 9).

This is the great turning point in Jonah's life. Before this declaration, he had been an apostate, a renegade, running away from God and planning for himself. Now he turns, and put himself into God's hands, announcing his allegiance and loyalty in no unmistakable terms. We can lay great stress on that expression “the God of heaven.” The storm had come from heaven; it was raging in the air; and the mariners had no doubt that it had been sent by the god of heaven, to pursue and overtake a guilty devotee. Jonah signed his own death-warrant in avowing himself a servant of this mighty God; there was no question now but that he, and he alone, was responsible for the calamity that had overtaken the vessel.

So much is evident from the mariners' horror-stricken query in verse 10, which, correctly rendered, is “What is this that thou hast done?” (The Hebrew is the same as in Gen 3; 13, when God said to Eve, “What is this that thou hast done,” and as in Gen. 12; 18. It implies a recognition of the serious nature of the action that has been taken and a bringing it home to the offender.) These sailors, Gentiles, heathen, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, looked askance at this man who had so defied his God and disobeyed His command. So does the unbelieving world sometimes look upon the Christian who has allowed himself to be overtaken in a gross dereliction of Christian duty. They do not profess such exalted standards themselves, but “we

did not expect that of you!”

These sailors probably had good reason, aside from the evidence of the storm, to believe in the power of the Hebrews' God. The scene on Mount Carmel, when God sent down fire from heaven upon the sacrifice, and Elijah slew the priests of Baal, was probably not more than a generation in the past, and these Phœnicians, whose home towns of Tyre and Sidon lay so near to Carmel, must have been quite familiar with the story. Now that Jonah had told them he was fleeing from this same Jehovah, they had good reason to be afraid.

Now what was to be done? That was the question uppermost in their minds. It is a testimony to Jonah's evident sincerity of repentance at this stage that the sailors should ask his advice; they were apparently assured that he, a prophet of Jehovah, would give them right counsel irrespective of the consequences to himself. For Jonah, too, the issue was no less clear. To what extent he received guidance from above at this point we do not know; we only know that without any hesitation he instructed the sailors to cast him overboard into the raging sea. Only thus could their lives be saved.

It is to their credit that they did all they could to avert this drastic remedy. The rowers ploughed their oars through the water in the vain endeavour to bring the ship to land. The effort was futile; they were fighting against God and no man can do that and be victorious. They realised at length that it must be Jonah's life, or theirs. The God of the Hebrews had them at His mercy.

Now here we have the supreme act in this drama of the sea. These pagans with one accord came before God in prayer, acknowledging His almighty power and beseeching forgiveness. “Who hath resisted His will?” asked Paul on a much later occasion. These men must have felt like that. *“We beseech thee, O Jehovah, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood; for thou, O Jehovah, hast done as it please thee”* (verse 14). A saddening reflection it is that Jonah's own countrymen, throughout their long history, hesitated not to lay hands upon their own prophets and put them to death. “Which of the prophets have your fathers not persecuted?” asked Stephen at his trial before the Sanhedrim (Acts 7; 52). And yet these rude, uncultured men strove with might and main to avoid laying violent

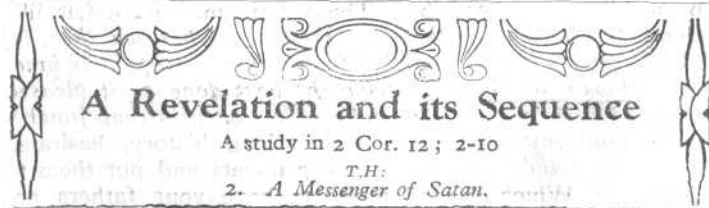
hands upon this man who, by his own confession, had brought them all into dire peril. They respected his prophetic office more than did the people to whom the prophets were sent.

"So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging" (verse 15). The same Divine intervention that had caused the storm to strike the vessel at the commencement of its voyage now caused the same storm to cease suddenly. The sailors believed that the God of heaven had personally intervened to deliver them; and they were right. The effect upon their minds is shown by the next verse. They were profoundly impressed, and delayed not to offer sacrifice and make vows.

The sacrifice would probably be of slain beasts, offered there and then upon the vessel. These ships, setting out on voyages which occupied several months, usually carried a number of living animals—chiefly sheep—to be slain en route to provide food for the crew. Tinned meat and refrigerators were unknown in those days! There would be the necessary sacrifices at hand, therefore, and the vows would be that more opulent and appropriate ones would be offered directly the adventurers set foot upon shore again.

So the battered vessel came limping back to Joppa bearing a company of subdued and thoughtful men. Out there, in the raging and tumult of the storm, they had come face to face with God; and perhaps life was never quite the same for them afterwards. It must have been an Israelite who had voyaged in a Phœnician ship who first suggested those stirring words of the Psalmist:

"Those that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in the great waters; these see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep."



A Revelation and its Sequence

A study in 2 Cor. 12; 2-10

T.H.

2. A Messenger of Satan.

So extensive and magnificent were the visions of Paradise accorded by the Lord to Paul, that it was found necessary to throw some make-weight into the scales against

him to restore balance in his life. Paul still had the limitations of a man with humanity's sensibilities to environment, hence an experience so sublime could easily have upset the reactions of both heart and mind. He could have become so over-sensitive to future things that he might overlook the things on this present dark old earth. An experience so rare could have thrown even this massive mind entirely out of gear (as similar experiences have thrown others), causing him to lapse into a vision-seeking recluse, too ecstatically-minded for his Master's earthly work, desiring only to see "the distant scene" again and yet again. His position was replete with risk and dangers, and lest he should be exalted (elated) above measure there was given unto him "a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him" and bring afresh to his memory every day that he was still resident in this present evil world. This was bitter consequence indeed to an experience so sublime, but Divine Wisdom saw that it had to be, if this chosen vessel was to remain of service to His purposes.

What then was this make-weight thrown into the scales to weight Paul back to earth? Of what did this thorn in the flesh consist?

Paul does not himself explain what this corrective was, unless, of course, we allow his simple statement to stand for what it is. There is no other direct reference in his letters to this thing, nor does any other writer of Apostolic days explain what it was. The second century had dawned before the first reference—still extant—was made, by writers of the early Church, to Paul's afflicting thorn, and even then they do not explain what it was. Since those days (and more particularly in the last two centuries), expositors have suggested almost every ailment to which the human mind and body is susceptible. Some of these expositors, citing Paul's angry flash before the Sanhedrin (Acts 23; 1-5) have sought to prove that Paul's thorn was an affliction of the mind—a domineering impatient asperity that could not brook opposition or diversity of understanding on any point—an attitude at once dictatorial and easily provoked to retaliation. Catholic commentators think the thorn was a real weakness of the flesh—a weakness open to suggestions of impurity and unchastity, and that Paul had to fight hard to maintain his celibate estate. Many others maintain that the evidences indicate a weakness of the eyes—some form of ocular affection which caused him intense discomfort and

pain. From Paul's own words in Gal. 4; 14-15, an assumption is drawn that Paul's eyes were diseased and that the Galatian brethren had been so solicitous for his welfare and his ministry that they would willingly have given him (if they could) their own unaffected eyes. Again they point to Paul's later words (Gal. 6; 11). ". . . see with what large letters I have written unto you *with mine own hand.*" They take the phrase to indicate that at this point Paul took up the pen from his secretary's hand, and wrote these few sentences in unusually large characters. The fact also that he had to have recourse to the help of some other secretarial hand in preparing his epistles is taken to indicate defective sight. It is assumed that the blinding glare of the Heavenly Presence on the Damascus way so injured the cellular tissue of his eyes, that, though scales fell away therefrom after three days (Acts 9; 9 and 18) they had been injured beyond recovery. Be that as it may, it is also a fact that there was enough intensity of expression in those eyes to match the stern reproof administered to Elymas the sorcerer at a later date (Acts 13; 8-11). "Paul fastened his eyes upon him and said . . ." Here were words of rapier sharpness and to drive them home a "look" not less intense!

Now it should be discerned that no affliction commencing prior to his vision-experience can be accepted as this "thorn in the flesh." Some seven or nine years had elapsed from the date of his arrest and apprehension on the Damascus way to the time when the visions and revelations were received. If that thorn was a fiery dictatorial attitude, then it began not from the Damascus incident, but from the later date. If it was the weakness of unchastity, again we say it began from that later date. And if it was defective sight it cannot be dated from his first contact with the Risen Lord, but only from the occasion of the heavenly vision. Paul's words are quite explicit on that point. "Lest I should be exalted above measure there was given me a thorn in the flesh . . ." He was under no illusion about cause and effect. He understood quite clearly why the thorn had come. He realised, in some way, that Satan had been given greater opportunity to impinge upon his person and invade his life, because he had received such signal honour from his Lord.

Paul may have had weak eyes, which caused him acute agony and which could have dated from the "blinding flash" of the glory of the Lord, but even if this were so, it could not be his thorn. His ophthalmic trouble may even

have pre-dated his contact with the Lord, and earned for him the cruel taunt of his enemies when they stigmatised him as "the blear-eyed Jew." Be it as it may, it could not be his thorn unless it first invaded his life somewhere at the onset of those "fourteen years." What then was the "thorn?"

Is it really expecting too much to ask that Paul's own statement be allowed to stand? "Lest I should be exalted above measure there was given me . . . a messenger of Satan to buffet me." That is what Paul says! How prone we are to take that statement as a metaphor, and throw all the emphasis on the "thorn." Is it difficult to conceive the thought that Satan would desire to cancel out the favour imparted by the Lord, and seek by intensified enmity to nullify the incentive produced in Paul's heart by the visions of Paradise. And if, subject to Divine sanction, Satan used an agent to probe Paul's very soul through and through as with a lacerating thorn or stake—driving it in, and turning it round to tear, to wound and to infect his deepest sensibilities, would that be an experience foreign to God's saints?

When Paul said "but Satan hindered me" (1 Thess. 2; 18), it was no figment of imagination, nor just a figure of speech. It was a real experience in his life. Satan was apparently given leave to intrude into Paul's life more than theretofore, because the Lord had taken Paul into His confidence and made him, as it were, His other self! More than any other man, for a very special work, Paul was Jesus' representative among men and as such, the target of increased Satanic malice.

If we take the "messenger" as the reality, and the "thorn" as the metaphor, we can still find in the thorn enough evidence to show what it meant in suffering to Paul. Several versions call it a "thorn," others describe it as a "splinter," still others depict it as a "stake." The Greek word SKOLOPS is used as equivalent for them all—but the last usage betokens a far more grievous affliction than the other two. A thorn or splinter could be an irritant and a cause of considerable pain, but the impalement by the stake (as with criminals transfixed at the crossroads) is a more serious thing. When we consider Paul's avidity for suffering (Phil. 3; 10) we can scarcely think he would plead for the removal of a mere irritant—a thorn, or splinter in the flesh—but if it were a stake driven through his very flesh (as it

were) transfixing him to the earth in a public place, that were indeed enough to pray about ! It stood for Satanic effort to wound and injure, to confine and circumscribe, to expose and calumniate as a vile criminal unfit for human society. And to see this done an angel from the Satanic court was deputed to attend Paul, day and night, and hold him up to odium exerywhere, and frustrate his activities by every means within the limits of the Divine permission.

Did then this special opposition of Satanic malice begin only from the occasion of his call to Antioch (Acts 11 ; 26). Did not Satan persecute him prior to this ? No doubt he did, but it was not with the relentless vigour of the later day. When he was driven from Jerusalem on his first visit following his surrender to the Lord, he went to live and work in his native land, Cilicia. But there he was out of the way. He had been driven into an out-lying corner of the field, and there his mighty influence was circumscribed. His light, while neither hidden nor extinguished, was reflected over but a tiny unknown portion of the world, and thus, to the Satanic view, his influence among men had been largely neutralised.

But when his Master called him to the front again and placed him as the organising leader of all evangelistic work in the Gentile sphere, Satan and his evil host could not ignore what had been done. They realised thereby that battle had been joined; that their Heavenly Opponent had called, equipped and placed his ablest lieutenant in the field, and that now it was to be war to the death, and, to the end. The Heavenly Leader knew what the end was destined to be; but more than that, He had caused His lieutenant also to know what the " end " would be, and Satan was also to be made to know what that end would be.

To win men from the power of darkness to the power of light, from the dominion of Satan to the allegiance of Christ, was more than Satanic dignity could allow. It must, at all costs, be opposed. Every man and every thing must be conscripted for the fight. The withering scorn of the cultured Greek; the fiery passion of the out-back mob; and the malignant hatred of the rejected Jew must be recruited to meet the new challenge to his universal domain. Everywhere and every day the ranks must be assembled, infuriated, and made ready for the assault at what place soever Paul raised the standard of the Cross. Every element of life and society was enlisted to meet, to hinder, to oppose and if occasion serve, to slay the banner-bearer of the Lord.

Everywhere the stake must be given another turn, another thrust, another wrench to daunt, if that could be, by its excruciating pain, the little " chosen vessel " upon whom so great a portion of the fight for righteousness had come to rest. No wonder that he sought the presence of his Lord to ask for some relief, as, from place to place he went forward on his journeyings. Perils of nature were everywhere in those rude times. Wind and storm and flood opposed, and at times, like his beloved Lord, he had no place to lay his weary head. Perils of robber chiefs, infesting the lone mountain pass; perils of fickle countrymen who could change like an April day. Perils from his kinsmen in the flesh who would neither hear him nor forgive, and worst of all, perils from false brethren within the church, who spat venom on his name. Leal-hearted friends were few, and the distance between them far,—enemies were numerous, and were found at every turn. And everywhere to take advantage of every circumstance the messenger of Satan accompanied him to augment every hostile thought and word and act. Need we wonder then that the new situation as he stepped forward to the front, took him somewhat unawares, and that at first he failed to understand the situation aright ! Once, and twice and thrice he asked the Lord to withdraw the permission accorded to the Satanic messenger. And thrice the Lord refused—refused with great tenderness and affection for His suffering friend. " Yes, I know Paul what it means, but remember My Grace is enough for all thy need."

Very well then, says Paul, if the continuance of this angelic buffeting conduces to the best interests of my Lord, and of His separating work " most gladly will I glory in mine infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake (each thing a new twist of the stake) for when I am weak, then am I strong " (*dunamis*—dynamite).

What words can elucidate such fidelity as this. It seems un-human and irrational. It is not un-human ! it is humanity at its best, because it is at rest in God ! It is not irrational ! but intensely reasonable, because the creature is returning to the Creator what is the Creator's due. But it is wonderful and the story is hard to tell in words. Only with the heart can such stories be told, and only with the heart can they be understood. More than that we have no need to say.

HEROES OF FAITH.

It is a remarkable fact that although many of the Old Testament "heroes of faith" were men who attained exalted places in the affairs of this world, the men that live most in Israelitish history as those who profoundly influenced the nation moved in humbler walks of life, and were men of the desert rather than of the court. If we were asked to name the ten most prominent men between Abraham and Christ, we would probably designate Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Elijah, David, Solomon, Daniel and John the Baptist. Of these ten men the first three, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, were wealthy and powerful "sheiks," to use the modern word, rich in possessions and servants, accustomed to command respect from those amongst whom they lived, by virtue of their influential position as well as by their integrity and uprightness of character. Four more, Joseph, David, Solomon and Daniel were statesmen, presiding over the affairs of empires, and holding the lives and destinies of multitudes in their hands. The other three, Moses, Elijah and John the Baptist, were men of the desert, witnesses for the holiness and supremacy of God, standing for His laws and His kingdom at times when it seemed that unless such prophets did arise, all would be lost.

Is it not noteworthy that these three last are the ones associated in vision with the coming of the King and His Kingdom? Moses prefigured the greater Prophet that should arise; Elijah the evangelists of this Kingdom; John was the Herald of the King Himself. In the vision on the Mount of Transfiguration it was Moses and Elijah who appeared in company with the transfigured Jesus, and our Lord Himself declared that John the Baptist was the greatest of all the prophets. Is there not some intimation here that God takes His rulers of the next Age, not from courts and palaces, but from the deserts and caves of the earth? There it is that the best training is to be had to the end that God's ministers of the Millennial Age may be merciful and sympathetic ministrators of Divine blessing.

Of course this does not mean that the Ancient Worthies, "princes in all the earth," will in actual fact be recruited entirely from those who in their first life were prophets of the desert. Men like Joseph and Daniel, who spent their

lives in a blaze of public service and power in idolatrous courts will be invaluable for the administration of Millennial conditions. From a natural point of view, the entire company of Ancient Worthies will include men of probably every possible walk in life and variety of experience, and in that fact will lie the peculiar aptitude of this company of men to rule the world in righteousness and peace. From the spiritual point of view, however, it is certainly appealing to think that in Scripture illustrations and symbolism, it is the men of the desert—Moses, Elijah and John the Baptist—who specially represent for us the ruling class of the Kingdom.

"HAVE YE ANY MEAT?"—John 21: 5.

"Children have ye any meat" is the Authorised Version's way of recording the question addressed by the waiting Lord, on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, to the unsuccessful toil-weary fishermen after their night's fruitless work. While it is fairly obvious that Jesus was asking if they had caught any fish, He does not use the word usually equivalent to "fish" (Ichthys) but an entirely different and unrelated word (prospagation). This word has caused the translators and commentators no end of trouble, as reference to the various translations will show. We append a few of these translations to show the line of thought the various versions give.

"Children have ye aught to eat."	Revised Version.
"My children have you anything to eat"	Twentieth Century
"Children . . . have you any food there"	Weymouth
"Children have you any food"	Emphatic Diaglott
"Children, perhaps you have nothing to eat"	Rotherham
"Lads, have ye any meat"	Young
"Lads, have you got anything"	Moffatt
"Lads, have ye caught anything to eat"	Ferrar Fenton
"Little children, have ye any viands"	Concordant

Obviously all the translators are referring to the fish they thought to have been in the net—and while Jesus is also referring to fish, He did not put His question that way. He used a word which does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament, which really means "to eat with or alongside."

The force of this word was brought out very vividly to an Englishman, resident in an official capacity in Palestine, during a journey from Tiberias to Jerusalem. He was well acquainted with the Arabic version of the New Testament, and knew that the Greek "prosphagion" had been translated by the Arabic "Idiam," which, he had been led to believe was more a classical word, than a word of current usage. He had had to stand in a crowded bus for about half the journey, but at Nablus—the nearest Shechem; the Sychar of Jesu's day (John 4: 5)—a seat next to a Palestinian Jew became vacant.

Availing himself of this seat, he heard the Jew ask one of several boys who came round the bus offering food for sale, for two small loaves. On the top of each loaf was a 'kufta' (or rissole) evidently intended to be eaten with the loaf. The Jew did not want the 'kufta' and demanded the loaves without them. Indignantly the boy refused to accede to his demand, blurting out with considerable vexation, "What, sell the loaves without their 'Idiam?'—never!"

The Englishman was greatly interested in the little episode. Here he had the key to the word which Jesus used. 'Prosphagion' meant 'something to eat with the bread,' to make the bread go down—exactly as we to day would eat butter, cheese, jam, and even meat and fish to help the bread along its way. Some commentators have suggested the word 'relish,' but that is not quite the thought. It could be any eatable that was 'extra' to the bread.

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

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A brother enquires for the loan, for a short time, of a book, "God's Plan in the Stars," known to the brethren some 20 or more years ago. If anyone has the book and is willing to lend, we will put them in touch with the brother concerned on receipt of a postcard at this office.

Whitsun Convention at Birmingham The Midland classes announce that their Whitsun Convention will be held at Birmingham and not at Leicester as was originally hoped. The venue is Digbeth Institute, Digbeth, Birmingham, near L.M.S. and G.W. stations and the "Bull Ring." Information and programmes from Bro. R. Walton, 14 Coniston Road, Coventry. For accommodation please write early to Bro. W. Burge, 46 Tillingham Street, Birmingham 12.

A Review of the Doctrines. We would remind the friends that this little book is still available, and we shall be happy to send copies to friends who have not yet seen the book. The price is 1/9 post free.

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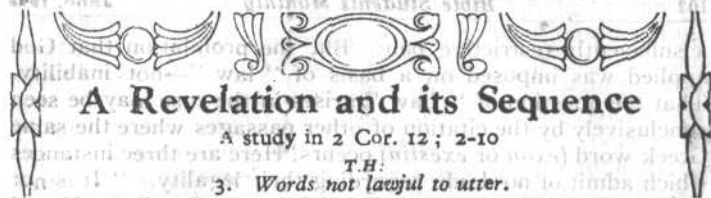
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It may seem a strange dispensation of Providence to us that anything once disclosed to His people, by God, should ever need to be sealed up again. We might be more inclined to think that every revelation from on high should be blazoned through the earth with the utmost dispatch. But such is not always the case. We call to mind that after Daniel had received the angelic messenger's full and final disclosure of what was written in the Scripture of Truth (Dan. 10: 21) he was told not to enquire for further explanation because the words were closed up and sealed till the time of the end (Dan. 12: 9). Also, after John had heard the message announced by the seven thunders he was commanded not to write what he had heard, but to " seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered " (Rev. 10: 4). Obviously, therefore, there are some things which have been " passed over " through inspiration of the Holy Spirit, but they are neither to be understood nor promulgated till a later time.

It was in line with these instances of restricted disclosure that Paul, in his vision of Paradise, heard words which he was not permitted to repeat in his general evangelistic activity.

It is not difficult to see that the perfect conditions of that final eternal state of sinless purity could be far too magnificent to be described by human tongue or pen. Even the great gifts of a Milton or Shakespeare would be far too inadequate to do justice to such a theme, and if their choicest language failed to depict the glory of that Heaven-created scene, surely they could be excused! Beyond any question it is not within the power of any man to set forth the splendours of God's perfected Creation, especially when we realise that He has devoted consecutive ages of time, and His Almighty Power to the performance of the great task.

Now if that were the standpoint of Paul's argument there would be no need to impose a ban on Paul's descriptive powers. If it were " impossible " that, in itself, would be

a sufficiently restrictive ban. But the prohibition that God applied was imposed on a basis of "law"—not inability. That the question of "Law" arises in the case may be seen conclusively by the citation of other passages where the same Greek word (*exon* or *exestin*) occurs. Here are three instances which admit of no doubt regarding their legality. "It is not lawful for thee to have her" said John the Baptist to Herod (Matt. 14: 4). "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar?" asked the enticing Jew, and "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman and uncondemned" asked Paul (Acts xxii. 25). The existence of the legality or illegality of this act or that is here manifest,—and show that Paul's prohibition had its basis in law.

The words spoken in Paradise were not unutterable therefore merely because they were beyond man's power to express, but because the competent authority (God Himself) had placed their repetition under a ban, and had forbidden their use by Paul in his missionary activities.

This restriction is brought out in different ways by other translations of the Scriptures. Ferrar Fenton and the Diaglott, say, "it is not possible to relate"; Weymouth says "no human being is permitted to repeat"; Rotherham translates "it is not allowable for a man to utter." Things not legally "allowed" are not "possible" to loyal subjects—hence, each version admits (as it must admit) the inhibition placed on Paul was laid on him by the authority of the law.

The questions will arise "Why was Paul not permitted to utter freely all that he had heard? Did God not wish his intelligent creatures to know and understand the nature of the task on which He had been engaged for so many ages of time? Was there something He must needs hide from human view?"

If Paul had been permitted to speak, his utterance would have been in line with much of the Jewish literature of that period. At that very time the leaders of Jewish thought were particularly interested in Apocalyptic lore, and at that stage of Paul's career may have given some attention to what he might have had to say. This type of literature was the only one that the Jewish authorship could produce, because by common consent, no addition could be made to the Law which was full and complete, nor to the prophetic Canon, which since Nehemiah's day had also been accounted to be complete.

Any further literature produced must therefore be of another kind. All the best specimens of Jewish Apocalyptic writing belong to the period 200 B.C.—100 A.D., and its production was in full swing when Paul was forbidden to describe what he had heard. Had he been permitted to speak, he would have found the very atmosphere into which to launch his revelation with every prospect of attentive reception by the Jewish authorities.

It is interesting to note, in contrast with Paul's prohibition, that those things which were forbidden to Paul were permitted to another pen. While the amount of space devoted by John to the final and eternal state is very small, still it is there at the close of his vision-scenes. What was "not allowable" for Paul was permissible for John! Why was that? The reason may not be far to seek. The nation to which Paul was forbidden to speak had ceased to exist when John penned his picture of eternal things, Jerusalem was levelled to the ground; its people scattered to the four corners of the earth. That wayward nation had been banished far and wide, without one further word of comfort or assurance beyond that written in their prophecies. No word of that final Paradise had ever reached their ears, to show them what the "End" of their sufferings would eventually be. When John was permitted to describe what he had seen, he wrote for another day—a day when the banished wanderers would be gathered "home" again.

But let us look again at Paul's literary work and ask, "Did Paul not have anything to say, at any time, about the final things? Does no single glimmer of light respecting that Day of perfect rest filter through his mind as he writes, and travel down to the written page? Is it not of this final state that he has something to say in 1 Cor. 15: 24-28: "Then cometh the End, when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father . . . that God may be all in all"? Also, is it not in that final state, when, with enemies destroyed, every knee in heaven and earth shall bow, and confess to the glory of God that Jesus Christ is worthy to be their Lord (Phil. 2: 10, 11)? Again, must we not place that magnificent climax of the "heading-up of all things in Christ" in that final and eternal state? (Eph. 1: 10, and Col. 1: 20). *Are not these the elements that belong to the third heaven and earth? Does not the bending of every knee tell of that Day of perfect peace and rest? Is not the assem-*

bling together of every living intelligence in heaven and earth under one stewardship identical with the house of many mansions set in its verdant park?

If then Paul was imperatively forbidden to utter the words he heard in Paradise, why did he dare to make reference to these things in his letters to his friends? Did he thereby break the "law"? Did he thus disregard the ban? Or was the prohibition intended to apply only to his contact with the rebellious Jewish House? Was it because God did not desire this "chosen servant" of His Son to join the babel of Apocalyptic thought then current among the vision-seeking Jews? Did God really determine that Paul should stand aside (as it were) and see his callous kinsmen drifting ever nearer to their doom, without permitting him to raise the only type of warning cry they might have been disposed to heed? If so, did not God thereby remove the last semblance of restraint, and thus make it inevitable that the headstrong nation should thenceforth go rushing down the rapids to the rocks below?

Does not the correct reading of the situation therefore seem to be that some of the unutterable words could be told (as in a glass darkly) to the Christian Church, but not one single word could be imparted to the faithless House of Israel, which having spurned and crucified the Lamb of God, in His day, maintained that same rebellious attitude at a later time when he offered proofs of His resurrection from the dead. And thus, because they were not prepared to accept God's sacrifice for sin, He had no further word of comfort or enlightenment for them, and had no other course open to Him but to let them drift on to the only fate that could follow such a hardening of heart and mind.

In suggesting this as the right reading of the situation it must be noted that Paul's allusions to the "final things" are mainly "passing references," and not by any means, full explanations of those things. There is so much about them which even we, with all our Bible helps, cannot fully understand. When we have done our best and scrutinised, with care, every word, there is still very much that we cannot comprehend, and which, of necessity must be accepted purely by faith. Only their realisation and fulfilment, in their own due time, will afford the explanation we need.

Again, let it be suggested, and stressed, that these faint glimmerings of truth were not addressed to unconverted

Jews. To none save the Christian believer was it given to understand, and it was to strengthen faith and assurance in the ultimate "End" of all things, that even these in this day of suffering were allowed to hear these deep things of God.

We suggest therefore that the weight of this testimony proves that it was not in God's arrangement to win attention or create interest in the unbelieving mind by informing them that He purposes at last to bring in the perfect Day. That would be beginning at the wrong place. God's order begins at the Cross of Christ. It is God's purpose to constrain men to an acknowledgment of sin. Men cannot dwell with God while tainted with sin, and Divine Wisdom requires man not only to acknowledge sin, as an un-moral thing, but also to repent, in person, from his sin. God has no place in Paradise for men who harbour unconfessed sin. God sent His Son to die for sin, and make possible for man a way of escape therefrom—not only from the guilt of sin, but also from the taint of sin. Hence, the mind and activity of Paul were confined to this one vital theme. It was (and is) the wicket-gate which opened upon the only way of escape. God did not allow His servant to draw attention to the "final things" and leave unspoken the primal essential things that required of them repentance from sin.

These primal things were exactly what the Jews did not want to hear or accept, hence, God had for them no further word, nor will He have any further word, till they have heard and heeded the primal things. Only for the believer in Christ—they who have already been "brought nigh" by the Cross—had God any further word concerning eternal things. God has no further favour or bounty to bestow on Jew or Gentile until acceptance has been made of the vicarious sacrifice of His beloved Son. Paradise has not been purposed or prepared for any man refusing to accept Jesus as the Lamb of God. It is not in God's order to put "restitution" or "perfection" before the Cross!

The Christian Church has received much comfort and help from Paul's rapture in Paradise—but still she must take her promises on trust, *as promises*, and by the exercise of faith. She cannot understand, by any means, how great the glory is that she will share with her exalted Lord. She sees the consummation of her hopes as in a darkened glass—but it is enough to cheer and sustain her to the end and lead

her on, over desert sands, till she is received by Him, the story of whose love had won her heart, and will have drawn her onwards on her long lone trail with magnetic power.

Paul did not have much to say about "final things." Though his pen was fully able to give expression to as much as any mortal man could grasp, he was not allowed to focus attention too much on the future day. He was constrained and enabled to place concentrated emphasis on the Cross of Christ, as the basis of all redemptive work, and thus defend the Cross against all who would oppose. Also it enabled him to stress the association of the believers with his Lord in His suffering, and to tell them of their conformation to Him in consecration and character.

This restraint made Paul's letters practical and realistic documents, packed with sound advice throughout, helpful to his readers for the experiences of this present life. It directed all Paul's activities to the work of winning men from sin and establishing them in grace. But at the background of his own ardent mind he had the assurance of that view of Paradise, as the sure token to him of what the end of God's purpose would eventually be, and it kept him faithful even unto death.

A THOUGHT ON THEOLOGY.

"By mercy and truth iniquity is purged" (Prov. xvi. 6). How different a sentiment from the old theology, which presented God as anxious above all things to punish, to all eternity, those who were subject to iniquity. In our day, we know that God, who will not tolerate sin for ever, has provided a means whereby it may be purged away from the hearts of men. The Millennial reign of Christ is set apart in the Divine Plan for this very work, to deal with men along merciful and upright lines so that they may, if they will, come into full harmony with the Father and with His beloved Son, their King. The "rule of the iron rod" is in reality the "rule of the shepherding rod." "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd." The penalty for sin is no less certain, and no less final. "It shall come to pass, that every soul that will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people," but not until every possible approach has been made, in the mercy of God and by the truth of God, to draw the sinner from the error of his way, and bring him into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

THE QUIET TIME

A PROMISE to those who patiently endure.

"Because you have kept my call to patient endurance, I will keep you safe through the hour of trial which is coming upon the whole world to test the dwellers on earth."—Rev. 3: 10 (Moffatt.)

The quality of patient endurance is expected of the Christian for we are told in 2 Timothy 3 to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, and surely the admonitions to Patience in James 5 would be to Patient Endurance. To such comes the promise "I will keep you safe through the hour of trial."

OUR REQUITAL TO GOD

Peter instructs us to have fervent love among ourselves . . . to use hospitality one to another without grudging, and as every man hath received the gift even so to minister the same one to another. (1 Pet. 4: 8-10.) This is an admonition to Godlikeness, for God delights to give: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." What is our attitude towards all His giving? Surely not by giving to Him in return, but by receiving from Him. Love wants no return for what it gives or does. God does not show favours in order to receive as much again. He gives because His heart is full of love, because He yearns to bless us. All he requires at our hands is that we gladly accept what He offers and give Him love in return. Consecration? Yes, but the consecration of love and not as recompense or repayment. The Psalmist asks:

"What shall I render unto the Lord
For all His benefits towards me?"

And he answers:—

"I will take the cup of salvation
And call upon the name of the Lord."

A MESSAGE FROM A PSALM

"Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways" (Psalm 81: 13). Verse 11 of the Psalm said previously, "but my people would not hearken unto my voice, and Israel would not obey me" (Prayer book version).

The Psalm is based upon Israel's deliverance from Egypt, and all the wondrous promises and experiences accompanying that deliverance, but the words apply very truly to the experiences of the Christian also for when we read in verse 6, "I removed his shoulder from the burden" we are reminded of the words in "The Pilgrim's Progress," spoken of Christian, "his burden loosed from off his shoulders." The Psalmist says of those who would have none of God ((verses 11, 12), "I gave them up to their own hearts' lust," and Paul, probably inspired by these very words, said of those who did not like to retain God in their knowledge, "God gave them over to a reprobate mind." Had Israel obeyed their God, the reward, as shown in verses 14, 15, would have been "I should soon have subdued their enemies . . . their time should have endured forever. With the finest of the wheat and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee," and how truly those who have given themselves to the Lord can testify that He has given to them the Bread of Life,—surely the finest of the wheat, and His word is sweeter than honey to their taste.

"Thus far I did come laden with my sin;
Nor could aught ease the grief that I was in
Fill I came hither: What a place is this!
Must here be the beginning of my bliss?
Must here the burden fall from off my back?
Must here the strings that bound it to me crack?
Blest cross! blest sepulchre! blest rather be
The Man that there was put to shame for me!"

RISEN WITH HIM

If we believe, as we profess to do, that we have been made partakers of His death, and also of His Risen Life, why do we still seek to satisfy the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life? Are we not dead to these and alive only to the concerns of our risen Lord? Should not His standards, His laws of life alone, be ours? Else, how are we risen with Him?

(E. H. D.).



The Prophet who Ran Away

An exposition of the Book of Jonah

A. O. H.

4. A Ser-faring story.



The story of the most astonishing happening related in the Bible is recorded in three short verses comprising no more than fifty-five words.

"Now the Lord had prepared (Heb., appointed) a great fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly. . . . And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land."

No writer of fiction could have contented himself with so brief a reference to so amazing an occurrence. One of the indications that this story is in fact a strictly historical account is the restraint with which the marvellous is subordinated to the main purpose of the book. To Jonah the incident of the great fish was a purely personal matter. He learned a great lesson from the experience and that lesson he has put on record in words of great beauty (chap. 2:2-9), but he relates only so much of the actual experience as is necessary to his purpose.

Of course enquirers and sceptics in these days are not content with that. That a man should be swallowed by a giant fish and come out alive, seems such an unheard-of and impossible thing that to profess belief in the story is usually to elicit a pitying smile. It is in fact this part of the account that has done so much to discredit the book. Rather than believe that such a thing did actually occur, men prefer to dismiss the entire narrative as a pure invention having no basis in fact.

Reasons for accepting the Book of Jonah as true history have already been given. Those reasons should be sufficient ground for accepting the fact that this amazing thing really did happen to Jonah, and Christians need not feel that any additional evidence is needed so far as their own faith is concerned. It is good, however, to investigate such further arguments and evidences as can be brought forward, for the assistance of others who may still be honestly incredulous of the entire proceeding.

Such arguments and evidences do exist, and they make interesting reading. It would almost seem as if our Heavenly Father, knowing what a strain this story would put upon the intellectual credulity of many in our day, has seen to it that a reasonable demonstration of the possibility and the probability of this having actually happened has been placed upon record.

On the score of possibility, modern history does afford an authenticated instance of a man being swallowed by a whale, and being rescued alive. (Nothing in the book of Jonah requires that the fish concerned must be a whale, the expression being in the Hebrew "a great fish." The Hebrews had no word for whale; but the translators of the Septuagint adopted the Greek "ketos,—whale," their rendering, and our Lord used the same word when he referred to the story. Whales were abundant in the Mediterranean in ancient times, and indeed up to the advent of the steamship). On the score of probability, there are a number of indications in classical ancient history which go to show that the town of Joppa in Canaan was at one time the scene of some strange and memorable happening connected with a whale. This is now the place in which to examine these evidences.

On August 25, 1891, the French "Journal des Debats" (a leading French journal founded in 1789) published the results of an investigation by its scientific Editor, M. de Parville, into the story of a strange happening reported to have occurred a few months previously. M. de Parville had verified the facts and published the story, with the comment that he now found it quite possible to believe in the Biblical story of Jonah. The reputation of the "Journal des Debats" is such that an account of this nature would not be published unless the evidence was reasonably conclusive, and the fact that it was afterwards published in the "Literary Digest" gives it a further guarantee.

It appears that in February, 1891, the "Star of the East," a whaling ship hailing from Liverpool, was engaged in hunting whales in the South Atlantic near the Falkland Islands. In the ordinary course of the work a whale was sighted, and two boats sent in pursuit. The first boat to approach the animal harpooned it, whereupon the whale swam away at high speed, dragging the boat for about five miles, then turning and coming back towards the other boat, the

harpooner in which succeeded in also sending a harpoon home. Both boats were towed about three miles by the whale, after which it "sounded" or went below the surface. As was customary in such cases, the men in the boats began to wind in the ropes attached to the harpoons with the object of bringing the whale to the surface, when it unexpectedly broke through the water and began to beat about in its death agony. In the confusion one boat was struck by the whale's nose and upset, the occupants being thrown into the water. All save two were rescued by the other boat.

The survivors rowed back to the ship, and in a few hours had made the dead whale fast to the ship's side and were busy cutting it to pieces. They worked all that day—the incident having taken place in the morning—and part of the night. Next morning they resumed, and eventually came to the stomach, which was to be cut loose and hoisted to the deck. Whilst engaged in this task they were startled to find that something inside the stomach was giving spasmodic signs of life. Upon cutting it open, one of the missing sailors, James Bartley, aged 35, was found inside, doubled up and unconscious. He was soon revived, but for two weeks his mind was unhinged. By the end of the third week he had recovered sufficiently to go about his duties again.

Bartley declared that he "remembered the sensation of being lifted into the air by the nose of the whale, and of dropping into the water. Then there was a frightful rushing sound, which he believed to be the beating of the water by the whale's tail, then he was encompassed by a fearful darkness, and he felt himself slipping along a smooth passage of some sort that seemed to move and carry him forward. This sensation lasted but an instant, then he felt that he had more room. He felt about him, and his hands came in contact with a yielding, slimy substance that seemed to shrink from his touch. It finally dawned upon him that he had been swallowed by the whale, and he was overcome by horror at the situation. He could breathe easily, but the heat was terrible. . . . The awful quiet, the fearful darkness, the horrible knowledge of his environment, and the terrible heat finally overcame him, and he must have fainted, for the next he remembered was being in the captain's cabin."

Upon the whaler's return to England, Bartley was taken to a London hospital. His skin had been bleached and wrinkled to the appearance of old parchment by the action

of the gastric juices of the whale's stomach, and never regained its natural appearance. He enjoyed normal health, nevertheless, after he had recovered from his experience, although every year on the anniversary of the occurrence he relapsed into a short period of insanity. "The happening is said to be unique in the history of whaling; the captains say that although it is a common occurrence for men from overturned boats to be swallowed by pain-maddened whales, there has never been known any other instance where a man has come out alive."

Shortly after its publication in the "Journal des Debats" the story appeared in various American newspapers, apparently at the instance of a Pittsburgh business man, James I. Buchanan, who had received it from his cousin, George Jarvie, a Scottish sailing master. This latter knew nothing of the earlier newspaper account, but had received the story in his contacts with South Atlantic seafarers, among whom, he declared, it was generally vouched for and believed.

The reference to the belly of the fish need only be taken as referring in a general way to the fish's interior. From a biological standpoint there are some grounds for thinking that Jonah, on being swallowed up, was in fact carried for three days and three nights in the whale's capacious mouth. To appreciate the reasons underlying this hypothesis it is necessary to refer briefly to the structure and habits of the Mediterranean whale. The necessary facts were very ably presented in a paper read before the Victoria Institute in 1924. (Papers read before this Institute are the work of acknowledged authorities in the fields with which they deal, and may usually be implicitly relied upon.) The species of whales known to have existed in the Mediterranean Sea attained a length of anything up to one hundred feet. The mouth was between ten and twenty feet in length, eight to twelve feet wide, and eight to fifteen feet high, the front portion being closed in with a screen of long flexible bones (whalebone) which formed a network, or kind of giant strainer. This screen of bones was so devised that it opened inwards to admit solid objects, but would allow only water to pass out. The animal obtained its food by swimming along the surface with its mouth open, sweeping up small fish, seaweed, and any other floating matter, all of which was retained in the mouth whilst the sea water filtered out again. It was through this whalebone screen that Jonah

was swept after he had been thrown into the sea. If the whale was a full grown specimen, eighty or one hundred feet long, it could probably have swallowed him without difficulty. If a small one, it could not have swallowed him and he must perforce remain lying on its great tongue, unable to go either forward or backward. Jonah would thus be lying in a cavity about the size of an ordinary living room, with plenty of fresh air—and sea water—so long as the whale was cruising on the surface. The average temperature of the water in the Mediterranean is 70 deg. F., so that he was not likely to be suffering from cold. At frequent intervals, however, the whale would "sound," i.e., dive below the surface and remain below for periods usually of ten minutes or so at a time. Now a whale is not a true fish; although a sea creature, it is a mammal, breathing by means of lungs like any animal. Consequently when below the surface it exists by breathing the air contained in its huge mouth, and must return to the surface before that air is exhausted. Whilst there was air in its mouth for the whale there was air for Jonah too, so that although at such times he was in dense darkness he at least had air to breathe, and moreover would be warm and comparatively dry. A man requires 70 cubic feet of air per hour for breathing, and since the capacity of even a small whale's mouth is at least 650 cubic feet there would be no risk of Jonah suffocating. The seabath to which Jonah was treated when the whale swam along the surface might have become monotonous but was at least endurable. The swimming speed is only four miles an hour so that there is no need to visualise foaming torrents of water pouring in and around Jonah, but rather a gently-swirling stream flowing in and out again. This is strikingly borne out by Jonah's words in *v. 3*: "Thou didst cast me into the depth, in the heart of the seas; and the flood was round about me; all thy waves and thy billows passed over me." The word for "flood" is "nahar" which means a stream or river, the other words being rightly used for the billows of the sea. Then the whale "sounded," i.e., dived toward the sea-bottom, and Jonah, though safe and able to breathe, was in intense darkness and excessive heat. The downward or perhaps undulating up-and-down motion must have been terrifying in the extreme. How could he have expected, in the natural way, ever to survive this awful experience. It is here that his sterling faith comes to the top;

quite evidently Jonah, for all his frowardness in refusing God's commission for him, still had faith in Divine power, and now that he was in this terrible predicament his heart turned to God in true repentance. *"The waters compassed me about, even to the soul. The depth (Heb. abyss) closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever. Yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God"* (v. 5, 6).

We must not be misled by the use of the past tense in that last phrase. Jonah uttered this prayer whilst he was being carried by the whale, not after his escape. It is common in Hebrew literature for happenings yet future, but regarded as absolutely certain to happen, to be stated in the past tense as though they had already happened. Jonah had realised in a flash that Divine power, preserving him hitherto in this marvellous manner, had done so for a purpose. God had not let go His hold of His servant. More than that, He had not even accepted that servant's rejection of the commission. And He had afforded an opportunity for repentance and a retracing of steps which could not have been obtained by Jonah himself in any way whatsoever. Without the intervention of God, Jonah was irrevocably committed to going to Tarshish; but the hand of God took hold of him and brought him back.

It is evident then that Jonah's repentance took place during his sojourn inside the whale. As the great mammal plunged into the green depths, down to the very foundations of the mountains, into the ravines and valleys of the seabottom which threatened to hold Jonah prisoner for ever, Jonah's prayer went up to the One who sits on the throne of the universe, and keeps watch and ward over every one of His creatures. Surely the Most High heard that petition, and in His mercy gave speedy command that the suffering of His wayward child be prolonged no longer.

It is likely that Jonah, like the sailor in the modern story, speedily became unconscious in his prison. Human endurance, even although buttressed by faith in God, could hardly be expected to be equal to seventy-two hours of such a fearful ordeal. Some such sequel seems to be indicated by v. 7: "When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord; and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple." As sensibility faded into unconsciousness the last

thought in Jonah's mind was that his prayer had been heard and that he would be delivered; he suffered the shades to gather about him in full confidence that he would awake and find full deliverance.

Surely we have here a perfect picture of our Lord's death and resurrection. He declared that this experience which befell Jonah was a figure of His own passing into and through the shades of death. (Matt. 12: 40). It was in perfect trust and confidence that our Lord bowed His head when He felt the shades of death closing round him and said, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit," and so lay in the garden grave until that momentous morning when the event occurred at which the "keepers did shake, and became as dead men."

Through death to life! The instrument of destruction becomes the vehicle of salvation. Whilst master of himself, confident in the possession of ways and means whereby he could plan his own course in life and avoid the Divine call, Jonah had brought upon himself the loss of all things and, apart from Divine interference, certain death into the bargain. His repentance changed all that, and what had been Jonah's grave became instead his gateway into a new world, a world in which unswerving obedience to the word of God would be his joy and his delight.

"I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord."

+ "Who Gave Himself" A New Testament exposition. +

* * T. H. * *

The story of Redemption is the story of a great gift. Repeatedly the sacred writers make reference to the bestowment of an undeserved gift (or series of gifts) to meet a great human need. What time humanity was still in its sin, and without strength to obtain relief therefrom, the condescending compassion of a great loving heart laid help on One who was mighty to save. (Rom. 5: 6-8.) Always and everywhere the inspired record assures us that man, at no time, had any claim upon the Providence of God, and that it had reached its very extremity when the Love of God intervened. And when that Love did intervene, that inter-

vention was ample and complete.

The story of the Divine giving can be traced back to the lips of the Blessed One, Who shows how deep was the need it was intended to meet. Taking the mind of his belated visitor back to those wilderness days when the venom of the serpent spread death through the Camp; (John 3: 14; Num. 21: 4-9, and Moses, responding to the unworthy peoples' plea, prayed to God for their relief (to be in turn instructed to fix a brazen serpent upon a pole), Jesus showed the timid enquirer that just as God provided the way of relief, when that relief was humanly impossible, so also He had provided relief from sin and death when such relief was otherwise impossible; *... as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up that whosoever believeth in Him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life* (John 3: 15, 16).

The people of the Covenant had sinned, but neither the Covenant nor its Law could afford them relief. Moses could not plead its terms, nor remind God of any provision of mercy in its articles; yet, in his desperation he prayed to God, and Mercy heard the prayer. God gave them mercy, when justice was due. He answered their need and overlooked the unworthiness. God loved them so much for their father's sake (Deut. 4: 37; 7: 6-10) that thus He spared them from their just deserts.

With this same kind of love, in both its measure and its character, God loved and still loves, and will continue to love this unheeding world, and to demonstrate the measure and nature of that love He gave His well-beloved Son to die for man's release. God gave so much, because He loved so much. But that was not God's only gift, though it gave the dearest treasure of His Heart. "He that spared not His own Son . . . shall He not also with Him freely give us all things?" Yes, indeed, all that pertains to life and godliness proceeds from His opened hand.

And as a tender Father "gave," so also a loving Saviour "gave." It is the Apostle's joy and delight to tell again and yet again of what the Lover of humanity gave to purchase them from sin and death. He "gave Himself a Ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2: 6). He "offered Himself without blemish unto God" (Heb. 9: 14.) He "died for the un-

godly" (Rom. 5: 6). We shall not at this time touch upon the deep corresponding factors of the Ransoming transaction; it is enough just now to note the amazing fact that He, with all heavenly honour at His command, came from His exalted glory, to place Himself over against human need. When no human hand could work or buy Redemption, He came into the family and gave all that He had, and all that He was, to win for men that which they could not win for themselves. Only when the world of dying men have ceased to die, and have been helped back to the enjoyment of a perfect life—a life at rest in God and at peace with men—will it be possible for them to understand and to appreciate the value of the price that was "Himself." Ourselves can only quote the text and note the fact with infinite delight; we cannot estimate the worth of that unprecedented gift, nor measure with any calculation or comparison how much was in "Himself." But we can thank God every day that we have come to know the fact that the value which He gave was enough to ransom every Adamic child from his father's penalty, and set him on his feet, so that he may stand before Eternal Law and make his own unfettered choice to take from God's own hand the title-deeds to an endless life.

But even that delightful universal prospect does not exhaust the Apostolic outline of what He "gave." Setting forth another relationship between the Lord and those who value His great love, Paul, tells us that the altogether Worthy One "loved the Church and gave Himself for it" (Eph. 5: 25). Here the sense is different. Though it most certainly cost Him His life to make it possible to have this Church—this called-out people to bear His Name—yet it is not here the presentation of Himself to God as her Ransom-price of which the Apostle speaks, but of His presentation of Himself to Her, to be her nourisher and cherisher (v. 29). No man, taking to himself a wife, has need to buy her from the justice of the law. He does not need to stand as her vicarious substitute. Having won her love, a love responsive to his own, he claims her hand and person before the law, and in the sight and hearing of its representative each gives itself to each. She gives herself to him; he gives himself to her, and thus they who hitherto were "twain" are by that "gift" made "one." Thenceforth their interests are one—one outwardly before the law, one inwardly

before the Lord. How searching but assuring are the words the law enjoins: "Wilt thou have this . . . to be thy wedded . . . to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of Matrimony? . . . and forsaking all other, keep thee unto . . . so long as ye both shall live?"

But, says Paul, though I have been setting forth the obligations of *man and wife*, "I speak concerning Christ and the Church." Indeed it is the relationship of the heavenly *Spouse and His help-meet* that forms the pattern of the earthly relationship, with all its obligations and its dues. But the Church to which He gave Himself is not the Church visible in this, or that, or any place. It is that mystic, spirit-wrought communion of spiritual souls, who have lived for higher things—that gloriously ideal fellowship of kindred souls, who living centuries and continents apart, one now, one then, one here, one there, have yet been linked together into abiding oneness for evermore; whose names have been incised on heaven's register as the first and best.

To these the altogether lovely One has given Himself to love, to comfort, to cherish, and to nourish them, so long as they shall live (which means for evermore) and to this He has given His troth—so that she shall be so cleansed and purified and sanctified, that when her preparation is complete she shall be without spot or wrinkle or blemish of any kind against the day when He shall take her, as Isaac led Rebecca, into His everlasting tent.

Let no one with the picture of Revelation 21 in his mind lose the force and beauty of this Apostolic picture of the present relationship between Christ and His Church. The Revelation has its own special point of view—but no less important and complete is the view of the Apostle Paul. No illustration of a Church merely espoused to Christ could be sufficient parallel to the intimacies and confidences of man and wife, or serve as the pattern of the fidelity of each to each. But who that knows the rich blessedness of two hearts made truly one, can from that earthly blessedness reach up to higher things and in that holier sphere faintly appreciate some little semblance of what the Beloved One gave when He gave Himself—and what that union can mean for every responsive soul that is joined to Christ. (Rom. 7: 4).

But even this delightful survey does not cover the whole field enriched by the Heavenly Giver. From the wider scope

of the universal Ransom-price to the narrower sphere of the elect Church, we have traced the Gift, now we proceed to the smallest circle of all, and again we read He "loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2: 20). Again, we say, of course He had to die to make this possible, but we also say again that it was not the giving of Himself to God on his behalf of which Paul speaks. He gave Himself to Paul, and took Paul into Himself, so that the identity might become complete. "I have been crucified with Christ, yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me, and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Crucified with Him, yet living with Him; living in the flesh, yet living also a higher hidden life; living in Christ and Christ also living in him—an inter-fusing and merging of two selves till those two selves are one; the lesser life caught up and blended into the greater life, till the sufferings of the one are the sufferings of both. Memory never lost its grip of those momentous words spoken on the Damascus way, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me." The Lord of Glory and the suffering saint were one, and in their anguish of soul He suffered too; when they were suffering the persecution's lash, the persecution was heaped upon Him, too. Do we ask how could that be, since He was far above the swinging lash?

The rules of cold reason do not apply here; hard logic enters not into this sphere; it is a new dimension with which we have to do, with facts and experiences to "be felt, not told," a higher sphere in which the love of God and Christ is linked into hallowed fellowship with those whose hearts are clean (1 John 1: 3), and where life comes from the inner knowledge conferred. (John 17: 3.)

He "gave Himself for me" as though there were none else to claim and take His love, and in return, the love of Paul was given as though again there were none else to share—He and Paul; Paul and He—as though they made the sole inhabitants of one little world; big enough to be satisfying to each, yet small enough to be shut off from all invading interests which could divide the love that throbbed between them both. Here the "coming into him and abiding 'there'" was complete. (John 14: 23.)

Happy indeed are they who can enter experimentally within the circumferences of the three circles we have scanned

herein. To know He gave Himself a Ransom for all is *much*, to be persuaded that He loved the Church and gave Himself for it is *more*, but to enter into the realm of faith enough to say "He loved me, and gave Himself for Me" is *most of all*. Here faith touches its sublimest peak, and pledges itself in fullest confidence to its Beloved, and takes the faith of Christ (the faithful pledge of Christ) as the sure anchor of the soul.

"ALL THE LIVING THAT SHE HAD."

(Luke 21: 4)

These words are part of the commendation Jesus uttered concerning the poor woman who cast her two mites into the Temple treasury. Rich men, out of their abundance, were casting therein lavish gifts, but they still had a plentiful reserve. This poor woman cast in all she had (Mark 12: 44).

We may be inclined to take it for granted that she was old—and alone—as well as poor. But that need not be the case, for there is poverty to-day in Palestine among the young, of equal intensity to this of the poor woman of whom Jesus spake. One such, whose husband had been killed in some rioting, was left with four young children, whose "whole living" consisted of just "five olive trees."

No widow's pension or government relief was available to meet her need, and all she had to meet the requirements of five appetites was the produce of the five olive trees. One day an Englishman, passing near a group of Arab women, heard the very phrase, in Arabic, which, in the Arabic-Version of the New Testament translates the words of both Mark and Luke. Voices carry far in the clear air of Palestine, and only a deaf person could fail to listen to some conversations. These Arab women were discussing the predicament in which a young friend had been placed by the death of her husband.

She was left with nothing more in the world than a small share in a vineyard, and that, said the speaker, was "kull ma'ishitha"—the exact phrase of Mark and Luke rendered into Arabic.

Two mites was the entire income of the poor Jewess whom Jesus praised. From what source it came we do not know, but be that as it may, this meagre sum was her "all." Out of her dire poverty she gave more than they all.

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Gone from Us. Sister Mary Cutler, for twenty-five years a member of the Portsmouth class, passed peacefully away in her sleep, while in her son's care, at Birmingham on April 8th, aged 82. Sister Cutler came to the Truth through the Photo-Drama and held loyally to the things she heard from the beginning to the end of her course.

Sister Lampitt, of Lincoln, passed away on May 2nd, after having known the Truth since 1911, having been the first in Lincoln to receive it.

Anonymous. We would acknowledge, with sincere appreciation, the anonymous receipt of £1 (May)

The Office. Will the friends please note that the office at 20 Sunnymede Drive will be CLOSED between June 22nd and July 9th. Letters received during this period will not be answered until after the latter date.

The Diaglott. We are quite out of stock of the Diaglott and orders now in hand will absorb the next shipment to arrive. We will accept further orders but it will be several weeks before they can be fulfilled. The demand at present is greater than the quota allowed to be imported under our import licences.

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IMPORTANT NOTICE

With the ending of the war in Europe it is considered that the emergency condition under which the Bible Students Committee has carried on without annual election has ended, and notice is hereby given that all interested brethren may take part in deciding the arrangements for the future. To this end, will those who wish to have voice in the matter please forward their views and suggestions to 20 Sunnymede Drive, Ilford, Essex, *not later than 15 August, 1945.*

Please state specially your views regarding the following points:—

1. Do you find the work carried on by the Committee to be useful and helpful in your own life and activities?
2. What should be the Committee's obligations regarding :
 - (a) Promulgation of Christian doctrine?
 - (b) Promotion of Biblical research?
 - (c) Public Witness?
3. Should the Committee continue to be subject to periodic re-election, or, since so much of the work is now of a nature involving conformity to Government regulations and a knowledge of publishing routine, is it better to have a permanent Committee not subject to re-election?
4. Are you satisfied with the present state of our fellowship, and if not, what are the causes of your dissatisfaction, and what, in your opinion, the remedy?
5. State the names and addresses of responsible mature brethren whom you would wish to see elected to the Committee, and who are willing to serve and prepared to give a number of hours per week to its service, store some of its property, and attend bi-monthly week-end Committee meetings.

Replies received will be classified and formulated into a series of proposals which will be circulated to all who have replied. A substantial vote on each proposal will be accepted as the voice of the brethren, and the Committee will notify all voters accordingly and proceed to put the decisions into effect.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Anonymous We would acknowledge with sincere appreciation receipt of anonymous donations of £1 (April) and 10/- (May).

News from Holland A letter has been received from Brother and Sister Van Halewijn, of Rotterdam, assuring us of their safety and joy at being once again able to get into touch



The Prophet who Ran Away

An exposition of the Book of Jonah
A.O.H.



5. *Unexpected witnesses.*

It is not often that Greek and Roman classical writers are called in to add their testimony to the truth of the Scriptures, but there does seem to be justification for relating certain scattered allusions in Pliny, Strabo, Ovid, and Herodotus to the story of Jonah, the more especially since their records reveal clearly that at a time remote in history the town of Joppa, in Judæa, had cause to commemorate some event which was connected with a whale.

The chain of testimony commences with Pliny, a Roman historian and naturalist who lived at the same time as the Apostle Paul, and perished in the eruption of Vesuvius which buried the towns of Pompeii and Herculaneum in A.D. 79. Pliny is the author of a voluminous work on Natural History. In this work he speaks of a well-known Roman statesman, Marcus Scaurus, who, during the year of his aedileship, staged a great natural history exhibition at Rome. Scaurus imported hippopotamii, crocodiles, leopards, and many other animals strange to the citizens. He also brought, from the town of Joppa, in Judæa, the skeleton of a monster which, from Pliny's description, is agreed by modern naturalists to have been that of a whale, some forty feet long, and between ten and fourteen feet high. This skeleton had been preserved for unknown ages in a temple at Joppa, apparently in order to commemorate some noteworthy event. Pliny himself says that the skeleton was that of the monster which figured in the Greek story of Andromeda and Perseus. According to the ancients, the Greek hero Perseus, returning home to Greece after travelling to the farthest parts of the earth, executing deeds of daring, on passing the town of Joppa, beheld a maiden named Andromeda chained to a rock on the seashore. She had been placed there to placate a terrible sea-monster which was ravaging the land. Perseus slew the monster and delivered Andromeda.

Pliny, like other educated Romans of his day, looked on these mythological tales much as we do to-day—highly-embellished poetic legends handed down for ages, and having

their origin in some barely recognisable basis of truth. The fact of the skeleton itself, however, is quite a different thing. It is known that Marcus Scaurus was Aedile of Rome in the year B.C. 58, and there can be no reason to doubt that Pliny's account of this exhibition, held only a generation before his own time, is reasonably accurate. We are left, therefore, with this established fact, that for an unknown length of time prior to the year B.C. 58, the skeleton of a forty-foot whale reposed in a temple at Joppa to memorialise some far-off forgotten event.

Now the story of Andromeda is given at length by the Latin writer Ovid, who was born in B.C. 43, and died when Jesus of Nazareth was still a young man. Ovid's description of the monster is strongly suggestive of a whale, as witness the following extracts:—

"But see, as a swift ship with its sharp beak plows the waves, driven by stout rowers' sweating arms, so does the monster come, rolling back the water from either side as his breast surges through . . . Smarting under the deep wound, the creature now reared himself on high, now plunged beneath the waves, now turned like a fierce wild boar when around him a pack of noisy hounds give tongue. . . . The beast belches forth waters mixed with purple blood." (*Ovid's "Metamorphoses" Book 4; 670*).

A variation of the story, also to be found in the classical writers, assigns the hero's part to Heracles, the great hero of the Greeks, who thus rescued Hesione, the daughter of the King of Troy. The significant thing about this variant of the story is that Heracles is said to have gone inside the monster's throat, wriggled into its body, killed it with an internal wound, and then come out again. Is there a faint recollection here of the whale vomiting Jonah out of its mouth?

The story goes back a long way, for Euripides, the Greek play-wright, who lived at Athens B.C. 480-406 (about the time of Nehemiah) wrote a play on the story; and incidentally in this play the monster is definitely called a whale. Sophocles, another Greek playwright, at about the same time, also introduced the story into his plays. What was it that happened at Joppa to set these men romancing for the benefit of Greek audiences at that early date—some four hundred years after the adventures of Jonah?

Herodotus, the Greek historian who has been called the "Father of history," says that the Persians in the time of Artaxerxes included descendants of Andromeda and Perseus, so that, whilst he does not retail the story of the monster, it was evidently current in his day (B.C. 440) as having occurred at least several generations earlier—say in the sixth century B.C. at latest. This is getting nearer to Jonah's day.

It is Herodotus, incidentally, who records another story, the tale of Arion and the dolphin. He is evidently a little dubious as to its truth, for instead of his usual definite style, he prefaces each statement in the story with "they say," as though he is not prepared personally to vouch for it. The story is that in the time of Periander, king of Corinth (in the sixth century B.C., and at about the time of the return from Babylon) a most remarkable prodigy occurred which was confirmed by the people both of Corinth and Lesbia. Arion, a renowned Greek musician, having boarded a vessel in which to return to Greece from Italy, overheard the sailors conspiring to throw him overboard and seize his possessions. Entreaties were in vain, and he was ordered to throw himself overboard, or else be cast over by the sailors. In this extremity Arion stood on the rowing benches and sang the Orthian strain, playing his own accompaniment on his harp, and at the end of the song leaped, fully dressed, into the sea. A dolphin received him on its back and carried him back to Corinth, arriving there before the ship, much to the astonishment of the sailors when the ship did at length come into port.

Now although Herodotus assigns this story to the sixth century B.C. there is evidence that it has an older basis. There is an engraving in a tomb at Praesos, in the island of Crete, dating from about B.C. 800, picturing a man being carried on the back of a giant fish. The story behind this tomb painting is quite unknown, but it is evidently in the same category as the later one of Arion and the dolphin. The Cretans in B.C. 800 were in close touch with the Phœnicians and the Israelites—the Philistines who figure so much in the Old Testament were Cretan colonists, engaged in growing wheat for export to their own land—and a great many of the Greek tales came from the earlier civilisation of Crete.

What then can be learned from this mass of fairy tale and folk lore? Is there anything of value in connection with

our study of the Book of Jonah?

There seems to be a common thread running through all these legends, one which fits in with the historic fact recorded by Pliny. That thread, stripped of the fantasy and embellishment, may tell us this:

Jonah's experience with the whale, recorded in the book which bears his name, occurred at a time probably between B.C. 810 and B.C. 850. Elisha had just died, and Isaiah had not yet appeared upon the scene. The fact that the whale vomited out Jonah upon dry land denotes unmistakably that the animal became stranded on a shelving beach, and Jonah was able to escape without even having to "swim for it!" What is more appropriate than that God should return Jonah to the very beach—the beach at Joppa—from which he had set out so determinedly a few days before? With what force would the futility of fighting against God be impressed upon the prophet's mind. And, from a different angle of view, would the prophet not take this as an indication that God had blotted out all that had happened since the ill-fated ship set sail. Jonah was back again at his starting-point, with an opportunity to make a fresh start.

Granted that this assumption is correct, it may be expected that the ship would have arrived at Joppa before Jonah. It is true that the Bible account does not say what became of the ship, but a little reflection will suggest that the mariners, having already cast overboard the precious wares which they were taking to Tarshish for purposes of trade (Jonah 1; 5) would have no reason for continuing their voyage, and must perforce have returned to their home port. The storm had fallen, but their sails and masts were gone, and they were compelled therefore to rely upon the rowers. Under these conditions they would make about five miles an hour, not much faster than the whale, but whereas they would steer straight for Joppa, and make all haste to get their unseaworthy ship safe to land, the whale would swim more or less aimlessly and take perhaps three times as long to reach the shore. We can expect, therefore, the arrival of the disabled ship with its relieved crew, full of the tale they had to tell about the strange passenger, and how his God, wroth with him, had pursued their ship with a fearful storm, and only relented when they had cast him into the sea. They probably told the story in subdued tones, with anxious glances over their shoulders as they did so; this

Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, had shown Himself to be a most powerful God.

The story would go the rounds of the town for a day or so, and then be eclipsed by a new wonder. A whale, venturing too far inshore, was observed to be in difficulties. There are no whales in the Mediterranean to-day; the steamships have driven them away; but they were common so recently as a hundred years ago, and dwellers along the Palestinian shore would probably be moderately familiar with them. A crowd would quickly gather on the beach to watch this monster twisting and rolling in the waves, and thrashing the water with his enormous tail, until perhaps a larger swell than usual, rolling in from the sea, lifted the forty-foot creature and swept it into shallow water, with its great head driven almost on to the sandy beach.

By this time a goodly number would be present, for the stranding of a whale is a lengthy process, and it might have spent several hours wallowing in the shallows before it finally gave up the conflict. Some would be drawn by curiosity, others with a view to killing and cutting up the stranded body, and making profit of this unexpected gift from the sea. There may, or may not, have been present some of the sailors from Jonah's ship, but if they were, neither they nor any others were in the slightest degree prepared for what happened next.

The great mouth slowly opened, and the contents of the whale's stomach were expelled on to the beach—and among them a shape that moved spasmodically, and then, perhaps, sat up and raised shaking hands to its head. At that the onlookers must have taken fright and scattered in all directions. They would soon recover their wits and approach, cautiously, to find Jonah more or less in his right mind, and capable of discoursing with them intelligently.

Probably they worshipped Jonah. He must be more than man, who travelled the seas inside a whale and emerged alive. Certainly they worshipped the whale. Joppa had been, for centuries, the port for the Philistines, the town from which their grain ships set out with their cargoes for Crete, six hundred miles away. And the god of the Philistines was Dagon, the Sea-god, part man and part fish. (See 1 Sam. 5; 1-7, esp. v. 4, margin). The sailors of Jonah's ship must by now have heard of the occurrence and hastened to the scene. "Yes, this is the man we cast overboard!"

The conclusion was obvious. Dagon had taken a hand in the matter and sent his own special messenger to pick up Jonah and transport him safely back to Joppa. There was probably a religious revival of unprecedented dimensions in Joppa that night, with both Jehovah and Dagon the recipients of fervent protestations of devotion and allegiance.

There would, of course, be no further attempt to make money out of the dead monster. As a divine messenger he was sacred, and his remains must be duly respected. Both Jehovah and Dagon had shown that they were not to be trifled with.

The stranded whale would, however, remain an obvious fact—increasingly so in the hot Palestinian sun. And the fact that there is practically no rise and fall of tide in the Mediterranean necessitated approximately eighty tons of whale-meat remaining on the beach at Joppa until something was done about it. Fortunately, Palestine possesses many vultures (the "eagles" of the New Testament), and they are proverbially keen of sight and of scent. It is possible that nearly all the vultures in Palestine visited Joppa for a short time whilst Jonah was there.

There remained the skeleton—picked clean, massive, but at least transportable. Since the vultures had not eaten that, it had to be assumed that Dagon required it to be preserved. The obvious thing was to house it in the local temple of Dagon as a permanent memorial of the most wonderful happening ever recorded in the history of Joppa. Bones are almost indestructible, and in any case the ancients were adepts at preserving such things, and the task would present little difficulty.

If something like this was in fact the sequel to the story of Jonah, it explains why, over seven hundred years later, Marcus Scaurus found the skeleton of a whale in a temple at Joppa, and shipped it to Rome as a fitting subject for his great exhibition. In that lapse of time the true story associated with the relic would have been forgotten and overlaid with other explanations, or varied so much from its original form as to be totally unrecognisable.

At the time, however, the story would spread rapidly. The very next ship to sail for Crete would carry it there, and that might give rise to the inspiration for the tomb painting already referred to. In another century or so, the Greeks were visiting the Palestine coasts in increasing numbers,

and to every visitor who inspected the famous relic the story would be told and retold, with additions, and these stories, taken back to Greece, would be worked upon by the Greek poets and dramatists, giving rise to the legends we have above noted. It may be that the theme of Joppa and its wonderful monster has been immortalised by the Greeks on the level of legend, just as that of Jonah and the whale has been preserved by the Hebrews on the infinitely higher plane of truth.

There is no doubt that legends do grow on a basis of truth in this fashion. That typically British story of St. George and the Dragon, in which the patron saint of England and Portugal figures as the central character, is known to have been derived from the story of Andromeda and Perseus. The legend is that St. George was born at Lydda, (which is nine miles from Joppa!), and there slew the fierce dragon and rescued the beautiful maiden; after preaching Christianity he was martyred in Nicodemia by the Roman emperor Diocletian (in the days of the Apostle John). He was canonised a saint by Pope Gelasius in A.D. 496, his birthday, 23rd April, ordered by the Council of Oxford in A.D. 1222 to be observed as an annual national holiday in England and Wales, and in A.D. 1350 he was instituted patron saint of the Order of the Garter by Edward III. of England. It is rather intriguing to think of the possibility that the most familiar figure in English pageantry, the votary of British chivalry, the guardian spirit of the Crusades, the symbol of present-day British patriotism, may in reality owe its origin to a legendary memory of Jonah the Israelite, the prophet of God.

And so Jonah, in chastened mood, must have retired to his native village of Gath-hepher to await the next instruction from his God—an instruction which he would receive in very different spirit to that in which he heard, and rejected, his first commission to go unto Nineveh, and cry against it, because their sins had come up before God.

(To be continued)

True Wisdom.

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart

And lean not unto thine own understanding

In all thy ways acknowledge Him,

And He shall direct thy paths. (Prov. 3: 5-6.)

XXXX THE QUIET TIME XXXX

A PROMISE

"I will give thee the treasures of darkness.—Isa. 45: 3.

Is it not in our sorrows

(As the stars in the darkest night
Shine with their brightest radiance)

That the promises meet our sight?

Does He not unfold treasures,

Never known in our fairest days;

When there are clouds about us,

And our feet are in stony ways.

Teaching His doings in silence

And revealing the light Divine,

When the earth songs are over

And the earth lights have ceased to shine.

Oh, it is in earth's night time,

When the shadows are cold and dim,

When we are tired and lonely

That we pass to our rest in Him. E. H. D.

WHY WE ARE BLESSED

God blesses you that you may be a blessing to others. Then He blesses you also a second time in being a blessing to others. It is the talent that is used that multiplies. Give out the best of your life in the Master's name for the good of others. Lend a hand to every one who needs. Be ready to serve at any cost those who require your service.

"There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth" (Prov. 11: 24).

THE JOY OF SUBMISSION

Nothing is more foolish than to make our plans without humble dependence upon God. We must take our purposes into His presence, and consider them in the light of His countenance. Every programme must be laid at His feet, to be taken up again, or cancelled at His good pleasure.

"In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths" (Prov. 3: 6).

AGAINST ANXIETY.

Dr. Moffatt renders Jesus' words, found in Matthew 6: 25, 26: "Never trouble about what you are to eat or drink

in life, nor about what you are to put on your body; surely life is more than food, surely the body means more than clothes! Look at the wild birds:" What is it that makes them appear so happy? Surely it is that they live in no dread of to-morrow, they have no anxiety about their next meal. The troubles and dangers of yesterday leave no burden on their minds for, although they fly away on the approach of danger, they quickly return to the same spot. They live in the present as we are instructed to do for "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." It is true that we are to provide things honest in the sight of all men, but we should have neither anxious forebodings for the future, nor morbid regrets for the past which is "under the blood." Our first concern must be the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and concerning earthly things Jesus assures us "Your Heavenly Father knoweth you have need of all these things." "Be not anxious then, about to-morrow, for the morrow will claim anxiety for itself" (Matt. 6: 34, Diag.). "Let all your anxieties fall on Him for His great interest is in you" (1 Pet. 5: 7, Moffatt). If by faith we are continually aware of our Father's interest and care for us we can rejoice in the Lord always, with hearts as light as those of the birds "who sow not and reap not, yet your Heavenly Father feeds them."

Sing a little song of trust,

O my heart!

Sing it just because you must,

As leaves start;

As flowers push their way through dust;

Sing, my heart, because you must.

Wait not for an eager throng—

Bird on bird;

'Tis the solitary song

That is heard.

Every voice at dawn will start,

Be a Nightingale, my heart!

Sing across the winter snow,

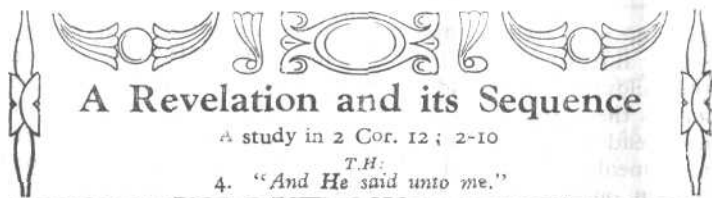
Pierce the cloud;

Sing when mists are drooping low—

Clear and loud;

But sing sweetest in the dark;

He who slumbers not will hark.



Before Paul came to understand the purpose of the Lord in granting him a fore-view of Paradise, he sought the presence of his Lord to present his plea that the thorn and the messenger of Satan should be withdrawn. Having such wonderful evidence now to unfold he seems to have felt, if it could be told, that his kinsmen in Israel would most surely accept the testimony he would present.

Once and twice he raised his ardent plea, but the Lord made no reply, nor did He mitigate the sufferings arising from the stake. Then in more urgent tones Paul prayed again. This time it drew forth the Lord's reply. How greatly Paul appreciated that reply. How caressingly he seems to write the words "And He said unto me."

If now the suggestion made heretofore concerning the Satanic messenger and the nature of the stake be taken as correct we may then conceive the substance of Paul's prayer to run something like this:—"Dear Lord and Master, hear, I beseech Thee, my humble prayer. Again I come to ask Thee to remove this painful stake. I do not shrink from suffering and would gladly go to death for the sake of Thy dear Name. But I cannot understand the need for my present sufferings, and ask Thee now for some relief. Thou knowest, Lord, the arduous nature of the task Thou hast committed to my charge. Thou knowest also that my people are hard of heart, and that the priests and rulers repudiate Thy claims. Thou knowest how they oppose and seek to thwart Thy work, and how they drive and chase me along from place to place. Nor need I tell Thee how they cling tenaciously to the ancient institutions and will not accept the "new." Yet in my heart I feel that if they only knew and understood the glories of that better day which Thou hast now revealed to me, and of the part therein which they are called to play in preparation therefor, they surely would not fail to heed what I might have to say to them in Thy Name. If only I could show them that 'the half has never yet been told,' and that,

in spite of all that Moses, David, Isaiah, Daniel, and all the other prophets spake, they only spake in part, and that the glories that await them are grander far than mortal man has yet conceived, surely they would choose and accept the new and better things, and turn with their whole heart into the Way of God. If only I might tell them of that Eternal Peace, and of all that satisfying plenty which then will abound, and of the ever-open access into the Presence of our God, oh! how could they longer refuse to accept Thee as their chosen Lord, and take Thee to their heart? Wilt Thou not permit me to speak freely of what I have come to know? Wilt Thou not permit me to win acceptance from Israel's choicest sons—from Gamaliel, and such noble souls as he—who wait expectantly for proofs and tokens such as I could now present? Dearest Lord, wilt Thou not bid me speak of all the glorious things Thou hast made known to me? Thou knowest, Lord, that I would run with haste over mountain and plain, over land and sea, and teach them in their synagogues and draw them to Thy feet. Only speak the word, dear Lord, and bid me go, and I will go with ready heart and willing feet, and as I speak to their waiting hearts, this suffering will cease."

If in the foregoing we have faintly caught the echo of Paul's ardent plea, we may now, with diffidence, construct some semblance of the Lord's reply; a reply couched in words of chiding and reproof, but oh, so tenderly and soothingly expressed: "I have heard thy thrice-told prayer, O Paul, my faithful messenger and friend. Listen now to Me, and let Me explain to thee the meaning of thy stake. That glimpse of Paradise I gave to thee was for the assurance and comfort of thine own suffering heart. It was not intended for the nation's ear, nor for their ruler's enlightenment to-day. Believe Me when I tell thee they would not accept thy word even as they did not accept Mine. It is a 'strange work' which My Father purposes to-day—for He seeks only a 'small remnant' from their midst as He sets the unready nation aside. Blindness is about to befall them, because their heart is becoming hard, and My Father purposes to excite this people to jealousy by calling and accepting believers from among a 'no-people' in their stead. I, also, am solicitous concerning Israel and would spare them if I could, but though I have been endowed with all power in heaven and earth I may not use that plenitude

of power contrary to My Father's Will. Though seeking naught but Israel's highest good, even I may not make known to them what I have come to know about their future destiny. I, also, am under restraint at this present stage of My Father's purposes. This is the season of sacrificial sufferings—sufferings made necessary by the nature of My Father's Plan. My own share in those sufferings is at an end, but it is now thy privilege to share with Me in those sufferings. Some years ago I chose thee to be My special messenger to bear My Name before this faithless generation, and to suffer for My sake! Wouldst thou now have these purposes changed, so that thou couldst win the favour of Israel, especially of her choicest sons? Is not My favour alone enough for thee? Thou couldst not win approval from Gamaliel, or Israel, as they are, this day, and still retain thy Father's smile and approbation. My favour can be much more vital to thee than all the commendations of Israel! With My approval thou canst attain thy appointed goal, even though the whole world disapprove thy course! With My assistance thou canst overcome Satan's craftiest wiles, and bear all the buffetings his angel can inflict. Even when thine own strength gives out, My power can work unchecked within thy heart, and bear thee up over every obstacle, and give thee victory over every foe,—yea more, when thou art at thy lowest ebb, My power can attain and manifest its greatest energy. Believe Me, O My chosen friend, My grace is quite sufficient for all thy need—to help thee bear the chafing and restraint what time thy heart is heavy for thy people's perversity. Thou canst not love this wayward people more than I have long loved it Myself, yet, what can I do, as yet, to stay its evil course. It must, ere long, be set aside, and overwhelmed with hard judgment and banishment from this chosen land, but I have shown thee what the 'End' at last, will be. In that better day which lies beyond their night of sin and suffering they will come home again to this good land, and to their God—of that thou mayst be well assured! It was to give thee full assurance of this consummation that I took thee forward through the long, dark years, and blessed thy deeper senses with the sights and sounds of that better day. Rest thee, then, content with Me and with My help, and take to thyself the fulness of My grace. When thou art sorely buffeted, and thy piercing stake wounds thee sore, come thou near to Me, and I will bear thee through thine

agony. When thy people spurn thy voice and drive thee out from place to place, I will go along with thee to soothe thy aching heart. Only trust Me to the end, and My Grace shall be sufficient for thy need, every day, in every way. Be thou at rest in Me, and bear thy stake and buffeting for Me, and share with Me the restraints of My Father's Sovereign Will.'

Perhaps we have been presumptuous in daring to fit words into the dear Master's lips, but if so, it has been reverently performed as we have sought to show the depth of love the Master bore towards His suffering messenger in that vital hour when He led him forth to the great task of leading the Gentiles into the fold which Israel refused to enter.

What marvellous psychology is here portrayed! And what an amazing partnership is brought into view! The time had come to teach the fervent messenger another phase of the Divine Plan, and in doing so, to cut across the most cherished longings of that white-hot soul.

The vehement intensity of those longings is recorded in another place, and at a later date. This is what Paul says, "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart, for I could wish it were I myself and not my kinsmen in the flesh who was cut off from the Anointed One" (Rom. 9: 2, 3.) This was no rebellious attitude against the ordainings of his God, but a token of the love he bore for Israel. Must someone be cut off from the fellowship in Christ? then Paul himself would gladly bear the pruning-knife, if Israel, by such means, might retain its tie with Christ.

The Master cut across those longings in such a way that He worked the matter in accordance with His sovereign Will, and won the consent withal of His messenger, even though he was wincing under acute pain the while. The ardent human preferences were gently bent around until they lay in full alignment with the Master's Will, and though the stake that had been driven through his heart still remained a stake, the copious supply of grace out-flowing from the Master's heart was always enough to stanch the bleeding wound, and ease its painful smart.

Daily experience enabled Paul to find the words of Jesus true. Continued conquest over his preference enabled Paul to give the words of Jesus another turn. "Most gladly will I glory in my weakness that the power of Christ may

rest upon me." The grace of Christ became, in his hour of need, the power of Christ. "Approval" in its turn became "enabling power." The gracious approving smile was a fitting prelude to the grip of the mighty Hand. The weakness of the suffering saint found opportunity for the dynamic energy of the watchful Lord. It linked the servant with his Lord, and make them one in purpose and suffering.

With such a "power" controlling life, spite of the aching heart, Paul sums the matter up, and writes, "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake,—for when I am weak, then am I strong (*dunamos*, i.e., dynamite).

Paul could not forget the experience that brought the Lord so mightily into his life. It was graven on his heart by various things. First, the glimpse of Paradise and his desire to tell his people what he had come to know, next the callous attitude of his kinsmen according to the flesh, who with so much at hand would take so little. And then the driving of the stake (so much more grievous to the messenger than mere soreness or weakness of the eyes) to pin him down to present things, and make him fit companion to Jesus in suffering, and not a man of dreams.

May we use that episode in the Apostle's life as a parable for our own anxious day? Beats there one single heart which throbs with love for humankind that would not spend its days and hours, its voice and pen to have the nations understand the Way of God amid the tangled mazes of to-day? We who have glimpsed that better world—that new Jerusalem yet to come down from God to men—would we not right willingly tell the peoples of this sad old earth what we have come to know? Like Paul himself, we also want to "go" and "speak"—to tell this suffering world of a better day, and turn this warring generation from the rapids and the rocks.

But are we sure that God would have it so? Are we sure this generation would give heed to us though we spake with angelic tongue, or with trumpet voice? Is the present set-up of circumstances a "stake" for us, driven through our very soul, to make it impossible to speak the word we would? Let us leave that point for another day, and meantime, take to ourselves the balm of our Master's soothing words. As first spoken they were intended for one loyal heart when self-desire must be made submissive to the over-

ruling Will of God. It will be, so again, to-day, for any child of God, who, uncertain what this crucial hour requires of him to do, can sink right down at Jesu's feet and "rest" with good contentment in his heart until his way is clear. It is far better to tarry till the "Glory-cloud" begins to move, than go forward to any task at our own time, and in our own way.

Divine Protection in the Secret Place.

"Thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety."

It is good to review the past, to look at the present, and then to contemplate the future, because in this way we inevitably obtain exhortation and encouragement from the Divine Word as we see the "exceeding great and precious promises" in their true light. This spiritual exercise is specially opportune in the times in which we live, and the text chosen for our meditation is peculiarly appropriate to our present needs, "Thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety." Nothing is more obvious from the natural standpoint than the absence of safety to-day, indeed, injury, damage, desolation, and death are everywhere evident at home as much as abroad.

It was in similar circumstances that the Psalm in question was composed. David was a type of Christ, and he was often in severe trouble, as may be judged from Psalm 3, when he fled from his rebellious son, Absalom. Incidentally, Psalms 3 and 4 are regarded as a pair, and they are often termed morning and evening Psalms respectively. As we are in, so to speak, the evening time of the Age, Psalm 4 has a valuable message for us, the remaining members of the Christ in the flesh.

THE PSALM SUMMARISED

Verse 1 is in the nature of a testimony to the goodness of God, "Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress" coupled with a prayer for mercy and succour "have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer."

Verse 2 is doubtless a reference to Absalom and Saul, with the distress of heart and mind thereby brought to David. "O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame?"

Verses 3-5 strike a different note for they are suggestive of reassurance. If we likewise remember in our day that "the Lord will hear when I call unto him" we shall have no fear, come what may, and the shades of adversity will become bright with the fulfilment of His promises, for, "certainly I will be with thee" (Exod. 3; 12). It is essential, of course, that we should "offer the sacrifices of righteousness" while we at all times put our "trust in the Lord" who is ever-present with His people.

Verses 6-8 tell us of the blessed results. The Lord lifts up His countenance upon us (a symbol of favour) and, in consequence, we receive great gladness of heart "more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased." Our joy is greater than that associated with these temporal blessings, while there is also the realisation of Divine protection. "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety."

The thoughts associated with the concluding section may be examined from three standpoints:—

1. The joy of blessings received—"My heart thou hast already given more joy than theirs who harvest corn and store new wine" (Moffatt).
2. Divine protection—"Thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety."
3. Peace and calm in consequence of that protection—"I will lay me down in peace."

Each of these features has its counterpart in this Age. Indeed, it is only as we recognise the Psalm to be prophetic of this Age that we can examine it in its proper perspective.

1. The Joy of Blessings Received.

As the years come and go so we cannot fail to realise the tremendous blessings that are ours. In this attitude of mind, moreover, our troubles surely appear to be but light afflictions, "but for a moment," working out for each one a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Past blessings impart confidence in relation to the future, and we cannot dwell too much on this aspect of the Christian life.

The Psalmist contrasts spiritual blessings against material good things—"Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time their corn and their wine increased." In the days in which we live, there are special blessings of truth such as have never before been enjoyed by the Lord's

people. How true those words of the hymn we oftentimes sing, "E'en now I see, and hear, and know, More than I hoped for here below." Another source of joy is to be found in our fellowship together, in our class studies, in our testimony meetings, and in our gatherings for worship, when the Word is publicly expounded. All these spiritual exercises are designed to build us up in the most holy faith. The truth means much in the individual life, too, for the Christian life is essentially personal.

Meditation upon the blessings received, then, is a *great power in the life*, and it is to be noted that the Psalmist speaks of gladness in the *heart*. Our joy and gratitude for blessings received must affect both heart and mind—the one is useless without the other. In the days in which we live this attitude of heart and mind helps us properly to understand and to realise the Divine protection given to each one who dwells in the secret place. It helps us to render better service, impelled by zeal which burns as a fire within the consecrated heart.

In this attitude of thanksgiving for blessings received, we can with the Psalmist now turn attention to the Divine protection given on our behalf.

2. Divine Protection.

The account of David's flight is given in 2 Samuel 15: 12-14, by reason of the rebellion of Absalom, and following through to chapter 18, we eventually see the Divine deliverance in verse 28: "Blessed be the Lord thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king."

Our life is hid with Christ in God, and this represents an even more wonderful illustration of Divine protection. The blessed consolations of Psalm 91 apply primarily to the New Creature. In this day of ours the Adversary is very busy, but God is for us, He is on our side, and we need have no fear of what man may do unto us. On the contrary, we can testify in the words of Paul, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." We shall be kept at all times in the Narrow Way if we rely on God, as David did.

We do well to contemplate His protection as a spiritual power, especially in the light of Ephesians 6: 12 (Moffatt): "For we have to struggle, not with blood and flesh, but with the angelic rulers, the angelic authorities, the potentates

of the dark present, the *spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly sphere.*" The Adversary is possessed of mighty power, but God's power is still greater, and we are exhorted to take unto us the whole armour of God whereby we shall be able to stand and withstand in the evil day. The same translator renders this exhortation with equal force in the words, "So take God's armour, that you may be able to make a stand upon the evil day and *hold your ground* by overcoming all the foe." It follows that we need more and more of the truth, and the present truth—the truth *now due*—with the Spirit which it imparts and by which it is revealed. The Apostle wrote: "Nourished up in the words of faith, and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained." One of the reasons why the Adversary assails doctrine is because he knows that it is a means of our protection, hence the need for giving earnest heed to the doctrine. The great truths of the Covenants, the Ransom and Sin-offerings, Christ's Presence and Kingdom, and the prophetic landmarks ahead of the Lord's people as seen in the books of Daniel and Revelation—all these and many other features of truth form part of the armour for this day.

The point arises—has God promised to protect the old nature? God's care over David as a man was a picture primarily of His care over us as New Creatures, but He does protect the old nature in so far as it is in accordance with His will, on the principle that we are immortal until our work is done. If, therefore, we should meet adversity as, for instance, damage to our homes or to our person in these times of terror, we must remember that it is all for our eventual spiritual good. Divine protection is emphasised in Matthew 10: 28-31: "The very hairs of your head are all numbered," and the contrast is seen in verse 28 where reference is made to those who can kill the body and to the One who can destroy both soul and body.

3. *Peace and Calm.*

Our joy on account of blessings received, and our realisation of the Divine care over us to keep us in all our ways, lead to an indwelling of peace and calm amid the storms of life. The coming year will no doubt be stormy by reason of present conditions, but this should not in any way interfere with our inward peace.

The peace and calm which we enjoy are likened in the Psalm to the literal rest at night, which is surely a beautiful

picture of our standing in the sight of God. "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety." The peace which comes from God "my peace" is begotten of the ability of Omnipotence as illustrated by the picture given to us in Revelation 4, with the sea of glass in the Throne vision.

We do well at all times to remember the Apostle's exhortation "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4: 6, 7). This summarises our attitude towards life if we would be pleasing to the Lord, and thus demonstrate to Him and to those around that His risen power is a mighty force in moulding us after the likeness of the perfect Pattern.

It is as we grow older and richer in experience that we are able to enjoy greater peace and calm by reason of increased faith in Him with Whom we have to do. This should be one of our reactions to the present terrific days in which we live, for God has protected us marvellously in that we are still permitted to meet together for worship and praise, He has smoothed the way of those affected by obligatory service in its several forms, and withal the truth shines brighter and means more and more to us as we see the signs of the times fulfilled. Truly, it is in the days of "these kings" and the God of heaven sets up a Kingdom which is breaking the present kingdoms in pieces, and as appointees of that new Kingdom we can rejoice and lift up our heads in the knowledge that our redemption (deliverance) draweth nearer and nearer, day by day.

PRAISE—Part I.

"Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me."

"I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving."

"Let the heaven and earth praise Him, the seas, and every thing that moveth therein."

"As the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as a garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth: so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations."

"And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an

honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity, that I procure unto it. Thus saith the Lord."

"His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise."

Psa. 50: 23; 69: 30. Isa. 61: 11. Jer. 33: 9, 10. Hab. 3: 3.

A Coming Forth by Day.

The ancient Egyptians were usually buried with a copy of what moderns have called the "Book of the Dead" by their side. It was a book of liturgical texts and other matters connected with the after life; for the Egyptians believed that after death there would be a resurrection, and that the body laid in the tomb would one day live again. And because of this, they themselves had a different name for that book. They called it "The Book of Coming Forth by Day." It was not a Book of the Dead to them; it was a Book of Resurrection.

How striking an illustration of the tremendous contrast which to-day exists between the world at large and the Christian believer! Too many people, intelligent, talented, look at death and see in it only the end of all things. The Christian, however deficient in intellectual attainments, looks at death and sees it as the preliminary to a coming forth by Day. "I know that my Vindicator liveth" declared Job, "and that in my flesh shall I see God" (Job 19: 25). "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust" said Paul (Acts 24: 15). The world goes on its way, unheeding, its plans and its schemes limited by the brevity of human life. We who have pledged our lives and our abilities to the larger vision have espoused a long term policy which sees death but as an incident in our service to God, an experience marking the transition from this order of things to that better order under which the practice of evil will disappear from Divine creation, and all men enter into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Look at it how we will, we cannot escape the inevitable conclusion; that which men call death is nothing else than a "coming forth by Day."

with us. The last word we had from them was a few days before the occupation. Knowing of the interest so many of the friends here will feel, we give their letter in full.

To the Bible Students Committee.

8th May, 1945.

Dear Brethren in Christ,

Loving and hearty greetings.

We are happy indeed to write you at once on this historic moment, now the occupation of our country by the enemy is in the past and the liberation by the Allies is a fact. They are welcome here with great enthusiasm!

We are glad to tell you how we both, Sister van Halewijn and myself, have come through it all safely and we are well and in health in the circumstances. It was indeed a very awful and critical time, never to be forgotten, but now it seems to be all in the past and new prospects open before us and we are glad to communicate with you anew to re-establish the former connection after these five years of forced interruption.

How have you all got on and how has the work developed during these years? We are anxious indeed to know all you have experienced. Has the publication of the B.S.M. been going on? We shall be glad to be anew amongst its readers and to receive its blessings as in the past. We rejoice in the Truth and are happy in our Lord and Master. Might any of the brethren over there enquire after our welfare, please give them the information as above written. We shall be pleased to hear from the brethren in England again and are waiting your reply with great desire.

In the meantime we remain with Christian love to yourselves and all of like precious faith.

Your brother and sister in the Lord,

G. van HALEWIJN.

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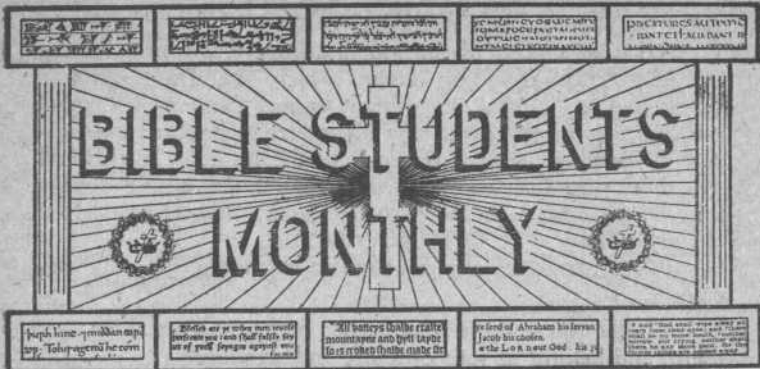
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IMPORTANT NOTICE

With the ending of the war in Europe it is considered that the emergency condition under which the Bible Students Committee has carried on without annual election has ended, and notice is hereby given that all interested brethren may take part in deciding the arrangements for the future. To this end, will those who wish to have voice in the matter please forward their views and suggestions to 20 Sunnymede Drive, Ilford, Essex, *not later than 15 August, 1945.*

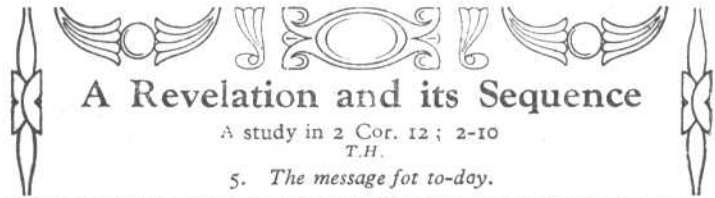
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1. Do you find the work carried on by the Committee to be useful and helpful in your own life and activities?
2. What should be the Committee's obligations regarding :—
 - (a) Promulgation of Christian doctrine?
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 - (c) Public Witness?
3. Should the Committee continue to be subject to periodic re-election, or, since so much of the work is now of a nature involving conformity to Government regulations and a knowledge of publishing routine, is it better to have a permanent Committee not subject to re-election?
4. Are you satisfied with the present state of our fellowship, and if not, what are the causes of your dissatisfaction, and what, in your opinion, the remedy?
5. State the names and addresses of responsible mature brethren whom you would wish to see elected to the Committee, and who are willing to serve and prepared to give a number of hours per week to its service, store some of its property, and attend bi-monthly week-end Committee meetings

Replies received will be classified and formulated into a series of proposals which will be circulated to all who have replied. A substantial vote on each proposal will be accepted as the voice of the brethren, and the Committee will notify all voters accordingly and proceed to put the decisions into effect.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Anonymous We would acknowledge with sincere appreciation receipt of anonymous donations of £1 (July)



A Revelation and its Sequence

A study in 2 Cor. 12 ; 2-10
T.H.

5. *The message for to-day.*

The purpose behind the discussion in this article, and the next, is to present for consideration the relation of Paul's unique revelation to its ultimate sequences as they occur in our own day and lives. We propose to take the basic facts and principles underlying Paul's wonderful experience at the beginning of the Age, and use them for our guidance to-day at this closing end of our Gospel Age.

The closing phase of Gospel Age activity and experience, after all allowance has been made for its orderly development, must be in full accord with the preliminary basic facts of the early days and be of one piece throughout, so that the one foundation runs underneath the whole structure of this activity, from its earliest beginnings to its closing scenes.

Let us review again the position at the beginning of the Age. After the first persecution, in which Stephen lost his life, the disciples became scattered up and down the land of Palestine, and beyond the sea. After Paul's conversion the persecution subsided, and the little scattered groups enjoyed a period of peace and quietness (Acts 9: 31). During this quiet time Peter engaged himself in what we would call "a pilgrim trip," and passing through Lydda and other unnamed places came eventually to Joppa. (Acts 9: 32-43.) At this place the pilgrim Apostle received a vision which initiated a far-reaching change in the direction of the young Church's ministry. Hitherto only believers of Jewish nationality had been sought and received into the Church. At Caesarea Peter opened the door to the first Gentile converts, and was led to see and express the conclusion that in every nation all who believed and lived in accord with that belief would thenceforth be acceptable to God. This was the first significant departure from the age-long exclusiveness of favour accorded to the Israelite peoples. Here began one of those vital changes which has left its mark indelibly upon the Christian Church. To introduce the change Peter was made the recipient of an extraordinary vision—a vision thrice

repeated—in response to which he went across the threshold of a Gentile home, and after he had spoken the words which the Lord gave him to say, he had the unprecedented experience of witnessing the tokens of the Holy Spirit's gift fall upon them. As with Jesus at Jordan; as with the assembly in the Upper Room, so here at Cæsarea, the Holy Spirit was poured forth to initiate a new and vital change in the callings of God. That is the most important point to be remembered, for the bestowal of the Holy Spirit's gifts and power was an indication that Heaven was leading the way.

Peter's act in entering a Gentile home and eating bread at an alien table was held suspect when he returned to Jerusalem (Acts 11: 1-3), but after hearing his defence the contenders had nothing more to say, at the time, beyond making the remark: "Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11: 18). Though it is said they "glorified God" for this "grant," their later conduct shows how little they had acquiesced in this Gentile entry into Church. This half-hearted reluctance to accept the alien lay like a smouldering fire beneath the surface of the Church's life for several years, until it had to be brought out into the open and discussed fully and completely in a full session of the Church. (Acts 15: 6-21).

Among those who had been scattered abroad at the time of Stephen's death were some believers, "men of Cyprus and Cyrene"—dispersion Jews—who, greatly daring, had spoken to the Greeks at Antioch, preaching to them the Lord Jesus, "And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord" (Acts 11: 21). Reports of this development reached the mother-church at Jerusalem, and Barnabas (a man of Cyprian birth) was sent to investigate. Arriving there he saw the tokens of the grace of God in their midst and was glad, and exhorted them to hold fast to the Lord. Thus in this outpost the Holy Spirit was preparing the field for a great work that was yet to come.

Now let us follow another line of preparation. After Paul's arrest on the Damascus Way the Lord gave him to know that he was a chosen vessel unto Him, to carry His Name before Israel, before kings and before the Gentiles. Apparently the Lord did not intend Paul to become identified too closely with the mother-church at Jerusalem or with its sphere of ministry. No sooner had he begun to speak for Christ in

Damascus than plots to destroy him were made and he had to flee. Three years' retirement in Arabia followed. Returning thence to Damascus again, he soon found the fury of his foes too strong and again he had to flee. (Gal. 1: 17; Acts 9: 23-25). He now went up to Jerusalem and attempted to join himself to the disciples there (Acts 9: 26-28). His stay with them was short because the Lord peremptorily commanded him to leave Jerusalem. His sphere of service was to be "far hence among the Gentiles" (Acts 22: 18-21). Because of the risks in Jerusalem Paul was sent home by the brethren to his native city, Tarsus. (Acts 9: 30). Here he was not only out of the dangers of Jerusalem, but also out of the sphere of service directed by the mother-church—almost like Moses away in the deserts of Midian. Paul was not inactive during this period of retirement, but was working away for his Lord on independent lines in the bleak uplands behind Tarsus. The man of the future missionary service was "in-the-making" there in the outback districts of a Gentile land, awaiting the Lord's "due time," and the Lord's "call." That "call" came when Barnabas sought him out in Tarsus, and solicited his help for the great work at Antioch.

This is one of the great land-marks in Church history. Though incipiently begun in Cæsarea (when Peter spake words to Cornelius and his household) it was here in Antioch that the door of entry was really thrown wide open to the Gentiles—and with the opening of this new door, the Lord brings forth the man whom He had chosen and prepared for the task. To equip and inspire him for the labour and risk of that unprecedented task the Lord drew up a corner of the curtain that over-hung the great consummation at the end of distant years, and gave this chosen "Name-bearer" a glimpse of the end and "outcome" of the Plan. After one year's arduous and successful work in Antioch, the Spirit of God instructed the thriving Church to "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts 13: 2). Thus the great missionary work began. For several years this missionary activity progressed with increasing opposition from the mother-church at Jerusalem—an opposition and handicap so severe that, at last, it became necessary to convene the general assembly of the Church in Jerusalem to consider the facts of the situation, and to determine (under the Holy Spirit's control) the true and actual

meaning of a long catalogue of events, dating back over several changing years.

The Assembly began with much questioning and debate (Acts 15: 7), and very probably with some heat, as the opposing parties had their say, until at length Peter stood up to review the position as it had developed from and around his own ministry. "Brethren," he said, "ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the Gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as He did unto us, and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. Now, therefore, why tempt ye God, that ye should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear. But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus in like manner as they" (Acts 15: 7-11).

Peter's address had a quietening effect—and in the waiting silence both Paul and Barnabas told of the signs and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.

Then James, the great pillar of the Jerusalem Church, under a flash of inspiration, took up Peter's recital of events, and cast the essential facts into a new form, "Brethren," he said, "hearken unto me! Simeon hath rehearsed how first God did visit the Gentiles to take out a people for His Name." Then bringing prophecy to bear upon the subject, he continued "and to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After these things I will return and I will build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; that the residue of men may seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom My Name is called, saith the Lord. . . ."

"God did visit the Gentiles to take out a people for His Name." This then was the object—the feature of the Divine Plan that began to work itself out at Cæsarea; that began to shape itself more clearly at Antioch—that was seen to be, in reality, the Divine programme for this present time. This was the solution to the immediate problem of the day—but it was much more than that—it was the declaration (under the Holy Spirit's influence) of the activity outlined by the Maker of the Plan, to span an interim period until Divine favour returned to build again the tabernacle of David which then lay in absolute collapse.

This was a fateful conference, because the Apostolic and official Judaism within the Church openly acknowledged the entry, on equal terms, of the Gentiles into the fellowship of the saints. It was a painful and humiliating experience for these long-exclusive people of God to realise that the Jewish nation had been set aside, and that the despised and hated Gentile was invited to fill up the number of the Elect. But the Church faced up to the situation and accepted the leadings of Providence as final and infallible.

The statement of James is based on that recognition. Had Jewry not fallen from grace, no Gentile would or could have been invited, hence the incoming of the Gentile proved the outgoing of the unbelieving Jew. There are thus three standpoints in James' remark:

- (a) the outgoing of the unbelieving Jew.
- (b) the incoming of the believing Gentile.
- (c) the restoration, in due time, of the Jew and the re-establishment of his throne.

Between the outgoing of the Jew and his restoration at a future time *one thing only* fills up the interval—that one thing is the incoming of the Gentile. Paul had these things set out with exact precision in his letter to the Romans—first, a believing remnant from among the Jews, and second, a "fulness" from among the Gentiles. These are to constitute the elect Church of Jesus Christ, while Israel is hardened and set aside till that blending of the two remnants into "one new man" is complete. Many branches of the Abrahamic Olive Tree were broken off, while branches of a wild olive tree were grafted into the Abrahamic stock—but in due time, God will re-graft the old branches in again and complete through it the purposes centred in Abraham.

The statement of James therefore spans the interval between the fall of Israel and its restoration by the Lord, be it fifty or two thousand years in duration. That interval spans the period between the departure of the Holy Spirit's guidance from Israel, till it is sent forth again to lead them home. Nothing can be done for Israel throughout that interval. Pious Jews seeking God must seek and find Him just as the Gentiles do. There is no other way as yet for them to become reconciled to God.

We are still in that interval. There has been no further change in the Plan since Cæsarea and Antioch. The "call"

to-day is for engraftment into the Abrahamic stock—or (in another phrase) into membership with Christ, which means the same thing. There is no “kingdom” call to-day, any more than there was at Antioch. There can be no kingdom call until the Holy Spirit comes forth again to call Israel (with David at its head) to its rightful place in the Plan of God. Till that auspicious day, the only “call” sent forth is to follow Jesus in the way of sacrifice—a “call” that is open to all who can “hear,” Jew or Gentile though he be.

There is no authority to tell men another Gospel to-day, that is, we have no authority to proclaim the Gospel of Kingdom restoration in the earth. The Gospel for to-day is the “good news of the taking out a people for His Name.” Till that “people” is complete, the proclaiming of that Gospel must continue. Till the Holy Spirit comes forth again upon Israel, the proclamation of the “taking out” must remain the theme of all Spirit-guided ministry. Only when the Holy Spirit begins to lead the way by calling Israel to the Lord will it be in order to desist from proclaiming “the taking out.”

These things are clear, definite and precise. The course of the ministry was laid down for the whole Age—the whole interval—by the Holy Spirit, through the lips of James, at the Council of Jerusalem, and that course of the ministry is as incumbent to-day as it was at any time since that Council was held.

No Association or Society is authorised to change that ministry—nor can it be changed by vote or concensus of opinion anywhere. It is God’s prerogative, not ours, to call a change, and till He calls again, His former Voice, speaking to us through His Son, must remain the Voice of control and authority. He who would serve the Lord must devote himself to that ministry. The only problem we have to face, in this our day, is to adapt that ministry to our changing times. It will be no easy task, but let us be assured that if the Spirit of our God has set the stage, that same Almighty Power can endow the ministry with wisdom and strength to perform the allotted task. There can be no uncertainty about the task we have been called to undertake—our only problem will be how to fit it to our day—but if God is at the helm, we cannot lose our way.

(To be concluded)

XXXX THE QUIET TIME XXXX

BEAUTY

“The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.”
(1 Sam. 16: 7).

In these days of so-called “beauty culture” the Christian asks, What is real beauty? and after a little thought we arrive at the conclusion that the toil-worn and gnarled hands that have laboured hard and lovingly for Him and His, and the furrowed brows, or sunken eyes which have watched over one of His little ones, are the ones which are truly beautiful. Can we not visualise Paul showing his beautiful toil-worn hands when he said, “Ye yourselves know that THESE HANDS have ministered unto my necessities (Acts 20: 34). Thus he showed his great love for those to whom he ministered, for 2 Thessalonians 3: 8 says he “wrought with labour and travail night and day.” Moffatt translates this passage “toiling hard at our trade, we worked night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you.”

*Beautiful hands are they that do
The work of the noble, good and true,
Busy for them the long day through;
Beautiful faces—they that wear
The light of a pleasing spirit there,
It matters little if dark or fair;
And truly beautiful in God’s sight,
Are the precious souls who love the right.*

A DESIRE:—

One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple. (Psa. 27: 4.)

ITS FULFILMENT:—

Delight thyself also in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart. (Psa. 37: 4.)

THE END OF ALL THINGS IS AT HAND

Whatever was in the mind of the Apostle Peter when he wrote the words in 1 Peter 4: 7, "but the end of all things is at hand," we know that present institutions, under the supervision of the prince of this world, and controlled largely by his spirit, must soon, according to Divine promise, give place to the new conditions of God's Kingdom, when our Lord shall take to Himself His great power and reign—binding Satan and putting down all insubordination and everything contrary to the righteousness which is of God. We who so believe can look with great equanimity upon the changing conditions of this present time; and the evil speaking of the world and its antagonism manifested towards us in various ways, because we are new creatures, walking after the Spirit to the extent of our ability, need not alarm us, for greater is He who is on our part than all that be against us. Hence it behoves us to be sober-minded—to take a reasonable and proper view, which does not overlook the future to see the present, but rather overlooks the present to see the future, held up before us in the Lord's Word; also to watch unto prayer, to remember that we are not of ourselves sufficient for these things, that "our sufficiency is of God."

"BE CAREFUL FOR NOTHING."

Hast thou within a care so deep,
It chases from thine eyelid sleep?
To thy Redeemer take that care,
And change anxiety to prayer.

Hast thou a hope with which thy heart
Would almost feel it death to part?
Entreat thy God that hope to crown—
Or give thee strength to lay it down.

Hast thou a friend whose image dear
May prove an idol worshipped here?
Implore the Lord that nought may be
A shadow between heaven and thee.

Whate'er the care which breaks thy rest,
Whate'er the wish that swells thy breast,
Spread before God that wish, that care,
And change anxiety to prayer.



The Prophet who Ran Away

An exposition of the Book of Jonah

A. O. H.



6. The journey to Nineveh.

"Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh" (Jon. 3: 1, 2).

There was no hesitation this time. The lesson had been well learned. Jonah packed the simple necessities required for his journey, bade farewell to his village home in Gath-hepher, and set out.

How did he travel? It was a long journey he had to take—about nine hundred miles. Wherever possible he would join a caravan of merchants and travel with them for company and protection. The great trade route which from time immemorial had run from Egypt to Asia passed within a few miles of Gath-hepher, and Jonah would be in no difficulty about the start of his journey. A day came, therefore, that a strange personage could have been seen striding down the hill from Gath-hepher to the road in the valley. Had he raised his eyes and looked to his right he would have seen the houses of Nazareth nestling on the hillside only three miles away—but another eight hundred years were to run their course before the One whose resurrection Jonah prefigured was to grow up to manhood in one of those houses. Jonah tramped steadily on, and before long was at the foot of the hill, waiting for a caravan to pass by.

He would not have to wait long. Trade by land was prosecuted as diligently as trade by sea, and perhaps even as he made his way down the hill his eyes had espied a cloud of dust in the distance, far away to his right. It was to that direction he had turned when he went to Joppa, along the road in the direction of Egypt, and he had proved by experience what his fellow-prophet Isaiah was to declare a century or more later—that woe is to those who go down to Egypt for help (Isa. 31: 1). Now he was going in the opposite direction, to the north instead of to the south—and God dwells in the "sides of the north." Some such thought may have flashed across his mind as he sat there by the roadside waiting for the caravan that was coming up out of

Egypt.

There would be no fare to pay this time. He could attach himself quite freely to the mixed multitude of men and animals—camels, asses, perhaps even a few horses, although they were rarities in that day—and lumbering waggons, all loaded with merchandise of every description. Intermingled with the throng, and in strong contrast to the mild Egyptian and Babylonian merchants, were the fierce, well-armed Arabs whose work it was to defend the caravan against attack, for marauding bands were frequent. There would probably be men of half-a-dozen different nations in that motley assembly.

Down to the shores of the Sea of Galilee, then on to Damascus. Here there would be a halt, and much unloading and loading of goods. Some of the merchants, having arrived at their destination, would be going no further, but others would be waiting to join, and so before long the procession would be streaming out over the road that led northward, and Jonah finding himself climbing the mountains of Lebanon.

Did he reflect, as he did so, that he was following in the steps of his forefather Jacob, who went this same way in search of a wife? Did he think of Eliezer, the faithful steward of Abraham, who came this way to bring back the bride of Isaac? Jonah's heart must have beat quickly as he remembered the soul-stirring events of which these mountains had been witnesses—the ladder stretched up to heaven, seen in vision by Jacob; that mysterious stranger with whom the same patriarch wrestled, and, prevailing, earned for himself the title of Prince of God—Israel (Gen. 32: 24-32). Yet Jonah was to see greater things than these!

So to Carchemish, on the river Euphrates, where two hundred years later, Pharaoh-Necho of Egypt was to meet his doom at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, finally sealing the fate of Judah (Jer. 46: 2). A halt here, for at this point the route from Egypt and Palestine joined the greater road which ran to Europe in the west, and to Asia—eventually to the borders of China—in the east. If Jonah had commenced his journey without any beast upon which to ride, it is likely that he had acquired one by now, for it was about three weeks since he had left Gath-hepher and there were yet several hundred miles to cover.

A few evenings later the caravan wound down the mountains toward a city which in the glinting rays of the setting

sun lay resplendent, a fairyland of rare beauty. Built in the shape of a vast crescent moon, lying along the hillside, its white walls and gleaming palaces set off to perfection the stately temple in its midst. Jonah's pulse beat quicker as for the first time his eyes fell upon Haran, the city of the Moon-god. Here it was that Abraham came with Terah his father, in the dim long ago when the covenant and promise of God was fresh and new. From here did Abraham remove himself when his father was dead (Acts 7: 4), away from all the pomp and glitter of its cultured idolatry, to the land which God had promised should be his and his seed for ever. "In thee and in thy seed shall all families of the earth be blessed;" so had run the promise; and Jonah, given the opportunity to extend that blessing to the Ninevites, had turned away so that God's blessing should not come to them. Perhaps the sight of that proud city, its very outline testifying to its consecration to the Moon-god, strengthened Jonah's determination to proclaim faithfully all that his God gave him to speak, be the consequences what they may.

But the glories of Haran were left behind; all the palaces and markets and gardens and fountains, the elaborate ceremonies and ritual; and the caravan was in the plain. The crescent-shaped city lay hidden again in the mountains, and now the road led across long stretches of gently-rolling pasture land with barely an inhabitant, frowning mountains on the left and a seemingly endless desert on the right—and at its end, the river Tigris and Nineveh.

To-day that same plain is studded, every six or seven miles, in every direction, with rounded hillocks, "Tels," as the peasantry call them. They are the remains of villages, villages built a hundred years after Jonah passed that way, villages in which dwelt, with weeping and sorrow, Jonah's own people—for this plain is part of the land to which the Ten Tribes were transported and left to mourn bitterly for the desolations that had come upon Israel.

Jonah was a prophet. The Holy Spirit had come upon him and he had seen in foresight the triumphs of Israel in times yet to come, the days of Jeroboam II. (2 Kings 14: 25). Did that same prophetic vision show him, as he wended his way through this wilderness, those villages which were yet to be, filled with old men and children far from their own land, young men and maidens bending under the burdens of the proud Assyrian conqueror? Did the caravan in which he

travelled change its form before his very eyes and become a great multitude going out with weeping, driven on by a fierce soldiery, wending their weary way farther and ever farther from the land of their birth? It might well be that Jonah's prophetic gift did indeed show him this calamity which was to happen not much more than a century later; but even if it did, the story tells us that he went resolutely forward, knowing nothing but that he must proclaim the message of his God, whatever the result might be. Though the Assyrians repent, and afterward take Israel captive—yet he must be faithful.

The journey was nearing its end. For perhaps six weeks he had been plodding steadily forward, with opportunity during all that time to relent and turn back. But he did not turn back. Down to the brink of the Tigris, across by the ford where the water foamed and sluiced over the rocks, then along the winding course of the river, descending the broad plain of Aram-Naharaim, the land of the two rivers, until, one day, there came a shout from an Arab at the head of the caravan, a brown arm pointed, and away there in the dim distance Jonah descried the battlements and towers of a vast city.

He had reached Nineveh!

(To be continued)

□ QUESTION BOX □



Q.—How is it possible for our Lord to be present at His second advent without being seen by men?

A.—Our Lord since His resurrection is a celestial being, and hence invisible to human sight, the human senses being insensitive to the "spiritual world." It is, therefore, clear that the only method by means of which the resurrected Christ can appear, or be visible to men on the earth, is by "materialising" as a human being, as He did on the occasions of His appearances between the Resurrection and the Ascension. This power of materialisation, possessed by all celestial beings consists of the instantaneous creation of a human organism from the elements of the earth in the vicinity, this organism becoming, as it were, the temporary "house" (see 2 Cor. 5: 1) which "clothes" the celestial being using it, and enables that being to speak with human

words, and act in human fashion. After the occasion for its use has passed, the human organism is resolved into its constituent atoms, but the celestial being may still be present, although then invisible.

There are sufficient instances in the Scriptures to permit of this understanding being accepted as a well-established belief. The "angels which kept not their first estate" (Jude 6) assumed human bodies in this fashion, and were able to live thus for a period of probably many years, marrying human wives and begetting children (Gen. 6: 1, 2). The men who sought Abraham (Gen. 18: 2), the one who wrestled with Jacob (Gen. 32: 24-30), the "captain of the Lord's host" (Josh. 5: 13-15), the angels who appeared to Manoah (Judges 13: 9-14), to Daniel (Dan. 10: 5), and to Zacharias (Luke 1: 18, 19) all materialised into the shapes of men of different types. Likewise did Jesus when He appeared to Mary as a gardener (John 20: 14-16), to the others as a stranger (Luke 24: 15), and once only, to Thomas, in His pre-crucifixion likeness (John 20: 25-28).

Now in all these instances, the angelic beings concerned could be, and in most cases were, invisibly present before the moment when they "materialised" and became visible to the men to whom they were sent. In like fashion Satan, the enemy, is invisibly present, and evidently precluded because of his sin from appearing visibly. Likewise the fallen angels, since God took action against them at the Flood, are unable to appear visibly, although the apparent partial appearances occurring at spiritualistic seances, may indicate some determined attempts to break through this restraint which God has imposed upon them.

The fact, therefore, that the Lord Jesus has not been visibly seen by men is not of itself a proof that His Second Advent has not commenced. Even if the Divine Plan should provide for Jesus to be manifested visibly to men, say at the establishment of the Kingdom in power on earth, there is nothing to prevent His having been invisibly present for a time beforehand, taking stock of earth's affairs, and perhaps diverting the course of events that they may lead up to the great event itself.

The Lord's first work upon His arrival is to gather His saints to be with Him. He then takes them to present them in the presence of God's glory with exceeding joy (Jude 24). This is the "wedding feast," or "marriage supper" of

Revelation 19: 7. However short or long a period of time this occupies, it obviously implies the Lord's personal presence with His Father, and therefore temporary departure from the earth. After this He must return to earth with His saints to rule the Millennial Kingdom; but this is not a "Third Advent." It is part of the same great Second Advent which commences with the Lord's arrival for His saints and endures throughout the Millennial Age until He delivers up the Kingdom to the Father (1 Cor. 15: 24) at the end of that Age.

"Sanctify them by Thy Truth." John 17: 17

In that deepest and holiest prayer the tongue of man has ever framed, the departing Lord resigned His loved ones to His Father's care. He was returning to His Father's Home, to dwell for ever in the realms of Light. But this little band of men (together with those who would believe on Him through their ministry) were to be left behind in a cold hard world till He should come back again to escort them to His Home. When He went away they were unready for that mighty change that must take place, ere they could reach that higher sphere to which their Master had ascended.

With fountains of love welling up at every word, the Master said "Holy Father, keep them . . ."—keep them through the dark valley of this world,—keep them from the evils and evil ones that infest this dark world, so that they may come up to be with Me, where I am . . .!

Then, knowing their weaknesses, and unfitness for that high abode, He said, "Make them ready for re-union with Me—"Sanctify them by Thy Truth" and fit them to be with Me, where I am."

Every word in this short sentence is emphatic and replete with the deepest Christian meaning—but out of the five words spoken, two of them stand out with special prominence—the words "them" and "Truth," and of these two, the word "them" stands for the greater thing. It stands for one of the culminating features of the Divine Plan—the taking by God to Himself of a family of sons.

Let us think for a moment upon the lesser thing—the Truth of God—though in speaking of it as the lesser thing,

we are not detracting from its excellence. "It is an exceeding great thing, when compared with every human code of defined truth, but great as it is in that respect, it is sent forth by God as a means to an end,—and this "end" is greater than the "means" by so much as a faithful, loving, obedient son is greater in potential possibilities than the best spoken word.

All Truth as it is applied to living experience must have a subject, that is, it must have some person, thing, or quality about which some statement can be made. There must also be some "Object" in view, in putting forward the statement it has to make. For instance, the phrase "that is a man" is a statement which would be true when spoken of a person of the human male sex. "Man" is the "subject" of the statement here. When, however, we say, "that is a kind man," we set forward the "object" for which we have made reference to the man. In making such a statement we have set forth the known facts, as perceived by our senses, concerning the man, in the particulars under reference. We have heard him speak kind words, we have seen him do kind acts, hence, our statement that he is a kind man is in harmony with the facts and phenomena surrounding his life.

All Truth must note the existing facts of the case and sum up correctly as it puts on record its estimate of that case.

Passing from this illustrative use, we can apply this same principle of application to the statements which God, from time to time has made concerning man, and his place in the universe. It is in this sphere that the Word (or Truth) of God so greatly excels the efforts of the acutest human mind to locate its place in the universal scheme. In Oriental lands sacred books abound which record the reflections and statements of men of great eminence, concerning man's relations to the gods and to his fellowmen. These statements do not tally with the facts of man's existence so closely as does the Word of God. Some do not allow for "sin" in the human heart—some provide for inequalities in the standing of various castes; some assert the existence of two gods of equal power—one evil; the other good. Some assert that man does not die.

The Word of God states that man *has* fallen into sin—that the human heart is deceitful and desperately wicked—that man at his decease does not cease to be. These are

demonstrable facts.

Universal experience attests that the unregenerate heart of man is deceitful, and that out of it proceed all forms of wickedness. It is seen on every hand. That statement of Divine Truth is thus seen to be true—that is, it is fully accordant with facts. God defines that heart-malady as Sin. Applying that Divine definition of the malady we find sin everywhere, thus attesting the Divine statement that “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” Space does not allow every human misdemeanour to be traced out in this way, nor can other statements of God’s Word be here shown to tally with all the known facts—but every student of the Holy Word knows such to be the case.

Ages ago God promised to square those facts with other facts. He promised to send a deliverer to release man from the grip of sin. The Deliverer came and died for the unjust men. Historical evidence attests the coming of such a Man, against whom no other man could lay the charge of sin. He was different from other men. He came into the world as the Lamb of God to take away sin.

When He came, He was carefully observed by other men, whose records of what He said and did have the right ring of honesty and reliability. No man can justly charge them with bolstering up their case, or framing-up their evidence. The facts and phenomena narrated by them are in agreement with that which God said should be done. God’s fore-spoken Word was thus shown to have become true. Events happened as He said they would. No other sacred book of Oriental lands ever recorded things like these.

The departing Master, in His Father’s Name, said He would come again and take His loved ones to Himself. He said they would receive an indwelling power to succour and sustain their hearts, and help them to bear the prolonged trials of the Christian life while He was away. Many generations of devoted souls have known the promise to be accordant with the facts. They know, by evidences that satisfy both heart and head that He spake the Truth. It has come to pass even as He said. His Word is Truth.

From ages past God sent worthy men to tell of the regeneration of the human heart, and that man should be restored to heart-purity and to fellowship with God—that sin should cease, and death and suffering have an end. Are

these things also true? They are part and parcel with the other things to which we have referred, and thus stand with them upon the promise of the Ever-Living God. Though not yet fulfilled, *they are in the line of Truth*. Only the passing years are needed to show the statements of our God accordant with the facts. In due time both fact and phenomena will prove the promise true.

Basing our judgment upon the already “has been” of God’s purposes, we can reach assurance concerning “what is to be” as being just as sure and certain of fulfilment, and in accordance with the full outline of facts that have been, now are, and are yet to be.

Looking forward down the ages God foresaw things that would come to pass, even before the defection of sin began to be, and as the long years passed, God made statements, not only accordant with then known facts, but long before other out-growing facts had taken shape or even begun to take their shape. God’s truthfulness was thus put under test for long centuries before His statements could be proved and demonstrated true. Throughout the Ages something has been crystallising into Truth before the eyes of discerning men. It is the Word that, going out of God’s mouth cannot return unto Him void. It is the supreme testimony of the eternal God that what He has said shall surely come to pass, and show that testimony to be accordant with every ever-developing fact. That Word is Truth, fulfilled and still fulfilling. Jesus knew all this when He compressed all this testimony into four short words, “Thy Word is Truth.”

And yet transcendantly greater though this testimony is above every other religious basic utterance, it is intended to be employed as a means to an even greater achievement. It is to be as food and drink to needy travellers—it is to be as a staff on which to lean and as a light to reveal the path. It is to be the subtle alchemic to change base metal into gold. It is to be as a ray of noonday sun to purify to virgin whiteness the heart of believing man.

Little by little, the transforming is intended to go on, until those who were unready when He left the earth (with all who since have believed His Word) will have been made ready for re-union when He comes again. “Holy Father . . . set them apart for Me—make them over unto Me—make them to long for Me as I shall long for them until I can bring

them to be with Me where I am"—such was the purport of that earnest prayer!

And this will be the Creation's diadem—the brightest, choicest, highest, product of the Spirit of the living eternal God. Yes, indeed, this family of royal sons will be of greater potential possibilities than the spoken Word—even though it be God's own voice that spake that Word.

And now to bring these great themes down to our present sphere. If the living child is more precious in the Father's sight than even His spoken Word, that same relationship ought to be observed by all who claim to be His family, that is, our love towards the brotherhood ought to be greater than our love for our definitions of Truth. This will indicate a great advance on the old contentious days, when men could ostracise and disfellowship a brother because he did not accept the other's definitions of doctrine. Luther refused Zwingli the hand of fellowship (though Zwingli pleaded with tears) because he could not accept Luther's definition of the Master's words "This is my body." Bitter hostility divided Anglican and Nonconformists for centuries because they could not agree concerning the Episcopate.

Nonconformists quarrelled and fought each other over many definitions of doctrine. That some of them in every fold may have been true children of God was of less account to them than acceptance of some word-formula. And that some of these contenders were true children of God, even though subscribing to erroneous and terrible things, is certain and beyond all question. Who can doubt that Albert Barnes, for instance, was a true son of God, loving God and beloved of God, yet believing that the Word of God taught the doctrine of eternal suffering. Here are a few words from his pen, which show how afflicted his heart was by that doctrine; they also show how much better the "heart" was than the "head." Speaking of man's final destiny, he said (among other things): "In the distress and anguish of my own spirit I confess that I see no light whatever. I see not one ray to disclose to me the reason why sin came into the world, why the earth is strewed with the dying and the dead, and why man must suffer to all eternity. . . . It is dark to my soul, and I cannot disguise it." (Quotation from his "Practical Sermons," page 123).

There must have been thousands in that same predicament—true-hearted, loyal sons of God, yet hedged about with

some untruthful articles of belief. Who of us to-day would dare to say that God had no true children in those dark days before the brighter Light began to break some seventy years ago? They had some Truth; some very blessed, precious Truth; Truth enough to link them to the God of mercies and the Lamb of God; Truth enough to make some here and there gentle, kind and true, and to prompt them to a life of service and sacrifice. God made them his sons, even though He did not give them full light, and *because they were His sons they were precious in His sight.*

Should we not learn from this that God can tolerate the ill-defined creed for the sake of His child? Even though God's statement of the facts disagreed with the child's imperfect understanding thereof, that non-agreement did not choke the channel of His love for His mistaken child. Indeed, it was not wholly the child's fault that he did not see the fuller truth, for the revelation of light is in the Lord's own prerogative, and till, in His due time, He is pleased to give, none can command further light. These are the facts of yesterday. What is the situation to-day? It is no man's privilege to have absolute truth even to-day. Though we are blessed with so much more light than our brethren had in that earlier day, we have not reached the goal. There is yet much more Light to break forth from His Word. Yet, though we have not *all*, we have enough to accomplish the sanctifying work (under God's hand), in these unprecedented days. And though, without doubt, we long and pray for further light, its non-appearance will not jeopardise the sanctifying and transforming work within the heart. There is within every child, a hard central core of truth, *based upon redemption facts*, which is enough, as in earlier days, to carry through the work, until we have grown into the likeness of the Lord, even though my brother may not entirely endorse the way in which my pen would put it into words. His definition may be different from mine, but the inner experience is the same for both.

And God will love us both, and count us equally precious in His sight. He will not make our sonship turn on word-exactitude, nor will the outflow of His Love depend upon our possession of an acute brain. God has devoted many ages for truth to reach its goal (and that goal still lies far ahead on the highway of time), but He is seeking, and loving, and

possessing His sons to-day—to-day, while imperfect understanding prevails, and vision is restricted to "seeing in part." Yet with all these handicaps, the Creative hand can mould and shape and fashion each child's heart to His great design, and make the Love that is shed abroad therein long and yearn for the object of its desire, and wait expectantly for the hour of blissful re-union when it will be caught up to be for ever with its Lord and Well-beloved.

If then God loves the child in spite of its misunderstandings and mistakes, will not every Christian desiring to be God-like do the same? If God overlooks the dross of error intermingled with the gold of truth in a Christian's belief, so long as He has the believer's love, can any brother-believer improve upon this attitude of God?

Ought not such reflection upon God's tolerance towards His error-infected child lead every imitator of Christ to set "sonship" and "truth" in right relationship, and though he love the truth for every grain of value that such truth is worth, love the tie of brotherhood the more? How different mutual experience would have been in our circles of fellowship if we could have borne the recitals of our differences of belief more patiently, and then said to each and all "God bless you, brother, because God by His Spirit had made you my brother, spite of the kinks in our understanding of His Truth."

If only we can realise that the measure of Truth we have (spite of whatever measure of misunderstanding we have) is the transforming power for our own selves, for the changing of our own heart into the likeness of the Lord, and that the "more" or "less" of truth in my brother's heart is "the quite enough" for my brother's need so that he may also attain the same result, we shall have travelled far along the way to place "them" in right relationship with "that" which makes them what they are.

We shall bear patiently while a brother defines his differences of faith, and then request his patience in return while we outline our own, and then having had our respective "say," clasp hands in holy brotherhood, conscious the while that the Father of us both will commend and bless the fellowship. It may be yet long years before we shall comprehend all the Truth, but we can grip our brother's hand this very day, and enjoy each other's sonship in the family of God.

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THE PROPHET WHO RAN AWAY

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Messages from U.S.A. Brother S. A. Couling has just returned from a visit to the United States and whilst there was able to meet many of our brethren and convey to them the warm love and greetings of the friends on this side of the ocean. He came back bearing a commission to tell us all in England with what Christian love and interest we on this side are regarded by our brethren in America. We hope to be able to express this more fully in our next issue, but in the meantime we are able to reproduce below just one of the letters given to our brother for passing to all the "household of faith" on this side

July 22nd, 1945.

"To the dear English Brethren in Christ
by His Grace—

It was with very great joy we heard your messages through Brother Couling, of faith and unswerving hope, looking towards Christ and His coming Kingdom

Our earnest prayer has gone up to the Throne of Heavenly Grace continually on your behalf for these past six weary war-torn years.

The 3rd Epistle of John 2 and 3, and Romans 8.28 express our deep wishes for you one and all

With warm Christian Love, ..."

Other scriptures were Ruth 2 and 12. Luke 12, 32

Two classes at Brooklyn.	1 Peter 1.7. Jude 24, 25 Ps. 19. 7-14. Ps. 34. 7. Phil 4.19
Boston District.	Isaiah 54.17 and 41.10 and a special message from an Eng- lish sister who left here in 1906, Sister E. Barker.
Statton Island, N.Y.	Ps. 133. With love.
Atlantic City. Friends assembled, July 21st.	Math. 28.20. Emphasis on the last portion..



The Prophet who Ran Away

An exposition of the Book of Jonah

A.O.H.



7. The Repentance of Nineveh.

"Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey" (v. 3).

Prior to the rise of Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon, Nineveh was the greatest city of the ancient world. It was in ruins before Nebuchadnezzar began to build, and that king made Babylon the greatest city of all time; but when Jonah first cast his eyes upon the place where his message was to be given it was a city calculated to impress the beholder. It had not, at that time, risen to the peak of its magnificence; it was Sennacherib who did for Nineveh what Nebuchadnezzar was later to do for Babylon; nevertheless what Jonah did see was impressive enough.

The "great city of three days' journey" was in reality a group of cities loosely linked together by outlying suburbs, parks and gardens, in the triangular area formed by the junction of two rivers, the Tigris and the Great Zab. This triangular space measured about twenty miles each way, and the expression "three days' journey" probably refers to the time required to travel completely around it. There is a link between this passage and the Book of Genesis, for these same cities are mentioned in connection with the story of Nimrod, who "went out into Assyria, and builded Nineveh, and the broad places of the city, and Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah; the same is a great city" (Gen. 10: 11-12). Thus the whole area is defined as a "great city" by the Genesis historian. The palaces of the kings, and the chief temples, were in the well-fortified and defended portion known as Ninua, the city of the fish-god. Twenty miles downstream lay Calah, the mercantile port of the city, with its quays and docks at the head of a long lake created by a dam across the river many miles lower down. In between lay houses and gardens of the people.

It is Ninua that is best known in consequence of modern excavation, but it is probable that Jonah passed right through this part of the city and preached his message among the common people. That seems to be the setting of the account.

Nevertheless he would doubtless have gazed with intense interest upon the wonders of Ninua, so different from anything he had ever seen or imagined before. Damascus would have impressed him as a city of merchants, Haran with its artistic beauty and high culture, but Nineveh was a city of massive architecture. Great brick fortifications, tremendous palaces of brick faced with coloured tiles and marbles, massive temples built in the same manner, gigantic statues of winged lions and other strange beasts at every turn; the predominant impression produced upon his mind must have been that of overpowering brute force, and that was truly characteristic of Assyria.

The caravan probably entered by the Gate of the Moon-god, at the north-western corner of the city, that being the point at which the road from Haran ended. Here Jonah would take his leave of his travelling companions. They had twenty miles to go yet, to the trading quarter. He had already arrived, and as he wandered along the magnificent highway leading straight to the eminence upon which stood the king's palace, he may well have wondered who of all these busy hurrying city folk would stop and listen to his message. There might have been a natural hesitancy in making a start. Perhaps he lingered on the bridge which carried the road over the canal that surrounded the palace area, and looked down into the placid water. To-day, that canal is merely a ditch, quite dry for most of the year, but in Jonah's time, they called it the Tebiltu Canal, and planted trees and flowers and lawns on its banks. But the water only showed him his own reflection, staring back at him, and presently he must have gained the farther side of the palace area, crossed the centre of the city, and found himself before another elevated area with more palaces and temples. We know nothing of these to-day, for this part is the hill known as Nebi Yunus (Prophet Jonah), and is crowned by an Arab village in the centre of which is a mosque, and below that mosque, say the Mohammedans, the Prophet Jonah himself lies buried. Hence no excavations can be undertaken, for the whole hill is sacred. A staircase leads from the interior of the mosque to the tomb, but no Christian is ever allowed to descend. As partial compensation, the visitor is permitted to examine the large piece of swordfish suspended on the wall of the mosque, and asserted to be part of the whale that swallowed Jonah. The people of the

village are ready also to point across from their own hill to the other palace hill a mile away. The body of Jonah is buried in their own hill, they say, and the body of the whale is buried in the other hill—which is a mile long, and one hundred feet high! It is only right to add that although many wonders of Assyrian art, the remains of palaces and temples, and a library of twenty-four thousand written tablets, dealing with almost every conceivable subject, have been brought to light in that other hill during the last hundred years, the whale's bones have not been discovered!

So Jonah, having entered one day's journey into the city (v. 4), and perhaps passed out of the Ashur gate into the residential suburbs leading to Calah and Ashur, found his voice and began to cry his message: "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." It is a very bare announcement as recorded in the story; there can be little doubt that we are given only the outstanding expression of his preaching, and that in fact he had much more to say. No prophet of God can preach without including in his preaching a call to repentance, and Jonah must have exhorted the people of Nineveh to turn from their evil ways, even although he may not have felt himself commissioned to promise that God would avert the judgment now overshadowing the city. There is an interesting passage in one of the early books circulating among the early Christians. It occurs in the so-called First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians. This Clement was the third Bishop of Rome, and there seems to be no doubt that he actually did write this treatise. This is what he says: "Jonah denounced destruction against the Ninevites; howbeit they, repenting of their sins, appeased God by their prayers and were saved, though they were strangers to the covenant of God." Now this seems to be just what did happen. Jonah preached God and His righteousness; denounced in no unmeasured terms the blood-guiltiness of the people of Nineveh, called upon them to repent, and announced the imminent destruction of their city on account of their past crimes.

And the Ninevites believed. That is the most amazing thing in the whole of this amazing story. That a people who for generations had been brought up to glory in brute force, in pillage and murder, and every kind of inhuman atrocity, should repent of all their deeds at the preaching of one obscure man, is a fact almost without parallel in world

history. "The people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them" (v. 5). Neither was the reformation confined to the lower orders, for "word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes" (v. 6).

Jonah seems to have been a most successful prophet. He promised Israel that their lost territories would be restored, and his promise came true. He so impressed the pagan sailors that they wrought with all their power to save him from death, and acknowledged the supremacy of his God. Now he had, single-handed, converted the people of the most ruthless nation of the ancient world, and made them as little children—the only recorded occasion in the whole two thousand years of Assyrian history when the slightest touch of softer feelings showed itself in that fierce, warlike national temperament. The conversion of Israel by Elijah on Mount Carmel is looked to as a great thing—surely this conversion of the Ninevites by Jonah is a greater!

What influence brought about this conversion? Was it purely the prophet's eloquence, his sincerity, his impassioned appeal? Were there some feelings of guilt in the hearts of the Assyrians, some realisation that retribution for their crimes against humanity must surely come one day? Or was there something else in addition?

Perhaps there was. Perhaps the fearful experience through which Jonah had passed in consequence of his attempted flight to Tarshish was having its repercussions here at Nineveh, a thousand miles away. For the Assyrians also worshipped the fish-god, Dagon. In the Nineveh palaces frequent representations of Dagon have been found, and in the very oldest mythologies of the countries he was known as Oannes, a mysterious Divine creature, half man, half fish, who came up out of the waters of the sea in the very dawn of history to teach mankind the elements of agriculture and of civilisation. It is not difficult to see in that ancient legend a dim and distorted recollection of Noah, the man who came up out of the Flood to set the world going once more. The people of Nineveh, therefore, would be just as superstitious in regard to matters connected with the sea-deity as were the people of Joppa.

We do not know what space of time separated Jonah's

second call from his first, but it was probably a matter of months. News travels fast in the East, and the caravans which constantly plied between Egypt and Assyria passed Joppa on the way. Merchandise brought from overseas to Joppa joined these caravans and found its way to Nineveh. It is quite possible—even probable—that the story of the Israelite prophet who ran away from his mission and was brought back from the sea by a giant fish, had found its way to Nineveh before Jonah's arrival. It would be told in the markets by the visiting merchants, and be passed from mouth to mouth through the city. The great sea-god who had thus sent his messenger to return the prophet to his duty was worshipped at Nineveh. Jonah's story would be sure to have been elicited by his travelling companions during that six weeks' trek to Nineveh, for at night when the travellers had pitched camp and were sitting around their fires there would be nothing to do but to tell stories to each other, and discuss each other's past lives and future aspirations. In such case it would be quite natural for the travellers, upon arrival at Nineveh, to announce that they had with them the hero of the story, and since it is quite possible that Jonah's physical appearance was permanently altered by his sojourn in the whale's interior he would speedily become an object of wonder and veneration.

There may, therefore, have been a mixture of motives in this conversion. The king, his advisers, and his priests, perhaps had a consultation and decided that their own god was evidently on excellent terms with the strange God preached by the prophet, to have gone to the trouble he did do in restoring the latter. It might even be that Jonah's God was superior in power to their own, and had called upon Dagon to perform this service. In any case it would seem that the preacher must be taken seriously. Hence the king issued a state decree to stamp with the seal of officialdom the repentance which had already spontaneously burst forth from the people.

The word rendered "decree," in verse 7, is a technical word for state edicts used by Assyrian and Babylonian kings, and is used, in fact, by Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus and Darius in the books of Daniel and Ezra. It is an interesting evidence that the writer of the Book of Jonah was at least in Nineveh at the time of the happening. Verse 7 preserves the official announcement, in its stereotyped wording, and if set out

properly should read like this:

"And he caused it to be proclaimed, and published through Nineveh—

' BY THE DECREE OF THE KING AND HIS NOBLES

Be it proclaimed:

Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing; let them not feed nor drink water. Let man and beast be covered with sackcloth and cry mightily unto God;

Yea,

Let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn, and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?"

The decree was published throughout the city, and most certainly a copy was placed in the State archives. It may be among those twenty-four thousand tablets which have been recovered from the palace library and distributed to the world's museums, for many of them have not yet been deciphered or translated. The crowning vindication of the story of Jonah may yet come from the labours of some cuneiform translator, patiently transcribing the records from those little fragments of baked clay—and what would the critics say then?

So God repented of the evil that He said He would do unto them, and He did it not. That is always the way with God, He has no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, but would much rather that he turns from his evil ways and lives. Like the father in the story of the Prodigal Son, He is always waiting to go out and meet the repentant one and draw him back into the light and warmth of home. So in the final outworking of the story of this world, men will find that God has been planning all the time to lead them to repentance, and no matter into what depths of degradation their past lives have been steeped, if they will listen to the "greater than Jonah," when the time comes to listen, they will inherit a salvation greater by far than that which came to the Ninevites three thousand years ago. "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive" (Ezek. 16: 27).

(To be concluded)

? QUESTION BOX ?

Q. What is the meaning behind Jesus' words to Mary Magdalene "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father" (John 20: 17)?

A. The hazy ideas of many Christians concerning our Lord's resurrection body have led them to a somewhat superstitious view that He could not or should not be physically touched, hence this word which, they think, was in the nature of a prohibition. Now we know that our Lord, Who was raised from the dead a glorious celestial being, must needs assume a body of flesh for the purpose of appearing to and conversing with His disciples, and on this occasion He appeared to Mary in the guise of a gardener. Directly Mary realised that it was indeed the Lord, and loving Him as she did, her first impulse would certainly be to embrace and cling to Him in happiness, as though she would never let Him go. Nothing less could be expected from this warm-hearted, devoted woman after the events of the previous few days. The verb rendered "touch" is the Greek "hapto," which means to cling closely and tenaciously, especially of two persons embracing each other. The scene should be easy to reconstruct—Mary in an ecstasy of happiness holding close to her Lord, so wonderfully restored from the dead, and Jesus saying gently to her, "Do not be clinging to Me now, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go and tell My disciples . . .," etc. He was not going away just yet; Mary would see Him again, and now He wanted her to haste away and tell the others the glorious news.

The Holy Spirit has a language outward, as well as inward. Within it gives holy disposition; without it shows itself in the natural signs and expressions of peace, love, forbearance, purity, and desire for the good of others. Before it, jealousy, pride, malice, murmuring, impurity, revenge, selfishness, and every evil thing, stand rebuked and condemned.—*Selected.*

XXXX THE QUIET TIME XXXX

BY HIS POWER

Although Psalm 75 is generally considered a Psalm of thanksgiving for mercies received, it manifestly contains prophetic features which tell of God's judgments during the reign of Christ. Verses 3-4 from the Margolis translation read, "When I take the appointed time, I Myself will judge with equity. When the earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved, I Myself establish the pillars of it."

Men of many nations are getting together to talk over ways and means of establishing "new foundations" for society (establish the pillars of it), as they have done many times before, but the Psalm indicates plainly that the "lifting up" we are to look for will come from God. "I say to the arrogant: 'Deal not arrogantly;' And to the wicked: 'Lift not up the horn.' Lift not up your horn on high; Speak not insolence with a haughty neck. For neither from the east, nor from the west, Nor yet from the wilderness, cometh lifting up. For God is judge; He putteth down one, and lifteth up another. For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, with foaming wine, full of mixture, and He poureth out of the same; Surely the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall drain them, and drink them. But as for me, I will declare for ever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob. All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off, BUT THE HORNS OF THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL BE LIFTED UP."

CHRISTIAN PATIENCE

Christian patience is a rare and noble quality: indeed, it is a divine quality, for do we not read of the patience of God? Where there is no patience energy is weakened, understanding is dulled, and discipline is slackened: but where there is patience all these others are reinforced. Many of our best endeavours are fruitless because we give up. Self-control is holding back, but patience is holding on.

"Let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12: 1).

"BIG BEN"

It is said that the Westminster Chimes say—

"All through this hour,
Lord be my guide;
And by Thy power,
No foot shall slide."

When we listen, as we often do, to these chimes, and the strokes of "Big Ben's" four hundredweight hammer striking the hour before the news is given on the radio, they can be a constant reminder of our daily and hourly trust in Him, and an incentive to prayer that the time may come when all mankind will similarly rely upon His guiding power.

THE PASSING HOUR

- "The glass has turned, and hark! the measured chime
Proclaims another hour of passing time:
Untold its value, as it swiftly flies;
The new-born hour appears, runs out—and dies!
- "Now is salvation nearer than the day
When we to God from idols turned away.
Scant is the measure, quickly runs the sand,
Christ on the threshold—on the latch His hand!
- "Darker the shades around of evening lower;
'Watch!' He has said, 'for no man knows the hour.'
The minutes, rushing onward, swiftly pass—
Wake, sleeper, wake, as turns the warning glass.
- "Soon in the Father's presence we shall stand
'For ever!' measured not by wheel nor sand.
Teach us eternal worth, while moments flee,
Whether we live or die, O Lord, for Thee!"

Thou must be true thyself,
If thou the truth wouldst teach;
Thy soul must overflow, if thou
Another's soul would'st reach:
It needs the overflow of heart
To give the lips full speech.

THE LAW COVENANT.

A doctrinal essay.

"Why then the Law? It was appointed on account of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise related" (Gal. 3: 19, Diaglott).

The Law Covenant, or simply the Law, was made with Israel and "ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator" at Mount Sinai. In these inspired words, incidentally, we are given one of the many veiled indications in the Divine Word of the honoured work of the angelic hosts as representatives of Jehovah Himself. It is very important clearly to understand the Law Covenant in order to grasp the Scriptural teaching concerning the New Covenant which is similarly to be made with Israel, and will accomplish for them what the Law Covenant failed to bring to pass. (Heb. 8.) Moreover, the Law Covenant was operative while the older Covenant, or Promise, was "barren" of results, and the Apostle aptly says of the Law "wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3: 24).

THE HOPE OF THE LAW

It will be remembered that the three great Covenants of Scripture are in a category different from all other covenants mentioned in Holy Writ because they concern salvation from sin and death, containing the *hope* held out in the respective Ages. The Law Covenant concerned purely *human* matters with no reference whatsoever, to spiritual hopes or blessings, and this is likewise true of the New Covenant, as will be seen later. The Law requires absolute obedience, and that is why it is often said to be the measure of a perfect man's ability. It has no power to give life, but it was a means of vindicating those already possessing life, and by obedience to its precepts indication was given of worthiness to continue to enjoy that life.

The record of the giving of the Law is found in Exodus 19, and the terms are very clear. "Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people." The nation of Israel, not realising the impossibility of keeping the Law, replied "All that the Lord hath spoken we will

do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord" (vv. 5 and 8). As the record subsequently shows, they were unable to keep the Law, and received its curses for disobedience, instead of its blessings for obedience. The only One who kept the Law perfectly was our Lord, while He voluntarily sacrificed His perfect human life which the Law demonstrated to be His by right. (God had to withdraw from Him the life to which He was entitled under the Law because of His consecration, and that is closely associated with His agonising cry "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?")

There was nothing wrong with the Covenant; the terms of the Law were plain and unmistakable. The crucial point is mentioned in Romans 8: 3, namely, that the Law was "weak through the flesh." Subsequent to the giving of the Law, the Atonement Day sacrifices were instituted whereby the people were typically cleansed from Adamic and personal sins year by year, thereby providing a wonderful figure of the "better sacrifices." These truths are closely intertwined, for it is because of the "better sacrifices" that the New Covenant is termed a "better" Covenant to bring life to the human family. Meantime, in this Gospel Age there is a special Call to the Divine nature, the "way of access" (into the hope of the Promise) being faith justification (Rom. 5: 2). This enables us to grasp the real meaning of the words quoted above when Paul wrote to the Galatians explaining that the Law had been a schoolmaster to those rightly exercised that they might be justified by faith, and then come "into Christ."

The Apostle Paul shows the hopelessness of the position under the Law "For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death" (Rom. 7: 9-10). The same Apostle shows that "the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do," and this was only too clear to those rightly exercised, hence the Law truly was a schoolmaster to the few who received Him and could therefore say, with Paul, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 7, 19, 25).

HAS THE LAW ENDED?

This is a simple question, yet it seems to be very difficult in the minds of many. The Apostle is very definite on the point, and if Romans 10: 4 be quoted from translations other than the Authorised, the answer should be clear. "For the consummation of Law is Christ, to bring righteousness to every believer" (Weymouth). "Now Christ is an end to law, so as to let every believer have righteousness" (Moffatt). It has often been suggested that the Law is still in operation except in the case of believers (i.e. believing Jews), but this would logically mean that whether or not the Law has ended *depends on belief*. That is obviously untenable, for either the Law is ended, or it is not. The Apostle teaches us definitely that it has ended.

The same truth is taught in Romans 7, where the Apostle uses the figure of husband and wife. Briefly, the Apostle tells the saints at Rome to whom he writes that the husband (Law) is dead, (or ended), consequent upon the introduction of the "better sacrifices," and that they (corresponding to the woman) are now free to be married to another, namely, to Christ. Our Lord made the matter clear beyond question when He said "the law and the prophets *were until John*: since that time the kingdom of God is preached" (Luke 16: 16).

A MEDIATOR NECESSARY

We read that the Law Covenant was "ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator," and the mediator, of course, was Moses. A mediator was required because the people had no standing in God's sight as fallen beings. This is evident from Exodus 20: 19—"they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die." A mediator, or middleman, brings two parties together and his function is very different from that of an advocate. The party who seeks the services of an advocate in human affairs has himself a standing, but he enlists the aid of an advocate to *stand by his side*, so to speak. This is quite different from the work of a mediator who *stands in between*.

In the same way, as will be seen later, the New Covenant will require a mediator because the world will have no standing in the sight of God, and the Mediator (Christ, Head and Body) will operate throughout the Millennial Age with

the object of restoring mankind to the likeness of Father Adam. Those who pass the tests at the close of the Age will inherit perfect human life, and will be able to do perfect works. The Mediator will then no longer be necessary, hence Christ will hand over the Kingdom to the Father. His work will be accomplished, namely, the restoration to Adam (and the race in him) of the Kingdom which he lost in the Garden of Eden through original sin. Mankind will have direct contact with God in the Ages of Glory, just as we read was the case with Adam before the Fall, as recorded in the Book of Genesis. This seems to be the indication of Psalm 24: 8, 9 "Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates: even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in (there being no longer any barrier)."

THE LAW WAS IMPOSED

The teaching of the Scriptures is very clear to the effect that the Covenants are separate and distinct, and the Apostle explains in Galatians 3: 17, that the Law which came 430 years later than the Promise, did not in any way affect that Promise "that it should make the promise of none effect." A faulty translation of verse 19 suggests that the Law was *added* to the Promise, but the right thought is that it was *imposed*, until the Seed should come to whom the Promise related, that is, until Christ should come, first the Head, and then the Body-members.

DOUBLE CONDEMNATION

The Jews were unable to keep the Law, hence, as notice above, they received its curses and not its blessings. Arising out of this, the suggestion has at times been made that the Jew was under a double condemnation—as a member of the Adamic race, and also as under the Law. This would suggest that the Jew required more to redeem him than was necessary in the case of the Gentile. This, in turn, would logically imply that the Ransom was insufficient and had to be augmented—a thought which is clearly untenable. It must be remembered that the Law affected the Jews only *while they lived*; it was a temporary arrangement for a specific purpose (Gal. 3: 24), and once they died they were held in death as is the rest of the race; they could not be *more firmly* held in death than the world of mankind gener-

ally. Hebrews 2: 15 proves this thought of the effect of the Law on the Jews while they lived—"and deliver them who through fear of death were *all their lifetime* subject to bondage." (This text has often been applied to the Great Company Class, but the context makes this untenable, for the writer has the Hebrews in mind.)

The theory arose out of an incorrect understanding of Galatians 3: 13—"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." According to the Jewish economy "he that is hanged is accursed of God" (Deut. 21: 23). If, therefore, any one in Israel committed a serious offence he was put to death by stoning, and his dead body was hung on a tree as evidence of his past life. It is evident, therefore, that the mere fact of hanging on a tree did not make the individual accursed, but what he had previously done which merited death. In our Lord's case the Apostle shows that He appeared to be guilty of serious offences in the eyes of the nation of Israel, and for that reason they were the means of His death. Moreover, in His case the figure was almost exactly complied with in that He was crucified on a cross, or tree.

SOLITUDE

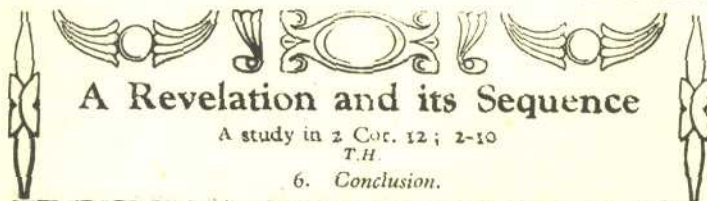
The Gospel narratives show that our Lord accounted times of solitude essential to the spiritual life. He planned resolutely to secure hours when He should be apart from even the most intimate of His friends. The Scripture describes His withdrawal into the wilderness when He needed to shape the methods of His ministry, and resist temptations to misuse His powers. In the wilderness He gained the fixity of purpose and composure of mind which characterised Him through all the subsequent strain of daily work among the excited multitudes. When, again, He was to choose the Apostles—a choice critical for the future transmission of His message—He spent the previous night in solitude. Once more, after a Sabbath in Capernaum more than usually crowded with teaching and works of mercy, "a great while before day, He rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed."

Only by such means could He be alone. "When thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut the door, pray" was counsel which He who gave it can Himself have been but seldom able to follow. Yet, at whatever cost, and whatever demands upon Him of the disciples or the multitude, He must find opportunities for being alone. He joined in the synagogue and Temple services, He encouraged His followers to meet in His name for united prayer. So far from being a recluse, He loved companionship, and chose to have friends at His side both on the mount of transfiguration and in the garden of agony. None the less did He set aside intervals of solitude, for prayer, for contemplation, for making decisions which involved the future of the human race in their scope.

That habit of the Master has a special significance for those who try to be His disciples in the days when solitude is generally disliked, and not seldom dreaded. This is an attitude which has marked reaction upon religious outlook. Under its influence, too often the average man first disuses and then loses his capacity for serious thought. His creed, instead of being derived from his own faith and verified by his own experience, becomes merely a product of mass suggestion.

We are all apt at times to imagine that corporate worship and some share in organised Church activities can replace that deeply personal religion which requires not only intense effort, but periods of solitary reflection for its development. Each individual has to face the eternal issues for himself, and to make up his mind about them. Without that his creed may have all possible orthodoxy, but it will have no real vitality. There is a wise saying in Ecclesiasticus which deserves to be remembered: "Make the counsel of thy heart to stand; for there is none more faithful to thee than it. For a man's soul is sometimes wont to bring him tidings, more than seven watchmen that sit high on a watch-tower." The Christian will read into those words a meaning which the example of His Master supplies. When a decision has to be made, though not only then, he will resort to solitude and prayer. So in the quiet he will hear not merely "the counsel of his heart," but, speaking through and shaping that counsel, the authentic voice of God.—

(Selected).



The statement made by James to the Church Council at Jerusalem, comprises three propositions, each of which has reference to a particular phase of the Divine Plan, but all of which as spoken, were linked together in their proper sequence as parts of a greater whole. It thus constitutes a valuable key to the right understanding of the ages-long purpose of God.

There is, first, the section stating that God is now visiting the Gentiles to take out a people for His Name.

Then, secondly, the assertion that God will rebuild the tabernacle of David, and set it up again, with all that this means by way of recovery and restitution for Israel to its place among the nations.

And lastly, we have the declaration that when Israel is thus recovered and restored, the "residue of men"—all the Gentiles, the nations outside Israel—will seek after the Lord and find Him, culminating in His Name (authority) being proclaimed over them. His kingdom will thus, in the end, embrace them all.

This statement of James was based upon the recognition (by him and the Conference) of the fact that Israel had been set aside by God, to sink into hardness of heart and blindness of mind. Thenceforward the "Nation" was "cast-off"—only a Remnant being accounted worthy, at that time, to receive and enjoy further favours from His Hand. To this Jewish Remnant another elect "remnant" from among the Gentiles was to be added-on, and from these two remnants a "new man" (or constitution with its varied members) was to be made (Eph. 2: 11-19). There are thus two "residues" left over for later redemption—a "residue of Israelites" and a "residue of Gentiles."

According to the statement of James, God proposes to recover and restore the residue of Israel first. When they have been restored and set up in their appointed place, the invitation of the Most High will go forth to the Gentile

residue, and call "whosoever will" from among this final residue to enter into the way of righteousness and live thenceforth as subjects of His universal Kingdom. James thus provides us a synopsis of the Divine Plan as it was ordained to develop forward from his day, each part in its respective order and occurring at its own appointed time. But all this future development was based upon the understanding that Israel had then fallen from grace, for otherwise, so long as the old Mosaic institution stood, no new order could begin.

Already we have stated that this change was instituted by the descent of the Holy Spirit at Jordan, and Pentecost, and Caesarea. It is also promised in the Word, that when God invites Israel to return—when a further change becomes due—there will be a further out-pouring of the Holy Spirit upon the banished and broken people, by means of which, the whole house of Israel (not merely the Jews) will arise from their ancient graves (Ezek. 37: 1-14).

Additionally, there will be yet another diffusion of the Holy Spirit's power among men when the other nations are invited to turn into the Way and City of God, and find life and peace and happiness beneath His control (Rev. 21: 17). God, by the impartation of His Spirit is thus shown always to lead the way, and institute the change, at every stage of the development of the Plan.

That is the fundamental and essential point for us to note. As with Israel of old, the Glory-cloud must "go on before," so we (and every other servant of the Most High at any time) must move forward when (and only when) it moves ahead, and also stop and rest when it comes to rest. To out-pace the cloud meant the perils of the wilderness for Israel,—no guidance, no protection, no food, no drink, and no cleansing from sin. To out-pace God to-day means the perils of isolation and wrecked expectations to say the least.

It is not for us (or for any one) to intermix and intermingle these respective phases of His Plan. It is not for us to spend time over the Jewish element of the House of Israel before their due time comes. God will lead the way when that is due. No more is it our duty to waste time over the Gentile "residue" till the Spirit of God marks the time for such a work. God will lead the way even in that. Even if the world is suffering more to-day than it ever suffered before that is no warranty for out-pacing God. Paul had

to stand and watch his nation drifting on the rocks, knowing the while that its heart must bleed itself white upon the edge of the cruel Roman sword. He would have given himself as Israel's substitute had that been possible (Rom. 9: 1, 2), but in spite of his ardent love, it was of no avail. Even if we also have to stand and watch and suffer where we cannot help, it is for us to be submissive to the Will of God, and wait for Him.

Seen in this inspired order, it is manifest that God is not yet working upon either "residue." Most certainly He is not "calling" the Israelitish residue, no matter what is happening in Palestine. Spite of the interesting developments, in that "Coming" land, "Israel" is still in its "grave." It lies hidden and broken—like the heaps of dry bones in the valley—among the nations of the world, and nothing but the Spirit of the living God can dis-inter it thence. God has blessing in store for Israel; not for the sons of Judah alone, but for "Joseph" and all the whole family of Israel (Ezek. 37: 15-28), but most certainly that great call is not under way to-day. And if the Call to Israel is not underway, then most assuredly the call to the Gentile "residue" is not going forth to-day from the Throne of God.

By all the evidences we have, we are still in the "taking-out" period. It is still the period of visitation for the Gentiles. That it has been of some nineteen centuries duration is of no consequence. To us it may seem long; to God it is but as a short watch in the night. But long or short, there is no gainsaying the fact that neither Judah nor Israel has yet been recalled from their banishment, nor delivered from their blindness of mind. The story of the Grace of God (or so much of that story which still remains unobscured) is still in Gentile hands, and from thence the Spirit of God has for long centuries called His Elect.

The "order of things" instituted at Jordan, and Pentecost, and Cæsarea still continues, and all believers, whether Gentiles or Jews, who find entrance into Christ, must do so in conformity therewith. Spite of the external changes in Church history, or of the errors of her creeds, this "order," has, in God's sight, remained for all these centuries unchanged, and remains unchanged to-day, and will continue to remain unchanged till the glory-cloud moves on.

It is not our duty to institute the Call to Israel. That

task, in part, was tried out once before. It failed, as fail it must till God leads the way. No more is it our duty to announce the Kingdom Call to the Gentile world! That also has been tried out, and failed, as fail it also must.

Here we present three reasons why the broadcast to the unbelieving nations must fail:—

First,—they would not understand us if we did. Our own understanding of the Plan of God (with its better coming day) is due to our possession of the Spirit of God. It is due to the Divine illumination of our minds (1 Cor. 2: 6-16). No man can comprehend the Divine verities or the Divine provision for human recovery without the assistance of the "Paraclete." The power to comprehend is a gift of God. Only the Lord can open the heart (Acts xvi. 14) and cause the light to shine therein (2 Cor. 4: 6). If then the Spirit of God has not been poured out upon the unbelieving world, it would be only labour in vain for us to issue the inviting "call."

Secondly,—that task of winning the Gentile world from sin is reserved for Israel, when once her House has been rebuilt. This Promise is made to her many times in the prophecies, and it is set forth with no less force and clarity in the book of Revelation. The whole Seed of Abraham (the earthly Seed, not less than the heavenly Seed) must be complete before the blessing of Almighty God to the nations of the earth can begin to flow.

Thirdly,—The way of approach to God begins with full acknowledgment of sin. That is God's message to all who will hear. The whole Plan of God starts from that fact. In God's scale of values, the basic malady of the human race is its sin. It is not its pain or suffering. It is not its lack of necessities of life. It is not the matter of tyrannical or despotic rule, nor of the blood which such rulers have shed. It is not a question of their dead, butchered and mangled by infernal instruments. These are incidentals only—branches, not the root.

It is sin that is the canker and corruption in the heart of man from which all else has proceeded. It is sin that unmans men and makes them more callous than the brute. It is there that the story of God's Love touches the human heart, but, till the Spirit of God comes forth to convict the whole wide world of its sin it is useless for us—or for any men—to attempt the task. Unbelieving men resent the thought that

they are "in sin." Even cultured philosophers will invent reasons by the score to rebut, or palliate, the Divine Indictment. But they cannot wash their black hands white, no matter how they squirm or wriggle against the facts.

God does not propose to change His standards to suit fallen men.

Sin still remains sin in His sight, and sin must become sin in human sight, with all its heinous ugliness, before man can begin to find acceptance before His holy presence. Nor does God intend to engage the attention of men by the prospects of the Restitution Day, till they have made acknowledgment of sin. This will apply to both Gentile and Jew. (Compare Acts 3: 19-21). Acknowledgment of the Cross of Christ is the primary essential in the way of approach to God—and there is no back door, or other way by which men can gain access to His grace.

Furthermore the "man of this world" wants his blessing now—to-day—he does not want it merely as a "hope"—to be realised only at some later day. God's present work, after convicting men of sin is to beget in them a "Hope"—a "hope" to help them in their present sufferings. Every glimpse accorded them of that better day is intended to help the believers wait God's due time with patience, spite of present suffering, knowing the while that the "End" is sure. Visions of Paradise are not "lawful" for unbelieving ears—they are intended for the saints alone.

(The End)

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"According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth; thy right hand is full of righteousness."

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THE PROPHET WHO RAN AWAY

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HOME-GATHERING AT COVENTRY,
SUNDAY, AUGUST 26th

On August 26th a happy series of meetings was held at Coventry, when about 120 brethren met to enjoy fellowship together. The morning session was filled by Praise, followed by "Texts that have helped," in which brethren related how Bible texts had helped them in their Christian experiences. Bro. French of Forest Gate, and Bro. Lodge of London, gave stimulating addresses in the afternoon and evening.

It was heartening to note that the brethren of the United States had sent along a message by Bro. Couling of Rugby, who has recently visited the States, assuring us of their continued love for their British brethren, and of their prayers on our behalf, especially during the dark years of the war.

We realised the force of Malachi 3: 6, that "God does not change," and that in whatever proportion any of His people bring their votive offerings into His house, He still delights to "open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing," even to overflowing.

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The Prophet who Ran Away

An exposition of the Book of Jonah

A.O.H.

8. "Like as a Father."



"But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry" (Chap. 4: vs. 1).

Jonah's anger with God is a thing unique in Old Testament history. Many men rebelled against God and disobeyed Him, some, like Moses, ventured to remonstrate and plead with Him, but of no other prophet is it said that he dared to be angry with God. Jonah must have felt very sure of his own position to venture upon this familiarity. His anger has often been put down to petulance, and his character is presented by nearly all orthodox commentators as that of a narrow, self-centred, ill-tempered man. There is really no evidence of this in the story. He does not seek to reverse the decision of the Almighty. He does not plead with God to change His mind and destroy the city after all. He does not even advance any argument such as the peril to future generations of Israelites if the city is spared. His acceptance of the Divine decree is full and absolute, but his feeling of one-ness with his God is so intense that he feels privileged to "speak his mind," as we would say, as to a familiar friend. "Was not this my saying," he says, "when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish; for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil" (vs. 2). These words are wonderful words, to have been uttered so early in Israel's history. This is no "tribal god of the Hebrews," as some would have us believe was the only conception of God to which men had attained at that time. Here is a man who knows that God is Love, knows it so well that directly Nineveh repented he realised that the threatened destruction could not come. Against his own will and desire, he had been made the instrument of salvation to the Assyrians, and of future anguish to his own people. His mind could reach no farther than that. Assyria would one day forget her repentance and newly-found piety, and return to her old ways. He knew that. And then would come to pass the desolations of Israel, foretold by prophets of old, and per-

haps seen by him also in prophetic vision. He knew that, too, and he could not bear the knowledge. In the bitterness of his soul he prayed that he might rest in death, for life no longer held anything of value to him. "Therefore now, O Lord, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live" (vs. 3). Like Elijah of old, he was utterly discouraged and dispirited. He had not wrought any deliverance for Israel; he had not had any greater success than had his predecessors. He could not bear to see his countrymen suffer, and so, despite all the wonderful preservations he had experienced, he prayed now that he might die. And in all his grief he quite forgot that if Assyria could be saved by repentance, why, then, so could Israel. One of the most striking impressions one gathers from the story of Jonah is the prophet's ignoring of his own people's sin. He was zealous for judgment upon Nineveh, but not for judgment upon Israel. In that fact lies a lesson for all time. Jesus brought it home to the individual, made of it a personal matter: when he spoke of the man seeking to pluck the mote out from his brother's eye, all the time failing to perceive the beam in his own. (Luke 6: 41.) So Jonah had yet to learn the greatest lesson of all—the over-ruling and over-riding providence of God which is able to protect and deliver those who are sincerely His own, even although to our human reasoning there seems to be no way out.

The reply of God to Jonah is one of the most intimate touches of the Father's attitude to His children that we have on record. In an indulgent, almost semi-humorous tone, He asks "Art thou greatly angry?" The Hebrew can be equally well translated as in the text as in the margin, but the latter does perhaps agree better with the setting. "Art thou greatly angry?" asks the Most High, gently. But Jonah is in no mood to respond lightly. He is in deadly earnest. "I am greatly angry, even unto death," or as we would say, "I am deadly angry." Such an answer is demanded at this point, although it does not appear in the text. The conversation probably took place in the booth Jonah had erected, for although verse 5 reads as though Jonah then went out and built his booth, a number of scholars consider that the verse should read "*Now Jonah had gone out of the city, and abode on the east side of the city, and there he had made him a booth, and had sat under*

it in the shadow, till he might see what would become of the city." It is certainly more reasonable to expect that after the Ninevites' repentance Jonah would retire and wait the forty days to see what the outcome was going to be.

We may picture him, therefore, as making his way eastwards, through the Ninlil Gate beside the great reservoirs which supplied Nineveh with water, over across the outer ramparts and along the road leading across the plain east of the city, until after a few hours' walking he would be climbing the foothills of the Kurdish mountains. Somewhere up in those mountains lay Elkosh, where a century later the prophet Nahum was to utter his denunciations against the wicked city. There on the slopes Jonah built his little booth and sat under it, gazing upon the vast city spread out on the plain below him, the great river Tigris winding behind it and away across the desert toward the sea. There he sat on the fortieth day, waiting, hoping against hope, for the catastrophe. It could be so easy for God—a great flood as in the days of Noah, a wall of water rolling down the river, bursting over those lofty walls, overflowing all the houses and palaces, carrying all that pride and splendour away in one vast maelstrom of rushing torrents until great Nineveh was reduced to a sea of mud. Or there could be fire and brimstone from heaven, as in the days of Abraham when God destroyed the cities of the plain. There were so many ways in which Nineveh could be overthrown—but the sun came up on the morning of the forty-first day, and as the pools of mist cleared away from the plain the city stood revealed in all its accustomed magnificence; the river rolled on to the sea as serenely as ever, and Jonah was exceedingly angry.

Yet Jonah's prediction was fulfilled eventually. The Ninevites' repentance was short-lived; they soon went back to their old ways; and less than two hundred years later Nineveh fell, never to rise again. That great city through which Jonah had walked, crying his message "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown" was so utterly destroyed that in after days a great Greek army marched over the very spot without knowing that the fabulous city of the ancients lay beneath their feet. Those magnificent palaces and temples, those massive walls and embankments, all were of the dust, and all turned to dust again. The very place where the city had stood was forgotten, and remained

undiscovered until the nineteenth century, when Henry Layard was shown some inscribed tablets dug from a hill across the river, and following up the clue, came upon the palaces of the Assyrian kings, buried far underground.

Jonah's forty days was not a literal forty days at all. The number forty is associated in the Scriptures with times of testing or of trial. Nineveh's literal forty days produced repentance and consequent deliverance for that generation. But the symbolic forty days—a period of nearly two centuries testing time—demonstrated that there was no real change in the national character, and so, the iniquity of the Assyrians having come to the full, the judgment of God fell upon the guilty nation, and Assyria fell, and great was the fall thereof.

But God was not finished with Jonah yet. There was a more personal lesson for him to learn, and now was the time when the prophet would be impressionable. So as Jonah remained in his booth, a light shelter of tree branches, ill adapted to protect him from the noonday heat, a spreading vine-like plant, a gourd, began to grow and twine itself over the booth. The commentators have spent a lot of time, and gone to a lot of trouble in order to decide precisely what kind of plant was involved, but that is really quite immaterial. There are many creeping plants which in that tropical heat grow exceedingly fast, and it need not have been many days before Jonah found himself ensconced in a cool and snug retreat. Perhaps the greater comfort of body to some extent eased his troubled mind; at any rate we read that he was exceeding glad of the gourd. It is evident that after his disappointment over the expected destruction of Nineveh he was undecided what to do next, and was spending a few days here in the hills until he should receive some indication as to his next move.

"But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered" (vs. 7). The word here denotes the class of creature concerned, and does not necessarily mean that only one specimen was concerned. A similar usage is met with in Isaiah 14: 11. What apparently happened was that the mass of greenery covering Jonah's booth was attacked by a horde of caterpillars, biting into the succulent stems, and so withering the whole mass, destroying Jonah's cool retreat. And Jonah was angry again—not because God had failed to destroy,

but this time because He had destroyed. Jonāh professed indignation against this apparently wanton destruction, but of course his pique was really due to his own frame of mind. He was in the mood to complain at whatever happened. But there was more to come. *"It came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live"* (vs. 8).

This "vehement east wind" is a well-known phenomenon in Mesopotamia and Persia. Under certain circumstances the sun's heat produces an eddy of intensely heated air which can kill a man in a few seconds. The natives call it the "sam," or poison wind. Marco Polo, the Venetian traveller of the thirteenth century, tells of this wind having suffocated sixteen hundred horsemen, and five thousand footmen on one occasion in Persia, and a modern writer, so lately as 1928, tells of a case in his own knowledge where a man was struck down and suffocated in this very district. It need not be considered any exaggeration, therefore, when we read that Jonah fainted, and wished in himself to die.

Again that gentle, indulgent question "Art thou greatly angry?" and again the same sullen reply, "I am greatly angry, deadly angry." Swift as an arrow came the accusation from the Almighty: *"Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither made it grow; son of the night it was, and as a son of the night it died. And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand people that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?"*

Jonah had no answer—and for a very good reason. The pity and mercy of God is greater by far than the weakly sentiment of men. Jonah had admitted to feelings of pity and mercy for this creeper of the field, a few trailing strands of vegetation, whose life was inevitably for a brief span, and even then only to serve as food for living creatures of a slightly higher order in creation. A son of the night it was, said God, and as a son of the night it died, and yet even for this humble representative of the plant world Jonah had pity. How much more then should God have pity for that great city which housed a hundred and twenty thousand human beings, with all the tremendous possibilities inherent in their

hearts and minds. True, their ignorance of God was so profound that in His sight they could not yet discern between their right hand and their left, but all that was provided for in His Plan, and one day they shall come before Him for that instruction which may well bring them into His image and likeness. They may have been cruel and bloodthirsty by upbringing and training, but they were not utterly depraved. Their repentance, short-lived though it may have been, showed that, and God knew that He could—or can—in due time do much with that unpromising material.

"*And also much cattle.*" That surely must have hit Jonah. He was solicitous for the creeping vine—God was tender toward the cattle. Can we not take a leading point from this? Man is to be the glory of earthly creation, a king over this dominion, and God took pains at the first to make him in His own image and likeness. But God does not forget that He made the cattle too, and took delight in what He had made, and has a place for them in His world. When the angel of death was hovering over the threatened city, God looked down and saw, beside repentant men, the dumb beasts His own hand had made, and on their account too, He bade the angel sheath his sword.

One wonders if there is more in this little by-play with the booth, the gourd, the worm, and east wind than would occur to the casual reader. Is there an intimate little picture of the strange experiences that have befallen Jonah's people, Israel, on the stage of world history, that they as a nation may learn the same lesson Jonah was taught on that memorable day. Throughout the centuries Israel has been subject successively to each of four great empires, seen by Daniel in vision as four great beasts. Soon after Jonah's own life had come to its close the chosen people were swallowed up by the Assyrians and Babylonians—virtually one people—just as Jonah was swallowed by the whale. They went into captivity, and yet, in that captivity, like Jonah, they were preserved and ultimately set free again. So they came into a condition which may be aptly pictured by the booth and its over-spreading gourd—a time of protection and relative ease under the more benevolent sway of Medo-Persia. It was under Cyrus, king of Persia, that the Jews were restored to their own land, and under the later Persian kings that they were able to rebuild their homeland and re-establish their national culture. Like Jonah, they were "exceeding

glad" for the God-given protection. But it was not to last long. The penetrating power of the Greeks, swarming over the Eastern countries under their leader, Alexander, like Jonah's caterpillars, destroyed the protection of Persia, and laid Judaea open to new and disruptive influences. Then the power of Greece gave way to the fierce, pitiless sway of Rome, a fiery, burning wind indeed to the hapless Jews who writhed under the yoke.

It is the rule of the fourth empire that continues to-day. Jerusalem is still trodden down of the Gentiles, and in all the tragic experiences which are befalling Jonah's people the despairing cry must often be uttered: "It is better to die than to live." So it must be, until their blindness is turned away, and they look unto Him Whom they have pierced, and mourn, and in that mourning find both a new cleanliness and a new inspiration to fulfil the glorious work to which they are called. (Zech. 12: 10).

So we leave Jonah, in his booth, waiting . . . for what? We know not. We do not know whether he spent the rest of his days in Nineveh, or went back to his own land. We do not know whether this experience closed his career, or he was given yet other mighty works to undertake for his God. His tomb is shown at Nineveh, and again at the modern village which stands on the site of the ancient Gath-hepher, and again in a village at the most southerly point in Palestine, on the borders of Sinai. We do not know where he is buried. The curtain drops upon a lonely man, sitting in his little shelter away there on the Kurdish hills, bitter in his disappointment and apprehensive for the future, and yet, we may dare to hope, conscious of a dawning realisation that there is something grander and greater in the plans of God for mankind than either he or his people had ever dreamed. The full understanding of that greater thing had yet to wait for a later day, a day when One Who "spake as never man spake," should come to bring life and immortality to light through the gospel. It is there that the greatest lesson of all finds its focus. One day those Ninevites, despite all their vices and depravity, their short-lived repentance and their national obduracy, will stand face to face with others, men and women of two thousand years ago and men and women of to-day, mute witnesses to a long-foretold Divine condemnation.

For it was said by One having authority,—“*The men of Nineveh shall rise in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonas, AND BEHOLD, A GREATER THAN JONAS IS HERE!*”

THE END

THANKS.

“Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers.”

“*Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*”

“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.”

“*Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High.*”

“I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving.”

“*Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto Him with Psalms. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all Gods.*”

“Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.”
Philemon 3: 4. 1 Thess. 5: 16-18. Col. 3: 15. Psa. 50: 14.

Psa. 69: 30. 95: 2, 3. Rev. 7: 12.

XXX THE QUIET TIME XXX

THREE WORDS OF COUNSEL

(1 Thess. 5: 16, 17, 18)

Be Joyful.—As later to the Philippians, so to these other Macedonians, Paul states the possibility of increasing joy, if it be centred in the Lord; “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice” (Phil. 4: 4). As Paul and Silas had set the example at singing songs at midnight (Acts 16: 25), so now they teach their converts to learn the nightingale’s note—“affliction with joy.”

“Ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction with joy of the Holy Spirit” (1 Thes. 1: 6).

Be Prayerful.—Constant intercourse with God is the next rule. “Without ceasing” (*adialeiptos*) occurs four times in the New Testament (Rom. 1: 9; 1 Thess. 1: 3; 1 Thess. 2: 13, and our verse 17) and usually in a context of prayer, usually intercession. Outside the New Testament use it frequently qualifies military attack. The true weapons of our warfare are spiritual. Persistent prayer, like a continuous bombardment, destroys strongholds.

Be thankful.—There is something to praise God for in every event of life, if we could only see the direction in which it is working. We cannot always see, but we can trust, because “WE KNOW” (Rom. 8: 28).

JOURNEYING HOMEWARD

Nothing does so establish the mind amidst the rollings and turbulence of present things, as both a look above them, and a look beyond them—above them, to the steady and good Hand by which they are ruled; and beyond them, to the beautiful end to which by that Hand they will be brought.

ANSWERS

I asked the Lord that I might patient be,
He sent me tribulation long and much,
It worked sweet patience as from self-will free
I yielded to His touch.

I asked the Lord that He my heart would fill
With His own fulness, and He emptied me
Of earthly things, of many treasures, till
My heart for Him was free.

I asked the Lord to make me keen in prayer,
He showed me all my great and mighty need
And that of others, which I sought to share—
Ah! then I prayed indeed.

I asked the Lord for Him I much might do,
To win Him many a soul, 'twas this I sought;
He disciplined me, taught me, used me too,
Not just the way I thought.

I asked the Lord for sweet humility,
He humbled me in dust, He brought me low,
Lower and lower—" 'Tis this way," said He,
" My meekness thou canst know."

" Lord give me sympathy," I learned to pray,
" That I may sympathise in others' woes."
He let me suffer—for 'tis in this way
Our sympathy o'erflows.

—A. G. Fisher.

MEASURELESS LOVE

The love of the Father to the Son is the measure of the love of the Son to those who are His disciples. To abide in the love of the Son is to abide in the love of the Father also; and the measure of that love as expressed in the Son's obedience to the Father, is to find an analogy in our fulfilment of His command to love one another.

(Jesus said) As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you. (John 15: 9).

THE TRANSFIGURATION *B.J.D.*

ON the basis of Peter's words in his second epistle it is suggested that the Transfiguration was a scene portraying in advance the power and parousia of our Lord, and that because of this preview Peter was able to declare that he was not deceived by cunningly devised fables when writing to those who had obtained like precious faith. Was this the sole object of their climb up the mount, that they should see in vision the Son of Man coming in his kingdom before some of them tasted death (Matt. 16: 28)? Or was there some primary purpose of immediate value to the disciples?

The apostle John makes no reference to this great event, though he was one of the favoured three who accompanied our Lord up the mount, but of the previous time when the same announcement of identity and benediction was made (our Lord's baptism) he gives details of the queries in Jewish minds in those eventful days. It will be noted from the narratives of John the Baptist's ministry that the Jewish world was agog by his mission, and that the priests and Levites sent emissaries to find out his status. To their questions he denied that he was either of the prophesied characters whom they particularly wanted to identify when they came—Messiah, Elias or that prophet. He confesses that he is a forerunner, a herald; and that one object of his baptising was that by the descent of the Spirit on one of the candidates for immersion he would be able without doubt to identify the Son of God. (John 1: 33, 34.) When our Lord comes to be baptised, John is momentarily unwilling to immerse Him (perhaps he already sees that this is He Whose shoe latchet he is not worthy to unloose), but he obeys, and immediately the Spirit's descent establishes Messiah's presence, and to crown it all, the voice from heaven confirms Him to be the Son of God. Straightway, John announces Him to be the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. He did not announce Him as Messiah, the question that all would ask, but spoke of His atoning work; the work which all Christians see as the very foundation of Messiah's reign and service, but which would not readily be seen by Jewish minds. Promptly on the announcement of the Lamb of God, Andrew finds his brother,

Simon Peter, and tells him they have found Messiah. The next day Philip tells Nathanael they had found Him of whom Moses and the prophets wrote, and following on proof of our Lord's insight, Nathanael accepts Jesus as the Son of God, the king of Israel. There seems to be no doubt that this is indeed Messiah, and they may for the moment have truly believed it, but events which follow during our Lord's ministry, such as His unwillingness to tell the outsider that He was Messiah, and His non-assumption of kingly powers which would convince them all, they became uncertain in their belief, though they did not then forsake Him. Every day they had proof of His great powers and rank, yet all the time He refers to himself as the Son of Man. They still hoped that the first exciting thought that he was Messiah would prove to be right, in spite of events and thoughts to the contrary, and so they clung to Him. Each of the titles which the disciples ascribed to Jesus in the first days of belief are fully true; our Lord neither confirms or denies them by word, but always He speaks of the Son of Man, thus supporting the first proclamation of John the Baptist of His being the Lamb of God, for both titles speak of redemption by atonement. For even in the knowledge of Messiah, all must have first things first and see the work of atonement.

The bold mission of John ended in his execution by Herod; but when he hears of the fame of Jesus he gives ear to the rumour that John was raised from the dead (a surprising suggestion, remembering that no example of raising from the dead had taken place which could give any the idea). Herod is troubled in mind by the three theories as to our Lord's identity. Was He the risen John, was He Elias, or was He one of the prophets? And Herod desired to see Him. (Luke 9: 9.) When at last Herod met Him at the trial of Jesus he gained no satisfaction, for our Lord did not answer this murderer of the Forerunner.

Shortly after the death of John our Lord asks the disciples the great question, "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?" Had He first asked them whom did they believe Him to be, they might have answered with the prevailing thought, but He astutely gets the general view, and then asks for their personal belief. And Peter boldly makes the heaven-revealed fact that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Well, had they not believed that all along?

It hardly seems so. And now Jesus admits it, and all seems to be well, but He quickly tells them not to tell others the news. Why did He not urge them to tell the glad news to all willing to hear? Why not tell the whole world these blessed tidings? Why not put all minds at rest? Why not prevent the Jewish question, "How long dost Thou make us to doubt? If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." It must be remembered that though Jesus affirms that He is Messiah, He continues to speak of Himself as the Son of Man. And from that time He shows to the disciples that He must suffer at the hands of the priests and scribes (the ones who should first welcome Messiah) and be killed and rise again. Our Lord's bearing and teaching following Peter's revelation must have bewildered His disciples. And in view of this, are these very Jewish-minded disciples quite convinced that Peter's outburst of truth is indeed accurate. At least Peter thinks it inappropriate that the revealed Christ should speak of things which do not savour of Messiah, or Kingship, and he quickly says so, and is as quickly rebuked. What could they make of these happenings?

Events were moving rapidly to their predetermined conclusion of sacrificial death before He could begin His Messianic reign, and so Jesus tells them of their responsibilities in discipleship, and urges them to loyalty to Himself in spite of all that will so soon occur, as will be seen in His teaching after Peter's revelation, and before the Transfiguration.

The specially-chosen ones of the small band of disciples are taken up above the world into the mountain, and there as He prayed His form was changed before their eyes, and they saw Him no longer in lowly status, but in high rank and glory, and in such office as they always would like to picture Messiah. It is truly good for them to be there. But there appear with Him in the vision, two other forms, Moses and Elias. So that staged before them are three personifications of the queries which were in every Jewish mind, and even in Herod's. Here all three are pictured, and Peter, perturbed in mind and not realising what he was saying, suggested that three tabernacles should be built in honour of them. Peter was in error; he had not yet fully realised that Messiah was not to be classed with the two others, famous and prophetic though they were. If it was appropriate that a tabernacle be erected, both Moses and Elias

would have suggested that only one be set up, and so would John the Baptist had he been present. And so a cloud overshadows their vision, and a voice declares "This is my beloved Son, hear him"; the same words from heaven as were announced to single Him out at His baptism. And when the cloud lifted they saw Jesus only, for Moses and Elias are passed from the scene. Surely heaven was saying to them; this is my beloved Son, hear him; do not now listen primarily to Moses, or the prophets, or Elias, faithful though they were in their proper season and sphere. Surely a very clear sign that Messiah must not be ranked or confused with other servants of God, and rightly so, for He transcends the sum of all other faithful servants of God. The Transfiguration teaches that apart from all portrayal of coming Messianic glory, the disciples still needed to be told, and told again, that Jesus was indeed Messiah. The story confirms what had been revealed by Peter in answer to our Lord's question (Matt. 16: 13), and as they descend from the mountain Jesus charges them once again that they tell no man that He was Messiah before He was raised from the dead. And events were shortly to happen which would tax their faith in Messiah to the utmost, and the transfiguration was designed to increase their faith. Were they convinced by the vision beyond all question? There is one query still in their minds, and it is related to the popular thought of the day. Matt. 17: 10—"Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?" The query had prophetic basis, but it is possible that the scribes were using the prophecy to prove that Jesus could not be Messiah because He was not preceded by Elias. Our Lord in answer identifies John the Baptist with Elias, and so disposes of the only question that can remain in their minds.

But they are not yet in full belief, for the next day, following proof of our Lord's miraculous powers in the curing of the tormented son, He says to them (Luke 9: 44) "Let these sayings sink down into your ears." Grasp their full import for the Son of Man shall be delivered into the hands of men, and then they would have great difficulty in believing him to be Messiah, and says the narrative, they understood not; it was hid from them; they perceived it not, and they feared to ask Him further. They were sad and difficult days for the disciples, and in the very nature of things, they, being Jews, could not grasp that He was

Messiah until He was invested with eternal power and beyond all possibility of suffering and death; and this was reached when He was raised from the dead, and said that all power in heaven and in earth had been given Him. Thus the injunction that they tell no man He was the Messiah until He was raised was as important to them as it was to those others who wanted to know who He was.



"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

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

"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."

"O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord."

"Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance."

"For with thee is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light."

"O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles."

Psa. 119: 105. Prov. 4: 18. Isa. 9: 2; 2: 5. Psa. 89: 15, 36; 9: 43: 3.

THE NEW COVENANT.

An outline.

The New Covenant is a very important item of the "faith once delivered" for it is one of the three *great* Covenants of Scripture, in the sense that it relates to the salvation of mankind generally. It is quite distinct from the various individual Covenants mentioned in the Bible, and it is vital that we should understand its true significance if we desire to harmonise the Word of God and to grasp its dispensational teaching.

As is well known, the New Covenant is set forth in Jeremiah 31: 31-34—"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers . . . this shall be the covenant that I will make. . . . After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts . . . and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them . . . I will remember their sin no more."

THE TIME OF ITS OPERATION

It seems clear from the language of the prophet just quoted that the New Covenant will operate in the Times of Restitution, when all men will know the Lord. The knowledge of the Lord is not yet broadcast in the earth, by any means. The verses immediately preceding make the position even clearer, for they show that just as "I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict," so in this coming time "I will watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the Lord." We see this returning favour to the typical people in its incipient stages in our own day, and ere long the New Covenant, ratified by the blood of the "better sacrifices," will operate. The prophet also shows that every man will then die for his own sin; no longer will it be that "the fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge." Contrive as we may, we cannot say that every man now dies for his own sin, for the iniquity of the fathers is still visited on the children unto the third and fourth generations. The Covenant, therefore, is future,

because its blessings relate to restitution times.

The prophet also tells us that the Covenant is to be made "after those days." This is another important item of evidence, for Bible students have for long appreciated that "those days" relate to the time of disfavour, ending with the close of the Gospel Age. In Matthew 24 reference is made to a time "after the tribulation of those days," while the prophet Joel indicates (in the second chapter) that the Spirit will be of limited operation "in those days," whereas "afterward" it will be poured out on all flesh. The result will be to bring the knowledge of the Lord to all—precisely as foretold by the prophet Jeremiah. Hence, another reason why the New Covenant is still future may be seen in the fact that *it is to be made after "those days" of the Gospel Age.*

Again, what blessing does this New Covenant contain? Search the Scriptures from end to end, but you will find nothing whatsoever about spiritual life in connection with this Covenant. On the contrary, it will bring to the world—through God's typical people—perfect human life. This is very clear from Hebrews, chapter 8, wherein the words of the prophet Jeremiah are quoted. Just prior to the quotation, we read, "For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second." The Law Covenant concerned human life only, but none could obtain its blessings because it required perfect works. The New Covenant, with its better Mediator, will do for God's people, Israel, and later for the world generally, what the Old Covenant could not do. Thus, the New Covenant is still future because *it relates to the world's portion—perfect human life.*

Finally, once we are prepared to recognise that the Mediator is Christ, Head and Body, we must be convinced that the Covenant cannot operate until first the Mediator has been completed beyond the veil. This truth is very clear by a comparison of Isaiah 49: 8 with 2 Corinthians 6: 2. The prophet takes his stand, in figure, at the end of the Gospel Age, and he shows that during the "acceptable time" and in a "day of salvation" (Gospel Age) God has helped this class whom He will preserve "for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages." Again, in Romans 11: 25-28, the writer shows that the Deliverer shall "come out of Zion";

He is none other than Zion's King, indeed, the great Prophet, Priest and King, who will turn away ungodliness from Jacob. He shows that they were cast off until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, the object being the completion of Christ, called out from both Jews and Gentiles (Rom. 4: 16), whereupon restitution blessings will come to Israel for "they are beloved for the fathers' sakes," although by Divine permission "they are enemies for your sakes." It is because Christ, Head, and Body, is the Mediator that the blessings have been delayed; otherwise, restitution would have commenced once the sacrifice of Jesus had been accepted. Hence, the New Covenant is yet future *because its Mediator is not yet complete.*

THE MEDIATOR OF THE COVENANT

Because certain texts speak of Jesus as the Mediator of the New Covenant, it is often thought that the Church has no part in the office and work of Mediator. Once it is realised, however, that it is not Jesus as a man, but Jesus as a new creature that is, the Anointed Jesus, or Christ—who is the Mediator, the difficulty vanishes, for the members come into His anointing and share with Him in His great Office as High Priest. This is very clear from Hebrews, chapter 12. The writer looks forward to the time when the Kingdom is inaugurated, and says that in the spirit of our minds, we (speaking to the Hebrews) have come unto Mount Zion, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant. Just as the people of Israel waited at the foot of Sinai while Moses ascended, so the world will approach the anti-typical Zion, with Jesus and the Church *up the mountain* about to inaugurate the Covenant. Why, then, should the writer refer to Jesus, and not to Christ? The answer is very simple. It was to identify Christ with the Man whom the rulers had crucified in their midst, just as to Saul the risen Lord and Christ said (for the same reason) "I am *Jesus* whom thou persecutest."

MINISTERS OF THE NEW COVENANT

Another convincing Scripture, when rightly understood, to prove that the members of Christ are part of the Mediator is to be found in 2 Corinthians 3: 6. There the Apostle tells us that we are able ministers of the Covenant, by which he surely intends us to understand that we have part in its

administration, for he immediately refers to the ministration of death under the Law and contrasts the greater glory than that of Moses in the administration of the New Covenant. Clearly, we cannot receive the blessings of the Covenant and at the same time administer those blessings. If anyone should still doubt this fact of the future viewpoint, note that in verse 12 of the same chapter there is reference made to a "*hope*," while in the closing portion the writer looks forward to the time when the vail *shall be* taken away. This corresponds precisely to the language of Jeremiah, and to the testimony in Romans 11 to the effect that the Covenant will operate in the days *when favour returns to the people of Israel.*

TO TAKE AWAY SIN

But, says someone, the object of this Covenant is to take away sin, and as we were at one time sinners we could be released from our sins only by coming under this New Covenant. In the Gospel Age, however, God has made a special arrangement whereby our sins are removed. This is the time when we are justified by *faith*, and when our faith is counted to us for righteousness. The Bible says that we are justified by faith, not that we are justified by the New Covenant. Moreover, when we are in the attitude of full consecration and our vows are "heard," God imparts to us life which we immediately offer up in "living sacrifice" (Rom. 12: 1), and there is thus no condemnation—neither personal nor Adamic—to those who are in Christ Jesus.

The New Covenant, on the other hand, relates to the time of physical justification when restitution will be in operation; it will then be a question of works and not of faith, in the sense now required, or sacrifice.

WONDER WORLD.

The wonder world for which we wait
Is not so far away;
For earth's new King is at the gate,
To usher in the Day.

A world where sin shall cease to be,
Where tears shall fall no more;
A world where truth and equity
Shall reign for ever more.

A world where pain shall ne'er distress,
Where sorrow finds no place;
Where radiant health and happiness
Illumine every face.

A world made new by Power Divine ;
" Old things have passed away."
A world where light shall ever shine
In one long perfect day.

The world we know is old and worn,
Fast falling to decay,
Before the breaking of the Morn
That brings Messiah's Day.

A thousand years of joy and peace
Prosperity shall bring;
When war shall end, all strife shall cease,
The reign of Christ the King.

This wonder world our faith awaits,
When comes down from above,
The City with the Open Gates,
The Government of Love.

The throne of God and Christ shall be,
With men down here below;
And from that Throne eternally,
Shall Living Waters flow,

While on the banks the healing trees,
In fruitful splendour grow,
That Man may find full joy and ease,
And Life Eternal know,

Oh, Glorious City, streets of gold,
As though by angels trod,
Where endless ages shall unfold,
The Wondrous Love of God.

(S.R.S. 1944)

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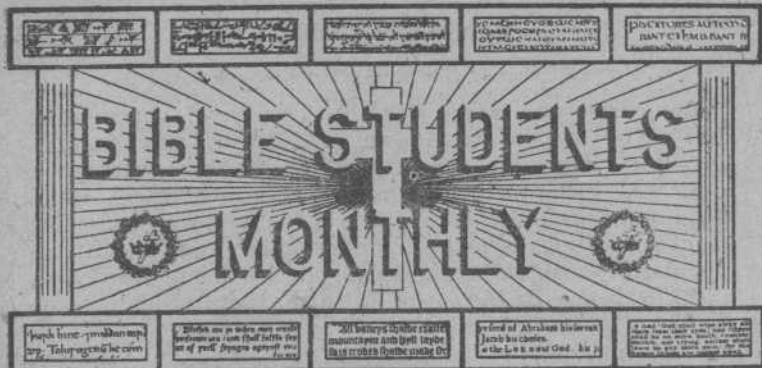
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Gone from us. Sister Melliush, formerly of London, and latterly of Langley, passed away peacefully on 22nd September last, after a long and trying illness, borne with great patience. Sister Melliush came into touch with the Truth in 1914 and during the whole time of her residence in London regular meetings were held in her house. She was an inspiration to many of the brethren, and her home was always open to them. At the age of 88 she has gone to be with the Lord. The funeral took place on 27th September at Putney cemetery, the service being conducted by Bro. C. T. Davey.

Anonymous. We would acknowledge with sincere appreciation the receipt of two donations of £1 each.

Useful Books. Two very useful and informative books are entitled "The Holy Land: the Land, the People, and their Work," and "The Holy Land: Background and Customs," published by George Philip and Son, Ltd., price 2s. 6d. each.

The first one is divided into two parts. Part I. gives an account of the geography and climate of the Holy Land with many pictorial illustrations. In the course of an hour's reading, it is thus possible to visualise physical conditions in the Plain of Esdraelon, or around the shores of the Lake of Galilee, or, again on the Plateau of Judea. The force of many of our Lord's teachings is then seen in a new light as, for instance, a city set on a hill, and the need of a well of "living water" in the dry parts of Palestine. The detailed description of Jerusalem is particularly interesting. The maps enable the reader quickly to locate the various places and they are carefully contoured so that going down from Jerusalem to Jericho is properly appreciated, as well as the deep valley of the Jordan, and the vantage point of Mount Pisgah. Part II. concerns the people and their work. The details of the harvest work, of the vineyards and the industry, the tax-gatherers, and the hewers of wood and drawers of water have a charm of their own, in view of their setting.

(Continued inside back cover.)

THE AMEN

"These things saith the Amen"
—Rev. 3: 14

T.H.

In most Christian communities it is usually the custom, at the close of some fervent prayer, or at the end of some impassioned exhortation for the congregation (or at least the greater part of it) to give expression to their appreciation and approval thereof by the exclamation of a deeply-emphasised "Amen." There may be differences in the volume of the vocal sound expressing this approval and endorsement, according to the nature of the occasion, or to the canonical laws governing the character of Divine Worship, but, almost everywhere, we may safely say, in louder or more subdued measure, the close of the fervent prayer or the intense appeal will call forth the pent-up responsive utterance of the devout "Amen" from all whose hearts are warm towards the Most High and His beloved Son.

This fervent word, in and around which such sacred associations are woven, is not a native English word, nor is it even a modern word. It dates from a distant antiquity. It is almost as old as the human race itself. It is derived from an ancient root which was common to several of the primitive Semitic languages, the original meaning of which was "to prop" or "to support."

As time elapsed it took on new and wider meanings. It came to carry, also, the thought of verbal support—"assent" or "endorsement," of some spoken word, as for instance, in the people's response to the Levitical adjuration recorded in Deut. 27: 15-26. Here it bears the thought "so let it be." Again, when Nehemiah made appeal to Israel to discontinue taking usury from a poorer brother in Israel, the whole people gave assent to his appeal by a mutual and national "Amen." Here it would carry the thought "so will we do." (Neh. 5: 13.) And on the occasion of the homing of the Ark, when the sons of Asaph had sung the anthem of thanksgiving, composed by David for the great event, the people responded by a great Amen! Here it would express the thought "So say we all."

Thus, in seasons of devoted worship, or times of national crisis, the fervent Amen of the whole nation (or of the whole congregation) was the response to the like fervent appeal made by the appointed servant of the Lord, to "do" what the Lord would have them do, or "be" what He would have them be.

When the centralised form of worship, located at the Temple, gave place to the widely distributed worship of the synagogue, every appeal by the synagogue authorities was answered by the local congregation's "Amen." In this way every responsible citizen of Israel admitted and acknowledged his responsibility before the Lord, and re-affirmed his desire to live at peace with God. Having been reminded of Israel's unique prerogatives, and of her special standing before the Most High God, every acclamation of the "Amen" was tantamount to a solemn vow, re-affirmed and renewed, by every member of the congregation. It carried with it the prayer—"so let it be, "so will we do," "so say we all."

From the Jewish synagogue this conception passed over into the Christian Ecclesia.

"It was a custom which passed over from the Synagogue into the Christian assemblies that when he who had read or discoursed had offered up a solemn prayer to God, the others in attendance responded 'Amen,' and thus made the substance of what was uttered their own." (*Thayer's Lexicon*, p. 32, under word *Amen*.)

In this way, the Jewish ceremonial practice, epitomised by a word far older than themselves, found an entrance into the Christian communities everywhere. It is thus an ancient word heavily encrusted with reverential thought, that finds expression on our modern lips when even we, ourselves, respond to the spirit of the fervent prayer or to the ardent exhortation.

In the days of the early Church the place of the "Amen" in the act of worship was a most important one. It was no mere trifling part of the ceremony to be performed or neglected at will. Even Paul himself,—opposer of ceremonialism and formalism though he was—calls it "The Amen" (1 Cor. 14: 16). The mutual response, at the right moment, of every heart and voice, in unison, was accounted to be of far greater importance than the exercise of some Spirit-bestowed "gift of tongues," if that exercise, for the time being, was in an unknown tongue. Better far to have

the whole audience answer with its great "Amen" because it understood—so Paul said—than have its ear regaled with incomprehensible oratory.

"How shall he that filleth the place of the unlearned say "The Amen" at thy giving of thanks, seeing he knoweth not what thou sayest?" asks Paul (1 Cor. 14: 16).

According to the testimony of some early Fathers in the Church, the expression of the congregational "Amen" was not by any means a weak or feebly-whispered response, but a mighty shout that made the rafters ring—a tide of sound that echoed and re-echoed, back and forth, till the very building shook. Gratitude for what the Lord had done for each and all, released the pent-up feelings of the whole personality in a great shout of such lusty magnitude, that it might well be called a "Grand Amen." If these records present a true picture of the scene, no wonder Paul, in words both simple and profound, depicts it as "saying the Amen."

Early in the second century Elders and Bishops in the Church began to claim the right exclusively to expound the Word. Her ablest scholars—so they said—must be thus authorised to enable the Church universal to parry and withstand the assaults of her pagan foes. But, while conceding this, for the common good, there was one thing the congregation would not concede. It would not relinquish the privilege of voicing its great "Amen." Call this vocal climax of the worship "formalism," if we will, but, we must not forget that the "Amen" seemed to mean much more to the early Church than it means to us to-day. To us, to-day, the force and meaning of the word "Amen" has been greatly whittled down and almost lost. It has come to mean, with passing years, little more than "so be it," or "so let it be." It expresses the assent of the audience to the spoken word—the hearer's response to the prayer, the benediction, the doxology, or the personal appeal.

This definition has not the ancient force of that which inspired the early Church, nor even the Jewish Synagogue. To them the sharing of the great "Amen" was tantamount to the making of a vow, or the solemnising of an oath to the Lord. "He who says Amen," writes one commentator, regarding both the Synagogue and the early Church, "thereby asserts that his statement is *binding*."

Perhaps we may better understand what the "Amen" meant to the early Church, if we consider this forceful word

as it fell from the Master's lips. Jesus used it as no other man had used it before His day. With Him, it never came as a climax to a statement or to a prayer; always, it preceded some solemn utterance. With Him, it was not used responsively to what another said, but only to emphasise what He Himself was about to say. "Amen, Amen, I say unto you" was His usual mode of stressing some great truth. To Him it meant, This is the Truth, this alone is Truth, and this is the whole Truth.

Among men, the teacher reasons his way from the shadows of the circumference towards the light at the centre of things—Jesus went through to the centre at one step and spake there in the full blaze of the Light. He had no "ifs" nor "buts" nor qualifying phrases to introduce. He could use the imperative, and say "it is thus and so." He spake as the Voice of Authority, infallibly, which knew the "Truth Absolute," and stated what it knew with emphasis. To Nicodemus He said "Amen, Amen, I say unto thee, we speak what we do know, and bear witness of that we have seen" (John 3: 11).

How authoritative and awe-inspiring, therefore, were those themes to which Jesus linked this solemn affirmation. Let us recall a few. "Amen, Amen, I say unto you, the hour cometh and now is when the dead shall hear the Voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live" (John 5: 25). "Amen, Amen, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep" (John 10: 7-16). "Amen, Amen, I say unto you, He that believeth hath Eternal life" (John 6: 47-51). Always it is Truth Absolute, spoken by the Voice of Absolute Authority.

How poor and feeble, against this weight of emphasis is the word "verily," or our own phrase "so be it," or a more recent "indeed and indeed." Truly we have lost much of the force and meaning of the Master's Amen.

The Early Church, at least in Apostolic days, was not permitted to forget this emphasis. Of this, we have an instance in 2 Cor. 1: 15-22. Paul had been charged with prevarication; with saying one thing and meaning something else. He had intimated that he might call at Corinth on his journey into Macedonia (1 Cor. 4: 19) then, when his visit there was accomplished, return again to Corinth and probably winter there. (1 Cor. xvi. 5-6). Circumstances had made the two visits impossible—and thus the cause of

the accusation arose! In self-defence Paul says "Do I purpose according to the flesh—that is, to please myself—that with me there should be (the duplicity of the double tongue) the yea-yea, and the nay-nay?" For Paul the course of life was mapped out by the Lord ("if the Lord will," 1 Cor. 4: 19; "if the Lord permit" 1 Cor. 16: 7), and he knew it was not for him, without the Lord's approval or ordering, to take one step here or there, or bind himself to take this course or that. He may form a preference, or even express a fond desire (Acts 19: 21), but it was not within his province to bind himself by emphatic promise, or excuse himself by definite refusal to do this thing or that. All the supervision of his life was in the Lord's prerogative, and subject to His oversight.

The Corinthian complainants had not learned this truth sufficiently to bow to the Lord's control, and were blaming Paul for "running off" his word. It did not seem to have occurred to them to charge the blame up to the Lord, or up to God, who had supervised Paul's course. Taking cover under this omission of theirs he would have them know that like as they accounted God to be faithful (actuated by a singleness of purpose) so, in like manner, "our word to you is not yea and nay," and that he was not one whit more unmindful of his promise, than God was, of the promises He had made.

Then carrying their minds to higher ground he cites the facts of the Saviour's life to prove that the Christian life is not based on irresolution or inconstancy. "For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, . . . was not yea and nay, but in Him is (only) yea." Indeed, had Jesus of Nazareth, at any stage of His exacting career, been of an irresolute or inconstant disposition (the yea-yea and nay-nay attitude) He could never have won through to attain the high dignity of "Son of God." Had there not been firm determination to do the Will of God, at all cost, and against all who would oppose, it could not have been said of Him that He had been "declared to be the Son of God . . . by His Resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1: 4). With Him, in full degree, had been the "yea"—the positive—disposition, throughout His earthly life.

And surely, not less positive is the exalted Son of God than was the Man of Nazareth! There was, therefore, no

ground for asserting vacillation or prevarication concerning the Supervisor of the Church, and since the oversight of Paul's little life was in that Supervisor's hands, there could be no charge of inconstancy or inconsistency laid against His "orderings." Paul wanted these meticulous brethren to understand that every promise or proposal made by one to another should be made subject to God's control, and accepted without recrimination, even if they could not be fulfilled, provided always, that such non-fulfilment were in full accord with the Will of God.

Paul then moves to still higher ground, and brings to the accusing brethren's attention a universal aspect of the Work of God made certain by the unchanging constancy of the Son of God. "How many soever be the promises of God," he says, "in Him is the 'yea.'" God has made many promises at various stages of His Plan. First, came the hopeful promise to Mother Eve, that her seed should bruise the serpent's head. Then, in due course, came the Oath-bound Promise to Abraham, repeated and confirmed to Isaac and Jacob, that in their seed all the nations should be blessed. After that the promise came to David, that, of his seed, should come forth Israel's Royal King. Meantime to Israel itself, the Voice of God had made many promises, assuring them that they should yet attain their rightful place among the nations of the earth. And to the Church of Christ, exceeding great and precious promises have been made. Yes! God has made many promises—but over against them all there stood for ages one effective embargo—all men were under the curse! The condemnation for Adamic sin stood in the way, and few indeed of these promises could be realised and inherited till that condemnation was taken out of the way. By His Sacrifice, consummated at Calvary, and presented at the Throne of God, that embargo was removed, and the whole wide range of promises was confirmed and made unfaillingly sure. (Rom. 15: 8). Jesus Christ, the Risen Son of God, now stands for ever forth as the "Confirming Yea" to every promise of the Most High God, to whomsoever made. His glorious exalted life, following His vicarious death, is the sure pledge that all God's purposes will stand, for the same constancy still prevails in Heaven as prevailed between Jordan and Calvary.

Then by a few well-chosen words Paul shows the great sequel to all this constancy. "Wherefore also, through Him

is the Amen, unto the glory of God through us." To-day the "Amen" rises from small upper rooms, from small, insignificant companies, but its volume will swell to the ends of the earth, as, first, the Seed of Abraham (in both its parts) enters into its inheritance, and through them, the nations of the earth find their way into the City of God. All the wide world will make the rafters of the universe echo and echo again as they volley forth the "Grand Amen."

There is one further aspect of this ancient theme in which a universal fact becomes also an incomparable Name! Jesus illustrated this extension of a fact into a Name when He said "I am . . . the Truth . . ." (John 14: 6). Jesus had stood forth as a Teacher of Truth, presenting to all who could hear the facts and verities of the truth; but, in reality, He was more than a teacher of truth. All the facts and verities of truth met and centred in His person. All the many-sided facts of man's alienated life pointed to their need for Him. All the many-sided facts of His spotless nature and sinless sacrifice pointed to His ability to meet man's need. All man's need, and all God's provision met in Him. In Himself He was the consummation of every fact. He was indeed the Living Truth.

Through Him shall yet be the Universal Amen, to the praise of Almighty God, but He also, in Himself, is the Great "Amen." "These things saith The Amen, the Faithful and True Witness . . ." (Rev. 3: 14.) Exactly as the Name given to Him at His birth (Jesus) was an indication of what He was come down to earth to do ("call His Name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins," Matt. 1: 21), so also, the Name given Him in His exaltation is an indication of what He has done. It has a sense of finality and completeness about it. It tells of a task completed in the interests of a purpose that for ever "IS"—a purpose that knows no change or variation, worlds without end, of which every segment is certain and sure, because of what He did.

God only is competent to confer such a Name, for none but He can fully understand the greatness of the task that has been done. By the conferment of that Name, God has set forth His estimation and approval of the universal work that was achieved, and of the certainty that exists.

It is as though the Eternal One, to sustain our faltering faith, has said, through the bestowment of that Name "Yea, it is so! it is sure! it cannot fail; in Him is the final word!"

Here, because our view is limited, we still unburden our pent-up souls by our weak "Amen,—so be it," or "so may it be"; but God does not need to speak "expectantly" as we poor mortals do. Even now the "realisation" to Him is sure. He knows His worthy Son is constant and true, and so He speaks accordingly.

To the Most High that worthy Son is the "Amen," the climax of every hope and good intent.

WITH BRETHREN OVERSEAS

Notes by a British brother on his recent visit to U.S.A. and contact with our American brethren.

Probably the aeroplane represents modern ways of life more than anything else; for by its use the whole world is brought into closer contact. It has been the writer's privilege to use this means of travel to the U.S.A. and to meet American brethren. Just before leaving this country, the friends at Forest Gate sent a telegram conveying their greetings for the other side, and the prayer for the journey to have "God's speed." Very significant, when we appreciate that man has devised the quite astonishing record of being able to convey passengers in comparative comfort from England to America in one day. Light, in contrast, one of God's natural illustrations of His powers of speed, moves at the rate of 186,000 miles in each second. Whatever the speed of my journey, the prayer was that it might be in accordance with God's will.

The visit was a unique one, since for six long years no personal contact has been possible between brethren in Europe and the United States, and the writer was the first messenger to be privileged to break this silence. Our brethren on the other side were eager to show their sympathy for the war privations suffered by this island; in fact at times their overwhelming desire to express their heart-felt condition for us became embarrassing. At one meeting, after delivery of the English messages, and relating briefly some of the bombing experiences, we were besieged by brethren thrusting

odd pieces of paper into our hands, each with a personal message, and some scripture. Here is an example of many: "To our dear English brethren":—

"Our hearts go out to you all in the bonds of Christian love. May our God bless and keep you all. 1 Chron. 16: 8-36.—Sis. . . ."

"My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.—Phil. 4: 19. . . ."

"Thank you all very much for your consoling and helpful messages of love, and God's Love and watchcare over you. Jude 24, 25. . . ."

"Thank you for your message and words of comfort. May God bless you richly. Psa. 19: 7-14. . . ."

"I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. Rom. 1: 8. Sis. . . ."

"In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength. Your experience has strengthened our hearts. Sis. . . ."

Additionally they expressed the desire to help materially—"Could they send, this, that, or the other?"

The object of this word is to enable the English brethren to appreciate that our fellowship is truly of Divine origin. We read "If one suffer we all suffer," but not often do we have such mass demonstration of fellow-feeling for one another. Although only one from your midst was privileged to make this trip, any and all would be just as welcome, so that on your behalf their loving hospitality was accepted with only one regret,—that the personal recipient was so little worthy of so great an honour.

You, no doubt, in your turn will be interested to learn something of our American friends' mode of life. In the first place, America is a country to which every nation on earth has contributed to its inhabitants,—Greeks, Jews, Italian, German, Russian, Dutch, African, English, Jap and Chinese, all in the boundaries of one state; all shades of colour in face and speech. The classes are similarly so made up,—a fore-taste of the Scriptural assurance that all flesh shall be made one. It is a remarkable experience, to one of this country, to discover the operation of God's Spirit producing equal reactions in every variety of subject. "May God bless you, brother," has equal power with the Heavenly Father from any of His children the wide world over.

There was also the occasional brother or sister with memories of an English home or friends, or perhaps brethren who have left this country. Some gave me dates back to 1906, and all gave the same message of love and concern for their brethren at home.

Fellowship was enjoyed with the principals of "The Dawn," "The Herald," and "The Watcher" publications, and no differences of outlook protruded to spoil the delivery of the English greeting, or their desire to warmly reciprocate. Not "Lease Lend," but "Give Take." Surely here lies the secret formulæ for world harmony. "What have we that we have not received." Compared with Heaven's viewpoint our little is nothing, ours only to reflect, and try to keep the mirror untarnished, constantly applying the washing recipe for eyes and heart.

The many messages which have been brought back from the other side have already appeared in print, so it is only necessary to add that it was an encouragement to the American brethren to realise that their prayers for our safe keeping had been so well answered, and that God's Spirit in operation is similar in both countries, and by this do we know that we belong to "One Body." One meeting, held in a hall used by Pastor Russell, consisted mainly of brethren of African descent, including the secretary. So let us be encouraged to carry on and be worthy of the high opinion that has been formed of our fortitude, courage and faith exhibited during this last war period.

"I know whom I have believed." These thrilling words marked the virtual end of the ministry of a great man, one who had given all and dared all for Christ—and won through. For him now, "the strife was o'er, the battle won," and although he knew that after his departing grievous wolves would enter among the believers, not sparing the flock, yet he died in contentment and confidence, knowing that the great Shepherd of the sheep would take his own unfinished work, and weave it into the great design, that at the end of time he would see for himself the grand results of his life's dedication.

THE QUIET TIME

"BE YE AN EXAMPLE TO THE BELIEVERS"

I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day,
I'd rather one would walk with me than merely show the way;
The eye is a better pupil and more willing than the ear,
Fine counsel is confusing, but example's always clear.

The best of all the preachers are the men who live their creeds,
For to see good put in action is what everybody needs.
I soon can learn to do it if you let me see it done,
I can watch your hands in action; but your tongue too fast
may run.

The lectures you deliver may be very wise and true,
But I'd rather get my lessons by observing what you do;
I may not understand the high advice that you may give,
But there's no misunderstanding how you act and how you
live.

When the heart has found God's own peace, the peace which knows no explanation and surpasses all our dreams, it has passed beyond the pale of agony to the quietness of a strong repose. *Peace is life plus God.* It is God handling life for us: God dealing with our affairs for us: God interpreting life's experiences for us. Such peace is beyond our understanding, but not beyond our living.

Be what thou seemest: live thy creed;
Hold up to Earth the torch divine;
Be what thou prayest to be made;
Let the Great Master's steps be thine.

H. Bonar.

THREE WORDS OF WARNING (1 Thess. 5: 19, 20, 21)

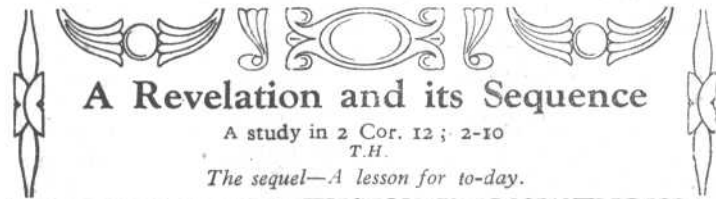
"Quench not the Spirit":—Beware of spiritual constraint, the Holy Spirit is a fire. To put a light under a bushel is to extinguish it. To neglect the prompting of the Spirit is to quench it. Let us beware, too, of pouring the water of discouragement on the spiritual flame in another's heart, for the Spirit where it is found is a fire; therefore it is not to be quenched either in ourselves or in others.

"Despise not prophesyings":—Beware of spiritual callousness. The sincere expounding of the Scriptures is bound to have some effect. If the hearers make something of it by obedience (which means "attentive listening"), then all is well, but if they "make nothing" of it (set at nought or "despise") only spiritual hardening will result.

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good":—Beware of spiritual credulity. This is the other extreme. Do not treat God's Word as man's, or, on the other hand, treat man's word as God's. Test the thing spoken by that which is written; hold the good fast, throw away evil in every form.

THE MYSTERY OF LOVE

We cannot see the twinings
 In God's long cord of Love.
 We cannot trace the windings
 By matchless wisdom wove.
 That cord can ne'er be broken,
 'Tis held by God alone,
 The Lord's zeal is the token;
 He knows, He keeps His own.
 And when the Father chastens
 His children, faith to prove,
 The cord is held by Jesus,
 The unseen end is love.
 Love, deep, Divine, unsearchable,
 Love is the binding cord.
 And hid beneath the chastening
 Twines round the saints of God.



The series of articles appearing during 1945 under the above title has traced the implications of that mystic experience granted to the Apostle Paul when he was caught up into Paradise, and saw and heard things which he was not permitted to repeat, or describe to others. After the great revelation came the messenger of Satan. After the messenger came the Lord's words to Paul, assuring him of grace sufficient. The series has shown how these factors, intertwining, have become pointers to an understanding of the Divine Plan for this Age and a guide to acceptable service for the consecrated. This sequel draws attention to the practical lesson to be drawn from these considerations, a lesson of direct interest to many who read these lines.

These articles have been prepared with a particular object in view. That object has been to re-set before our minds the basic facts and principles of the Plan of God as they apply to our day. We have reviewed those experiences of Paul which befell him when the Gentile phase of the ingathering of the elect began. The beginning of that phase set the stage for the remainder of this Gospel Age, that is, it introduced the particular state of things intended to continue until the Spirit be again poured out upon the now cast-off Israel. As such, the same facts and principles applicable in those days to Paul (and through him to the elect remnant and the cast-off residue) apply also to our own day. There has been no change in the facts, nor in the principles, nor even in their application to the outworking of the Plan. The Gospel Age has been of one piece throughout since those days, without variation or modification. No calculations relating to Gentile Times nor to dispensational parallels has altered either the principles or their application in the slightest degree. Nor has the belief that we have reached Harvest Time changed them in any way. It still stands true that the Gospel of God's Grace has had its course among Gentile peoples from that early day to this. Nor has the

development or ascendancy of an imposing visible earthly Church amongst these Gentiles brought any change. No change is due until the whole of the "called" people from amongst the Gentiles has been "taken out." These facts are incontrovertible.

We noted that though Paul was carried forward to Paradise, he was not allowed to tell what he had heard and seen, except in vague and meagre form to those who had believed that Jesus was the Christ. By force of adverse circumstances Paul's mind was brought back to the realities of earthly things, and to the privileges of suffering with Christ. To win men from sin, and establish them in Grace was made the sole objective of his eventful ministry. With stricken heart he was obliged to watch his kinsmen drive towards the rocks, with none to save them from an awful doom save the Son of God whose salvation they had spurned.

We are far on towards the end of this Gentile phase to-day, and are emerging into a new and serious situation as the rulers of the nations prepare themselves to meet the conditions arising from the near approach of the "world-that-is-to-be." Strange things are destined to occur, as the foundations of man's new world are laid, and its super-structure raised. We are heading for the greatest departure from the "faith" the professing Church has ever known. Many men and movements are being beguiled into sentiments and activities, seemingly right and laudable in themselves, but which, in reality are paving the way for the great relapse. Among the seceding mass are some dear souls, still right and tender before the Lord who will find the organizing activities of that coming democratic world hard to bear.

Investigation will reveal that God still has some children within denominational circles, women and men who revere His Holy Name. Some of these dear souls are famishing for the ministry of the pure Word of God—pining as sheep left neglected by the socialistic pastors of the flock. And if this is true to-day, what will become of them when the great building and consolidating drive begins? These are our brethren in the Lord, even though thus far they have seen no reason to "come out" from their sphere of fellowship. Sonship does not turn on the issue of being inside or outside their denominational membership. If, out of their acceptance of Jesus's sacrifice (as their redemption-price), and of love to God's Holy Name (spite of some erroneous theology) God has accepted them into His Family, they are our spiritual

kith and kin, and one with us in the privileges of our present Calling.

Known or unknown to themselves they are participants with us in the "taking-out," and like ourselves, have opportunity to make both calling and election sure. That door of opportunity is not yet closed—the work of the "first-fruit" ingathering is not yet at an end. The plucking of the ripest grains—found one here, one there, as in the harvest fields of Israel—to constitute the "first-ripe sheaf" is not yet complete. These ripening grains, even though outside our present fellowship are wanted by the Great High Priest to be presented before the Lord "on the morrow" after this long "Passover night" comes to its close. These are the ripening product of the Holy Spirit's descent at Jordan and Pentecost and Caesarea and Antioch! They are the fruit of this present Age, and as such are in the line of the present ministry. Here is our present field of service. *Our labour is required to help homewards a "Remnant," not a "Residue!"* God is still building up His Christ—and if we would be found co-workers with Him, we must still devote ourselves to that which every joint will need, and which every joint can supply.

Brethren in the Lord, we say to you most seriously and solemnly that we must take great care over that which we essay to do for the Lord. Our sympathy with a suffering world could lead us astray. It is no callous lack of sympathy that actuates our God in leaving the mass of men to groan and wait till another work is done. A groaning Creation must continue to groan—as it has groaned for centuries—till the Sons of God are made manifest. God's present work is the perfecting of the Sons, and irrespective of the universal groan, His work of Grace is for the Sons, and for the Sons alone. No intensification of the "groan" can divert Him from His ordained work. Humanity is not forgotten in the scheme—its day will come—but that day is not yet come. A Loving Creator has made no mistake in permitting the long agony, and in the end it will prove to have been not one day too long.

Meantime what a Loving Creator does, is to be accounted the standard and pattern for those in working harmony with Him. We too must help in the development of the Sons, and look hopefully forward for the easing of the universal groan, when it shall have accomplished the object desired by Almighty God.

Some seventy years ago a work was instituted which cut right across all denominational distinctions, and sought to help all thinking Christians to a deeper and broader appreciation of the Plan of God. Many followers of the Worthy Lamb were hungry for the truth, as a consequence of the impact of Evolutionary and Higher Critical teaching upon the voice in the pulpit. For forty years the blessing of the Lord was upon that ministry, as thousands of devout souls have testified. About thirty years ago a change was introduced and a new service began. A new objective was set up. A claim went forth that the Kingdom of God had begun, and that its demands should be observed by all men everywhere. A ministry directed towards the Gentile "residue" of men was initiated and carried to great lengths.

That activity switched the minds of brethren away from the form and purpose of the former ministry, and concentrated their minds upon what was called Kingdom work—the announcement that the Kingdom of God was here, and that men should submit to its requirements.

If our deductions concerning James' remark to the Conference at Jerusalem are correct, then that work beginning nearly thirty years ago was wrong, and based upon a great mistake. We believe that it was wrong, both in its message and objective.

It is for every brother to face this issue to-day and decide the question of his activity in the light of the evidence submitted in this series of Articles. If any Brother concludes that his service should be directed to the unbelieving man of the world, then we say again, to such an one, that his theme should be to call them to repent from Sin, and accept the Lord Jesus as their Saviour and Lord, and then, that accomplished, exhort them to go forward to present themselves a living sacrifice. This is in line with the work of this Age—the "Remnant" Age—and nothing in the Word of God forbids such a ministry. In such a work the workmen will be co-working with the Spirit of God in its present ministry, and in so doing may count on the approval and blessing of God like Wesley and Moody did.

If, however, the enquiring brother concludes by the signs of the times that it is rather late in the day to convict this present generation of Sin—because of its acceptance of other and more pleasant doctrine—socialism, humanism, or other modern theory—there is still a sphere of service crying out for all the aid he can give—a need that will deepen with

the passing years. Let him seek to establish all the Lord's children in grace. Let him feed the sheep of the Lord's pasture everywhere, and strengthen their endurance through this last weariness and final strife of the Church's Gethsemane hours. That is the work of the Lord for these days—the work upon which the Most High is still engaged, the work upon which the great Shepherd of the flock is engaged, and the work in which every under-shepherd and co-worker will be glad to be engaged—and in the travail of the coming situation, there will be work enough—and more than enough—for every willing heart and hand.

These are the culminating sequences brought up to our day, of that unique experience, when, for Paul, the curtain was drawn aside, to reveal to him, as he stepped forward to begin and carry forward the invitation to the Gentile Remnant, that the End of the Plan was sure, and though strange things must intervene ere the End was reached, yet when came that End, there would be blessing for all for evermore.

Holding Forth the Word of Life.

The Prophet Jeremiah had a burning zeal in his heart, a consuming sense of the importance of the message given him to deliver. His previous declaration of the Word of God concerning Israel had been so despised and rejected that he had become disheartened. He himself declared, "The Word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily. Then I said: I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name. But His Word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary of forbearing, and I could not stay!" His message *had to be* spoken. The Lord had instructed him to tell Israel that they were about to be given over into the hands of their enemies.

If Jeremiah had allowed his fears to overwhelm him, and had withheld the message, undoubtedly he would have been set aside as the mouthpiece of God, and another would have been commissioned to deliver the message. The burning within the heart of the Prophet would have grown feeble and would ultimately have died out. When a fire is kept shut off from a draught for some length of time, it will become extinguished. This is as true in the realm of moral and spiritual forces as in that of physical nature. This is why.

the Apostle Paul urged: "Quench not the Spirit." We might let the Holy Spirit of God die out in our hearts by a failure to do our duty, a failure to keep our covenant faithfully. The light within us, the holy fire, would smoulder for a time, and finally become extinct. He could not withhold that which God had commanded him to speak; he could not quench the fire within his soul without losing his relationship with Jehovah.

Thus it is with us to-day. God has let us into the secret of His counsels. He has granted us a wonderful spiritual illumination. He has given us a Message of the utmost importance to deliver. We have been informed by the Lord that a great change is impending—that the lease of power to the Gentile nations is about to expire. We are instructed that the present systems of Christendom are to go down, that the rule of the present order is about to end, and that the dominion is about to be given "to Him whose right it is" to reign. The kingdoms of this world are about to "become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever."

This Message is not to be stated in a rude manner. But it is to be stated, nevertheless. The great King whom God hath appointed is about to come in. In Jeremiah's time, the message was that the Kingdom of God, His typical kingdom, was about to be overthrown. The lease of power to the Gentiles, under the domination of the Prince of this world, was about to be inaugurated. This order of things was to be permitted to run for an appointed time. That time is now about to run out. The King's Son is soon to receive His long-promised inheritance. (Psa. 2: 7-9.) We are glad that our Message is not now the *overthrow* of God's Kingdom, but the very *opposite* of this—the overthrow of the kingdom of darkness and the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

So we are to tell forth this glorious Message. We are to tell it in our actions, in our words, by the printed page, by pictorial presentations to the eye, and in every way that the Lord shall give us the opportunity. If through fear of persecution, of losing prestige in the eyes of men, for love of ease, or for any reason whatever, we should fail to give forth the Message of God, it will be taken from us and given to one who is worthy. The Lord is seeking those who are valiant for Him, for righteousness, for truth. If we prove

ourselves weak, we are not fit for the Kingdom.

Is this wonderful Message, this Message the like of which was never before granted to men or angels to tell, burning within us? And are we speaking it forth, that its inspiration may cause other hearts to take fire?

If we refrain from telling the Glad Tidings, the result will be that the fire of God's Holy Spirit will become extinguished within us. And if the light that is within us become darkness, how great will be that darkness! The possession of the Truth—God's Message—brings with it great responsibility. Shall we prove faithful to it? Shall we show to our God our deep appreciation of His loving kindness in granting us the knowledge of His wonderful Message of Salvation, His glorious Plan, with its times and seasons?

There is a difference between the operation of the Lord's Spirit in His children now and its operation in the days of the Prophet Jeremiah, and the other holy Prophets. During the Jewish Age the Holy Spirit acted upon the servants and mouthpieces of God in a mechanical manner. Now the people of the Lord have both His message in His written Word and the begetting of the Spirit, which gives us a spiritual understanding impossible to His people of past Ages. The mysteries of God are now opened up to His faithful children, the watchers; and we are granted a clear understanding of "the deep things of God," some features of which were never revealed until the present time, even to the most faithful of the Lord's saints. (1 Thess. 5: 1-6.)

We are also told by the Apostle Paul that the things which were written of the servants of the Lord in past dispensations were written for *our* admonition and instruction and comfort, "upon whom the ends of the Ages are come." (1 Cor. 10: 11.) Seeing all these things, dearly beloved, "What manner of persons ought we to be, in all holy conversation and godliness?" How earnestly, with what painstaking care, should we give heed to the Word spoken unto us! Let us be faithful in proclaiming the Message of our Lord, now due. Let us tell forth the words which He has put into our mouths, whether others hear or whether they forbear—whether our faithfulness bring us the favour or the disfavour of the world and of nominal Spiritual Israel. But let us speak His Word in meekness and love, leaving the results with our great Chief Reaper. The Day is at hand!"

COMMUNION

What is communion? Communion is simply sharing; to have communion therefore, we must have something to share; and to have communion with a Holy God, we must have something which we can share with Him. We cannot share nothing, and He will not share with us in the unclean. Our attainments, therefore, cannot yield communion, nor our works, for the best have sin in them. But, thank God, there is a perfect offering, the offering of our blessed Lord, and if we would have communion with God, the only way is to share that offering.

And this at once gives us the key to the cause of our lack of communion. Of intercourse we have enough, perhaps too much. Of communion, how very little. So little of Christ's offering is comprehended, that when believers meet they have scarcely anything of Him to share. And the same is true of our approaches to God, for there may be intercourse with God without communion. How often when we approach God do we speak to Him only about our feelings, our experiences, our sins, our trials. All this is right; we cannot be without these; and we are right to tell them to our Father. But after all this is not of itself communion, nor will speaking of all these things ever yield it to us. Let us come before God to be filled with Christ, to be taken up with Him, His life, His ways, His sweetness; let the confession of our failure and nothingness in ourselves be made the plea that we may be filled with Him; and our intercourse will be soon changed to communion, for in Him we shall have something to share. May the Lord lead us more into His presence, there to be taught what we possess in Jesus; and then, when we meet our brethren or our Father, we shall feast together on what there is in Him.

(Andrew Jukes.)

The second book gives an excellent background to both Old and New Testaments. The neighbouring lands are described, with Assyria, Babylonia, and Persia, the Empire of Alexander, and the Roman Empire. This comprises Section I, and, once again, the illustrations are very good indeed, as well as the maps. There is a picture of the Temple of Solomon with explanatory notes; and one of a Jewish mother with her babe in swaddling clothes. Section II is devoted to customs of the Jews in New Testament times—their homes, meals, love of ceremony, the Sabbath Day, festivals of Jewish life, marriage feasts and funerals.

Altogether, these books are excellently executed and should repay careful study by all Bible students. They are the work of E.M. Sanders, B.A., Senior Geography Lecturer at the Furzedown Training College.

"The Foolishness of Preaching." By the zeal of a brother who wishes to remain nameless, a reprint of this article has been made available for brethren who could make good use of small quantities. A copy is enclosed with this issue, and friends who could use more are invited to write to the office and a supply will be sent.

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Important Announcement.

Consideration has now been given to the response to the "Important Notice" in the July and August issues of the Bible Students Monthly. The number of replies received was exceedingly small and revealed a general lack of interest in the constitution and policy of the Bible Students Committee. The nature of the few replies to hand were varied and conflicting, and afforded no guidance to the members in their desire and endeavours to reach a solution to the many problems which have accumulated in recent years.

Circumstances which have made it necessary to divide the work among brethren in widely scattered districts have greatly increased the difficulties of administration, and there seems to be no likelihood that the work can again be centralised. Differences of view-point among the Committee members concerning doctrine and policy have also created a condition in which effective co-operative service is no longer possible.

In view of the meagre response to the appeal for guidance and direction, it has been left to the remaining members of this Committee to decide in what way the approved and essential services for the brethren might be continued. This matter has been the subject of much prayerful consideration and it is now decided to recommend:

THAT in view of the inability to obtain a mandate from the brethren for the continued existence of the Bible Students Committee, this Committee be dissolved as from December 31st, 1945, and that the essential service on behalf of the brethren be administered in the following manner:

- (1) The control of the Bible Students Monthly and kindred publications to be the sole responsibility of Bro. A. O. Hudson, aided by an advisory panel of brethren chosen by him.
- (2) The existing agency for the overseas journals (Dawn, Herald and Peoples Paper) and publications other than B.S.C. publications to be dealt with by Bro. E. Allbon.
- (3) The administration of the Benevolent Fund to be controlled by Bro. G. A. Ford, aided by two responsible brethren chosen by him.

(Continued inside back cover.)



"On Earth Peace— Goodwill toward men"

These words form part of the message of the heavenly host at the time of the Nativity. The sacred record reads, "Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." The way in which this was to be accomplished and the reason for the long delay, however, were hidden from those to whom the words were addressed, and the purpose of God in Christ is still a mystery to all save those who have been enlightened by the Holy Spirit to perceive the deep things of God. In order to understand how and when it will be true to say that there is "on earth peace, goodwill toward men" it is essential to appreciate Christ's method of dealing with evil, and also the mystical Body of Christ, composed of not one but many members.

The message had special appeal to the shepherds and those to whom they recounted the wonderful message that they had heard from heaven because their land had not known true peace for many years. Their background was one of captivity, warfare, rebellion, and severe suffering; they looked back upon the destruction of Jerusalem in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, and the consequent national disintegration. The restoration after the seventy years of desolation was only as a tributary nation under Babylon, later under the Medo-Persians, and then under the Greeks. The attempts of the Greeks to Hellenize them led to revolt which succeeded after dreadful persecution, not due solely to the military prowess of Judas Maccabæus, but more by reason of the collapse of the Greeks before the rising power of Pagan Rome. Under the Hasmoneans there was a period of unstable independence until 63 B.C., when Pompey marched his Roman legions into Jerusalem. From that

time until 70 A.D. there were many rebellions against the invaders, and it is little wonder that all men were in expectation of Messiah as they longed for relief from their sufferings. In 37 B.C., for example, Herod was sent to Jerusalem with the title "King of the Jews" and crucifixion was the legalised penalty for any traitorous act against the Roman yoke. While Jesus was a young child, however, a widespread revolt broke out and Jewish rebels held out for months in the fortress of Sepphoris a few miles from Nazareth. Eventually, the Romans put down this insurrection with all the savage cruelty of old-time Pagan Rome. Some two thousand male prisoners were crucified, while women and children were sold into slavery. These terrible happenings and similar episodes are reflected throughout the Gospels as, for instance, in Luke 13: 1, where we read of "the Galilæans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices."

In the midst of these conditions, Jesus grew to manhood's estate, and by reason of His inherent perfection He would naturally stand head and shoulders above His fellows. They would look to Him for leadership in confident anticipation that He would be able to free them from the Roman aggression. They expected, as do so many to-day, that "on earth peace, good will toward men" would come by means of armed force by which their enemies would be crushed in the same way as they themselves had been subjugated. How bitterly disappointed must they have been, therefore, when the One to Whom they looked for leadership on His return from the wilderness declared an entirely different policy. He exhorted them to love their cruel enemies and to do good unto them; if they were smitten on one cheek, as often happened in the streets, then they were to turn the other; if a Roman compelled them to carry a pack one mile, they were to go twain. There were many features of their own Law which were somewhat severe, but Jesus taught them by both precept and example to act in an exactly contrary manner. In Matthew 5 there are many of these contrasts: "Ye have heard that it hath been said," then follows, "But I say unto you," as in verses 43 and 44: "Ye have heard that it has been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy, But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

The More Excellent Way.

They could not understand how such a method could accomplish any good. Time and again even the Apostles failed to follow this more excellent way. Peter struck off the ear of the high priest's servant; Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Put up thy sword (carried in that land as a protection against wild beasts) into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18: 11).

The Matthew account (Matt. 26: 53) clearly indicates that Jesus voluntarily allowed His persecutors to take Him captive, for He explained "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" This is the same thought as that given in John's account—"The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" If this be linked up with the words of Hebrews 5: 8 we begin to see the Divine method, for there we read "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." God's ways are higher than our ways, and His thoughts are superior to those of men, even as the Creator is above the created (Isa. 55: 8, 9), and in due time, He will be vindicated.

In order to bring peace on earth, God had so arranged His Plan that His Son should be the Redeemer of mankind, and that He should give His life amid conditions of evil which He was commanded to resist by the force of love alone. This is very clearly seen when on one occasion the Greeks (it is understood) desired Jesus to be their King, which would have avoided the cruel death on the Cross. But Jesus, in perfect subjection to the will of God, informed them that if He was lifted up from earth to heaven then He would be able to "draw all men unto me."

When viewed in this light we can see the deep wisdom of the Heavenly Father, for in no better way could He prepare His dearly beloved Son for His future work as the Anointed Priest made "higher than the heavens." While Christ defeated the sin of the world by accepting it into His love, He at the same time learned obedience, demonstrated His absolute loyalty to God, and developed sympathy for those Whom He died to save. To this agree the words of the Apostle in Hebrews 5: 1, 2—"For every high priest

taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God . . . who can have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way. . . . So Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee."

This method seems so futile without the Divine Spirit of enlightenment. That is the thought expressed by the prophet "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living" (Isa. 53: 7, 8). So it seemed when He died, as they cruelly gibed Him: "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross . . . He saved others; himself he cannot save" (Matt. 27: 40-42). Nevertheless, He rose within three days to be the greatest Leader of all time because faithful to the Divine method in this Age of dealing with evil, and in due course "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied," for, by virtue of the Atonement, it will be possible for God to pour out His Spirit on all flesh so that they will learn to love peace and good will.

Called to Follow in His Steps.

The Scriptures reveal that Christ Jesus is to have a "little flock" associated with Him in the great work of bringing to pass the message of the heavenly host, and that they must walk the same narrow way as He trod; they must meet evil as He did—on Christ's terms, by Christ's way, and at Christ's cost. This is the mystery of Christ of which the Scriptures speak in many figures, types and shadows so that we may understand the close unity which exists between Head and members in sacrifice, and also in Kingdom power.

It was at Pentecost that the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus was first made known for, once Atonement had been made by Christ Jesus ascending into the presence of God (antitypical Most Holy), the Holy Spirit came upon the waiting disciples with creative power to transform them into His likeness as new creatures in Him. This is why we see in their writings clear instruction concerning the same method of meeting evil by the force of love alone, as a necessary preparation for our future work—a method to be adopted collectively and as individuals.

Let us now consider Christ's attitude towards evil as our pattern in the development of His likeness ready for the fuller life of the Kingdom, when peace will be on earth and good will among men.

Christ's terms. He asks nothing less than full consecration, which means that we are to be "dead" with Him. His was a sacrificial death, and we are called to be made conformable to that death, by filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ. Weymouth renders this thought as "I fill up in my own person whatever is lacking in Christ's afflictions" (Col. 1: 24) which demonstrates that the sacrificial sufferings were not completed with Christ, the Head. They are continued in Christ, the Body, throughout the Gospel Age, just as the anointing flowed down from the Head to the Body from Pentecost onwards. It is only by full consecration and entry into Christ that we can understand this apparently strange way of meeting evil, coupled with faith to believe that all such are being qualified thereby to bring peace on earth in due time.

Christ's way. The Apostle Paul had learned well the way of Christ when he witnessed the non-violent resistance of the first Christian martyr, Stephen. He was falsely accused, but he did not meet evil with the weapons of his persecutors, "and all that sat in the council looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel" for it was lighted with the Holy Spirit (Acts 6: 15). Later, he was stoned, but manifested the same disposition saying "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" and we also read "Saul (standing by) was consenting unto his death." His death seemed unavailing and powerless to accomplish good, but what a mighty force it was when later Saul heard the Voice of Jesus on the Damascus road: "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest" (Acts 8: 1; 9: 5), for he immediately linked up events with the death of Stephen and the "havock of the church" which he created by his zeal, wrongly directed. Little wonder, then, is it that we find Paul clearly defining Christ's terms in these words "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12: 21). These are the terms of the One who "loved righteousness, and hated iniquity" (Heb. 1: 9), realising as He did that it was not yet God's time to restrain evil in the world at large; the Gospel Age is the period in which Christ, Head

and Body, is to resist evil by non-violent methods, and thereby to receive their training for the Day in which evil will be suppressed. Christ's terms, then, are simple and plain; we are not to force them on others, but to realise that only the Body-members can fully understand their implications, and the peaceable fruit of righteousness which will be the outcome of suffering for His sake without resistance.

Christ's cost. This method is costly when judged by human standards. It entails sacrificial death, as in the case of Jesus, but if faithful unto death we shall be raised in the power of the First Resurrection—already in course of completion—with the Divine nature of the Kingdom. Then, and then only, will it be possible to bring about what good-intentioned men are now striving by their own efforts to accomplish—peace on earth, good will towards men. Man feels it nothing less than criminal to stand idle in the present chaos; he is impelled to do all in his power to crush collective evil whatever the means, but this is because he does not understand God's Divine Plan of the Ages. The Kingdom cannot come by man's efforts, but by God in the hands of Christ, the great Mediator—the One who has resisted evil by non-violent methods throughout the Gospel Age, first the Head and then the members. Man will never be able to cause wars to cease; it is God who will do this in His own time and way, for "He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth" (Psa. 46: 9, 10).

The Practical Application.

The ministry of affliction plays a very important part in the development of Christ. In 1 Peter 2: 23, we read, "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." It is sometimes said that this was because Jesus had a special work to do, whereas we are called upon to fight evil. The Apostle Paul writes, however, that "Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted we suffer it; being defamed, we intreat; we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day" (1 Cor. 4: 12, 13), and this reminds us that the servant

is not above his Lord. This is a line of conduct to be followed in the church and also in the world. It is no sign of weakness; it savours not of compromise; its practical outworking demonstrates both strength and beauty of character.

Conditions in Old Testament days were, of course, entirely different, and their wars when "iniquity had come to the full" were illustrations of God's righteous indignation to be manifest against all who, after full light and knowledge, choose evil rather than good. Nevertheless, here and there we see glimpses of the same Spirit which we are impelled to follow in this day when it is not "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." We recall the case of David's victory over Goliath: "Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied" (1 Sam. 17: 45). The three Hebrews resisted the king's decree to worship the image in the strength of God alone, but with a definiteness worthy of imitation "Be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (Dan. 3: 18). In the fuller light of the Gospel Age, of course, we see the Spirit of Christ manifest in the sufferings of the Body-members from our Lord's day, throughout the Dark Ages of the Inquisition and other forms of torture, down to our own day when, so far, the main suffering is in the mind. But the same Spirit of Christ must be manifest.

Severe tests have come amongst us—mental tests—and they demonstrate to what extent we have cultivated the Spirit of Christ. We must be definite in our views and give an uncompromising witness, but we must refrain from judging others in the sense of condemning them. "If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another" (Gal. 5: 15). The Apostle tells us that if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, then he is none of his, and the very essence of this Spirit is boldness combined with non-violent resistance, interpreted according to the high standard of Matthew 5. There is no limitation placed upon our Lord's teaching; it applies as between individuals and in the wider sense among communities, as already suggested.

Peace on Earth.

When the last member of this Christ class has passed

beyond the veil of the flesh, men will have the scales removed from their eyes; they will turn their instruments of destruction into utensils of husbandry (Joel 3: 10), and a new Spirit within them, according to the law of the New Covenant, will cause them to love their neighbours as brethren. They will then be well pleasing to the Heavenly Father through the Mediator, and bring to pass the words of our text which, according to Weymouth, reads "Glory be to God in the highest heavens, and on earth peace among men in whom He is well pleased!" That will be the time when in the Pastor's words "love welling up from every heart meets a kindred response in every other heart, and benevolence marks every act. . . . The inward purity and mental and moral perfection will stamp and glorify every radiant countenance."

Meanwhile, it is for us to continue along the narrow pathway, faithful to the increasing light of truth as we endeavour to make our calling and election sure for the Kingdom promised, on Christ's terms, in Christ's way, and at Christ's cost, come what may. Let us always remember that "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10: 13).

Amid the tears of grief, peace keeps her silent place, like the rainbow upon the spray of the waterfall; nor can it be driven thence so long as Jehovah's sunshine rests upon the soul. The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. So let us value more and more that calm deep peace in our hearts, knowing that all His dealings with us are for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness, and be fitted for the fruition of our heart's desire.

The Way of the Cross.



There is a "needs be" for the Way of the Cross. In the heavenly realms every obedient angelic being has great cause for rejoicing. His loyal submission to the Will of the Divine Sovereign does not occasion him one moment's pain or regret. He is so perfectly in harmony with a perfect environment that the carrying out of the commands of God are a joy for ever. Some perhaps are sent on missions of Creative Work and are agents of the Divine Power in bringing to the birth some new constellation or planet. Others may have their place in upholding and maintaining the present spheres in their orbits; and still others are ministering Spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation on this earth. Their submission to the Will of God is no "cross" to them. Their wills are in perfect alignment with God's Will, nor is there any innate desire to have it otherwise.

But it is not so with those from among fallen men who desire to serve the Lord God. The whole environment of their life is against them when they seek to surrender themselves to do the Lord's Will. The "world" with its customs and habits and ways of thinking is against them. Institutions and practices hundreds, if not thousands of years old, cluster thick around them. It is a "world" of evil—"this present evil world" as the Apostle styles it.

Then heredity is a handicap. In spite of the best of motives and the sincerest of desires, they cannot put these things fully into operation. There are "motions of sin" in the best of them. Then there is a wily Adversary—the conductor of the whole orchestra of evil things—ever manipulating world-forces against the saints of God. "Satan hindered me," says Paul on one occasion, and "hindering" is the least of his activities.

But even apart from these external things (as we can see in the case of the perfect man Jesus) the Will of God as it finds expression in works of Redemption, must of necessity fall across the highest natural instincts and longings of

men to direct and lead them to higher things. Left alone, these instincts and longings would run parallel with earthly things—finding joy and pleasure in the beautiful things of this world—its delectable flowers, and fruits, and sights, and sounds. Such will be restored humanity's portion through the eternal years, gratefully accepted from the lavish hand of a loving Providence.

To accept and bow to the Will of God during this period of Evil and Redemption must of necessity be a Cross. Why must this be so? Because the whole purpose of Redemption is God's alone. Apart from God's disclosure no one else could know what He purposed to do. No one by searching *could find out God. His ways are unsearchable.* Again, no one could know with what instruments He purposed to do His work, nor in what way He would use those instruments to do that work. This knowledge, and this mode of operation was His sole prerogative.

When, however, God spake to His ancient people through His messengers—the prophets—and also in a very particular sense through His Well-beloved Son, He showed Himself possessed of an intense love for His fallen son, of which He began to give most certain proofs. Chief among these proofs was the provision of Jesus to be a Saviour from sin. God made Jesus the messenger of an offer of life eternal, to as many as will accept His offer, so that they might enjoy His Love for ever. To put this fact of His Love beyond all doubt, God has purposed that the instrument He will use for man's uplift must be an expression of His own great Love. *It must have His own Spirit of compassion for the sinner,* and His own intense hatred of sin. It must be, as it were, God's altar ego—God's second self! But where could such an instrument be found? There was not any such instrument to be found anywhere, either in heaven or earth! Then, if God would have such an instrument, He must "make" it! Where shall He make it? In Heaven? No! only amidst the scenes of evil. From whom shall He make it? From angels? No, only from among men—such as had no love for the ways of sin. How shall He make it? Only by the process of suffering under conditions of evil.

God's great instrument was of His own devising—part Kingly, part Priestly, "a Royal Priesthood"—a gloriously ideal thing, envisaged and outlined in the mind of God long ages ago: a thing to be made in glorious perfection, by an unique process.

The sculptor sees his masterpiece before ever the chisel touches the flawless marble: the musician conceives his galaxies of sound before ever pen is laid to paper. So God conceived His great masterpiece, Christ—unique, exclusive, peerless, perfect—a thing such as only an Omniscient and Omnipotent God could conceive. And, up to the sublime heights of this conception, this ideal, God must develop the material to make His instrument.

"Perfect through suffering." What a method! Perfect? By what standard? An entirely new one, never before applied in either heaven or earth. Perfect? By what method? By means never tried before, either in angelic or human creations. First the Captain—Jesus—(Heb. 2: 10). "Princely Leader" (Rotherham): then "many sons led up to this glory." And these "many sons," remember, were warped and twisted; stained and soiled by sin, though they groaned under its burden. But grace, in due time, reached their hearts, and won its way in. And grace kindled new *desires and a readiness to yield to an amazing invitation—* a High Calling indeed—wonderful! amazingly wonderful!

But herein lies the "needs be" for the Cross. Hand and heart, instinct and motive, the whole life within and without must be transformed up to the "Ideal." And only the Omniscience of God knows what that is! And only the Omnipotence of God can do this thing! *And only the Love and Grace of God can sustain in the making!* Thus the Will of Him who knows must of necessity lie across the will of him who knows not, to direct and cause them to aspire up to God's perfect Ideal of Glory. Thus the Power of God must overshadow the weakness of those who leave the haunts of sin. Thus the Love of God must fill and enlarge the hearts which hitherto had been chilled and frozen amid evil things.

Life, hands, feet, voice, lips, silver and gold, moments and days, intellect, will, heart, love, myself—all in the Way of the Cross—to be moulded and shaped after the pattern of Christ, a loving God's other self. It must "needs be" therefore, that all who would serve Him, must "take up his cross daily."

"Lie still, and let Him mould thee."

Peace like a River.

In the midst of the storms through which we are passing we have peace, deep peace, too deep for any storms of earth to reach. In the world we have tribulation, but in Jesus we have peace. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." Clouds overshadow us, but on every cloud we see calm sunshine resting. "O that thou hadst hearkened to my righteousness as the waves of the sea" (Isa. 48: 18). Those who hearken to the Lord, whose ears are attuned to His word will find their peace is like a river. It is not stagnant as a lake, nor tumultuous as the sea, but ever in calm motion, ever flowing on in its deep channel like a river. The course may sometimes be through rocks, sometimes through level plains, yet still it moves unhindered on. It may be night or day, it may be storm or calm, but it is there, flowing on till the embrace of the ocean receives it. Such is our peace, let us hold it fast.

Public Meetings at Macclesfield. An account is to hand from friends in the Manchester area, concerning a very encouraging series of public meetings recently organised by them at Macclesfield. Lectures on four successive Sunday evenings were given in a good hall, the attendance being 85, 80, 45 and 55 respectively. The subjects were "Enduring Peace; is it possible?" "Man's Obstruction," God's Construction," "The Re birth of a Nation," and "The Great Home-coming." Advertising was by means of leaflet distribution, window cards, posters, newspaper adverts., and slides in local cinemas. The sustained interest was such that follow-up lectures were planned to be held with a view to the formation of a local group.

The friends who arranged these meetings did so under the conviction that this method of evangelical work can be very effective if carefully planned and vigorously prosecuted. The varied nature of the advertising methods used seems to have been justified by results, especially when the maintenance of interest, as shown by the relatively large proportion of attendants at the final meeting, is considered. It would appear that our brethren have good reason to feel encouraged at the outcome of their effort.

WHAT IS THE SOUL?

There has always been speculation and discussion upon the nature of the soul. The instinctive feeling that some part of man's being must survive death and live again, in some way, at some time, provides a theme for the debates and philosophies of every age. Present-day Christian thought has been determined to a considerable extent by the theology of the early Christian Fathers. Most of these venerable men had been educated in Greek philosophy and influenced by Plato, the Greek philosopher of the 4th century B.C., so that it is not surprising to find the latter's teachings occupying a more prominent place than they deserve. Plato's theory of the soul's immortality was based upon academic reasoning, and did not take into account the Divine revelation in the Bible, and for this reason much of the simple directness of the Biblical presentation is lost to orthodox Christian belief to-day.

Fortunately for the inquirer, the Bible gives a clear and unambiguous definition of the soul. Speaking of the creation of man—an instance of direct Divine intervention in mundane affairs—the record runs "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" (Gen. 2: 7). The Hebrew word is *nephesh*, translated "soul" over 400 times, "life" over 100 times, and "person," "self," "heart," "mind," "beast," "body," "creature," "thing," "mortal," "fish," all conveying the thought of a living personality or creature, a great many more times. According to this definition the soul is the result of the spirit of life operating in and manifested through a living, breathing creature. Thus Gen. 46: 18 tells us that Leah bore sixteen souls to Jacob, Exod. 1: 5 that seventy souls came from his loins, and Num. 31: 28 that animals also are "living souls." In Isa. 19: 10 the word is applied to fish, in Lev. 24: 18 to beasts, and in Gen. 1: 21, 24; 2: 19; 9: 10, 15, 16 to creatures. It is used for "person" about thirty times, of which Gen. 14: 21; Num. 5: 6; Deut. 10: 22; Prov. 28: 17; Jer. 52: 30, and Ezek. 27: 13 are examples. "Men" in 1 Chron. 5: 21, "body" in Lev. 21: 11 and Hag. 2: 13, "thing" in Ezek. 47: 9, "one" in Lev. 4: 27, and

"mortality" in Deut. 19: 11. Scores of other examples can be found upon referring to an analytical concordance.

In the New Testament the word "soul" is translated from the Greek "psuche," which occurs about one hundred times, of which about one half are rendered "soul" and the remainder, with few exceptions, "life." "*Psuche*" is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew "nephesh" and has the same meaning, this fact being demonstrated by the connections in which the word is used. Thus in Rev. 16: 3 the creatures in the sea are referred to as "living souls," and in Rev. 8, 9, as having "life," the same word "psuche" being used in each case. It occurs also in the sayings of Jesus: "The Son of Man . . . came to give his *life* (psuche) a ransom for many." "The good shepherd giveth his *life* (psuche) for the sheep." (Matt. 20: 28; John 10: 11.) In quotations from the Old Testament "psuche" is used to translate "nephesh," as for instance, 1 Cor. 15: 45, "The first man Adam was made a living *soul*" (psuche), and Rom. 11: 3, "I am left alone, and they seek my *life*" (psuche)—quoted from Gen. 2: 7 and 1 Kings 19: 10).

These are only some of the texts which show that the word is used to denote the living man in whom the Divinely-bestowed spirit of life is operating. The Book of Acts tells us that three thousand "souls" were added to the church, Jacob's kindred numbered seventy-five "souls," and the ship in which Paul voyaged carried two hundred and seventy-six "souls" (Acts 2: 41; 7: 14; 27: 37). Peter, likewise, says that eight "souls" were saved in the deluge (1 Pet. 3: 10). A very telling word in Heb. 4: 12 speaks of the "dividing asunder of soul and spirit," a clear intimation that the New Testament conception of the soul is one that identifies it very closely with the physical body. This was evidently in the mind of Paul when he used the same Greek word in its adjectival form to describe the difference between the physical human life and that spiritual life which belongs to the unseen world. In these instances "psuchikos" is translated "natural"—"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2: 14). "It is sown a *natural* body . . . there is a *natural* body" (1 Cor. 15: 44), and in an even more intensely physical manner the word is translated "sensual" in two places (Jas. 3: 15, and Jude 19), where the seventeenth-century meaning of "sensual"—

pertaining to the physical organism—is intended.

When it is understood that there can be no "soul" without the body, it becomes easier to perceive the necessity of a resurrection from the dead in order to attain future life. The Church recognises this fundamental truth in the creeds, but it is stated more clearly and logically in the New Testament. The great theme of the apostles was that life after death comes by means of a resurrection from the dead (Acts 4: 2; 17: 18 and 32; 24: 15, and 21), and Paul in his famous "resurrection" chapter (1 Cor. 15) showed that God will, in the resurrection, give to every person an appropriate body; to some a natural (earthly) body, and to others a spiritual (heavenly) body. This is only one of the many indications in the Scriptures that the Divine purpose includes for a restored and purified earth on which human beings endowed with everlasting life will give eternal glory to God's Name, a phase of His plans quite separate and distinct from the "heavenly home" which awaits the "spiritually minded in Christ Jesus."

The philosophy of Plato, which coloured Jewish thought at the time of the First Advent, and which insists that the soul has existed consciously from all eternity and will exist to all eternity, being carried into Christian theology, greatly obscured another important aspect of the Scriptural presentation. Jesus declared that God can, and will under certain circumstances, destroy the soul. "Fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in *Gehenna*." (Matt. 10: 28.) That the destruction of the soul is the inevitable consequence of deliberate, wilful sin, after full opportunity for reformation has been given, and rejected, is clear from Jas. 5: 20 and Ezek. chapters 13, 14 and 18. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" is as deliberate a pronouncement as Paul's parallel statement in Rom. 6: 23, "The wages of sin is death." If, as Gen. 2: 7 indicates, the combining the spirit of life with a suitable bodily organism constitutes a living soul, then the withdrawal of that spirit of life with the consequent death of the body means the end of that soul. Hence it is only as the spirit of life is safe in Divine keeping that a resurrection of the individual is assured, and this is the Biblical position (see Eccl. 3: 21).

It is probably true, however, to say that in our day the expression "soul" is taken to refer, not so much to the physical living being as such, which is the Bible usage, but

rather to mean the seat of consciousness, desires, intellect; that permanent part of man which endures throughout life as distinct from the flesh which is constantly undergoing change and renewal. (It is said that each part of the human body is renewed every seven years.) It might be justly said that what the normal Christian regards as the "soul" is that to which the Scriptures refer as the "spirit," or "spirit of life," and as Eccl. 3: 21 declares, it is this spirit of life which, at death, returns to God Who gave it.

A right view of the matter might therefore be had by saying that the infusing of the spirit of life into a bodily organism constitutes a sentient creature, or in Bible language, a living soul. In the case of man, there is intelligence, reason, powers of reflection and anticipation, etc., which men to-day, following Greek philosophy, are in the habit of calling "the soul." At death, this combination ceases and there is no more a "living soul," but the "spirit," being returned to God Who gave it, and imbued with those qualities of heart and mind which made the man what he was during life, is safe in Divine keeping until God clothes it with a new body—heavenly or earthly—in the resurrection.

The impressing of that spirit with those qualities upon a newly created, physical organism, will have the effect of reproducing that former identity. Such an one, awaking to consciousness, will pick up the thread of memory and experience at the point where it was broken by death. Thus it is that the doctrine of the resurrection is so important a part of the Christian faith; without a resurrection there can be no future life.

Anonymous. We are requested by Ilford to acknowledge in these columns the receipt of £2 for the Penevolent Fund, the address of the donor having been omitted from the covering letter, thus rendering direct acknowledgment impossible. The letter asked that each needy one should be given a little, and Bro. Ford will administer the gift in harmony with this request.

Many Wonderful Works.

Coming at the climax of a sermon unparalleled in all the recorded sayings of Jesus Christ, that reference to those who sought entrance into His Kingdom by virtue of their words and works has formed the subject of many a homily. With a very ready unanimity we join together in condemning the man who puts his trust in the arm of flesh and brings the fruit of his own works as an offering to the Almighty. Here in no unmeasured terms the Saviour of all men denounced the mental attitude which had made the Pharisees what they were in His day—a class of men who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others. The awful results of that self-blinding egotism were manifested when they crucified the Prince of Life, and desired a murderer to be granted unto them. Thus does the evil bring forth its bitter fruit—the husk of an outward righteousness as fair to the casual eye as the whited sepulchres to which Jesus pointed; but concealing a corruption and a defilement as nauseous and repugnant to the All-seeing One as ever the contents of those same whited sepulchres were to the Jews.

Is it because, like Isaiah, we see the glory of the Lord and wish straightway to be used as His messengers that we so easily fall victims to the temptation of engaging in outward activities for their own sake rather than the inward work of the heart, to which all external things are but hand-maidens. Just as a church is the shell which houses a congregation of worshippers and has no lasting value in itself, so also must the whole fabric of our earthly fellowship and service ever remain but an avenue by means of which we can feed and build up each other with the realities of Divine Truth. And yet just as in a church there is an altar which symbolises the presence of God, so in every form of Christian activity and service springing from the efforts of sincere and loving hearts, there is always manifest the Spirit of Christ—the material erection becoming in very truth an agent of Divine things.

Still must be remembered that truth enunciated by Paul in saying "we know that if this earthly house of our dwelling place be dissolved, we have a building of God, not made with

hands, eternal in the heavens." So must it be with all our fleeting arrangements and organisations; all those things which minister to the needs of the saints while in the flesh, but which must necessarily vanish away when their work has been done. Not one of these "mighty works" goes with us into the eternal light of the Divine Presence—for their purpose will have been served, and amply served, in the ministry to the saints here below. That Church which, founded at Pentecost upon a hope and conviction which had its anchor in things unseen, nevertheless developed and multiplied by means of the unremitting toil of saintly men and women who counted not their lives dear unto them; and who, in lives given up and sacrificed on the altar of service, found a richer and fuller and nobler life even here amidst the imperfections of the earthly state. Paul in organising new communities of believers; Timothy setting in order the things that were wanting; the seven first deacons administering the serving of tables; in all of this we do not see the frantic building-up of a vast and imposing edifice which would absorb the thoughts and energies of all believers, and dissipate those energies in a useless beating of the air. What we do see is the serious and solemn administration of a sacred trust left by the Master Himself, He who knew only too well how the heart left to theorise and meditate upon His message without the broadening influence of service for others must inevitably become self-centred and egotistic. We see thoughtful and zealous men and women full of the Spirit and of wisdom, rejoicing not only in the intellectual satisfaction of a clear knowledge of the Truth, but also in the abundant opportunity of manifesting the influence of that knowledge by their works and activity among their brethren and neighbours. There can be little doubt that the early years of the primitive Church were years of ceaseless activity. "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the Temple and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." The wonderful growth of the Christian community was due as much to the burning zeal of those who went forth to propagate the new faith as to the readiness of a sin-wearied world to listen with hope to the message of Him who should come.

But in all of this the early Christians thought little of their own personal relation to the organisation they were

building. Sufficient that this marvellous fellowship which was coming into being was steadily making progress through every stratum of society. Sufficient that the name of Jesus Christ was becoming increasingly familiar to those who met on the Sabbath day throughout all the cities of the Dispersion. Sufficient that the words of Jesus "Ye shall be witnesses unto me—to the uttermost parts of the earth" were having a glorious fulfilment. Of their own place in these things they thought not at all, but, like saints of earlier times, took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that in heaven they had a better and a more enduring substance.

Let us take to ourselves the lesson they so nobly taught. Let us in all our activities and arrangements, our organising and building, ever remember that all these "mighty works," desirable and even necessary as they are to-day, are not intended to endure for all time, to be jealously guarded and handed down to posterity. They are for the needs of the moment, for the promulgation of the Word of God and the edifying of the Body of Christ—UNTIL we all come, in the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, to the measure of the full stature of the Anointed One. Happy is the brother or the sister who can touch lightly these things of this earth, realising their place in the leadings of the Good Shepherd, thankful for their provision, and yet without regret or repining seeing them wax old and vanish away when their period of usefulness has passed.

So doing, we shall never be of those who, at the end, must needs claim their wonderful works as their only recommendation for entrance into the Heavenly Kingdom. If our building has been with the gold, silver and precious stones of the eternal truths which are revealed to us by the Holy Spirit of God, and if we have so learned Christ that the failure of all material supports and defences leaves us "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might" then indeed we shall not be of those to whom will come the sad, regretful words "I never knew you. Depart from Me."

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On and from January 1st, 1946, the above arrangements to replace the present Committee organisation and the name "Bible Students Committee" to be no longer used. The existing assets of the Committee to be divided between the above three sections as is necessary for the continuance of the appropriate services.

The present Committee sees no alternative to this proposal and recommends its acceptance by the brethren. Will those interested kindly indicate their acceptance or otherwise on the ballot paper enclosed with this issue and post same to arrive not later than December 20th, 1945, to the Scrutineer, Bro. G. Absalom, The Square, Beeston, Notts. The result will be announced in the "Bible Students Monthly."

In harmony with its powers under Article 1 of its Constitution, the present Committee has delegated its work to the three brethren above mentioned to be conducted by them as described pending the result of this ballot.

* * *

It is important that the above changes be noted and all correspondence addressed as below after the end of 1945.

- (a) All subscriptions for the B.S.M. and orders for kindred publications should be sent to:—
 Mr. A. O. Hudson,
 18 St. Ives Road, Leicester.
- (b) All subscriptions for the "Dawn," "Herald" and "Peoples Paper," and orders for all overseas publications should be sent to:—
 Mr. E. Allbon,
 20 Sunnymede Drive, Ilford, Essex.
- (c) Donations for the Benevolent Fund and matters pertaining thereto should be sent to:—
 Mr. G. A. Ford,
 13 Cranleigh Gardens, Luton, Beds.

—THE BIBLE STUDENTS COMMITTEE.

Announcements.

Gone from Us. Sister Tucker, of Sidmouth, finished her earthly course on Thursday, October 18th. She had known the Truth for many years and at the time of her death was still rejoicing in the Hope of the Church and the promise of Times of Restitution. The prayers and sympathy of those who knew her will go out to Bro. Tucker, and to her mother, Sister Castell. The service was conducted by Bro. Fox, of Yeovil, on Monday, October 22nd.

Home-Gathering at Yeovil. On Saturday and Sunday, September 8th and 9th, the Yeovil class enjoyed a home-gathering, a profitable season of spiritual refreshment and fellowship. The Saturday session was addressed by Brother Batcheller (London) on lessons from Genesis and Revelation. He was followed on Sunday morning by Brother Burge (Birmingham) on "Paths of Promise" and in the afternoon by Bro. Fox with a talk "The Shepherd and the sheep." Bro. Batcheller concluded with the subject "A wilderness song," the expressed wish of all present being that another such gathering might be possible next year.

Sacred Art Calendar, 1946. This well-known calendar is obtainable as usual from Brother F. Lardent, 174 Forest Hill Road, London, S.E. 23, at 2/9 per copy post free, including purchase tax. The usual photographic calendar post-card is also available from Bro. Lardent at 3/- per dozen post free, in two styles. The Sacred Art Calendar hardly needs description, most of our readers are familiar with its coloured illustrations, and texts for each day of the year.