

APRIL 1949.

The Berean Christadelphian

EDITED BY G. H. DENNEY & G. A. GIBSON

*Devoted to the exposition and
defence of the faith once for
all delivered to the Saints;
and opposed to the dogmas
and reservations of the Papal
and Protestant churches; with
the object of making ready a
People prepared for the
COMING OF THE LORD*

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Berean Christadelphian

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CONFUSING THE TRUTH.

“I would suggest that discussion of the very knotty and intricate subject of the manner of the manifestation of Deity in flesh be suspended among you for a while. In the meantime it may not be amiss for our metaphysical friends to see if they can agree among themselves with regard to the more simple proximate and primary question—what is flesh? before they undertake to speculate dogmatically concerning the manifestation of Deity in flesh, who is spirit. I may remind you that metaphysics are of a very unsubstantial and shadowy nature. As a system it is a science so-called that treats of things immaterial and therefore intangible and visionary, and which may be considered to be quite beyond the sphere of all profitable inquiry by plain men like ourselves whose faith is based upon the revealed testimony of God and not upon the manner in which essences are generated: and how entities and quiddities are induced. We can easily believe the testimony of John that God can of stones raise up children to Abraham, with a true and valid faith, which is not at all impaired by our metaphysical inability to explain the process by which He is able to arrive at such a result. The faith that saves men is the simple belief of the testimony divinely given not a metaphysical or scientific comprehension of processes. Metaphysics are capital things for "doubtful disputations" and are admirably adapted to the development of "sounding brass and tinkling cymbals". Let our friends therefore who would grow in the knowledge of God and in His favour, eschew metaphysics by which they can never be spiritually improved. As they say in Scotland, Metaphysics is when two men talk the gither and the ane who hears disna ken what the ither says: and the ane who speaks disna ken what he says himsel".

JOHN THOMAS. 1871

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EDITORIAL

THE SIMPLICITY OF THE TRUTH

It may be said that Truth is always simple and this has been contended for by many philosophers. But Truth is a term designed to cover many things. The Scottish people have an expression "Facts are chiels that winna ding," which being translated colloquially into English means that you cannot mess about with facts. They stand fast in their own naked integrity.

When however the human mind gets to work upon facts, especially if a certain objective is in sight rather than a desire to plainly ascertain the truth, then we get some queer developments. Just one simple illustration: —No book so plainly teaches the mortality of man and the necessity of resurrection if a further life is to be enjoyed, than does the Bible.

But let a man become obsessed with the idea of man's inherent immortality and he will approach the Bible not to hear its message but to find something, no matter how tenuous, to support his view. The devotee of the ancient cult of spiritualism will excel all others in this respect. One such

recently quoted Psalm 78.2. to prove the authenticity of messages in séances in darkened rooms. At the present moment however our purpose is to depreciate the tendency that has been growing among those who are called Christadelphians to indulge in fanciful and metaphysical disputations. It gets worse. We should never have had any disputations among ourselves about doctrine if we had all been satisfied to stand fast by the simple truths we believed as a people, and as individuals, 80 to 100 years ago.

When one contemplates the piles of manuscripts, setting forth more erudite ideas than those of our earlier days, which have accumulated about us, we are appalled.

Who ever required all tho elaborate disquisitions on the flesh of man that have tormented us and caused division? No simple mind wants to indulge in deep discussion as to whether Jesus was of the same nature as ourselves. Such is satisfied that "He was made in all points like unto His brethren:" "For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."

It only creates confusion to say as one of our most prominent writers has recently said that there is a gulf between Jesus and all other men. There is no such gulf, except maybe such can be produced by the metaphysical reasonings for which like our beloved predecessor, Bro. J. Thomas, we have no use at all.

Once again then we plead for simplicity and not the over-elaboration which some indulge in.

We were no party to the deletion from Hymn 160 of verse 6 in the old edition in order to accommodate some very doubtful reasoners about "God manifestation."

Nor can we be enticed by one who recently wrote us, to become pedantic and substitute, in our conversation "Yashua Messiah" for Jesus Christ and to abandon the use of the term "Lord" in favour of the term "Yahweh." Says our friend, "The phrase 'Coming of the Lord' on your cover is an unChristadelphian one; please replace it with the 'Coming of Yahweh'." Bro. R. Ashcroft was well able, metaphysically, to talk as he did about the Inspiration of the Scriptures in 1885. But for plain folk it was enough to accept the simplicity of 2 Tim. 3: 15-16

Bros. E. Turner, G. J. Hadley & A. D. Strickler talked learnedly, but again metaphysically, about the flesh of man, free life under the law, and of the flesh of Jesus, but they would have done a great service to the Truth if they had instead used their abilities to preach the simple Truth of God. Solomon was right when he labelled such work as theirs as "vanity". That is all it ever was.

Bro. J. J. Andrew would never have troubled us all about responsibility if it had not been that he delighted in subtleties. Clapham Ecclesia would never have split us all to pieces in 1942 if they had been content with tho simple truth.

Heed the warning we once more give. Drop all these silly rambling arguments which figure so much in the current literature of tho brotherhood and get down to tho earlier sympathetic, loving hardworking, joyous methods that accomplished so much. Try to agree and not to offend: to work more & talk less.

There never was the slightest need for interpreting "growing in the Faith" to mean a continual changing of one's ground. If all the ideas that many now deem essential were to be generally accepted then we should never be able to assure the validity of one single baptism.

One cannot be accused of unfaithfulness who loves the simple Truth and has no use for all these speculations.

Nor has any ecclesia or individual the right to set out some new thing and then demand general acceptance for it.

At the same time while false doctrine must always be resisted the fault of division does not lie with those who do so resist but with those innovators who introduced the mischief.

Let us in love hold fast to the simple elements of the One Faith and put aside "doubtful disputations." And let us work for the Truth with all our might. The day of opportunity is far spent.

G. H. D.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

ISRAEL.

Once more we put first in our observations the present position of the new dominion of Israel. The taking over and alteration of Palestine House in Manchester Square, London, has now been completed and ISRAEL has designated it as its Embassy. There is no doubt now of the strength of the Jewish Government and its ability to look after its own affairs.

Dr. Bunche having completed his work is returning to U.S.A. The Arabs and the Jews never have worked together and never will. They are utterly incompatible. The fact has however to be faced that the Jewish people from the point of view of both military and political strategy appear to have completely outwitted their enemies.

Belgium, Holland, New Zealand, Australia as well as Britain have with others now agreed to recognise the ISRAELI Government.

We await with interest the result of the application to be given admission to the United Nations organisation which has now been sent from TEL-AVIV. Will Russia support the application?

* * *

DR. CHAM WEIZMANN.

We quote from Lloyd George's "War Memoirs" the following: —"When our difficulties were solved (re explosives) by Dr. Weizmann's genius I said to him, 'You have rendered great service to the State and I should like to ask the Prime Minister (Mr. Asquith) to recommend you to His Majesty for some honour.'

He replied 'There is nothing I want for myself.' 'But is there nothing we can do as a recognition of your valuable assistance to the country' I asked. He replied, 'Yes, I would like you to do something for my people.' That was the fount and origin of the famous declaration about the National Home for Jews in Palestine." This modest and unselfish man, Weizmann, is now the president of the State of Israel. He is a moderate man not at all an extremist and it is to be hoped that he will be wise in counsel and administration. Then we may soon see fulfilled the words of Ezekiel "dwelling safely all of them" etc.—Ezekiel 38.

* * *

THE ANTI-ZIONISTS.

We never hear anything now of the Anti-Zionists among the Jews, whom Dr Weizmann in his autobiography describes as his worst enemies. They denounced him as a "British Agent" and altogether discredited his ambitions. Then when he had won his fight with them all and survived white papers and broken promises the day came at last when premier Ben Gurion nominated him as President. But it must be recalled that it is only a short time since the same Ben Gurion drove Weizmann out of the Jewish Congress. But this is what Ben Gurion said in his speech of nomination "I doubt whether the presidency is necessary to Dr. Weizmann but tho Presidency of Dr. Weizmann is a moral necessity for the State of Israel". The Doctor has just published his Autobiography (Hamish

Hamilton 21/-) and any who can afford it should buy it. Those who cannot, should borrow it. If ever a book linked itself with Bible prophecy without admitting it, this one does.

* * *

RUSSIA and TURKEY and OIL.

Turkey stands in Asia Minor and Europe's tip, between Russia and her satellites on the one hand, and the Middle East countries. So she needs, and keeps well trained, an army to defend the Oil fields of the Middle East and the military bases down to Suez. Turkey has approximately a half-million men under arms. She has received much help from U.S.A. but not enough for her needs. 61,000 tons of military equipment has gone to strengthen her frontiers with Russia. There are over 20 American missions in Turkey. But Istanbul (Constantinople) remains the chief centre of Turkish culture and communism finds no place in it. Sitting astride the narrow Isthmus which divides two worlds of East & West the city never knows, but always fears, when Russia will determine for the last time to invade and ruin her. The dream of Peter the Great will at last be realised but only for a little while. It is clear from both Ezekiel and Daniel, with some light from Zechariah, that Russia is getting ready for her fatal adventure South and East.

The world views the prospect with dismay. The oil regions are of the utmost importance to the non-Russian-influenced countries. Everywhere observers of world politics are setting forward the facts of this critical position in the Middle East. "When ye see these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your hearts for redemption draweth nigh." - - -

* * *

ANXIETY IN THE KREMLIN.

Viscount Bruce, Australia's former Prime Minister and till recently High Commissioner in London in an address to the Leeds University said—

"The fundamental cause of the present malaise is the differences and even antagonisms which have progressively developed between the democracies on the one hand and totalitarian Russia on the other.

"In attempting to form a view as to why this has happened, it is necessary to consider what is Russia's objective in pursuing the course she has.

"There would seem to be two possible answers. They are that the Soviet leaders of Russia are determined on world domination and the establishment of Communism in all countries; or, alternatively, that they are so fearful of their own position that they have been forced to create the bogey of capitalistic aggression against Russia and ruthlessly to employ the methods of the police State in order to maintain their grip upon the people".

We suggest that a mixture of the two answers is what we shall see hastening on the final war and leading on to Armageddon.

* * *

BRITAIN'S MEAT RATION

An "austerity" Budget with little or no relief of present taxation and with new burdens imposed makes the British people the most heavily taxed people in the whole world. Luke 21 with its message as to perplexity is well illustrated by the Chancellor's speech (Sir Stafford Cripps). As we read it we felt that he did not really know what to do. At the same time the greatest meat eating people in the world, the British, are now no longer able to boast of the Roast Beef of Old England. Looking at a cutting preserved from 1914-1918 we see that the lowest meat ration then was 2/- per head per week in value. To-day with meat much dearer we are allowed 8d. per week for just a few ounces, scarcely enough for one meal. Then we are told that this small morsel is to cost more by 4d. or 6d. but will not be increased in weight.

The Butchers' Federation are very unhappy and feel that their advice is scouted.

Does this not again illustrate the word "famine" in Luke 21?

So the Bible today is vindicated.

Man has made a fearful mess of trying to govern himself. It has not helped to alleviate his miseries that so many leaders have turned away from God and thrust aside His Work.

Everything points to the Coming of the Son of Man.

Then we shall see the "shaking of the nations" and the vindication of God's elect.

* * *

HAVING A FORM OF GODLINESS.

Paul told Timothy that in the last days men would have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof. This has been well illustrated in the religious press of Britain recently.

Two Bishops have loudly lamented the fact that men and women favour a "white wedding" in the Churches but have no regard for the ceremony beyond the show it enables them to make. Another laments the increase in divorces from an average of 300 per annum 40 years ago to 55,000 last year.

Now Dr. Barnes' chief helper, the Rev. G. Lin ton, Assistant Bishop of Birmingham has issued an appeal to the one-quarter million Black Country miners, chain makers and other workers asking them to respect Good Friday and not work on that day.

The Unions' reply through, the Amalgamated Engineering Union is that men prefer to work till Saturday so that they can have till the Wednesday following as a complete holiday.

The Rector of St. Martin's, Birmingham, says "We cannot dictate we can only appeal. He calls working on Good Fridays as a "scandalous habit".

While we are glad Christ's sacrifice is in some way remembered, we would remind ourselves that the fixation of the day and of Easter originated not with followers of Christ but with paganism enthroned in Rome.

WATCHMAN.

NO MAN'S LAND IN JERUSALEM.

There is a present division between the old and the new Jerusalem and a stretch of so-called neutral land. Barbed wire divides off the two spheres. The new City is Jewish and the old is Arab and governed from Transjordan.

In the King David Hotel the United Nations Conciliation Committee is working out a plan for making the whole City of Jerusalem international. It is a queer situation. The task of reconciling the three main interests is a very heavy one. These three interests are Arab, Jewish and Christian. King Abdullah is in possession of the Old City and of Bethlehem and other sacred spots and he will not allow the Jews to obtain control of those without a bitter fight.

The expected tourist traffic to the Holy Land would be strangely affected if the visits to the Holy Places had to be made via Transjordan in the first instance. Another very interesting development to watch!

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ECCLESIAL NEWS and Correspondence

(Brantford, Canada)

Christadelphian Hall, 44 George St.

Sundays: 9.45, 11 a.m. & 7 p.m.

On Saturday February 26, we held a farewell Social Evening in honour of Bro. H. W. Styles (now of Detroit). Our brother introduced the Truth in Brantford over fifty years ago; and for many years was Recording Brother. His faithful service was gratefully acknowledged by all present, who wished him "God Speed."

We are happy to report that on Thursday March 3, 1949, we assisted Mr. & Mrs. W. P. Easton to put on the saving name of Jesus Christ, through the waters of baptism. Our prayer is that Our Heavenly Father will guide them at all times, so that they may win the great prize of Eternal Life.

Visitors at the Table since last report include; Sis. Ethel Martin (Bronte), and Sis. Grace Marshall (London), Sis. Mary Sommerville (N.J.), Sis. Eunice Robinson (Pomona, Cal.), Bro. & Sis. Clifford Styles & daughter Margaret (Toronto). And from Detroit: Bro. & Sis. Albert Styles & daughter Sylvia, Bro. & Sis. Roy Styles, Bro. & Sis. Ernest Styles & daughter Joyce, Bro. Herbert Styles, Bro. Norman Styles, & Bro. & Sis. Arnold Robinson.

Brethren Clifford, Ernest, Albert and Herbert Styles, ministered to us the word of exhortation. They have our thanks.

F. G. Marlett, Recording Brother.

* * *

COLCHESTER.

38, Collingwood Road.

We have great pleasure in reporting the obedience to the Truth of Miss Eileen May King daughter of Bro. & Sis. King. She made a good confession of the Faith and was baptised at North London on Dec. 4. 1948. May her pilgrimage to the Kingdom be a happy one.

* * *

KIDDERMINSTER.

4, Ashgrove, Franche

Have you heard of the serious illness of Sister Baker of Blackheath? She had a stroke about 4 months ago. We have been to see her and also Sister Phipps of Birmingham.

S. Pigott.

CLAPHAM, THE DAWN and OURSELVES.

The official organ of the Clapham fellowship returns to the attack upon ourselves in its March number. The same contradiction is again seen in the profession of a "hightone" and the use of vituperation. We deplore this. It appears that we have been "castigated": we are "dishonest"; we "repeat half truths": we "mislead" and are guilty of "malpractices" etc.

Before we were excommunicated by the Clapham people we used to exhort them to strive to attain the very highest ideals of service and spirituality in life and conversation.

We warned them in 1940 that so much talk of adultery & divorce would inevitably lead to a lowering of ideals and result in a considerable deterioration in conduct generally.

We greatly regret to see that this was a true forecast. Today the main topic of conversation among them is that of adultery and divorce and now their magazine is devoted mainly to the same unsavoury topics.

This is not the Scriptural way to develop a mind after the Spirit.

The Apostle Paul highly commended the brethren at Philippi for their spiritual strength and then he went on to exhort them to strive for still greater measure of attainment.

He warned them not to let the mind dwell upon sordid things but to devote itself to the best possible thoughts because thoughts bring actions and actions build character.

Said he, If there is to be virtue and praise think on these things—True things, honest things, just things, pure things, lovely things, things of good report. "And the God of peace shall be with you." We know full well the weakness of human nature, and we would not glory in another's failure but we would exhort the Clapham people to take note of the fact that they cannot claim that their 1940-1949 contentions have produced a better standard of behaviour among their members than prior to that date or in comparison with the rest of us. In point of fact they have had more cases of adultery and other "malpractices" to quote their own word, than all the rest of us outside their ranks.

Let them heed the warning before their standard is still further lowered.

WHOM, NOT HAVING SEEN, WE HAVE LEARNED TO LOVE.

Jesus these eyes have never seen
That radiant form of thine.
Yet, though we have not seen and still
Must rest in faith alone
We love thee dearest Lord and will,
Unseen but not unknown.

1 John, 4: 10, etc.

EXHORTATION

THE BUILDING OF CITIES.

We have all doubtless often been struck by the remarkable coincidental relationship between the various parts of a day's daily readings, revealing the marvellous interweavings of the harmony and unity of God's Word.

Such is the case when we find ourselves, by the "Companion," reading Isaiah 52 and Revelation 14 together. Therein we have a parallel picture of history's two great symbolic cities, with their ultimate destinies—Jerusalem and Babylon.

Isa. 52: 1, "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean."

And Rev. 14: 8, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

The Holy City, the city of life and hope and light—and the unholy city, the city of death and confusion and evil. The city of future eternal joy—and the city of present, passing pleasure.

Both these chapters carry us forward to the time when the wisdom of the true choice will be manifested for the blindest to see—Zion exalted and Babylon destroyed. No exhortation or persuasion will be needed then to point out the advantages of the more excellent way. It will be convincingly clear to all, but the books will have been closed and the decree will have gone forth:

"He that is unjust, LET HIM BE UNJUST STILL" (Rev. 22:11).

Too late then to seek oil in panic-stricken confusion. There was plenty of time once, and constant pleadings and urgings, but now it is too late.

This picture of two cities, two rival commonwealths, is woven all through the Scriptures. This pictorial and allegorical form of instruction greatly helps the memory and impresses the imagination. The seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman run parallel right from the beginning. From the time Cain hated and slew Abel because he was annoyed and condemned by Abel's more faithful and fuller life, the two cities have existed. Cain went, we are told, and built himself a city (Gen. 4: 17)—an establishment, a center, an organisation, a foundation of power. Abel already had a city. He was satisfied and secure. So Cain hated him in the misery of his own misdirected and unsatisfied desires.

* * *

The sons of God, in the long years that followed, tired of the Zionward journey. The vision of their distant city grew dim. The glittering cities of the children of men drew them aside and the result was the greatest catastrophe that has yet befallen the race. Out of the wreckage, only eight were saved, and even among those eight, all was not well.

And when men began to multiply again, they said (Gen. 11: 4):

"Go to, let us build us a city."

Give us a city, give us a king, give us something we can see and handle, something social and exciting. This spiritual city, this divine King, this joy of the Spirit and treasure in heaven are rather thin fare for the natural appetite. "Our soul loatheth this light bread"—this divinely-provided manna from heaven.

But there was one among them who could see through the emptiness of the present. Abraham set forth seeking a city that had foundations (Heb. 11:10). He was obsessed with a desire for something real and lasting. He knew that —

"Except the Lord build, they labor in vain that build it" (Psa. 127: 1), so he sought for a city—

"whose Builder and Maker is God" (Heb. 11:10)

By God's guidance he found the City of Peace with the King of Righteousness reigning in it (Gen.14: 18), set high upon a mountain in the Land of Promise. And Abraham was satisfied, for he saw afar off the glory of this city, and he believed these things, and embraced them, and confessed that he was a stranger and a pilgrim separated from the cities of the children of men and waiting in faith for the City of God.

Not far from this mountain, in the attractive green valleys below, there was a city of the children of men. And God said to Lot:

"Get you out of this place . . . escape to the mountains . . . lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of this city" (Gen.19: 14-17).

And so another chapter in the lessons of God was written, and Sodom, the city of corruption, added its name and example to Babel, the city of confusion.

Isa. says in this 52nd chapter, vs 4, "My people went down aforetime into Egypt."

See how marvellously the hand of God worked in this. And as we read, let us be impressed with the inexorable workings of God's justice—slow, invisible, often disguised, but terribly sure and strikingly fitting. Rebekah misled Jacob, very well-meaning but misguided; Jacob deceived Israel, still well-meaning but still deception; Laban deceived Jacob, not quite so well-meaning; Jacob's sons deceived Jacob and sold Joseph into slavery into Egypt; and finally the Egyptians betrayed and enslaved the Israelites and killed their children as they had thought to do to Joseph. What a gradually broadening chain of evil and sorrow!

And what did the Israelites have to do in Egypt?

"They built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Ramses" (Ex. 1: 11).

What irony! The sons of God sunk to ignorant slavery and forced to build cities for the earthly treasures of the children of men!

* * *

The next typical unholy city was Jericho. This was an important place, a strong fortress, the gateway to the conquest of the land of promise, it was the first city confronting the Israelites as they set out to occupy their inheritance; its defeat was miraculous and symbolic, and its destruction was complete.

It is several times called 'the city of palm trees.' Now palms throughout the Scriptures represent triumph and joy — victory after faithful struggle. Palms so appear in the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23: 40), at Christ's royal entry into Jerusalem (John 12: 13), and in the hands of the victorious host before the throne (Rev.7: 9). In Psalms (92: 12) and the Song of Solomon (7: 7), the righteous are likened to the straight, erect beauty of the palm tree.

How then is Jericho, the unholy city, a city of palm trees? Jericho is a counterfeit copy of the true. The palm trees indicate that Jericho is not just the cities of men generally, but the false ecclesiastical city. There is one reference to palm trees that gives us a hint of this meaning. Speaking of the heathen idols, Jeremiah says (10: 5): —

"They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not."

They have a dead form of godliness, but lack the living power. Trees without fruit, twice dead (Jude 12). In this light, the Roman system is pre-eminently a "City of palm trees," for their dead idols are legion.

As the destruction of the hosts of Sihon and Og typify the defeat of Gog, so the subduing of Canaan with its seven (or completeness of) nations typifies the subduing of the earth. And Jericho came first. At the 7th trumpet-sounding on the 7th day, Jericho fell. So will great Babylon, the unholy city.

Jericho had, to be utterly destroyed. The other cities of the land they took over and used but not Jericho. As the fourth beast, a curse of perpetual destruction was put upon it. It was never to be rebuilt.

But what happened? Someone in the host of Israel did not realise the terrible reality and power of the One Who was in their midst and led them, and great trouble came upon the whole camp as a result until they had put away the covetous one from among them. God had promised them abundance in His good time, but here was something they could not have.

But Achan was out of harmony with the purpose. He could not wait for God. "Is it a time to receive money and to receive garments?" said Elisha to Gehazi (2 Kings 5: 26). First things first, and all things in God's order, "Verily they have their reward."

Achan said (Jsh.7: 21), "I saw . . . I coveted . . . I took . . . and I hid."

He THOUGHT he hid. What a pitiful delusion! He dug a hole and hid it away from God! Is it possible that we sometimes are as foolish as that?

And what was it? "A goodly Babylonish garment." What a snare those goodly Babylonish garments have been to the children of God all through the ages!

It was a "goodly" one—doubtless one of Babylon's best, and the very latest model. But was it worth the price he paid for it?

John, saw the unholy city arrayed in a goodly Babylonish garment. He describes It in Rev. 17: 4,—

"And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls."

Her gold and precious stones and pearls are counterfeit, as are her palm trees. Her ostentatious parading of these apparently genuine symbols of righteousness and truth deceives the world and in a subtler way may deceive the very elect. Believers are in little danger of deception by the bare Church of Rome itself, or her many ecclesiastical daughters; but her institutions, customs and thinkings permeate the world. The fourth empire still exists in universal diffusion. It is still a Roman world. And each year, on Dec. 25, this Roman world pays more or less conscious homage to the scarlet woman on the seven hills.

"By her sorceries," says the Spirit, "were all nations deceived" (Rev.18: 23).

But Isaiah in this 52nd chapter, tells us of better garments than the flashy tinsel of Rome:

Vs. 1: "put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city."

Here is a refreshing and satisfying change of scene. Here is the beauty of holiness which so delighted the heart of the Psalmist:

"Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" (Psa. 29: 2).

What is this holiness, without which none shall see the Lord (Heb. 12: 14)? It is nothing strange or mysterious. The word simply means 'separateness.' Worship the Lord in the beauty of separateness, —separateness from anything that is displeasing to God or out of harmony with His ways. We can see immediately that the result must necessarily be perfect beauty.

It is not necessary to point out the desirability of beauty, but it is necessary to learn what, in God's sight, constitutes beauty, and what mars it. Solomon says (Ecc. 3: 11-14),—

"He hath made everything beautiful in its time: also He hath set eternity in their heart ... Whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and God doeth it that men should fear before Him."

He hath made everything beautiful in its time. All God's work, and everything associated with Him, is beautiful. Apart from God, nothing is. Of natural attractiveness, unassociated with God, Solomon says again (Prov. 31:30),

"Grace is deceitful, and beauty is vain."

And again (Prov. 11: 22) —

"Beauty without spiritual understanding is like a jewel in a swine's snout".

Wisdom will always perceive and be repelled by the snout behind the jewel. So beauty is purely a matter of spiritual education and discernment. It is inward, and not outward,—

"Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning (like the scarlet woman,) but; the hidden man of the heart, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit" (1 Pt. 3: 3-4).

There is one item of outward glory and beauty that God has expressed delight in—one that He himself has expressly created for glory. While of great beauty and dignity in itself, its chief beauty in God's eyes lies in its evidence of wisdom and discernment and humble acceptance of, and obedience to, God's will. Its importance rests in its symbolism of harmonious, God-appointed relationship. In God's love and wisdom He has made this a token of blessing and honor, and the marring of it a matter of sorrow and shame. God's mind is expressed in 1 Cor. 11: 6, 15.

The world's fashions in beauty vary with every age and every nation. What is beauty to one nation appears quite hideous to another. But God never changes. Are we wearing His Holy garments appointed "for glory and for beauty"—or the world's? When we are called to the judgment seat, we shall have to go as we are. The importance of some of the desires God has expressed may strike us a little more forcibly then than now.

Vs. 1: "Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city. From henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean."

As custodians of the holy city, believers have the solemn responsibility of maintaining its standards and laws. Bro. Roberts says on this point:

"If the knowledge of the truth fail to get the new man in the heart of the sinner, the baptism following his knowledge is not a birth. It is a mere performance of no benefit to him, but rather to his condemnation.

"It ought, therefore, to be seriously considered by all who contemplate that step, and by all who are called upon to assist them, whether there is evidence of death to sin before arrangements are made for burial. The burial of a living man is cruelty. It were better for the sinner to leave God's covenant alone than to make a mockery of it." (Fur. Seas., p. 13).

It is no kindness to either the city or the individual to bring in the uncircumcised in heart. The issues are too serious. The Holy City—God's city—has been in degradation and misery for 25 centuries. Why? Because the custodians of its holiness neglected to keep it holy. What an unforgettable lesson!

* * *

Vs. 3, "Ye have sold yourselves for nought . . ."

We are often reminded that the Jews are God's witnesses. What a sad witness they are to this eternal truth! What have they gained by putting aside the loving guidance and restraints of God's arrangements, and seeking their own pleasure and benefit?

"Unto them were committed the oracles of God . . . To whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the service of God, and the promises"

(Rom. 3: 2; 9:4).

What great blessings this people had! What great responsibilities these blessings entailed! What terrible punishments because they had been allowed to approach too close to God, and yet had failed to discern His mind or be transformed by His love.

“. . . and ye shall be redeemed without money."

God's purpose will not fail. Regardless of man's failure, injustice or unkindness, we have the Divine and Eternal assurance that certain things are sure and guaranteed. And Israel's long night is not purposeless. The nation will rise out of it purged and white.

What does He mean, "redeemed without money"? Surely this refers to the "stone cut out of the mountain without hands."

"Not by power, nor by might, but by My spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Zec. 4: 6).

When all natural strength and resources are spent and cast aside, then will redemption come. The proud and militant Jews of Palestine have a sad and bitter lesson to learn before that day. And so it is with spiritual Israel.

"My strength," saith God, "is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12: 9).

The proud, the able, and the self-reliant — all such are of no value to God.

* * *

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings of peace and salvation". (vs. 7).

Here is real and divine and eternal beauty. The Spirit through Solomon speaks of these beautiful feet in the Song of Songs (7:1), —

"How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince's daughter!"

The divinely-appointed shoes whereby they walk in the ways of God, and run to do His bidding. John sees these feet as flaming pillars of the fires of war, purging the dross and ugliness of the earth, preparing it for eternal beauty. (Rev. 10:1) Paul sees them shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace (Eph. 6: 15).

* * *

Vs. 8, "They shall see eye to eye when the Lord shall bring again Zion."

Why is it necessary to say that? The sad history of Israel, both natural and spiritual, shows how real and necessary this blessing will be, Consider the Jews—at the greatest moment of their history for the past 2000 years, faced naturally speaking with their supreme crisis—yet torn by bitter factions among themselves. And we remember the words of Joseph, as he sent forth his brethren with a message of life and hope for the perishing, "See that ye fall not out by the way" (Gen. 45: 24).

* * *

Vs.11, "Depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing. Go ye out of the midst of her."

That same warning again. That same picture of the two cities— come out of one and enter the other. Paul quotes these words of the Spirit through Isaiah when he says,

"Come ye out from among them and be ye separate and touch not the unclean, and I will receive you and be a Father unto you" (2 Cor. 6: 14-17).

This is the condition upon which alone God will accept us as children.

* * *

Vs. 13, "Behold My Servant."

There, in three words is the message of the Bible. Behold, give heed, learn and consider, hear and live. My servant—God's servant. There are just two kinds of servants, says Paul:

"To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness" (Rom.6:16).

Look out on the world—all those deluded millions who think they are free.

"We were never in bondage to any man," (John 8: 33), they said to God's servant who came to deliver them. And he said to them in his pity,

"Whosoever committeth sin is the slave of sin."

And the wages of sin is always—death. (Rom.6: 23).

But, 'Behold God's Servant.' Consider the pattern of service that God has presented in him.

"He shall deal prudently" (vs. 13).

The course he followed brought blessing and happiness to himself and countless others. He did all things well. Every action directed toward that single fixed goal of preparing a city for the habitation of his God. No time for anything else—

"I must be about my Father's business" (Luke 2: 49).

* * *

"His visage marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men" (vs. 14).

And the following chapter (53: 2):

"No beauty that we should (naturally) desire him."

The cross that wrung out his life would complete that to the uttermost. There was no beauty or attractiveness in that revolting spectacle of shame, but in that very service he opened up the beauty of holiness to a world hopelessly sold into the ugliness of sin.

"So shall he sprinkle many nations" (vs. 15).

The law has told us what the sprinkling signifies, and Paul tells us what it accomplishes, —

"Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience. . . ." a consciousness of evil and condemnation taken away by the knowledge that God has, in Christ, provided a way of reconciliation and life, through faithful obedience to his loving desires—

“ . . . let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith . . . for He is faithful that promised” (Heb. 10: 22-23)
Detroit. G. V. Growcott

FOLLOW ON.

Christ had his sorrows—so must thou
If thou wilt tread the path he trod—
O then like him, submissive bow,
And own the sovereignty of God.

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