

The Berean Christadelphian

A monthly magazine devoted wholly to the exposition and defence of the Faith once for all delivered to the Saints, with the object of helping to make ready a People prepared for the coming of the Lord. Opposed to the unscriptural teachings of the papal and protestant churches of the world.

Edited and Published by:
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“They received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many believed”—Acts 17: 11.

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"EXCLUSIVENESS" AND "BIGOTRY"

The Bible is a many-chambered casket. Reading therein, we become "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets." We become enlightened and justified by the faith we receive by hearing them.

The consequence, though glorious, is painful in one direction. We become despised and hated of men. The world detests what it calls the "exclusiveness" and "bigotry" of this position.

This we must endure. No one buys a thing of any value without paying a good price for it. Justification, leading to salvation, is the most precious thing upon earth. Therefore you pay a heavy price for it towards men, though as regards God it is cheap—"without money and without price."

It demands the sacrifice of what is sweet to all men: the friendship of the world. No man can be the friend of the world and the friend of God at the same time. There is only one way in which a man professing the Truth can be a friend of the world, and is by HIDING WHAT HE IS.

—Bro. Roberts.

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EDITORIAL

Leadership

In recent weeks some have expressed regret that we were "leaving the ecclesia." These have been assured, as we now solemnly declare to our readers, that we still stand firmly upon the historic and scriptural position that the Berean fellowship has held since its inception. As we stated in October 1949, we desire to make no change of any kind from this position. This statement was made in the fourth issue of the *Berean* after taking over the editorship. Because of our limited capacity as a writer, we felt that the task might be too great for us. But we determined to carry on, and do the best we could. If our literary ability was weak, we were convinced that it could be counterbalanced by using the pages of the magazine as a medium for the promulgation and defence of the old-fashioned Christadelphian standards and viewpoints of bre. Thomas and Roberts. In this we believe we have succeeded.

If a person saved us from drowning, or some other form of death, would we not feel grateful to them all the rest of our life? Should we not, therefore, be extremely thankful to our heavenly Father for what He has done for us through the labors of John Thomas and Robert Roberts? That is how we feel about it, because we are fully convinced that their expositions of the Scriptures of truth have provided us with a sound scriptural basis of apostolic doctrine and fellowship. It is, therefore, not only reasonable, but most important for us that we be familiar with what they have written.

We have recently been criticized for not providing any leadership in regard to the re-union movement. We believe that the charge is unjustified. Our position was made clear in the October 1949 *Berean* when we said—

"We do not desire to enter into controversy on these long-established principles. Nor do we desire to be party to any negotiations for the purpose of developing a fellowship solution by compromise or suppression of scriptural Truth, or ignoring, or condoning error. The strong stand of the Berean fellowship of the past is a priceless heritage. Let us strengthen the bonds of unity and fellowship amongst us. Let us be thankful that brethren in the past have held firm. Let us not sacrifice what has cost so much heart-ache in the past to establish.

"The greatest danger that assails us at present is not any one specific error, but a general blurring and obscuring of the vital importance of fellowship on the proper scriptural basis. Let us not lower the high ideals of fellowship by careless toleration of error, or by making the duties and distinctions of fellowship secondary to other interests and desires."

In February 1953, we further clarified our position on page 60. We suggest that our accusers read that statement again, and carefully, too. As to leadership in the re-union movement, that was entirely taken over by those who arranged the Jersey City Conference, and formed the basis upon which it was to be conducted. They also requested the editor of the *Christadelphian Magazine* to act as chairman, but did not even invite the editor of the *Berean* to attend. His own ecclesia requested him to act as a delegate, but he declined for the reason set forth by bro. Roberts in Section 44 of *The Ecclesial*

Guide. As bro. Roberts said, "*Such collective machineries create fictitious importances, which tend to suffocate the truth.*" That is exactly what happened at the conference. The real issue was evaded, and facts were covered up by high pressure, appeal to numbers, and sentiment. The cause of our separation in 1923 has not even been acknowledged. It was fully established that error was introduced at that time, and in loyalty to the truth, it should have been solemnly renounced. (We express these convictions with great reluctance, but we have been criticized repeatedly for having said so little on the matter. Our own desire is rather to devote the pages of the *Berean* to upbuilding scriptural expositions of the beauties of the truth, hoping in this way to contribute to a solving of the problem by stirring up to greater zeal and individual study.)

It is not leadership that is required—there is plenty of that. *What is needed is courage to stand firmly for what is right.* It is quite easy to break down the fortress of truth, and step out into the broad and pleasant way, and follow the crowd. But it requires courage, based upon a full assurance of faith and hope, to stand firmly, or as Paul says, "steadfast and unmovable." There is no bitterness whatever in such an attitude of enlightenment. It is the mark of wisdom. If there be some who are uncertain about the truth, they will be unprepared to follow such an example. They will become charmed by intellectual verbosity which tends to engender vacillating policies. If such prefer to wander in fog-land, there is nothing we can do about it. As to our own mind, we will express it in a combination of words by bro. Roberts, with our own.

Our mind is this—(and if others glory in their ways, we need not be ashamed to glory also)—our mind is that the truth has been found in its original simplicity and purity and completeness, and the only enlightened business in hand is to preach and contend for and apply this for the enlightenment of a generation perishing for lack of knowledge; and for the purification and comfort of those who love the truth. Our position is not an "holier than thou" attitude, nor can we be truthfully charged with being "righteous overmuch." In 1923 we acted with a good conscience before God, and with sorrow we were compelled so to act. To let bygones be bygones is a reasonable proposal, when the bygones have been sorrowed for and repented of, but no such action has taken place. Restoration of fellowship, resulting in union with unity, would be something to rejoice in, if it were offered on the basis of truth accepted and error discarded, but to accept restoration on the basis of a method which would cover up the real issue, would result in union without unity.

All serious minded brethren and sisters should fully realize that when a division has actually taken place there often comes, after a long time, an overweening desire by some to be reunited. But they should also realize that such action is often the result of fleshly emotion, rather than a true spiritual desire for sound company, and unless due care and mature judgment is exercised, it would result in the sacrifice of the truth for a Laodicean policy.

Our purpose, in the *Berean*, is to steer clear of the rising fog that would undermine our separation from the world, that would stimulate a sentimental love in place of the true love based on obedience, that would elevate the social side of ecclesial life above true fellowship in Christ, and do all in our power to bring before our readers the undimmed glories of the purpose of God as revealed in the gospel of salvation. The unchangeable ingredient in the situation is THE TRUTH, and the action it calls for at the hands of enlightened and faithful servants is to prove all things and hold fast that which is good.

—Editor.

REMEMBRANCE

No matter how pure minds may be (that is, no matter how thoroughly they have freed themselves from worldly things) they still need constant stirring up to remembrance.

The memorial supper is a matter of constant remembrance—"Do This in Remembrance." God Himself is the great Rememberer. He forgets nothing except that which He wills in mercy to forget.

The Scriptures contain many exhortations to remembrance. Forgetfulness is one of the greatest enemies of the spiritual mind in the present day of weakness. James speaks of those who get all worked up with zeal and determination—then straightway go and forget (Jam. 1:23). "Keeping in memory" is the distinguishing mark between a substantial and a superficial faith.

All flesh truly is weak and forgetful, but it will be noticed that memory generally follows the line of interest, and the things people love, those things they remember. Notice the class of things people remember and discuss without difficulty. It is a good index to their heart and mind. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Three things combat forgetfulness—search the Scriptures daily, exhort one another daily, and "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together" but "Do this in remembrance of me." Any who neglect these court disaster.

This principle, like other scriptural principles, works both ways. It is recorded that God keeps a book of remembrance for those who remember Him, and talk often together about Him (Mal 3:16).

THE ONLY WAY TO STAND APPROVED

The only way to stand approved by him whom we serve, when he comes in his glory, is to have good sense enough to lay hold, with all our hearts, on the things that pertain unto him, and to DEVOTE OUR LIVES to the doing of those things that he requires of us.

He has given us a rule plain enough, "He that doeth the will of my Father, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." NONE OTHERS HAVE ANY CHANCE. Christ himself said there would be certain parties who should come to him at his return, expecting he would take them into his company, but what does he say to them? "Depart from me, I know you not."

Please, therefore, remember, that there is something more to do than simply believing the Gospel, and being baptized. We must through this present life be controlled by the will of Christ, as expressed in his commandments; and in order to do this, we must make ourselves acquainted, and keep ourselves, by reading, familiar with these.—Bro. Roberts.

The Sabbath

By brother John Thomas

Shavhath, called "sabbath" in our tongue, signifies "cessation, resting, or time of rest," from the verb *shahvath*, "he ceased;" hence the phrase, *eth-yom hasshavhath*, "the resting, or sabbath, day." Moses says that this day was "the seventh day," and that it terminated the period during which the Elohim by the Spirit of the Invisible were occupied in fitting up the earth as a dwelling-place for the animal races.

The work being ended on Friday night, *shahvath*, "he ceased;" the Spirit ceased or refrained from creating and making on Saturday. Hence the reason given for blessing and sanctifying the seventh day—

"And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made."

He did not rest in the sense of being tired; for—

"The everlasting God, Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary:"

but He simply assumed inactivity or ceased His creative operations. What the words of blessing were we cannot tell, because they are not recorded. We may, however, infer that they were words of promise to man for whom the sabbath was made; and judging from subsequent revelation, we may conclude that the words of sanctification and blessing predicted a state of things upon the earth in the enjoyment of which all Adam's posterity approved of God should "be as the gods"—holy, happy, and in perfect harmony with Himself.

To *sanctify* is to "make holy." This is the prerogative of Deity. Holiness is not an *essential* quality of time, space, or matter, so that if any of these be made holy, it must be by virtue of its being *constituted* such.

Man, originally "upright," has lost his integrity, and is defiled. He is therefore essentially the opposite of holiness; and so cannot confer upon things an attribute of which he is himself destitute. To make things holy is to separate them from a common to a special use *according to divine appointment*.

Men cannot therefore of their own notions make ground, buildings, persons, times, seasons, and days, holy. They may agree among themselves to call cemeteries, churches, and days, holy; and can inflict penalties for the "desecration" of such things; but the violation of their laws with respect to these, lowers no man in the estimation of God.

Adam did not sanctify the seventh day. If he had made the attempt he would have failed, not knowing in what an acceptable sanctification would consist. And this is precisely the difficulty in which his posterity are involved—they have a vague idea the day should be *kept holy*, but they know not how to do it, much less do they know how to *make* it so.

God made it holy by His absolute authority. He made it holy for man's benefit; for the Lord of the sabbath has so declared,

"The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath."

Beyond an allusion to the division of time into periods of 7 days in the account of Noah's sending forth the dove from the ark, nothing more is said about the 7th day than what is contained in Gen. 2:2-3, until a miracle was wrought to prevent its desecration, in giving a double quantity of manna on Friday and none on Saturday; and until its observance was enacted by a law accepted by the 12 tribes of Israel.

The church and state of this renowned people Israel was one and indivisible, and grafted upon the stock, whose roots were "the Foundation of the World."

They were therefore told to "*remember* the resting-day, to keep it holy." In what way it was to be kept holy is defined in the sabbath-law. It consisted in not doing any work on the seventh day. There was no other way of keeping it holy.

The Son of Man, who is Lord of the sabbath, taught that it was "lawful to do good on the sabbath day." But *then* for an Israelite to kindle a fire, or pick up sticks, or buy and sell, or speak his own words, or do any kind of work, or for any other member of his household, stranger, or anything that was his, to work and pursue the ordinary avocations of the previous 6 days, was doing evil and not good, *for the simple reason that God had forbidden it*.

To observe the 7th day law in letter and spirit was to keep it holy; but to violate it in *one* particular was to be as much guilty unto death as if no regard were paid to the day at all; for the transgressor came under the sentence, which extended to the violation of the Mosaic Law, in whole or part, namely,

"Cursed is every one that continueth not in ALL things written in the Book of the Law to do them" (Deut. 27:26; Gal. 3:10).

Besides this total abstinence from work,

"Two lambs of the first year without spot, and 2/10 deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, & a drink offering"

were to be offered as the burnt-offering of every sabbath, beside the continual burnt-offering, and its drink offering.

These sabbath-offerings, like all others, were only acceptable from the Altar and from the Holy Place of the Tabernacle and Temple. It is clear, therefore, from the requirements of the Law, that not only do the pious among the Gentiles not keep the sabbath, but neither *can* they, nor the Israelites, however zealous for its observance.

But, the observance of the 7th day was only enjoined upon those who were "under law" to God; not upon those who were "without law"—that is, non-Israelitish nations. The sabbath was "a sign" between the God of Israel and *that* people; and signified good things to come upon them, and through them upon the rest of mankind, when "the times of the Gentiles" should be fulfilled.

This appears from the words of Jehovah to Israel by Moses His faithful servant in all His house (Ex. 31:13-17)—

"Verily My sabbaths shall ye keep; for it is a sign BETWEEN ME AND YOU throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the Sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you.

"Every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death; for whosoever doeth any work therein that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done; but in the 7th is the Sabbath rest, holy to the Lord; whosoever doeth work on the Sabbath-day, he shall surely be put to death.

"Wherefore the CHILDREN OF ISRAEL shall keep the Sabbath to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the CHILDREN OF ISRAEL for ever; for in 6 days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the 7th day He rested, and was refreshed."

That the observance of the 7th day was given *exclusively to the house of Israel* appears from the reason assigned for imposing it upon them.

"Remember (saith Moses) that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that Jehovah, thy God, brought thee out thence with a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm; THEREFORE the Lord commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day."

When they were slaves in Egypt they served a hard bondage to Pharaoh, having *no rest* to their souls; but after being "baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea," the nation *rested from its work*, and in anticipation of its rest under Joshua, kept the Sign-Sabbath in the wilderness.

The Egyptian servitude, the national baptism into Moses, the wilderness-cessation from the works of slavery, and the Joshua-rest in Palestine, were, however, examples only—

First, of things spiritual in relation to baptized believers of the Gospel of the Kingdom;

Secondly, of things national on a grander scale, when, the world having passed through its MILLENNARY WORKING DAYS of six thousand years from its foundation, the Twelve Tribes and the Nations of the Earth, ceasing from their own works in which they serve their own lusts, and the

tyrants who oppress them in mind, body, and estate, shall by a mighty hand, and out-stretched arm, be constitutionally inducted into Abraham and his Seed, the Christ, and keep the DIVINE SABBATISM, the rest that remains for Israel in their own land under their glorious and immortal rulers; and for the nations under their own vines and fig-trees, in all the Day of Christ, the *Millenary Sabbath Day* of a 1000 years, in which God and men will cease from their works, and be refreshed.

The present dispersion of Israel is the penalty for not keeping holy the 7th day in its true significancy. For if they had turned away their foot from the Sabbath, from doing their pleasure on God's holy day, and called the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and had honored Him, not doing their own ways, nor finding their own pleasure, nor speaking their own words—"Then," saith Jehovah,

". . . shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord: and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee, O Israel, with the heritage of Jacob thy father."

Thus testifies Isaiah (58:13-14); and the testimony of Jeremiah (17:24-27) is like it, only with a threatening of the consequences to the nation if it did not keep the day:

"It shall come to pass if ye diligently hearken unto Me, saith the Lord, to bring in no burden through the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, but hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work therein:

"Then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, and this city shall remain for ever.

"And they shall come from the cities of Judah, bringing burnt offerings, meat offerings, incense, and sacrifices of praise.

"But if ye will not hearken unto Me to hallow the Sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched."

That fire has been twice kindled unquenchably, once by Nebuchadnezzar, and once by Titus; and on both occasions, *because they regarded not the Sabbath of the Lord in the way that pleased Him.*

At the Assyrian overthrow of their commonwealth they defiled the Sign-Sabbath; and at the Roman, they refused to hallow it in its spiritual signification, by ceasing from their own works in no longer serving sin in the lusts thereof, and delighting in the Lord whom Jehovah had sent them as an ambassador of peace and glory to the nation—the *Angel of the great Sabbatic Covenant.*

"The Law" (which is a phrase expressive of the Mosaic institutions in the aggregate) being "the *representation* of the knowledge and the truth," and "the *pattern* of things in the heavens"—the sabbath (which, being incorporated into it, is a part thereof) is also "a *shadow* of things to come."

The sign-sabbath is a "rudiment" or "element of the world:" and therefore classed among "the weak and beggarly elements" to which the Galatian Christians wished again to be in bondage (Gal. 4:10-11). Writing to the Colossians (2:16-17) Paul says,

"Let no man judge you in respect of a holy day, OR OF THE SABBATH: which are a SHADOW of things to come, but the body (casting the shadow) is of Christ."

Jesus rested on the 7th day in the silence of the tomb from all his work pertaining to his offering for sin; and on "the 8th day," commonly called Sunday, or the first of the week, arose as the Light of the new creation, as a strong man to run a race.

The mystery of the Sabbath was thus laid substantially in him. The Sabbath, or "rest remaining to the people of God," was proclaimed in his Name to the Jew first, and afterwards to the Greek.

All believers, who desired to enter into that rest, were commanded to "cease from their own works, as God did from His." In other words, to *sabbatize from sin*, by being "buried with him by baptism into death" to sin:

". . . that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4).

This is the only way Jew or Gentile can keep the sabbath, so long as the Commonwealth of Israel, and the dwelling place of David, are in ruins, and trodden under foot of the worst of the heathen, as at this day.

But the 7th day was only *one of the sabbaths* of the Law. To mention no others, the 8th day was also a sabbath. The 1st and 8th days of the feast of ingathering, were sabbaths (Lev. 23:39). This feast was representative of the future ingathering of the 12 Tribes into their own land; and of the gathering of the Saints, the palm-bearers, with them unto Messiah their king, when both classes shall rejoice before the Lord.

They will then celebrate the 8th day as the sabbath day of the Age to Come instead of the 7th, as it is written in Ezekiel, saying,

"Seven days shall they purge the altar, and purify it, and the priests shall consecrate themselves. And when these days are expired it shall be that upon the 8th day (Sunday) AND SO FORWARD, the priests shall make your burnt offerings upon the altar, and your peace offerings, O Israel; and I will accept you, saith the Lord God" (43:26-27).

This testimony relates to the order of things in the kingdom of Israel under Messiah the Prince during the Millennium.

Israel and the nations will then keep the Eighth-day, instead of the Seventh-day, Sabbath, as under Moses. The Gospel is glad tidings concerning that Kingdom and Age; and those who believe it, and have obeyed it, being therefore the heirs of its kingdom and glory, sabbatize by ceasing from sin, and rejoicing in their present eighth-day probation in hope of entering God's millennial rest by a resurrection to the life of the Age to die no more.

There are two crotchets among the people respecting the sabbath which deserve a passing notice in conclusion of the subject. The one is that the seventh day, or Saturday, should be kept holy according to the Mosaic law; and the other is that Sunday should be observed as the Jewish sabbath.

Both these classes are great sticklers for keeping holy their sabbath days after Moses' prescription; yet, it is manifest from what has gone before, that they have no scriptural claims to the approbation of the Lord for so doing. If Sabbatarians would keep the seventh day holy, *they must keep it according to the law thereof*.

They have no right to dispense with what suits them not, and to retain the rest. Neither God nor Moses have given them this license. In lighting fires, making up beds, cooking, using their horses, &c, and preaching sermons, which is "speaking their own words" (certainly not the Lord's), they break the sabbath and defile it, as much as any anti-sabbatarian, who performs double work on Saturday that he may lose as little as possible by resting from his labor on the following day.

Such keeping of the Sabbath (in the light of Moses' Law) is truly wonderful, and only paralleled by the others who impose on God the pretension of keeping his sabbath by abolishing the celebration of the seventh day, and observing Sunday after their own taste and convenience.

When God says, "Keep holy the 7th day, O *Israel*, by resting from every kind of work and *offering the sacrifices of the Law*;" He does not mean, "Keep holy the 1st or 8th day, O Gentiles, by resting according to your views of profit or convenience."

Yet, practically, such is the construction put upon His words by those who would bind heavy burdens upon men's shoulders, grievous to be borne, but would be the last to help them to endure. A rest of 1 day in 7 is an excellent provision for laboring, and business men; and if they could be persuaded to use it aright, it would be inestimable.

They cannot, however, keep Sunday to the Lord as His day, while they remain disobedient to the "One Faith." They must believe and obey the Gospel, and then—

"Continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and in prayers."

When such assemble on the First Day for the worship of the Father in spirit and in truth; and to honor the Son even as they honor Him, showing forth his death, and memorializing his resurrection, in hope of his appearing in his kingdom and glory, ceasing from their own works, and doing the works of God; they serve the Lord in the only way acceptable to Him who seeketh only such to worship Him as are intelligent in the truth.

Having brought the subject to this point, the following recapitulation is presented, which concludes this exposition of the Bible doctrine of the Sabbath. I have shown—

1. THAT THE SEVENTH DAY IS THE MEASURE OF THE DURATION OF EACH OF THE PREVIOUS SIX DAYS OF THE CREATION-WORK;
 2. That God sanctified, or separated it, from the other days of the week as a sign foreshadowing good things to come, in a millennial sabbatic day; which should be a sabbatimal refreshing for mankind when the work of replenishing the earth, and subduing it, should be sufficiently accomplished;
 3. That the hallowed 7th day was incorporated with the institutions of Moses; and its observance imposed upon the 12 Tribes of Israel, with the penalty of death to all individual violators of its holiness, and the overthrow of their Commonwealth for its national desecration;
 4. That the hallowed resting day (called Saturday by the Gentiles) was enjoined by the Mosaic Law as a sign between Jehovah and the descendants of Jacob or Israel—a sign of the divine rest they shall enjoy from all their national afflictions, under their own kings and princes of the house of David—adopted into that royal house by an obedient faith in the gracious promises covenanted to him: and destined to ride upon the high places of the earth in the Everlasting Age;
 5. That God commanded Israel to keep the sabbath day, because that in bringing them out of Egypt He had caused them to rest from all the works imposed upon them by Pharaoh's taskmasters;
 6. That non-Israelitish nations were never commanded to keep the 7th day holy;
 7. That Sunday, or the 1st day of the week, was never imposed upon the nations by divine authority to be kept holy according to the law of Saturday or the 7th day;
 8. That the 7th day is kept holy neither by Israelites, nor Sabbatarians; because they do not observe it according to the requirements of its law; which, under existing circumstances, can be kept by none;
 9. That Sunday will be the sabbath, or resting day for Israel and the nations, when they shall all be constituted the kingdom and empire of Jehovah's king in the Age to Come.
 10. That the only persons who keep holy the sabbath day in its spiritual signification, are those who, having become obedient to the gospel of the kingdom promulgated in the name of Jesus as its king, "cease from their own works, as God rested from His."
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LET US NOT BE SATISFIED WITH HALF-MEASURES

"Holiness," saith the Scripture, "becometh Thine house." All the Psalms are holy; all the Scriptures are holy. The Bible is a holy book. Everyone is made holy by reading it—that is, everyone who does so with diligence, earnestness, and effort.

This is its mission as regards individuals—to make men holy—"to purify for Christ a peculiar people, ZEALOUS of good works," to whom Christ has left his command. "BE YE HOLY," and of whom Paul says, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

Now, are WE holy men? We are TRYING to be, and perhaps we are to some extent, but LET US NOT BE SATISFIED WITH HALF-MEASURES HERE. Let us not be like the Laodiceans, and rest contented with our attainments.

You remember Christ's message to them. They had a high opinion of themselves—"I am rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing." But Jesus says, "Thou art wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked."

Let our estimate be not as to how we look in mortal eyes, but how we look when compared with the "holy angels." We will be safe in comparing ourselves with them—we are not safe in comparing ourselves with humans.

Who are fit to be promoted to equality with angels? Those only who are now "an HOLY priesthood, a peculiar people." It is written, "Be ye holy in ALL manner of conversation." That is, in EVERYTHING—in behavior, in practice, in habits of life.

God Himself says, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." Let us fix our minds on it and ask, "WHAT DOES IT MEAN?" Is not holiness that which is pure, that which is clean, that which is undefiled?

And if we are to be holy in "ALL manner of" ways, are we not to BE so? Are we to be undefiled in some things, and not in others? WHY IS IT NECESSARY TO BE SO EXPLICIT? Because the world is reeking with unholiness of every kind, and we are so liable to be infected with its ways.

The world is to be judged with terrible judgment when Christ comes. That judgment we are invited to administer, IF meanwhile we become what the world is not—a purified, holy people—not a cold people, but a zealous people—"Zealous of good works."

Let us give this a special application. Surely these principles touch the question of smoking. Putting it in its mildest way—Is it not possible that Christ will consider this practice an unholy thing? Who can smoke for the first time without being sick, and what healthy person can come near a person reeking with narcotism without physical loathing? Imagine a whole ecclesia sitting in clouds of tobacco smoke! Why not, if it is right? All the world smokes. It is our part, having come out from among them, to be holy in all manner of conversation, partaking not of their sins.—Bro. Roberts.

The Prince-Priest of the Age to Come

By brother Robert Roberts

PART TWENTY-THREE

OBJECTION 14: Is not the original word for "Prince" in Ezekiel "NASI," is not this word usually applied by God to petty officers (as Num. 7:2-10)?

Yes, the original word is *Nasi*; but *Nasi* is never used to designate "petty officers." Its root meaning is "lifted up, exalted;" and it is applied in this sense in the chapter referred to: "the princes of Israel," that is, those who were high in the congregation. How high is a question of context. When used alone, it means the highest in the special connection that may be in view:

"The captain (*nasi*) of the children of Judah" (Num. 2:3)

"The captain (*nasi*) of the children of Issachar" (v. 5)

—that is, the *highest* of the children of Issachar; so through the chapter. In this sense, it is translated "chief" in Num. 3:32: Eleazar, son of Aaron, was to be "chief (*nasi*) of the chief of Levites."

When used in connection with a nation, it has the sense of chief ruler, leader, king, as will be seen by the following instances:—

"I will make him (Solomon) prince (*nasi*) all the days of his life for David My servant's sake" (1 Kings 11:34);

"Thou profane wicked prince (*nasi*) of Israel, whose day is come," that is, the King of Israel (Eze. 21:25);

"David a prince (*nasi*) among them," that is, king (Eze. 24:24);

"The prince (*nasi*) of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal," that is, Emperor of Russia (Eze. 38: 2-3).

Even if the term had had a "petty" use, its inapplicability to Christ would not follow. What could be pettier than "servant" which is frequently used of him?

OBJECTION 15: Is not the word translated "Prince" in some of the passages you have quoted as proof of his being Christ, quite a DIFFERENT word from the one used in Ezekiel (as Dan. 9:25, Isa. 9:6, etc.)?

Yes, but the *meaning* is the same. *Nasi* in Ezekiel is the common adjective for "exalted," used in a technical sense—as if we should say "the head man" instead of saying the Duke.

The word in Isaiah is more in the nature of a technical designation of rank. It is *sar*, meaning head, prince, captain. Messiah, the head prince or captain of peace, is the same as the *nasi*, the exalted or lifted up one, who makes peace as priest.

In Daniel, the word is *nagid*, which signifies "leader." This also is the equivalent of *nasi*, the exalted one; *sar*, the head or captain. All the terms are interchangeable in meaning, and therefore properly translated "Prince."

OBJECTION 16: The objection that the statement "The Prince shall eat bread before the Lord" (Eze. 44:3) implies that the Prince is not the Lord, is dealt with to some extent by a comparison with passages in the Revelation. But seeing that the one is literal and the other symbolic, is the comparison legitimate, or does it adequately meet the objections raised?

The scope of the phrase is determinable apart from its apocalyptic use (though the instances referred to are illustrative in the way used). Its general use in Scripture will be found, on a comparison of instances, to prove that it means *before the manifested presence of the Deity*.

In Nimrod's days, the presence was manifested cherubically. In the day of the Kingdom of God it will be manifested as never before; for that is a day when, as Jesus told Nathaniel,

"Ye shall see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man" (Jno. 1:51).

This manifestation will be specially active and visible in Jerusalem, as we learn from many testimonies. Therefore to "eat bread before the Lord (before Yahweh)," signifies on that day the highest, closest, and most intimate relation to the manifested glory of the Father. Such a position could only belong to Christ.

It is only by leaving the Father out of sight that any difficulty can arise. To leave Him out of sight is impossible if we look at the coming glory as Christ looked at it. The glory to be revealed was to him,

"The glory OF THE FATHER, with the holy angels" (Mk. 8).

OBJECTION 17: Is it true that the more correct rendering is, "The Prince shall eat bread before the FACES OF AIL"? If so, does not this lend additional weight to the objector's contention?

A literal translation would be "to the faces of Yahweh" (not Ail)—*le penaii Jahowah*; but a literal translation is not always a correct translation. The idioms of 2 languages may so differ that a literal translation of one into the other would make nonsense apart from explanation. This is a case. It is an idiom of the Hebrew language to use face or front to express the relation denoted in English by the preposition "before."

There is an instance of it in the very next verse, where we have the translation "before the house": the Hebrew is literally "to the faces of the house"; *el penaii ha baiyeth*. This is a graphic way of saying before the house; for a man or gate that is before a house is in front of all its "faces" or front features. But it would be a bad translation into English to introduce the mention of faces.

The English translation "before the house" is correct as conveying the sense of the original. Similarly, "before the Lord" expresses to the English reader the idea contained in the Hebrew idiom "at the faces of Yahweh."

The argument in the case neither gains nor loses by change in the translation (for which there is no occasion). There are many other cases where "faces" is Hebraistically employed to express the idea of "before," and where the word is properly excluded from the Auth. Version. The following instances will show the impropriety of attaching any specific meaning to the word in such a case: (Gen. 6:11, 13; 13:9; 17:18; 18:8; 20:15).

OBJECTION 18: You base arguments on the Prince ALONE going through the East Gate. But we are told that the LORD alone goes through the East Gate, while the PRINCE is only allowed to enter "by the way of the Porch" of the Gate (Eze. 44:3)?

The contrast in the verse is not between God and the *Prince*, but between God and the *people*:

"No man shall enter in by it, because the Lord the God of Israel hath entered in by it. It is for the Prince. He shall sit in it to eat bread before the Lord" (Eze. 44:3).

The reason that excludes the people does not exclude the Prince. It would exclude the Prince also if he were a mere man; but as the Son of the Father, it is otherwise.

As for the distinction between "going through the gate," and "entering by the way of the porch of the gate," there can be none if the porch in question is the outside porch, or "the porch of the gate *without*." That it must be so appears from the statement that,

"He (the Prince) shall ENTER by the way of the porch of that gate, and he shall go out by the way of the same" (44:3).

He could not *enter* by an *inner* porch. Entering from without, it must be by the outer porch—of which gate? Not the north gate, not the south gate, for these are allotted to the people (46:9). It is "*this gate*" "of the outward sanctuary that looketh toward the east" (44:1)—the gate that is to be shut so far as *man* is concerned, because the glory of the God of Israel enters there.

And now suppose this were not clear, it cannot be said that it is not perfectly clear that the Prince sits "in" the shut gate through which the glory has entered. He *sits* there, however he obtains entrance there. If so, it would follow that there is some great and vital difference between the Prince (the *Nasi*, the exalted) and the common people: for it is a higher honor to sit in the gate than to go through the gate.

Going through the gate, in the sense of the suggested objection, would amount to a mere passing through the open door of the gate,—whereas sitting in the gate would be to officially occupy the spacious gate interior to which the door of the gate gives entrance.

Therefore the one would be a higher distinction than the other; and it would be a strange anomaly that the entrance of the divine glory should be a reason preventing the Prince from entering by the door of the gate of entrance, but should be no reason against his sitting in the actual gate itself by which the entrance was made.

But it is not so. To be allowed to "enter by the way of the porch of the gate," is to be allowed to enter the gate itself, for the porch is the entrance to the gate.

(TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH, IF THE LORD WILL)

Now, if you are courageous, faithful, and valiant for the Truth, if you are really a good and useful man in your day and generation—you may lay your account with being misrepresented, slandered and abused in various ways. But if you turn traitor in faith, or practice, or both—you will become popular and obtain applause.—Bro. Thomas.

The Lamentations of Jeremiah

"It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart"—Eccl. 7:2.

In the final chapter of the prophecy by Jeremiah is given a resume of the destruction and captivity of the city of Jerusalem. We are shown the removal of the royal line of David to a strange land, to undergo imprisonment and humiliation. The city was destroyed and the Temple plundered.

In order to set before posterity the justice and righteousness of God in all His actions with His chosen people, Jeremiah is moved to ask (Lam. 1:1)—

"How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! How is she become a widow! She that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces—how is she become tributary!"

The message gives abundant testimony to exhort, to warn and to guide the servants of God concerning God's goodness and severity. Paul told the Romans that these things were written for our learning and instruction that we might have hope. He had previously stated (Rom. 11:22)—

"Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them that fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness—if thou continue in His goodness. Otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."

The position of Jeremiah was typical of all the righteous through the long ages of Gentile ascendancy. Paul further instructs that though we are persecuted and "accounted as sheep for the slaughter" we shall be "conquerors through God's love" . . .

"For I am persuaded that neither death, life, things present, things to come, height, depth, nor anything . . . shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus."

The lessons of Jeremiah's time apply to all. We ourselves are the only ones who can separate us from God's love. Therefore the preservation of this Lamentation is that we may be wise while it is our day of opportunity.

In the days of David and Solomon God had promised to bless Israel without measure if they were obedient unto His commandments. He agreed to care for them and watch over them through all their trials. All the other nations were to be controlled *according to God's purpose with Israel*. They were to be the head and not the tail.

But Israel left their first love, even the true love which God had expressed for them. They sought out others upon which they set their affections and trust. They patterned their lives after the surrounding nations, appropriated their idols and forms of worship; they despised God's prophets, and put His word behind their back.

Worldly ways may seem strong and tangible for the immediate moment as contrasted with spiritual things and the power of God. But the help of man is a vain thing in the day of adversity. When Israel's calamity came (and it was directed by God) she was destitute of assistance. Lam. 1:2—

"Among all her lovers she hath none to comfort her. Her friends have dealt treacherously with her; they are become her enemies."

Turning to other nations in affinity and by making political or expedient alliances was an *open distrust in the power of God to save in an evil day*.

It began with Solomon making affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and marrying his daughter; and then proceeding to surround his country in a similar manner with other supposedly friendly nations; permitting the observance of pagan sacrifices among the holy people of God. It was (as we read in 1 Kings 11) Solomon multiplying unto himself—

". . . many strange women—Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians and Hittites—of the nations concerning which the Lord had said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in unto them; surely they will turn away your heart after other gods."

This very thing came to pass when Solomon was old, for his heart was not perfect before the Lord his God.

God was Israel's husband. He was the One who had chosen them as His bride. But they turned from Him and chose other gods unto whom they offered their affections. Finally in the days of Zedekiah the bride was sent into captivity; she was unworthy of all the care and the everlasting love of a gracious and longsuffering husband. The Lamentations are a witness that it had become necessary for the Creator to dissociate His blessings and mercy from them. They had estranged themselves from His love. A continuation of the forbearance of God would have justified Israel's wickedness. God's final action was a vindication of His eternal principles of righteousness and justice and illustrate, for the sake of God's elect, the sureness of His Word. Lam 1:6-7—

"From the daughter of Zion all her beauty is departed. Jerusalem remembered in the days of her afflictions and of her miseries all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old, when

her people fell into the hand of the enemy, and none did help her: the adversaries saw her, and mocked her sabbaths."

We see the glory and splendor of Solomon's new-found throne, the wealth of his dominion, the magnificence of the temple and palace. God had advised him that if he walked faithfully before Him his throne and kingdom would be established forever.

But if perversity was found in him or his children, then Israel should be driven out of their land, and the wonderful temple (where God had agreed to place His name) would be cast out of His sight, and Israel would become a proverb and byword among all nations.

Israel's position in Divine favor was admired by all her surrounding neighbors, as the wealth of other lands was presented in gifts to Israel. The king of Tyre said, 1 Kings 5-7,

"Blessed be the Lord, which hath given unto David a wise son over this great people."

While the queen of Sheba praised in these words (1 Kings 10:9)—

"Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel. Because the Lord loved Israel for ever, therefore made He thee king, to do judgment and justice."

But alas for Israel, their worship was for the glories which they saw and possessed. *They did not see the hand of God behind it.*

The first chapter of Lamentations is Israel's cry because the people unto whom she had looked, and who had admired her age of glory, failed her in the time of need. Jerusalem had not looked to God, their Rock and Fortress, therefore He abandoned them.

"Her adversaries are the chief" (Lam. 1:5).

Israel's position of pre-eminence during the days of David and Solomon was now turned about. Those nations such as Tyre and Sheba and others—who once came to view and marvel at the glory and splendor conferred upon Solomon—now turned their backs upon her. Israel was now the tail and not the head.

Solomon had marred the glorious type that his reign was intended to foreshadow of the Millennial reign of Christ. Therefore God marred the pride of Israel. And that by the very people who had admired her:

"The heathen entered into her sanctuary, whom God said should not enter into the congregation" Lam. 1:10).

"All that honored her despise her, because they have seen her nakedness" (v. 8).

When Israel was beautifully clothed with the garments of holiness God caused all nations to look unto her. But when her glorious garments were removed and she exposed herself unto the Gentiles, then they despised her; for of herself she was no better than they. It was only in God's favor that she was glorious and the object of admiration. Now she was only wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.

Is it not so also in a spiritual sense? Peter tells us that if our speech and manners are honest among the Gentiles, they will glorify God by those things which they shall behold.

These things also speak to us of our own natural nakedness, that we need the sin-covering name of Jesus Christ and to clothe ourselves with the garment of righteousness, rather than the fleshly inventions of man.

Israel's punishment was sore, *because their responsibility was great*. They had the revealed purpose of God, and had it constantly drawn to their attention by prophet after prophet. As they were warned (Amos 3:2)—

"You only have I known of all the families of the earth: THEREFORE I will punish you for all your iniquities."

Let us not despise His merciful provision, nor ignore the constant warnings and longsuffering of our Heavenly Father, knowing that these blessings are designed to lead to *repentance*, rather than *presumption*.

Whereas chap. 1 shows Israel's plight without natural assistance, when God's wrath had come to the full, chap. 2 impresses the fact that God had now withdrawn His sovereign care and protection.

"How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in His anger!" (Lam. 2: 1).

Divine leadership with Israel was evidenced in a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, which guided their steps through a barren wilderness, a constant reminder of His presence and protection. The language here seems borrowed from this type, as the object of Israel's protection is now turned to their destruction.

As Russia in the time of the end comes as a cloud to cover God's land (Eze. 38:16), so Babylon came against Jerusalem and covered the land to the utter dismay of Israel.

The cloud in the wilderness would be a welcome relief from a burning sun. But to apostate Israel it was as a consuming storm. Therefore the anger of the Lord is justified in removing the evidences of His name from their midst. That protection which He had constantly afforded through His angels was now gone.

An angel appeared to Joshua and instructed him that he would be a guide unto the nation (Josh. 5:13-14)—

"There stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand . . . He said, As captain of the host of the Lord am I now come."

But now—in the end of the kingdom—God turns to face Israel's armies, with drawn sword in hand. Though they, like Balaam, were unaware of the presence of the angel, the sword was poised over the city and fell with vengeance.

"He hath drawn back His right hand from before the enemy. He hath bent His bow like an enemy. He stood with His right hand as an adversary. He hath violently taken away His tabernacle" (Lam. 2:3, 4, 6).

When a man seeks to follow the ways of the Lord He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. But when he wilfully disobeys there is no hope of mercy. Israel now stood in the same position as Sodom and Gomorrah. Their iniquity had grown to such an extent that the city could not be saved. The kings, priests and prophets had taught rebellion against God and *the people loved to have it so*. From the least of them to the greatest of them there was no vestige of acceptability to God (Lam. 2:6)—

"He hath despised, in His anger, the king and the priest."

Those especially responsible members of His chosen race—those to whom was entrusted the duty of shepherds—were the chief upon whom the indignation fell. Prophet, priest and king alike bore their shame, for, v. 9,

"The Law is no more."

They had reduced it to a hollow shell; the seeds of pagan worship, sown by Solomon in the land, had borne their fruit of gall and wormwood. Throughout the message of Jeremiah we witness how God singled out the false prophets, the priests and the kings because they wilfully rejected a clear warning.

But the responsibility did not end there. God caused the sword to fall upon all alike. The sword, the famine and the pestilence of the siege entered every home, except those faithful few whom God had assured should have their life for a prey. Those terrible pronouncements of Moses made 850 years previously to Israel, contained in Lev. 26 and Deut. 28, were now having their primary fulfilment (Lam. 2:11, 19-20)—

"The children and the sucklings swoon in the streets of the city. The young children faint for hunger in the top of every street. Shall the women eat their fruit, children a span long?"

The time for mercy for the city had come to an end. Prayers for the forbearance of God were now unavailing. *Jeremiah had been told not to pray for them.*

Jeremiah had said, "My heart is broken." He had spent his lifetime for what appeared to be a lost cause. But when analyzed with the eye of faith it was just another stage in the purpose of God in calling out and refining a people for His name. Though the vision was sad, though the oil of joy was turned to a spirit of heaviness, though the garments of praise had been exchanged for sackcloth and ashes—prayer still rises in all ages from the lips of the servants of God for the remembrance of the eternal promise (Lam. 2:19)—

"Arise, cry out in the night. In the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord."

Or as Isaiah had previously declared (62:6-7),

"I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night. Keep not silence: give Him no rest till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."

Then the scorner will not ask, "Is *this* the city that men call the Perfection of Beauty, the Joy of the whole earth?" Then shall all men seek unto her and the wealth of the Gentiles shall be brought unto her, no more to be removed.

But that day has not yet arrived. It is still the time for the watchmen to stand upon the walls of Jerusalem, those sure foundations of the Abrahamic covenant, and to cry out in the night.

But hope fills the hearts which have been broken by man's failure to appreciate the love and mercy of God. The long night begins to give place to the rays of dawn. The resurrection of natural Israel is taking place before our eyes.

Though a time of Jacob's trouble yet remains, when the Russo-Assyrian power causes his thunderous clouds to cover the land, *he shall be saved out of it*, when Israel sees that their arm of flesh is broken, and they turn to God with their whole heart and mind.

Then shall they rejoice in their Law, executed by a divine priesthood. Then shall the sacrifice of praise from the altars of Israel be acceptable unto the Lord their God.

(TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH, IF THE LORD WILL)

A Woman on David's Throne

PART TWO

"Now Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and when Jehoram was risen up to the kingdom of his father he strengthened himself and slew all his brethren with the sword, and divers also of the princes of Israel" (2 Chron. 21:1-4).

What an appalling introduction is this to the new King of Judah! Though a son brought up in the way he should go, of what advantage was it when a serpent was placed in his bosom?

This sanguinary character would not be hereditary from his father; we look to the other side and we see the leaven of Jezebel working the old animus. Those "princes of Israel" slain by Jehoram, were not men according to his murderous heart, otherwise they would not have been slain. There was a wholesale clearing away of those obstacles to the purpose he ultimately attained.

The revolution that has now taken place in Judah makes the prospect for the future dark for the Lord's people. The probable reason for exterminating his brethren was to obtain "the gold, silver, and fenced cities" Jehoshaphat had given them, and this seems the reason for its being recorded. No doubt such gifts were not uncommon, though unrecorded, in the history of other kings.

The act shows its author; the Jezebel instinct in murdering Naboth for his possession finds its expression in Athaliah's moving her husband to do likewise. Again, these "brethren and princes" would be faithful men, worshipping the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Whatever Jehoram's disposition was, we are sure his wife, as a worshipper of Baal, was filled with all the deadly hatred that Jezebel exhibited against the people of the Lord. Having the power now in her hands in the authority she exercised over the king, we see it once taking effect when Jehoram reigns.

That the influence of the wife was over the husband, and was the cause of these evils, it is so written (2 Chron. 21:6)—

"He walked in the way of the kings of Israel like as did the house of Ahab, FOR he had the daughter of Ahab to wife."

The inspired writer sets it down as a natural conclusion. The peace and prosperity of the former reign soon ended, and as God had then given them rest round about, so now wars and troubles are the fruit of unrighteousness. Edom revolted, and Libnah also "unto this day," because he had forsaken the Lord God of his fathers and compelled Judah to sin—

"Moreover the Lord stirred up the Philistines and Arabians, and they carried away all the substance that was found in the king's house, sons and wives, so there was never a son left him, save Jehoahaz his youngest son" (vs. 16-17).

A writing from Elijah is sent to him; an awful message soon fulfilled; and after all this the Lord smote him

". . . with an incurable disease . . . and after 2 years his bowels fell out by reason of his sickness, so he died . . . and his people made no burning for him . . . He reigned 8 years and departed without being desired;"

—and was not buried in the sepulchre of the kings (vs. 18-20).

No language can describe the horror of such a death—the merited reward of an iniquitous life; an example of the apostolic teaching that the Lord is not mocked, and that he that soweth to the flesh shall reap corruption.

Had the commandments of Moses been observed no such cause would have been possible. Strange marriages constituted the fruitful source of idolatry in Jacob which ultimately enveloped them in the darkness that altogether obscured for them "the Light that came into the world." Jehoram's fatal marriage was the cause of all.

By the death of Jehoram, Athaliah is left a widow; the throne vacant by her husband's death is filled by his youngest son, the only one who escaped death at the hands of the "band that came with the Arabians." We recognise the hand of Jehovah in thus preserving one of the house of David to fulfil God's promise to him.

"And the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah king."

The unhappy state of Judah, the miseries arising from the foreign invasions of the Philistines and Arabians, the wars undertaken against Edom and Libnah, with the evils within that would follow upon the suppression of the temple service, and the undoing of the good Jehoshaphat had brought to pass—this unhappy state of affairs would not cease from the accession of a son coming from such a stock.

The tree—bad in Ahab and Jezebel—was made far worse in Jehoram and Athaliah; the fruit of such an union proves worthy of the tree—equally corrupt with its bearers. "Can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit?" Let history answer. Ahaziah, son of Athaliah, grandson of Jezebel, reigned one year. 2 Chron. 22:3-4—

"He also walked in the way of the house of Ahab, FOR his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly; wherefore he did evil in the sight of the Lord like the house of Ahab, for they were his counsellors after his father's death, to his destruction."

The friendliness commenced with Jehoshaphat towards Ahab would naturally increase after the 2 families had intermarried. Thus we find Ahaziah repeating his grandfather's action in helping Ahab; he joins with his uncle Joram, Ahab's son, in battle against the Assyrians at Ramoth-Gilead.

Ahaziah's death is brought about specially by this alliance:

"And the destruction of Ahaziah was of God by coming to Joram, for when he was come he went out with Joram against Jehu the son of Nimshi whom the Lord had anointed to cut off the house of Ahab" (2 Chron. 22:7).

Thus was the eighth son of the house of David slain—destroyed by the sword of God in the hand of Jehu; and again is the throne of Judah vacant. We look now for a son of Ahaziah to succeed, as had been the case with all former kings, for Ahaziah had many sons. But no, *there is now to be a new thing in the earth as concerning the rulers in Judah.*

The opportunity has at last presented itself; the throne is within her grasp, and Athaliah's ambition is satisfied.

"Two and twenty years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem" (2 Kings 8:26).

He was therefore but 23 years old at his death; the children were young and tender, and at least had claims on the natural affection of Athaliah—her own flesh and blood, her own grandchildren.

But natural affection under the teaching of Baal had no proper place: its devotees were like brute beasts made to be taken and destroyed. A ritual which made prostitution a religious obligation would be utterly incapable of producing either a moral character or developing those finer sentiments so abounding in the Law of Moses and teaching of Christ.

These filthy abominations were practised in the very House of the Lord itself—in that glorious temple built for His worship and service. So utterly degenerate had Israel become that Baal was established in Zion and Jehovah forgotten (2 Kings 23:4).

We readily understand the hatred such practices would engender in the human mind against those things written in that Book which the kings of Israel were commanded to study. To Athaliah it would be an intolerable burden, grievous indeed, and in like measure to those priests of Baal abounding in Jerusalem.

No such opportunity for serving Baal in Judah had before been possible. Now was the golden chance—the pinnacle of fame to be reached—High Priestess of Baal and Queen of Judah! With terrible brevity the sacred historian records it—

"When Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah saw her son was dead she arose and DESTROYED ALL THE SEED ROYAL OF THE HOUSE OF JUDAH" (2 Chron. 22:10).

The murderous hostility of the mother against the priests of God, finds its counterpart in the daughter. True to the family instinct Athaliah stops short at no crime that serves her ambition and animosity. Void of all that is admirable and lovely in woman, the innocent children are ruthlessly slaughtered—her intention being to exterminate the house of David—and—

"ATHALIAH REIGNED OVER THE LAND."

In our consideration of these things we are enabled somewhat to realise the words of Peter and to account the longsuffering of God as salvation—for what had been the condition of things in Zion during the few years since the advent of Jezebel?—a king rises who murders his brothers and sets up the abomination of the Zidonians in Jerusalem; wars commence with the Gentiles round about who plunder Jerusalem itself; the king's sons all slain save one; the king himself, smitten by God with a horrible distemper which consumed him, dies uncared for; the son who succeeds, and in like manner follows the evil ways, is also smitten by God after a brief reign of one year.

Probably the children of Ahaziah were no better, and their murder was no more than *a clearing away of the serpent-seed* so strongly developed in Judah, and filling up the iniquity of Athaliah to the full before the judgments of Jehovah come upon her as upon the Amorite of old.

Athaliah, by killing her grandchildren, helps, with her own hand, to execute the judgment upon the house of Ahab and Jezebel then being so thoroughly performed in Israel by Jehu—her own son, the late king, having been slain by that valiant man.

Doubtless had Athaliah lived in Israel she also would have suffered at the hand of Jehu; for surely no such pernicious offspring of Ahab would have been spared. The events then occurrent in Israel, the killing of all her own kindred, and the extinction of Baal so energetically carried out by Jehu would have a great effect upon such a woman—urged on, as she no doubt was, by the priests of Baal in Judah, who would be anxious both for their own safety and that of Baal.

Athaliah herself would also be involved in the ruin that would ensue did Jehu extend his operations to Jerusalem. In this way did the Jezebel-leaven work its own destruction by her own daughter; there had been a general clearing out, with but one more left of this accursed family who had killed the children of God and stamped out the truth to the best of their ability; and this solitary one is Athaliah herself.

By her counsel prevailing with her husband to kill all his brethren, and by her own hand slaying the remnant, she exists the last representative of a house accursed of God—murderers of the prophets—destroyers of God's people—doomed to extinction: an imperious, sanguinary, ambitious woman that hated Jehovah of Israel—inheritor of all that Ahab and Jezebel could leave—and where do we now find her? *Seated on the throne of the Lord at Jerusalem!*—in that place concerning which the Lord said,

"Here will I dwell, for I have desired it."

Has the Lord forgotten His promise? Has His love for Zion ceased? Is it not written that the Lord—

"loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob."

What a severe trial of faith this darkness in Judah must have been to the few faithful! The promise to David apparently a delusion—and Baal supreme! For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken up the House of God, and also all the dedicated things of the House of the Lord did they bestow upon Baalim.

No more hopeless picture could be presented to those believers in the sure mercies of David. David's sun had apparently set. They no longer rejoiced in their appointed feasts—no morning and evening offering was made to the Mighty One of Jacob; darkness was over the land.

(TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH, IF THE LORD WILL)

The King

"Hear the word of the Lord, O king of Judah that sittest on the throne of David. I spoke to thee in thy prosperity, but thou saidst, I will not hear. If ye will not hear, I swear by Myself, Surely I will make thee a wilderness."

For over 400 years the prophets had been bearing this message. A few had heeded it, but the many had not. Now the end was very near, but the many warnings and repetitions had dulled their perception, and they mistook God's patience for indulgence.

"Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Eccl. 8:11).

The root of the evil, as Jeremiah reveals, was covetousness and pride,—The desire for possession and position. As these are indulged, they gradually stifle every other consideration. And they bring no satisfaction. It always seems that just a little more is necessary—just one step higher.

But saddest of all is the one who reachest the highest pinnacle and finds it is but ashes in his mouth, and yet there remains no higher goal before him to lure him on and maintain the elusive deception of happiness just around the corner.

Jesus said, "Having food and raiment, *therewith be content.*" As we study the teachings of Jesus, we come to realize that they are not a set of restrictive rules for self-discipline, but the instructions of wisdom for a fuller life, the only way to happiness.

"*I am come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly.*" It is not necessary to wait until we die. The "living more abundantly" can start immediately if we will only let it.

Jesus was an efficiency expert, and his specialty was life:

"Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

He was not only meek, but also lowly. Meekness was his character, lowly was his position in life. The two go together. Lowliness is very galling to those who are not meek. Meekness is well nigh *impossible* to those who are not lowly. Jesus was both, and recommends them highly as the recipe for peace and rest.

There's another peculiar advantage in these attributes. He said:

"It is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven."

He was very sorry for the rich young ruler. He loved him and pitied him because he was rich and unhappy.

But the point is this. Most sins (and sin is the root of discontent—"There is no peace to the wicked")—most sins are very *difficult and unattractive* to the truly meek and lowly. These qualities are an automatic insulation against most of the soul-disturbing vices, for they are the antithesis of pride and covetousness, and these are the root of evil.

Pride and covetousness—they fortify themselves stealthily and secretly within us until they grow strong, like an incipient revolution; then they openly and insolently challenge our most vigorous efforts to dislodge them.

Pride and covetousness destroyed the house of David and the kingdom of Israel. It is hard for a ruler to maintain meekness. Forty years in the wilderness brought forth Moses as "very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth." Forty years ruling Israel only broke this down once—a remarkable and unique record showing the greatness of Moses and the thoroughness of his preparation.

But the common run of the kings of Israel and Judah were not equal to the task—not big enough to be and remain meek. See how well Saul began . . . but how miserably he failed! And therefore the kingdom was swept away until a king should come who would show them what a king should truly be. A king who, like Moses, must *first learn to rule himself*, for that is the basic requirement of rulership.

* * * *

Paul's letter to the Romans carries us forward another 600 years. The scene has again changed, and Israel has suffered many things, but the age-old problem is still the same.

"I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart for my kinsmen according to the flesh."

The king had finally come to them, meek, and riding upon an ass. *God's* conception of a king, adorned with the personal majesty of godly self-control, and invested with the indisputable authority of a perfect example. A king in his own right who could be stripped of all the common, meaningless, external trappings of royalty and still remain a noble, awe-inspiring figure of majesty.

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, thy king cometh unto thee. He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass."

But he was not *their* idea of a king. They wanted a king like the nations around them, a proud, despotic figure of outward show and pride. It never occurred to them that a king's duty was to enter into their lives and show them how to live—not to cater to their pride and desire, but to teach them how to overcome it. Their long-expected, hoped-for, prayed-for God-given King and Deliverer came, and dwelt intimately among them, doing wondrous, heavenly things that no man had ever done before—a man utterly unique in all the world's history—and *they knew him not!*

"He shall speak peace unto the Gentiles: and his dominion shall be from sea to sea . . . How great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty!" (Zech. 9:9-10, 17).

What a strange, almost unbelievable, thing! How easy it is proven to be to have eyes, and yet be stone-blind! Briefly, the brilliant light of the gracious invitation shone forth upon them—and then the long, dark night closed over Israel. They had heard, but missed, the royal call—and must wait 2000 long, bitter, wandering, persecuted years to hear it again.

The Strange Jewish Story

PART TWO

Let us then turn to the Scriptures to see how God's Word concerning the Jews has been so marvellously fulfilled, and to see what still lies in store. There are 7 heads into which the matter we desire to treat conveniently falls:

1. THE PRESERVED, CONDEMNING WITNESS OF THE WORD

It is prophesied that the Word of God, entrusted to the Jews, *would endure for ever*, and that the Jews would preserve these records as a witness for God and against themselves.

(We shall quote from the *Jews' own modern version*, put out by the Jewish Publication Society of America. It can easily be followed in the Auth. Ver., from which it varies very little.)

In Deut. 31 it is recorded that, as their first great God-given leader Moses was about to die, God said through him (vs. 19-26):

"Write ye this Song for you and teach thou it the children of Israel. Put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for Me against the children of Israel.

"It shall come to pass, when many evils and troubles are come upon them, that this Song shall testify before them as a witness, for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouth of their seed.

"Take this Book of the Law, and put it by the side of the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee" (Deut. 31:19, 21, 26).

Today, *3500 years later*, the Jews still jealously preserve this Book of the Law, with this song. It is regularly read to the people in the synagogues.

2. CONTINUAL WICKEDNESS: FORETOLD AND RECORDED

The second item is their continual wickedness. We desire to draw attention to it from two points of view. First, as a matter of fulfilled prophecy, for this was written from the very beginning of their history; and second, the remarkable fact that—*unlike any other people*—the national records of the Jews are one continuous catalogue of national condemnation, explaining in the most humiliating

terms the reasons for their long degradation. Moses continues in this chapter (Deut. 31:29, still from the Jewish version):

"For I KNOW that after my death ye will deal corruptly and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you, and evil WILL befall you in the end of days, because ye will do that which is evil in the sight of the Lord."

And in the Song of Witness referred to here and recorded in the next chapter (Deut. 32), we find,

"A generation crooked and perverse. Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? For they are a nation void of counsel, and there is no understanding in them. If they were wise they would understand this—they would discern their latter end.

"Their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter.

"Their wine is the venom of serpents, and the cruel poison of asps" (Deut. 32:5, 6, 28, 29, 32, 33).

For 3500 years they have preserved, as their *greatest national treasure*, a book that constantly speaks of their wickedness, abominations and rebellions. Time and time again, it warns them of the misery that would be sure to befall them if they did not repent. Wherever we turn in all their Scriptures, the testimony is the same. The prophet Jeremiah, 800 years after Moses, records—

"Since the day that your fathers come forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day, though I have sent unto you all My servants the prophets, yet they hearkened not unto Me, nor inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff" (Jer. 7:25,26).

And chapter 32, vs. 30-31:

"For the children of Israel and the children of Judah have only done evil in My sight from their youth. This city hath been unto Me a provocation of Mine anger and of My fury from the day that they built it even to this day."

And God through Malachi, the last of the Old Testament prophets, 200 years later, says (Mal. 3:7, 9):

"From the days of your fathers ye have turned aside from Mine ordinances and have not kept them. Ye are cursed with the curse, yet ye rob Me, even this whole nation."

The 106th Psalm, and Neh. 9, are samples of the way their long history of evil is documented in their national records. But—if we read any *modern* Jewish newspapers, or any *secular* history of the Jews by a Jew, we find it the same as any other national history—self-defence, self-pity and self-glorification. *The Bible is obviously not a human production.*

3. THE EXPECTED, REJECTED MESSIAH-PRINCE

All through the Scriptures is woven the expectation that some day a great deliverer would arise to save the Jews from all their troubles and enemies, and rule them in peace and glory.

See Gen. 49:10; Psa. 72; Isa. 9:6; 11:1; 21:1; 42:1-7; 49:6-9; 52:13; Eze. 21:27; 37:22; Mic. 5:2-5; Zech. 3:8; 6:12-13; 9:9-10.

And yet all through there is the strange parallel foreshadowing that when this long-expected Savior should come *they would REJECT HIM AS AN IMPOSTER*. How could they fail to understand the 53rd chapter of Isaiah?—

"He was despised and we esteemed him not. We did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted" (Isa. 53:3-4).

The context of this and the previous chapter makes it clear that it is the great promised Deliverer that is the subject—see Isa. 52:13 to 53:12. There are several similar references which, when put together and compared with the life of Jesus Christ, give marvellous evidence of divine foreknowledge. Some are shadowy and figurative, but many are crystal-clear—

the stone the builders rejected made chief cornerstone (Ps. 118);
the stone of stumbling to both houses of Israel (Isa. 8:14);
the exalted servant abhorred by the nation (Isa. 49:7);
the bruising of the woman's seed by the serpent power (Gen. 3);
the treacherous betrayal by the trusted friend (Ps. 41:9);
the smiting of the shepherd and scattering the sheep (Zech. 13);
the smiting of the Judge of Israel on the cheek (Mic. 5:1);
the abuse detailed in Isa. 50:6;
the reproach, gall and vinegar of Psa. 69:19-21;
the detailed crucifixion picture of Psa. 22, referred to by Christ as he hung upon the cross (see vs. 1, 6-8, 14-18);
his soul's (body's) deliverance from hell (sheol-grave) in Ps. 16;
God's deliverance of him from the strivings of his own people (2 Sam. 22:44);
the prophecy that, at their final regathering, they shall look on him whom they pierced, and mourn (Zech. 12:10);
the atonement for sin, **CUTTING OFF THE MESSIAH**, destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple—all associated in Dan. 9:24-26, where the **VERY DATE** is given in a symbol whose meaning is simple and obvious;

Is there any other explanation than that their own Scriptures give?

"Make the ears of this people heavy and shut their eyes lest, seeing and hearing, they return and be healed" (Isa. 6:10—See Matt. 13:13-4).

—*divinely inflicted blindness* because of long devotion to evil.

4. SCATTERED, DESPISED AND ABUSED

The fourth item of fulfilled prophecy is that they should be scattered into all nations and be everywhere persecuted and despised. We have seen how Moses told them they would be continually disobedient and bring great punishment on themselves. In Deut. 28 he tells them in much detail what that punishment would be. A few sample verses, still from the Jewish version:

"The Lord shall scatter thee among all peoples, from one end of the earth, even unto the other end of the earth . . .

"And among these nations shalt thou have no repose, and there shall be no rest for the sole of thy foot, but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart.

"And thou shalt grope at noonday, and thou shalt not make thy ways prosperous, and thou shalt be only oppressed and robbed alway, and there shall be none to save thee.

"Thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all the people whither the Lord shall lead thee away" (Deut. 28:64, 65; v. 29; v. 37).

Remember—that is a *3500-year-old extract from their own records*. It would be practically impossible to completely catalogue the vast range of cruel, inhuman regulations that have been inflicted down through the ages upon this unhappy people by the Gentiles.

They have been treated and regarded for centuries as something entirely different from all mankind. A host of crushing taxes, restrictions on where they could live, their travel (even over the shortest of distances), their possessions, their occupations, their marriages, their religious ceremonies, whom they could employ, their dress with its compulsory yellow badge—in short, every aspect of their existence has been hampered and twisted *by nations who considered themselves "Christians."*

Every possible contrivance has been devised to degrade and harass them. There is hardly a nation (and this even includes England) that has not—at one time or another—ruthlessly expelled them from its borders. For centuries they had no political rights, no protection or redress at law. Within the last 20 years we have witnessed one more gruesome chapter being added to this terrible story that has been going on for 2000 years, *in fulfilment of prophecy*—see also Deut. 4:27; Lev. 26:33; Jer. 9:16; Eze. 12:15; Luke 21:24; Amos 9:4.

5. UTTER DESOLATION IN THE LAND

The fifth item is the remarkable prophecy that Palestine, this once goodliest and fairest of all lands—highly fertile and well-wooded—was to become utterly barren and desolate. The Scriptures give us a picture of bed-rock desolation that only centuries of deliberate abuse could accomplish. In Lev. 26:32, God says:

"I will bring the land into desolation, and your enemies that dwell therein shall be astonished at it" (Lev. 26:32).

Such a state of desolation that *even the enemies* who had been a party to it should be astonished at it! In answer to *how long* the divinely inflicted judicial blindness of the Jewish nation should last, Isaiah records (6:11-12):

"Until the cities be waste without inhabitant, and houses without man, and the land become utterly waste, and the Lord have removed men far away, and the forsaken places be many in the midst of the land."

The U.S. Govt. soil expert, Walter Lowdermilk, recently wrote,

"The decline of Palestine began with the first Arab invasion during the 7th century. However, several centuries were to elapse before the state of UTTER DESOLATION was reached.

"The decay of Palestine reached its darkest stage in the 400 years of Turkish rule, 1517-1918. About 1850, the condition of the land reached its lowest ebb."

6. NEVER TO BE DESTROYED

Throughout all their long scattering and continual persecution, the Jews were never to be destroyed, but would always remain distinct as a nation. In Jer. 30:11, God said to them—

"Though I make a full end of all the nations whither I have scattered thee, YET WILL I NOT MAKE A FULL END OF THEE" (Jer. 30:11—Auth. Ver., at this point favors the Jew).

The strong, united victors, dwelling in their own lands, were one by one to pass away—the weak, scattered victims were to perpetually remain. What a reversal of all probabilities! But that is *just what has happened!* Peoples and empires have disappeared, but the Jew goes on unchanged. He has now nearly completed his *fourth 1000 years*, and he is as strong, active and distinct as ever. (Also Jer. 31:35-6; Amos 9:8).

(TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH, IF THE LORD WILL)

The Words of Eternal Life

"The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are life" (John 6:63).

Let us not be misled by the apparent simplicity of Jesus' words. They will be found to be the deepest, most piercing, and most revolutionary words ever spoken. Once they come into a man's life, and begin to actually take hold upon it, they will gradually rob him of everything that the world regards as desirable and worthwhile, but as they clear away the empty, worldly things they will fill his life with satisfactions infinitely more desirable.

It is *only* those, says Jesus, who *lose* their lives that truly find life. The life of Jesus cannot be venerated on to the surface of a prosperous, worldly life. It must be a fresh, new creation. New wine cannot be put into old bottles, nor can new patches be put on old, wornout garments.

The words of Jesus before us this morning (Matt. 25) are the parable of the virgins, the parable of the talents, and a description of the day of judgment. Let us weigh every word with the greatest care, and absorb into our lives the life-giving lessons they contain. *Upon these words our eternal destiny depends.*

The PARABLE OF THE VIRGINS declares that to be accepted, we must have a constantly-maintained supply of the Spirit of God in our lives. We must have a spiritual reservoir, so that our lives will continually give forth a pure, steady, godly light.

The PARABLE OF THE TALENTS declares that all man's possessions and abilities are the property of God; that they must be used faithfully in God's service; and that *a strict accounting of them will be required* when life is done.

The JUDGMENT SCENE teaches that unless our life is dedicated to the benefit of others rather than our own advantage and interests, we shall be rejected at the final day.

Let us not regard the consideration of these words as an interesting diversion or a pleasant spiritual relaxation. That is the complacent spirit in which Christendom settles into their cool and comfortable pews to have their ears gently tickled. *Properly comprehending these teachings is a matter of life and death.*

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins."

When? *Then*—in that day of the Lord's coming described in the last verses of the previous chapter. *Then* the importance and meaning of these words will be clear to the dullest perception.

The *all* took their lamps; they *all* went forth to meet the Bridegroom. There is clearly therefore no saving virtue in this alone. They saw a good thing and they wanted to share in its advantages. So they joined themselves to the bridal party, and complied with all the external requirements.

The foolish ones may have wondered in a light, passing way what the heavy, extra vessel was with which some of the virgins were burdening themselves; or they may have smiled knowingly to themselves that these other fearful ones seemed so absurdly concerned to carry along such a huge, unnecessary supply of oil; or they may have been annoyed by the thought that the others were trying to make *them* look careless and unprepared; or most probably, they may not have noticed at all.

"Five of them were wise, and five were foolish" (v. 2).

Jesus never minimizes the seriousness of the issues involved. The reverse side of the picture is always clearly and prominently presented. There is no blurring of the edges to make it less painful and upsetting to the fleshly mind.

To the foolish virgins the brief message was, "*I know you not.*" That was all. Just that—and *a closed door*. No second chance—no heed to tearful and doubtless very sincere repentance and intense resolve to do better. The time for that had passed.

Where is the loving and gentle Jesus, who desires all to be saved, and who came to patiently seek out the lost? *That* Jesus is calling *now*, urging and pleading for adult, mature wisdom and work instead of childish foolishness. Could he do more than lay down his life in intense suffering to emphasize the vital seriousness of the words he said?

To the lazy, self-pleasing servant the verdict was, "Take everything he has from him, and *cast him out.*" Where is the kind and compassionate Savior of men? Who is this dreadful, pitiless figure who is casting out his professed and pleading servants?

And to those in the last scene who claimed to be his servants, and who had selfishly sought all his benefits, without giving their lives to help his cause and his brethren, come the most terrible words of all, "*Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.*"

No, Jesus did not minimize the seriousness of the issue. This heart-searching teaching of Jesus created 2 classes among his hearers, just as he intended. There were those that said, "These are hard sayings; how severe, how discouraging!"—and they walked no longer with him. *Where did they go?* Did they find something better or more satisfying? Some easier way to life?

That was the majority—and Jesus let them go. He made no effort to persuade them to stay. He had shown them the power of God, and the way of life—and it annoyed them to consider the change and effort it involved. He had revealed to them eternity—and it was too big for them. They preferred to slip back into the easy darkness. *And he let them go.*

But there was another class. Very few; just a handful. Consider their answer when Jesus turned and put the choice to them. "Where shall we go?" they said, "*These are the words of eternal life.*" This was the way of life, and there was no other. So they gave their whole heart and soul to laying hold of it, and did not complain about its hardness.

The cost of the Pearl of Great Price was "all that he had" (Matt. 13:46). There are always two classes, the *givers* and the *takers*. There are those who are anxious to pay the price and wish they could give more; and there are those who begrudge it and would like to get it cheaper.

"Five of them were wise, and five were foolish."

He does not say "good" and "bad," but "wise and "foolish." The Spirit through Solomon says (Prov. 9:6)—

"Forsake the foolish, and live. If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself: but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it."

God ceaselessly urges men to awake and face the real facts of existence. Foolishness simply injures the doer of it, and benefits no one. The course of life God prescribes is the course of wisdom and peace. But they stare emptily at Him and continue in their childish amusements. Does not this show that natural man is the most foolish of all the animal creation?

The Scriptures tell us that many creatures—the ox, the ass, the ant, the spider, the coney, the locust—all are wiser than man.

"The ox knoweth his owner," but man does not know his Maker.

"The ass knoweth his master's crib," but man does not recognize the Source of all his benefits.

"Go to the ant," says Solomon, "Consider her ways, and be wise." The ants take advantage of a time of opportunity, and prepare for the future. But man—busy about passing things—fails to store up the *one* thing that will be any good to him when the Bridegroom comes—the spiritual oil in his vessel.

"The conies make their houses in the rocks," but man prefers to build his vast edifices on the shifting sand.

"The locusts go forth all of them by bands." United and irresistible, nothing can stop the locusts or turn them from their purpose. But how few men display these characteristics in the pursuit of eternal life—the highest possible purpose!

"The spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces." The patient, tireless, spinning industry of the spider. But how few men really and earnestly take hold with their hands, and *how few will ever attain to the King's palace!*

Of these last four small, creatures, Solomon declares. "They are exceedingly wise." They represent in Solomon's allegory the wise virgins, those who at present store in their lives and minds the divine treasures of spiritual wisdom which will cause their lamps to shine forth brightly in the day of judgment.

* * *

"The kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling to a far country, who called his servants and delivered to them his goods."

The heart of this parable lies in those last 2 words—HIS goods. If we grasp the depth of the significance of that expression, and apply it to our lives, we have gained the life-giving wisdom that the parable teaches.

We are "his servants" and all things we possess are "*his* goods." He has a great purpose in hand, and "his servants" are directed to use "his goods" *exclusively for that purpose.*

There are several instructive lessons in these particular "words of eternal life."

First, all pride and self-esteem are completely ruled out as foolish ignorance. As Paul says,

"What hast thou that thou didst not receive? Why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"

If to glorify ourselves on account of what we have been given is foolish, what shall we say of glorifying ourselves on account of sinful *misuse* of those things? If we use God-bestowed talents and abilities for our own personal profit and advantage, what will the Lord of those servants say to us when he comes for the reckoning? Jesus says,

"If ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" (Luke 16:11).

Let us ever remember two vital expressions: "*his* servants—*his* goods." Paul says (1 Cor. 4:2):

"It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful."

That is the first, essential quality that is required in those entrusted with the goods of another—a rigid faithfulness to resist the temptation to minister to personal desire and gratification, and to see that *all* the entrusted goods are used for the Master's purpose.

"After a long time the lord of those servants cometh and RECKONETH WITH THEM" (v. 19).

All activity must have some incentive. The secret of getting anything done is to create the incentive. The incentive in spiritual things lies in a strong, ever-present perception of the *reality of the future*. Of Jesus it is recorded:

"For the JOY THAT WAS SET BEFORE HIM he endured the cross, despising the shame" (Heb. 12:2).

That was his incentive—his driving force. His teaching is largely concerned with *creating an incentive* in men to follow the course of divine wisdom; impressing them with how much is to be *gained* by following the right course—how much to be *lost* by following the wrong.

The time of reckoning is bound to come. It will either be a glad opportunity to lay before the Master the fruit of a life of loving labor, or else it will be a time of intense remorse and regret for the past neglect and foolishness.

Jesus is trying in these parables to get men to *think about that time*, and get ready for it. His words are hard words; *certainly they are hard words!* Would it be kind for him to give smooth and comfortable words, when only hard words truly and fairly reveal the facts that must someday be faced by all?

The unfaithful servant is called for his account. His first words are, "I knew thou art a hard man." *He is obsessed with this childish idea of "hardness" and "discouragement,"* for he has no real love or enthusiasm for his master's work. He resents being told what he must do, or having his pleasure interfered with. *He did not realize that the master was concerned solely with the servants' own welfare,* and was just testing them as a basis for future gifts and honor.

* * *

"Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom" . . .
"Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire" (vs. 34 & 41).

There are the 2 sides to the picture. Some brethren and sisters will hear one, and some the other. This is a terrible reality, and we should live constantly in the shadow of it. There is no need for anyone to hear the latter message. *That is the great pity of it.* God desires that none should be rejected. This part of the picture is so utterly unnecessary and avoidable.

What constitutes the difference between the 2 classes in this scene? It is this. One group fed, clothed and visited Christ's suffering brethren; the other did not. These are simple words, but let us not be deceived—*they go right to the roots of life.*

They do not mean just making a pleasant hobby of a few visits and acts of charity. They refer to a *basic revolutionary course of life*—a course that is related to the storing up of the Spirit oil and the faithful use of the Master's talents.

The natural man serves himself. His labors are directed toward the gratification of his lusts, greed and pride. This is not only regarded as legitimate and commendable, but it is taken for granted as a first principle of life.

The natural man is wrapped up in his *own* interests; the spiritual man is wholly absorbed with the things that *God* is doing. He is so obsessed with the glories of the *future*, so anxious to learn all about *God's* ways and be useful in the working out of those things, that passing things hold little interest for him.

These are the 2 classes Jesus is speaking of. The accepted are surprised at his warm words of commendation, for they are painfully aware of how little they have actually done, and how much more they would have liked to have been able to do. The others are terribly surprised at their rejection. They had been so wrapped up in their own perfectly legitimate interests and activities that they had never stopped to think about the possible application of this parable to themselves.

They were "in the Truth"; they attended the meetings; they knew the sick were being visited fairly regularly and they even occasionally visited them themselves. And not only that, but out of their comfortable surplus they had given the Master back what *they* considered was a very generous percentage of his own talent.

It was just 2 days before his crucifixion that Jesus spoke the foregoing solemn words of life. He had said,

"Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 16:25).

The power of Christ's words lies in the life—and the death—by which he illustrated them. That life and death we meet each week to remember. The purpose of this institution is to remind us of the tremendous sacrifices he made for the sake of the things he believed and taught.

Having, by his own life, put the divine and more excellent way into perfect practice, he gave that life to lay a basis for the acceptance of those few among men who should faithfully follow in his steps.

Let us, then, ponder well his "hard," but nonetheless *loving*, words of life about the foolish virgins, the unfaithfully-handled talent, and the rejected brethren and sisters at the judgment seat.

Ecclesial News

BIRMINGHAM, Eng.—174 Edmund St. —Memorial 11 a.m.; Lecture 6:30 p.m.; Bib. Cl. Thurs. 7:30 p.m.; Sun. Sch. 11 a.m.

BOSTON, Mass.—355 Newbury St. — S. S. 10:30 a.m., Memorial 11:45; Lecture 1st & 3rd Suns. 2:30 p.m.

BUFFALO, N. Y.—O.F. Temple, Kenmore & Myron Aves.—Memorial 10:15 a.m.; S.S. 11:45; Bib. Cl. Wed. 8 p.m.; Public Lecture 3rd Sun. each mo., Oct. thru May.

CLOVER BAR, Alberta, Canada

CROYDON, Eng.—Ruskin House, Wellesley Rd.—Memorial 11 a.m.

DENVER, Colo.— 432 S. Emerson St. — Memorial 11 a.m.; S. S. 10 a.m.

FLAXCOMBE, Sask., Canada

HAMILTON, Ont., Can.—Crescent Hall, 63 King St. W.—S. S. 9:45 a.m.; Memorial 11; Lecture 7 p.m.; Thurs. Bible Class 8 p.m.

HOUSTON, Tex.—8008 Junius St.—S.S. 10 a.m.; Memorial 11; Public Lecture 7:30 p.m.; Wed. Eureka Cl. 8 p.m.

KIDDERMINSTER, England

LAMPASAS, Texas—1604 Ave. "I" East Memorial 11 a.m.; Sun. School 10 a.m.

LETHBRIDGE, Alta., Can.—633 7th St., S.—Memorial 11 a.m.; S.S. 12.30 p.m.; Lecture 7.30 p.m.; Bible Class Wed. 8 p.m.

LONDON, Ont., Can.—Orange Hall» 388 Clarence St.—Suns: S. S. 10:15 a.m.; Memorial 11:30; Lecture 7 p.m.; Thur. Cl. 8 p.m. at WCTU Hall on Clarence St. ½ block N. of Dundas.

MASON, Texas

MELBOURNE, Australia

MIAMI, Fla.—Memorial 7 p.m. Sun. at 2940 S.W. 23rd Ter.; Wed. Cl. 7:30 p.m. at 3428 S.W. 65th Ave.

MONTREAL, P. Q., Canada—YMCA Bldg., 1000 Gordon Ave., Verdun —Memorial 11 a.m.

NEWPORT, Mon., England—Clarence Hall, Rodney Rd. (opp. Tech. Col.) —Sundays: Breaking Bread 11 a.m.; Lect. 6:30 p.m.; (3rd Sun. of month —Supplem. B. of B. after lecture).

NEW TREDEGAR, Eng. — Workman's Lesser Hall—Memorial 6 p.m.

PAPAKURA, New Zealand

PLYMOUTH, Eng.—O. F. Hall, 148 Union St.—Breaking Bread 11 a.m.; Lecture 6:30 p.m.; Bib. Class Thurs. 7:30 p.m.

ST. ALBANS. Herts., Eng.—O. F. Hall, Victoria St.—Memorial 11 a.m.; Lecture 6:30 p.m.

SAN ANTONIO, Tex.—R4, Floresville.

WHANGAREI, New Zealand

WICHITA FALLS, Texas — Box 343—Sun. Sch. 10 a.m.; Memorial 11.

WINCHMORE HILL Eccl.—Canning Hall, Canning Cres., Wood Green, London N 22—Memorial 5:15 p.m.; Lecture 7 p.m.

WORCESTER, Mass.—Grandview Hall, 21 Grandview Ave.—S. S. 10 a.m.; Breaking Bread 11.

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS

BOSTON..... October 11

(Please tell us of any others)

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