

# 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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**CHRIST IS COMING AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH**

# *The Berean Christadelphian*

Please send all communications and manuscripts to the Editor—

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## EXHORTATION

### Who is on the Lord's Side?

The writer of the Acts of the Apostles informs us (11:26) that "in Antioch the disciples were for the first time called Christians." That is, they were *followers* of Christ. This term had a practical application because they believed what Christ taught, and lived in harmony with his teaching. They were not actually or practically existing in name only, but they were *real* Christians after the apostolic type. In the writings of the apostles, they were addressed as "called to be saints," "sanctified in Christ Jesus," "the ecclesia of God," and the "faithful in Christ Jesus." They were particularly addressed by Paul, saying—

"Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise"—Gal. 3:26-29.

*"From these premises," writes bro. Thomas, "then, it is evident that an Ecclesia is a community of men and women, who have accepted an invitation to the Kingdom and glory of the Deity; in believing the promises and testimonies concerning the Kingdom and Name of Jesus Anointed; and in being immersed into him: by faith and obedience they have been 'washed from their sins in his blood) and made kings and priests to Deity, even the Father,' and so separated from the body of mankind for the Age to Come."*

These "called out ones" "walked after the Spirit," or as John expressed it "they walked in the Truth." They were zealous for "the faith once for all delivered to the saints" and contended earnestly for it, "walking in the fear of the Lord." Giving heed to the commandment "to come out and be separate," these real Christians had no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reproved them. They had escaped from the corruption of the world through lust, and *devoted their time*

*and energy to the "making of their calling and election sure,"* for they fully realized that they were (1 Pet. 2:9)—

"A chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people; that they should show forth the praises of Him who called them out of darkness into His marvellous light."

But they were not all real Christians, even in the first century. The apostles were well aware of what was developing in the ecclesias, and continually *warned the faithful to be on guard*. Nowhere in the apostolic letters do we find such expressions as "I know it is wrong, but I do not think it is serious enough to be concerned about," or "I realize they are astray from the truth regarding the nature and sacrifice of Jesus Christ; but I do not think it is serious enough to affect our fellowship."

Is it possible that we can read the history of Israel without discerning the extraordinary prominence given to the absolute necessity of their keeping ALL of the statutes and the judgments enjoined upon them? The writer to the Hebrews makes a comparison of life under the Law with the Christian dispensation—

"We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?"—Heb. 2:1-3.

Why did he say that? Were some neglecting the obligations that a belief of the Gospel had placed upon them? There is no question about it. To Paul, it was most serious (Acts 20:28 RSV):

"Take heed to yourself and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you guardians, to feed the church of the Lord which he obtained for himself with his own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease **night or day to admonish every one with tears.**"

This was less than 30 years after the ascension of Jesus. Peter, likewise, warned them that there would be "false teachers among them who had forsaken the right way," and John said there were some teaching "that Jesus Christ had not come in the flesh." The seriousness of departing from the way of Truth could not be put in stronger words than those used by Jesus in his last message. Here are some of his serious charges—

1. "Thou hast tried them who say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars."
2. "I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first."
3. "Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die."
4. "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold or hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

The Christians of the first century failed to observe these divine warnings, and because they would not endure sound doctrine, they turned away their ears from the Truth, and turned unto fables, and the way of Truth was evil spoken of; and darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. This condition remained until the middle of the last century when the Truth was revived as we all well know. Once again the real Christians (Christadelphians) began to walk in newness of life *and in fear of the Lord*.

A hundred years has passed and, as we look abroad throughout the Household, what desolations we behold. Apparently, many have not learned the severe lessons of the past because we are faced with the same problems as the Christians of the first century. Brethren have arisen and are speaking perverse things with the result that some are turning aside from the saving institutions of the Gospel. If we were to follow the advice of others, we would come to the conclusion that it does not matter what we believe.

What is true Bible teaching, and at what period during the past 100 years can we point the finger and say "Here it is"? It is our considered judgment that true Bible teaching was presented to the world in the writings of bro. John Thomas, and further elucidated in the writings of bro. Robert Roberts. It is that form of religion known as "The Truth." Their writings are not a substitute for the Bible, but a signpost which has directed our minds to the system of doctrine and practice established by the labors of the apostles in the first century. We have proven this to our own satisfaction after a careful and critical examination of their writings and the Bible. This teaching has been condensed into a form known as our Statement of Faith which forms the basis of our fellowship, and our bond of union is the reception of the One Faith which it represents. If we do not agree on the doctrines set forth in the Statement of Faith, we have no right to be in fellowship. One who recently left our fellowship writes:

**"I cannot bring myself to believe that even the originators of the many heresies which have plagued the Christadelphian movement from the start were, in themselves, "lewd fellows of the baser sort," merely because of their difference in views, unless they really attempted to force their wrong teachings upon the brotherhood with malice—thereby intending to disrupt instead of strengthen."**

A teacher of heresy does not have to be a "lewd fellow of the baser sort" in order to be out of harmony with God. He can be as Paul said, "a false apostle, a deceitful worker, transforming himself into an apostle of Christ." Nor does such an one have to force his wrong teaching upon the brotherhood with malice. Even though he did it with the best of intentions, as most of them no doubt do, he would still be guilty of disruption. Our correspondent further writes—

**"Similarly, therefore, it seems to me the brethren in any other fellowship who honestly and sincerely believe, and even teach a different interpretation of any of our basic doctrines, and do so without thought of personal aggrandisement or gain, are not to be despised and treated as criminals, or worse than popular churchmen."**

We are troubled by the growing tendency to palliate false teaching and worldliness, rather than to robustly and uncompromisingly denounce it. A 'criminal' is one guilty of crime, and 'crime' is any sin or wrongdoing. It is possible that our friend has forgotten about such cases as that of Uzzah who, no doubt, had the best of intentions, but when he placed his hand on the ark, he committed a crime against God's law and was punished by death? Does he not realize that the leaders of the various churches of Christendom honestly and sincerely believe what they teach?

It is the duty of Christadelphian teachers to keep our light-stands well supplied with the oil of God's Word, and to shine that light uncompromisingly on any defections from the one "narrow way." If they fail to do so, they undergo progressive deterioration in faithfulness, and the light grows dim, flickers and finally goes out. If their hold upon divine principles is relaxed, they become weak in the faith and lack that enterprise and force which is essential for their preservation in this evil world.

If a worldly and "charitable" spirit is developed in our midst, it will generate indifference, by which the sharpness of the Truth is destroyed. It is no true kindness to minimize the vital seriousness of the issue between the True and the False—between the way of life and the way of death.

If we do not maintain the standard of our baptismal covenant, walking in the fear of the Lord, and devote our time and energy in upholding the Name we bear, we cannot expect to meet with the Lord's approval when he comes. —Editor.

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## The Mystery of Godliness

By brother John Thomas

### PART FOUR

#### DEITY MANIFESTED IN FLESH

When the time had come to bring Israel out of Egypt, the Elohim of the Deity were sent to Moses to inform him, among other things, of a new Name by which He was pleased to be known to His people. In answer, then, to the question, *What is this name?* the Deity said to Moses by His Elohim, *Ehyeh asher ehyeh*, I WILL BE WHO I WILL BE; and He said—

"Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, EHYEH hath sent me unto you."

The Elohim said moreover to Moses,

"Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel, YAHWEH, Elohim of your fathers, Elohim of Abraham, Elohim of Isaac, and Elohim of Jacob, hath sent me unto you.

"This is My Name **leolahm** (for the hidden time), and this is My Memorial, **ledor dor** (for a generation of the race)"—Ex 3:15

In the Name and Memorial thus revealed at the bush, the Deity declared that *He would be a person, or persons, not then manifested*. He announced to Moses, that HE was the *Mighty Ones* who had appeared as "three men" to Abraham, and as "*a host*" to Jacob; but that at a future period He would manifest Himself in others, even in persons of the Adamic race. Hence, in view of this new manifestation, and to keep it constantly in remembrance, He imposed upon Himself the name of EHYEH, "*I will be*."

And this Name of the Deity was to retain its import in a certain time hidden in the future. The time when it shall no longer be memorial is not yet arrived. It is to continue for the Olahm—that epoch when "*He who is, and who was, and who is coming*"—

"Shall come with the clouds, and every eye shall see him; and all the tribes of the earth shall wail before him" (Rev. 1:7).

When this terrible crisis is passed, the ascription of Rev. 16:5:

"Thou art righteous, O Lord, Who art, and wast, and SHALT BE."

—will be anachronous, for it will be no longer "*shall be*" on earth, seeing that He will then be here, and—

". . . reigning on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously" (Isa. 24:23).

The word *asher* in the Memorial is the relative pronoun *who*, and is both singular and plural, masculine and feminine. It stands, therefore, for a multitude as much as for one person. Yea, it is clear that a multitude was intended, by reference to the parallel text in Exo. 6:7, where the Deity said to Israel—

"I will take you to Me for a people, and **I will be** to you for **Elohim**; and ye shall know that I am YAHWEH your **Elohim**."

The Elohim here indicated in the aggregate are "the generation of the race," in which the Deity will manifest Himself by "the Seven Spirits before the throne" (Rev. 1:4).

The term *Ehyeh*, is the first person singular of the future tense of the verb *hahyah*, "to be, or become." It does not mean, and never did, what it is made to signify in the Auth. Vers., "*I am*." The Deity did not give Himself this name; but, on the contrary, said, "My name is I WILL BE."

The Auth. Vers. translators have suppressed the Name of the Deity wherever in their opinion it was not specially emphatic, and have substituted for it "Lord," which does not at all express the sense of the original. Where they have thought the Name emphatic they have represented *Ehyeh* in its subsequent form by "*Jehovah*," which they have only introduced nine times; though the word occurs so often that the citation of the texts occupies seven columns in the concordance.

The form of the Name which subsequently prevailed over *Ehyeh* is *Yahweh*. This is pronounced *Jehovah*, according to the Masoretic pointing invented five hundred years after the time of Jesus. But all philologists and theologians are now agreed that *Jehovah* is a spurious pronunciation. It was devised by Jewish superstition, which did not permit an Israelite to pronounce this sacred Name correctly. They have another word, *Adonai*, "lord, ruler, sovereign." From this they took the vowel-signs, and attached them to *Yahweh*, thereby making it "*Jehovah*."

All critics, however, are now agreed that the true pronunciation of the word is "YAHWEH," which they predicate on the fact of the word used in Exo. 6:2-3, being the old form of the third person, future tense. *Yah* is the same in a contracted form: and is used of the Deity over 50 times; one of which exhorts us to:

"Extol Him by His Name **Yah**" (Psa. 68:4).

YAHWEH or *Yah*, as a noun, and signifying "*He Who will be*," is then the Memorial Name the Deity chooses to be known by among His people. It reminds them that HE *will be* manifested in a multitude; and that, in that great multitude which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, which shall stand before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands (Rev. 7:9)—in each, and every one of them—

"He will be the all things in all" (1 Cor. 15:28).

Or, as it is expressed in Eph. 4:6,

"There is one Deity and Father of all, Who is upon all, and through all, and **in you all**."

The Deity, then, *in a multitude*, is a conspicuous element of apostolic, as well as of Old Testament, teaching. It is not "One God in three Gods," and "Three Gods in One;" but *one Deity in a countless multitude revealed in the Memorial Name*, and expounded in the "Mystery of Godliness."

The knowledge of this mystery was lost sight of by the Babel-builders of the third and fourth centuries; who, as a substitute, invented the Athanasian conceit of three persons in the Divine Essence, coeternal and coequal. They bound up the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, three distinct persons, into one person, or body; and called the fiction "the Triune God."

They did not perceive that the Deity was but one person, and one substance, peculiar to Himself. One Deity and not three; that Holy Spirit is an emanation from His substance, intensely

radiant and all pervading; and that, when focalized under the fiat of His will, things and persons without limit, as to number or nature, are produced.

This multitudinous manifestation of the one Deity—one in many, and many in one, by His spirit—was proclaimed to the Hebrew nation in the formula of Deut. 6:4—

"Hear, O Israel, YAHWEH our Elohim is the ONE YAHWEH;"  
—that is:

"He Who shall be our Mighty Ones is the One who shall be."

Certain *Mighty Ones* are promised to Israel—

"Pastors according to YAHWEH'S heart, who shall feed them with knowledge and understanding."

They will be spirit, because—

"That which is born of the spirit is spirit."

He, the Spirit, the AIL or Power of the universe, self-styled YAHWEH, is their Divine Father. His nature will be theirs; so that they will be consubstantial with Him, as all children are consubstantial with their parents. The Deity will then be *Manifested in the Sons of Deity*; He in them, and they in Him, by the one spirit. And this company of sons, led to glory by the Captain of their salvation is—

"The ONE who shall be," or "the ONE YAHWEH."

Of these Sons, or Elohim, One is "the Firstborn"—

"The Child born, and the Son given" (Isa. 9:6).

He is *Eloah*-in-chief, "the Head of the Body;" in whom it "pleased the Father that all the fulness should dwell," that among all he might have the pre-eminence.

*This Eloah is the great theme of prophecy.* His manifestation was predicted in the promise of the Woman's Seed (Gen. 3:15); in Isaac (Gen. 21:12); of the royal "Shiloh" from Judah (Gen. 44:10); of the sceptred "Star out of Jacob" (Num. 24:17); of the Divine Son assured to David (2 Sam. 7:14); born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14) and to rule upon his throne (Isa. 9:6-7).

In these testimonies it was revealed, that he should be *both Son of man and Son of Deity*. How this could be otherwise than is related in the New Testament would be impossible to devise.

"Is there an **Eloah** without Me? saith the Spirit: Yea, there is no Rock; I know none" (Isa. 44:8).

The manifestation, therefore, *must be by the spirit of the Deity*, or not at all. The time of manifestation was appointed and placed on record in Dan. 9:25; and—

"When the fulness of the time was come, the Deity sent forth His Son, made of a woman;"

—begotten, not of blood, nor the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but by the holy spirit coming upon her, and power of the Highest enveloping her; therefore also the holy thing she bore was called a Son of Deity and named JESUS (Luke 1). Thus:

"The Logos became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of an only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth; the Law was given through Moses; the grace and truth came through Jesus Anointed" (John 1:14-17).

Now "*Theos was the Logos*" says John; that is, Deity was the Word; and this Word became flesh in the manner testified.

After this manner, then, THE ETERNAL POWER, or Yahweh, became flesh; and commenced the initiation of His promise, that He would be to Israel for Elohim.

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

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## THE REAL STATE OF THE ECCLESIA

Where are we to look for the indications of the real state of the ecclesia? The answer is, in the individual lives of the brethren: and sisters. Let us follow them in their dispersion during the week, and ask how they act when thrown upon their own resources.

What do they do with their leisure time and their surplus money? How do they transact their business or do their work? Do they continue instant in prayer, abounding therein with thanksgiving? Are they "ready to every good work"?

Or does the Word of God go neglected in their houses while they bestow all their energies on business or work, or friends or family, or pleasure? Have they no likeness to Christ, who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister? Do they not realize that they are strangers and pilgrims, and stewards of the goodness of God, and that that stewardship relates to their private selves and their private affairs? And that if they are not found faithful in these "least" things, they will not be accounted worthy of that calling with which they have been called?

THESE are some of the questions that would determine whereabouts an ecclesia stands in the matter of "having a name to live and being dead." —Bro. Roberts.

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## Lovers of Pleasure

*By brother Robert Roberts*

In our readings this morning (1 Tim. 3), we have been informed that the Scriptures—which are elsewhere declared to be for *comfort and patience*—are also profitable for *reproof and instruction* in righteousness. We have recently had occasion to look at the comfort in the glory of the prospect opened up before us in the Gospel. This is the bright side.

Today we glance at the dark side—that side, namely, that exhibits the position of saints in the present evil world—taking the word "*saints*," for present purposes, as including all upon whom the name of Christ is called (without reference to whether they are faithful or otherwise).

Here we shall find reproof and instruction in righteousness most salutary—*most necessary*. While in this position we are in danger. The greatness of the danger is evidenced in the constant recurrence of the apostolic exhortation to be on our guard.

"Beware, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

"Let us therefore fear, lest any should seem to come short."

"Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed, lest he fall."

"Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."

"Redeem, the time because the days are evil."

"Be ye holy in all manner of conversation."

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world."

"Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear."

Such are examples of the constantly recurring precepts of the Spirit to the saints in relation to their present position. They point to our *danger*, and danger calls for circumspection. Let us look this morning at some of our dangers. The chapters read give us a clue. We read therein of some who were to be—

". . . lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God."

The persons so described were *not unbelievers*: they were professors, for it is added that they had—

". . . a **form** of godliness but denying the **power** thereof."

This is a graphic description. It sets forth *exactly who is meant*. It does not mean that the persons to whom it applies would deny there was a form of godliness, or reject the form. The word "deny" has the same force here as in the counsel to believers to:

". . . deny ungodliness and worldly lusts."

—that is, *put them away*—have no part with them—deny them. The persons in question believed the Gospel *in theory*, and submitted themselves *in form* to its institutions, but there is a something in connection with these which they practically denied in not being influenced by it: "THE POWER THEREOF." What is this?

If seed is put into the earth, and does not germinate, it has no "power" in the soil. It is powerless, and at last succumbs to corruption. This is a simile employed by Jesus himself, in reference to the Word: the Word is seed: our minds are soil: if the seed does not bring forth the results intended, *we have the "form" without the "power."*

As a rule, the failure of seed to germinate is due to some defect in the seed. In other cases the seed is good, but some one or more of the conditions necessary to its fructification are wanting. There is a lack of moisture, or the ground is too hard, or it is not sufficiently covered with soil.

In the case of the seed of the Word, there is no defect in the seed: failure in fructification must be due altogether to the surrounding conditions. These conditions are most of them subject to control.

The quality of the soil cannot be altered: a man cannot by an act of will change himself at the start from being what he is, as regards natural capacity and proclivity, but he *can* regulate the external conditions which at last even affect the constitution of the mental soil to some extent. A piece of poor ground well cultivated will show a fair result, and even improve in quality, where good soil untended yields weeds, and deteriorates in its own constitution.

The parallel in the case of mental tillage is perfect. Certain conditions are essential to the fructification of the good seed sown in the heart, and other conditions are hurtful and will positively arrest growth at last and bring decay and death.

*The pursuit of pleasure is one of the latter conditions.* It is mentioned in the chapter read: "lovers of pleasure" are the antithesis to "lovers of God." It is mentioned in other places. Paul speaks of certain female professors, who living in pleasure, were "dead while they lived." The opposite condition is expressed as—

"Living soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope."

Incidentally, we have a practical illustration of the two states in one of the chapters read. In 2 Tim. 4:10 Paul says,

"Demas hath forsaken me, having loved the present world."

Two years before, in writing to Philemon, Paul describes this Demas as his "fellow laborer," and therefore a partaker of the sufferings that are incident in all ages in one form or other to those who identify themselves with the high calling of God which is in Christ Jesus. So that here is the case of a man, an actual companion of the apostles, turning aside because he "*loved the present world.*"

Now this is an influence to which we are all, at all times, exposed. There *are* pleasures in the world. There is recognition, entertainment, society, merry-making, and honor for those that the world loves, and these things make the time speed pleasantly away.

Even for those that the world does not love, there are many pleasures provided, if people like to go in the way of them. There is a gratification to the natural mind in going with the multitude in the ways of pleasure. There is always a fascination about the thing, *especially if it is "respectable" and engaged in as something about which the lovers of pleasure can say there is "no harm" in it.*

The temptation to give in to this kind of seduction is liable to be felt in the loneliness, endurance and self-denial that belong to the present walk of fellowship with Christ. The temptation is especially felt by the young, who have not yet realised the *hollow character of all the ways of man.* They need especially to be warned, and if they are wise, they will listen. There are two strong reasons why they should listen—always pre-supposing that they have earnestly made Christ their portion, and not taken up with him merely because friends have done so.

There are two things which make it impossible for those, whether old or young, who desire the approbation of Christ at his coming to indulge in the pleasures of the world, whether in the form of the ball-room, concert-hall, theatre, or *any* of the other devices sinners have invented to while away heavy hours.

The first is, *these things are hurtful to the new man formed within them by the Word:* they check the fructification of the seed of the Word. They hang a heavy weight on the spiritual racer: they help the sin which doth already too easily beset us: they tend to hold the mind in a carnal sympathy, and to keep at a distance the things of God. *They make us feel one with the world, which is God's enemy.*

They are therefore a hindrance. They do not help us to Christ, but they rather widen the distance between us and him. Who has not at one time or other experienced the mental blank—the spiritual desolation—caused by the peculiar mental excitement called "*pleasure*"?

Therefore on the score of spiritual expedience, spiritual men and women (and none others are the children of God) should *never* be found in the paths of pleasure-seeking. They should be found taking care of the seed of the Word sown in their hearts.

To follow pleasure is as if a man should water his garden with vinegar or lime water. Let him water it rather with the pure water of the Word, and fertilize it with those self-restraints and sobrieties which will make it healthful and strong and vigorous.

But there is a *stronger* reason why we should—

". . . stand not in the way of sinners, nor sit with the scornful."

It is one of the *plainest teachings* of Christ concerning himself and his brethren that they are "not of the world." By the world he does not mean the earth, or air, or sky; he means the people that inhabit the earth; the people who compose the present order.

Not being of the world is a sufficient reason of itself why we should not be found consorting with the world in its particular pleasures and festivals. But we are expressly *commanded* to "Love not the world." We are further informed that if in spite of this exhortation, we do love the world and have its friendship, *it will be at the price of God's friendship*, for—

"The friendship of the world is enmity with God."

There is substantial reason for the invitation to,

"Come out from among them and be ye separate" (2 Cor. 6:17).

—that God may receive us, and that we may be His sons and daughters. That reason is the one given by John:

"All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father."

—that is, these sentiments are *not such as the Father approves* as the motives of action in those whom He has formed in His own image. Now these feelings mentioned by John are the conspicuous features of every worldly gathering of pleasure-seekers, and of worldly people when they do not gather. *When we attain to any growth in Christ, we see this clearly, and more clearly every year.*

At first, to youth and inexperience (and *always* to the carnal mind, whether old or young) it seems not so bad. Things seem fair and harmless; and the apostolic portraiture overdrawn, and the scruples of such as are guided by the apostles over strong.

But at last, with maturer judgment of all things and enlarged appreciation of things that are truly "good," the world looks all that it is; and if we are wise, we stand aside as God's friends have always stood aside from the enemy of God.

We get to see that the world in all its ways is *wrong at the root*. What root is that? *God*. The world sprang from God: and in a right state of the world, God would be its highest honor, its highest concern, its highest pleasure.

But in the actual state of the world, *God is not there at all*. He is unknown, unregarded where professedly recognised, sneered at where not actually denied in words—blasphemed everywhere in the actions of men. His Word neglected where admitted, despised where not avowedly cast out, spurned and denounced where the carnal mind openly unfurls the flag of its rebellion.

While casting God behind its back, the world scruples not to use—as if it were its own—the goodness God has distributed with open hand on every side. It lays its hand on everything as if *it* were creator and lord of all. It puts itself in the place of God. The Word tells us that *for the pleasure of God* creation exists (Rev. 4:11). The world ignores this, and acts on the theory that all things are for the pleasure of man. Thus God is dethroned.

God purposes a great change in this respect. He intends to humble the haughtiness of man, that the Lord alone may be exalted in that day. He intends to exhibit His glory to the eyes of all flesh, when, because of His judgments, all nations shall come and worship before Him. He will say,

"Be still, and know I am God. I will be exalted in the earth."

The day is coming when one shall not say to his neighbor,

"Know the Lord—for ALL shall know Him, from the least even to the greatest" (Jer. 31:34).

Every knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue confess. Meanwhile He is making preparation for that day in the selection from men by the preaching of the Gospel of a family who shall shadow forth His glory, and execute His authority in the Age to Come. They are called to the fellowship of His Son, who is the firstborn of the family, and their elder brother.

This fellowship consists in *walking as he walked* (1 John 2:6), doing the will of the Father, and glorifying His name, even to the point of enduring the contradiction of sinners against themselves.

Now, *these*—the appointed executioners of Divine vengeance on the world, the appointed reflectors of Divine wisdom in the Age to Come, the appointed instruments of enlightenment and blessing to Jehovah—shall *these* be found consorting in the pleasure-seeking of a world that knows not God, and obeys not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Can the *Sons of God* give countenance to assemblies and occasions in which God is dethroned, and pleasure placed on the seat of honor and power?

*It is scarcely possible for a heart in true sympathy with God to falter in the answer to this question.* David is a true instance of such a heart, and he says:

"I have **hated** the congregation of evil-doers, I will **not** sit with the wicked . . . I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers."

Such will be the account that *every* faithful son and daughter of the Lord God Almighty will give of themselves. And what if such a course may bring present weariness (though a righteous man is less weary in solitude than in the crowd of those who set not God before them)? What if it shut you off from much that *looks* agreeable and entertaining and advantageous in the present?

The day that hastens is a day of great recompense for those who take up the cross and follow Christ. It is a day when the present evil world will be no more, when it will have passed like a dream, when the children of vanity shall lament in vain with weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, mourners shall be comforted, and the despised shall be exalted.

There is no human joy and no earthly pleasure comparable to the joy and gladness that will electrify the ranks of those who shall come to Zion with singing, crowned with everlasting and unspeakable joy in the day when, for them—

*“Sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”*

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**"Loose Him, and Let Him Go"**

*"Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus"*—John 11:1.

With this thought our attention is directed to a faithful family in Israel, three righteous individuals who were dear unto the heart of Jesus. This beautiful 11th chapter of John speaks of the

love, the wisdom and mercy of God. It reveals the operation of the Divine purpose in relation to His elect.

The first feature we notice is the sickness unto death of a faithful servant of God even though he was loved by Jesus and in the presence of the power of the eternal Father.

Though we have been called to service and have obeyed in all readiness of heart, we shall not be immunized against the evils which are the lot of all mankind. If such were the case we would be very satisfied with our position in this present life; there would be no development of character; there would be no earnest longing for the manifestation of the *Sons of God in power and immortal strength*.

We learn that the trials which we are called upon to endure in a faithful manner are for the manifestation of the glory of God. This is the primary purpose in our being called to separation by God. Any aspect of benefit toward ourselves must be secondary to this basic objective.

"This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby" (v. 4).

It is human to chafe under trial. We must learn to endure it as the chastening of an all-wise Father who knows our every need and wherein we must be developed to suit His eternal purpose as His sons and daughters. There were those in the Master's time who did not understand the mysteries of Divine wisdom—

"Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?" (John 11:37).

Is the power of God limited? Is it not coextensive with all His creation? Look at the faith of the centurion—

"Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed" (Matt. 8:8).

The word "*sick*" in v. 1 has the meaning of "*strengthless*" or "*without strength*." This meaning helps us to understand the position of all men in the eyes of God. Most men and nations do not recognize their position in this respect but are like Nebuchadnezzar in declaring (Dan. 4:30),

"This great Babylon have I built . . . by the might of my power."

How sweet by contrast are the words of Hannah—

"By strength shall no man prevail" (1 Sam. 2:9).

*"God is OUR refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble"*—Psa. 46:1,

This truth is manifested in so many ways in our lives day by day, if we will only observe. It is expressly comprehended in the provision of a Savior for mankind, wherein man is entirely unable to aid himself, being without strength—

"The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts . . . for when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5:5-6).

The closer we observe the details of John 11, the more we realize that it is a loving message designed to strengthen the servants of God. All men are sick by constitution. But the message is to particular, "*certain*," or called out ones. We are the "*certain sick man*." It is no coincidence that this man's name was *Lazarus*. Lazarus means "God will aid."

Lazarus stands for a class of individuals who recognize that they are *without strength*, that they need *God's help*. It is the Greek form of the name Eleazar. Looking to the bearer of this name in Israel in the past we see the high priest, Aaron's son. This Eleazar went into the promised land with Joshua, the type of Jesus. How appropriate then that the name Lazarus should be used in this message of hope for a righteous people! It speaks of the assistance which God will afford to those who put their trust in Him, and of their ultimate entrance into the promised land when they have been strengthened by His spirit without measure.

So also the casting of the scene in a town called *Bethany* illustrates the wisdom and beauty of Divine arrangements. Bethany means, "*the house of weeping or sorrow*." Solomon advises the elect of the wisdom of association with sorrowful things in this life; that they are more provocative of right thoughts and ultimately tend to life—

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

"Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning" (Eccl. 7:2-4).

Across the Valley of the Kedron rose the city of Jerusalem in all its splendor, with its glorious temple sparkling in the rays of the sun. While nestled in the arms of the everlasting hills lay little Bethany, the house of sorrow. Jerusalem had rejected the Master with his teachings, while Bethany had ministered unto him with such as it had, with Mary who had chosen that good part, sitting at his feet and resting on his words, which part would not be taken from her. *Jerusalem*—the rich man who fared sumptuously every day; *Bethany and Lazarus*—the poor man, full of sores, who lay at the gate; desiring to be fed of the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table.

We notice in the reading from John 10 that Jesus had left the country because of Jerusalem's attitude toward him. They had sought to kill him and he had gone away beyond Jordan. He had escaped out of their hands. This was supremely manifest when he rose from the dead. The wound of the cross was not mortal in the final sense; he rose to life forevermore and went to the far country to await the purpose of God in his return—

"Death hath no more dominion over him" (Rom. 6:9).

We observe from John 10:41-42 that while Christ was across Jordan many resorted unto him and believed on him. This is an indication that through the ages many have resorted unto God through him, and have believed and obeyed his will. This same thought is conveyed in a more personal manner in 11:3—

"Therefore his (Lazarus') sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom, thou lovest is sick."

This was a petition that the Master would consider his faithful servants. The earnest prayer of the righteous ascends to the Father through the Son of God from generation to generation. It is a confession of our weakness and helplessness before God. It is an admission that we of ourselves can do nothing. We must observe the position we are in as the faltering sons of Adam, ever needful of Divine mercy and aid. It must come from humble hearts and sincere unfeigned lips.

Gradually we will see the picture of our unworthiness and we will empty ourselves and make room for God in our hearts. Then God will be able to dwell in us and guide us. But God operates in a manner best suited to develop the character which He desires. He desires that we intreat Him repeatedly, though He knows our inmost needs before we do ourselves. This does not mean we shall have an answer right away or shall see heaven opened, nor a passage through the sea. Now is the time for faith in God.

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

In the message before us it is recorded—

"Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus" (v. 5).

This verse speaks volumes for the lives of these three. Jesus had repeatedly said he loved those that loved him, that those who did his commandments were his friends, that those who loved him God also loved. Oh! that we could be sure that we are so esteemed in the eyes of Jesus and his Father! This mutual love was a result of mutual concern and a desire to work together for the glory of God. And yet with all this love and concern we read—

"When he had heard therefore that he (Lazarus) was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was" (v. 6).

The delay brought about the death of Lazarus. This attitude may seem strange at first glance. As we consider the picture we again conclude that the wisdom and love of God are manifest in all His ways. We are vessels for the Creator's use. We must constantly subject ourselves to His requirements.

If we concede that we have been called to be sons and daughters of the Father, certainly we must allow that He is concerned about what happens to us. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without His knowledge. We know the contrast the Master makes:

"Ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Luke 12:7).

God *is* concerned with what happens to His elect, but in the process of waiting and watching and praying for His merciful kindness there must be the exercise of patience and trust. We must never give up and feel that God does not care. The parable of the unjust judge was recorded for the very purpose that we should always pray and not faint.

"Shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily" (Luke 18:7-8).

The danger lies not in the possibility of God forgetting us or ignoring us, it lies with ourselves. *Shall we grow faint and weary with asking?* It would seem to carry a warning in this manner, for the Master's sobering words immediately follow—

"Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8).

The "*two days*" in which Christ tarried in the country across Jordan speak of the 2000 year period between his first and second advents. During the ages since Creation, those who have looked for a savior have *sent messages* to God as incense rising to the throne of grace. During the same period God's servants have lived and died, awaiting the revelation of the purpose of the Father in resurrection and glorification.

The two days in our picture illustrate the time Christ would be away. Living in the closing days of the Gentile times, we are favored with the fulfilment of many signs which tell us these two days are almost expired and that the Master will soon return. These 2 days dovetail with Hosea's prophecy of Israel's regathering:

"After two days (from Hosea's time) will God revive us: in the 3rd day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight."

As we see natural Israel returning to their own land we take courage and lift up our heads for our redemption is near.

As the Master proposed returning to Judah again, the disciples questioned the dangers of such an enterprise because of the recent endeavor to stone him. The Master's reply carries the correct view of our service before God, that we are created for His purposes and not our own, and for His service and not our pleasure.

"Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world" (v. 9).

Each individual who is called is given a *day* in which to work. His lifetime is his day. While we are afforded this opportunity, we must be diligent in the Master's vineyard. While we are occupying in the manner God desires we have nothing to fear. At the end of the day cometh sleep. We shall not live forever, nor do we desire to live forever as presently constituted. When our service for God is ended we shall rest.

"He giveth His beloved sleep" (Psa. 127:2).

But in the day we must work. Jesus said—

"I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4).

These things again teach us of the control of God over our lives. We are created for His glory and purpose. We should not question when He decides it is time for sleep, when our day is done. Hezekiah questioned God's decision and he did not use the additional hours in an acceptable manner.

*"Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep"*—John 11:11.

How peaceful is the picture, how encouraging to those who must follow after!

"God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matt. 22:32).

Yet Jesus said he was glad he wasn't present when Lazarus died, to the intent the disciples would believe. Though we know that Jesus is aware of all our deeds and lives, the period of his absence is expressly designed for the development of faith and trust. Now is the time of probationary sojourn. Yet through it all Jesus says:

"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age."

Jesus came to Bethany but did not enter the town (v. 30). He was met by Martha and Mary outside of the town. They had gone forth to meet him at his call. Their activities in weeping and waiting for the coming of him whom they loved, speak of the remaining of some alive unto the coming of the Lord. It illustrates that right up to the end, the true servants will not be found in the way of mirth and feasting. They shall be sowing in tears, if happily they may reap in joy. What a glorious yet awe-inspiring expression. Fearfully yet hopefully shall our hearts beat as we hear the words—

*"The Master is come, and calleth for thee"*—v. 28.

Lazarus had been dead four days already when Jesus arrived. The natural processes of corruption had set in (vs. 17-39). We may have expected that to fit the type *six* days would have suited the 6000 years from Creation to the return of Christ; but the picture is primarily *Jewish*. The four days fit the decorum of the symbol in respect to 4000 years from the Covenants of Promise made to Abraham to the beginning of their fulfilment. It is an extension of the 400-yr. period of persecution, multiplied ten times, which was shown to Abraham as the lot of his descendants.

This explanation by no means excludes the faithful who await a resurrection, who lived prior to Abraham's day. Again we are impressed with the days in which we live being the end of the ages of human rule. They give us courage that the sackcloth witnessing period has just about expired.

Both Martha and Mary remarked that if Jesus had been there their brother would not have died. This is instructive again concerning our present estate and pilgrimage. Jesus is ever present with us. He was quite aware of the circumstances at Bethany. He could have healed if it had been his Father's will, even at a distance. Sometimes God is glorified by our lives. Upon occasion a greater service is rendered by our death—

"Whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's" (Rom. 14:8).

By Lazarus' death the disciples' faith in Christ was confirmed and we are also told many more believed on him (v. 45). Martha believed in the resurrection—

"Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (v. 24).

—and her confession of this gave Jesus the opportunity of impressing the real position he played in the whole purpose of the life and death of God's servants (vs. 25-26)—

"Jesus said unto her, I am, the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

The termination of the mortal existence, the end of the probationary sojourn, is a secondary event in the eyes of God for His servants. *The real death takes place at baptism.* Perhaps we have not stressed this point enough—

"We are buried with him by baptism into death . . . our old man is crucified with him. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him." (Rom. 6:4-8).

If we believe in Jesus we shall never die again. Perhaps we shall sleep like Lazarus, our type; but we shall live before God in the sense of being heirs of the glorious resurrection to immortality and life. How important are right views of real death and real life.

God is not unmindful of all the anguish and tears that are poured out in this valley of the shadow of death—

"For He hath looked down from the height of His sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth; to hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those appointed to death" (Ps. 102).

Thus we find Jesus witnessing the anguish of soul of those who truly loved him and he is moved to tears.

"He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled" (v. 33).

If we could only realize, as we struggle here through the problems of life, seeking to do what is right, yet heavily weighed down with sorrow and care, that Jesus is also sorrowing and caring with us and for us! What depth of meaning is contained in that short verse of two words—

"Jesus wept" (v. 35).

Paul also indicates that the very spirit of God is exercised for us—

"The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities . . . the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Rom. 8:26).

"Weeping may endure for the night but joy cometh in the morning." Jesus requested the removal of the stone from the cave—no elaborate sepulchre, simply a cave with a stone to seal away, a humble covering. Lazarus was asleep in Christ, our stone of covering. Then came those clear loud notes for all the believers to hear—

"LAZARUS, COME FORTH!" (v. 43).

This is the moment for which all the righteous are waiting, and have been waiting during all the ages. Paul tells us it is accompanied—

". . . with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (1 Th. 4).

The awe inspiring moment has arrived. The weeping hearts are for the moment spell-bound as they witness the miracle of resurrection—

*"And he that was dead came forth"*—John 11:44.

But he did not come forth to immortal life. None who come out of their graves will come forth immortal. This is only the first step in standing again. He was—

". . . bound hand and foot with grave clothes and his face was bound about with a napkin" (v. 44).

The association with mortality is still impressed in our lesson. The judgment had not taken place. Yet Jesus had said that those who believed in him should not die. The most impressive words of the whole chapter therefore are—

"LOOSE HIM, AND LET HIM GO"—v. 44.

Loose him from the shackles of sin and death. *Death shall have dominion over him no more.* The glorious reward is bestowed upon the righteous. Those who are appointed to death are loosed. Or as Paul tells us—

"When this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:54-57).

Therefore, my beloved brethren and sisters, let us remain steadfast and unmoveable. Let us always abound in the service of the Lord, though it be with tears. All else is vanity.

"Your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58).

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### **THE SPIRIT'S STANDARD**

It is written, "Be ye holy for I (God) am holy (1 Pet. 1:16). This is the Spirit's own standard. To reach it we must continually strive, for we are assured on the same authority of the Spirit that—

**"Without holiness no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14).**

LET THERE BE NO TALK OF THIS STANDARD BEING "TOO HIGH"— this is the language of the unwise. We must rather accustom ourselves to the thought, and the language of the Spirit, and labor to conform to that statute of the Kingdom which requires us to . . .

**"Deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously and godly in this present evil world" (Tit. 2:12). —Bro. Roberts**

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## The Image and the Stone

### PART FOUR

*"And he chose 5 smooth stones out of the brook"*—1 Sam. 17:40

"Five smooth stones." First, why five? Wasn't one enough?—he actually only used one. David said to Goliath (v. 45)—

"Thou comest to me with a sword, and a spear, and a shield: but I come to thee in the Name of Yahweh of hosts."

—the Memorial, Covenant Name. David's sling and five stones represent the power of the Name of Yahweh set against Goliath's spear and sword. Paul, speaking of the armor of faith (Eph. 6:17) says the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God.

David has no sword—its place being taken by the stones of his sling—so these in his case stood for the Word of God. They could not represent anything else; the man of God has no other weapon.

What was the Word of God in David's day? In what way was *five* connected significantly with it? The answer is obvious—at that time the Word of God was the Book of the Law—the *five* books of Moses—the five smooth stones out of the brook of living waters—"*Written and engraven on stones,*" as Paul testified (2 Cor. 3:7). Of Jesus it was foretold, in the Psalm (110) that is the keystone of Paul's argument concerning Christ's Melchizedek-greatness—the Psalm that speaks of his enemies becoming his footstool:

"He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head. . . He shall fill the places with dead bodies: he shall **wound the heads** over many countries."

The Psalms tell us of what brook he drank—

"How sweet are Thy words unto my taste!" (119:103).

"Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures; for with Thee is the fountain of life" (36:8-9).

"As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God" (42:1).

And Proverbs 18:4 (RV)—

"The wellspring of wisdom is as a flowing brook."

The five books of Moses are the entrance-way to the Old Testament, as the four Gospels are to the New. So we find that the *outer* veil of the Sanctuary entrance was upheld by five pillars with brass sockets (Exo. 26:36), while the *inner* veil of the Most Holy Place was upheld by *four* pillars with silver sockets (v. 32).

The principal subject of the five books of Moses is *sacrifice*— all the types and ordinances of *typical* sacrifice (just as the four Gospels portray all the elements of the true, living sacrifice and its great central fulfilment and example). From Eden forward— through Noah's offering and the consequent confirmation of the everlasting covenant—Abraham and Isaac on Mt. Moriah—all the sacrifices of the Law—everything centers in the "*Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*" The

*first* of David's 5 stones struck the Sin-Image in the head and heralded victory—directing our thoughts to *Genesis* and the *beginning* of the promise of the seed to smite the serpent's head.

Now the *sling*—the weapon used to destroy the adversary—required a death for its preparation. Like the garments that God prepared to cover Adam and Eve's nakedness, it was made of the skin of a slain animal.

It was the sling that gave all the power to the stone in fulfilling its mission. By just throwing the stone himself, David could (naturally speaking) have accomplished nothing. But the sling developed a tremendous striking power—almost incredible accomplishments as to force and accuracy of aim are related of ancient slingers. (We realize that the power and aim in this case, of course, was supplied and directed by God, even as it was in the great antitypical sling that cut down the mighty enemy Sin.)

But there seems more to the number five than just a linking with the Law of God. When we think of *stones*, we think of—

“The stone which the builders (the elder brethren) rejected, and which became the head cornerstone” (Psa. 118:22);

“The stone cut out of the mountain without hands, that smote and destroyed the image” (Dan. 2:34).

Here is a smiting that is strangely parallel to this latter verse—though with one significant difference: one stone smites the Goliath-image on the *head*, one strikes it on the *feet*. But the result is the same—the Image is destroyed, and Israel is delivered.

The Nebuchadnezzar image represents the accumulated history of the *four* world empires that collectively make up the Kingdom of Men. David's selection of five stones relates his victory, therefore, to that of the *fifth*, Stone Kingdom that filled the earth.

We note that they were “*smooth*” stones—nothing about them sharp, coarse, irregular or rough. *But they were not made smooth by the artifice of man.* They were “cut out without hands.” They were made smooth by the grinding and polishing action of running water. Where the term “*running*” water is used in the regulations of the Law (as Lev. 15:5, 6, 50-52), the original is *chai* —“living.” The fitness of the symbol is very striking.

It may be noted too that—contrary to possible first impressions—a *smooth* stone accomplishes the slinger's purpose much better than a rough one. It leaves the sling more freely and accurately, and flies truer in its course. Surely an impressive lesson here!

“And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him, for he was but a youth” (v. 42).

It seemed an impossibly unequal contest, and the Philistine champion was angrily insulted that Israel should send out such an opponent to make a fool of him. How God delights to humble the pride of the pompous and the mighty, in order to teach His eternal lessons! How often does He in His wisdom use *weakness and fewness* to confound great numbers and apparent strength!

And how often a faithful young boy is the honored instrument of His purpose, used to abase the mature in power and wisdom.

*Joseph, Samuel, David, Joash, Jeremiah, Daniel, Jesus*—seven who were hardly more than children when the burden of the divine purpose began to rest upon them in their generation.

What purer faith is there than the faith of a simple child? This priceless characteristic is so often lost in the hardened adult—

"Unless you turn, and become like children, you will never enter the Kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3 RSV).

\* \* \*

"And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves?"

Knowing how the term "dog" is used in Scripture—to represent those of the world outside the divine covenant—we see far more in this statement than Goliath meant. In David's sight—and in God's sight—*that is exactly what he was!*

We see this in David's word to Saul (vs. 34-37). If God had helped him defend his father's sheep against a lion and a bear—great and noble animals, as animals went—then he could surely with the same help defend God's sheep against this uncircumcised barbarian, this "*dog*" which was frightening them with its blasphemous barking. There is no stronger term of contempt in the Scriptures than "dog." We get the feeling of the word more in the current use of the word "cur."

The crucifixion Psalm (22), which antitypically parallels this encounter, makes clear the meaning of "dog" (vs. 16-20 RSV)—

"Dogs are round about me; a company of evil doers encircle me . . . Deliver my soul from the sword, my life from the power of the dog!"

And in the last chapter of the Bible we are told, as the final consummation of the age-long struggle—

"OUTSIDE are the **dogs** . . . murderers . . . idolaters" (v. 15 RSV).

\* \* \*

David's reply to Goliath shows a faith that did not contain the slightest shade of doubt or fear—

"I will smite thee, and take thine (head from thee, and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth—**that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel!**" (v. 46).

"*Without faith it is impossible to please God*" (Heb. 11:6). If the cause is right, there can be no thought of failure, regardless of apparent odds or appearances. The earth *must* be taught that there is a God in Israel, and this can only be done by works of faith—for works of faith are works of God. He works by and through the faith of the faithful.

As we trace the symbolism of these events, let us compare the statement of David to Goliath with the prophetic wording concerning the destruction of God. The similarity is striking—

"Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble . . . that ye may eat flesh and drink blood."

"And the nations shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel" (Eze. 39:17, 7).

And again, of the same event in Rev. 19:17—

"And he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come . . . and eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains . . ."

\* \* \*

"And David **hasted**, and **ran** to meet the Philistine" (v. 48).

—another impressive evidence of the entire absence of fear or doubt, and an indication of eagerness to do God's work.

There are many interesting and instructive cases of *running* in Scripture. Who is the first man spoken of as running, and for what purpose? *It was Abraham, the "father of the faithful."*

And the incident gives evidence of his robust eagerness to serve that was among the things that pleased God about him. When he saw strangers (that later turned out to be angels), he ran to offer them his hospitality (Gen. 18:2). His heart was in it—he was alive—nothing of the abomination of insipid lukewarmness. And when he had greeted them warmly and prevailed upon them to tarry and eat, he "*hastened*" to the tent to tell Sarah to prepare (v.6), and then he "*ran*" to the herd to fetch a calf, and "*hasted*" to dress it (v.7). Then as they ate he stood by them, waiting to be of further service (v.8).

Truly an inspiring example of zealous activity! *Abraham was at this time 100 years old—"old and well stricken in age,"* as he is described in the previous chapter.

To walk in the way of God is duty. To *run* in that way with joyful, tireless eagerness is pleasure. In David's beautiful picture of the Sun of Righteousness (Psa. 19), he says—

"He is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race."

In the Song of Songs, the Bride exclaims (1:4)—

"Draw me; we will run after thee, and be glad & rejoice in thee."

But sometimes, though the spirit is eager and willing, the flesh is weak, and running is not the pleasure we would like it to be. Then let us remember the inspiring promise (Isa. 40:31)—

"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

It is they who are portrayed in Ezekiel's glorious vision of the Four Living Creatures—

"They **ran** and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning . . . whithersoever the Spirit was to go, they went."

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

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### **SPIRIT, SOUL AND BODY (1 Thess. 5:23)**

Those to whom Paul's letter was addressed would regard such an expression as coming under a similar head as "heart, soul, mind, and might" (Deut. 6:5; Mark 12:30). Most certainly Paul meant, "May your whole person . . . your entire self in each individual case . . . be preserved blameless, etc."

The formula would by us be well expressed thus: "Your moral, mental, and corporeal nature." There is a purely Hebrew ring about the expression. The New Testament is a Hebrew work in Greek dress . . . writers Hebrew, ideas Hebrew.—Christadelphian, 1884.

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## The Lamentations of Jeremiah

### PART NINE

"*The crown is fallen from our head: woe unto us, that we have sinned!*"—Lam. 5:16.

The crown in this case is a symbol of royalty. The days of Jeremiah saw the end of the Davidic line upon the throne. Ezekiel (21:26) had spoken of the removal of the crown. Hosea (3:4) had said they should remain many years without the symbols of royalty. These are prophecies which Israel's history has amply proven true. But the prophet's remarks are on a higher plane for the faithful. The crown was rejected many years earlier. Said God to Samuel:

"They have not rejected **thee**, but they have rejected **Me**, that I should not reign over them" (1 Sam. 8:7).

God was their king, but they preferred to be like all the other nations. *Therefore God gave them exactly that which they sought.* As all other nations lost their kings, so this evil came upon them.

How necessary that we retain God ever before our minds—that we be "sealed in the forehead" with the Word of God! As a type of these spiritual things, which Israel let fall from their head, we find God instructing Moses concerning the High Priestly adorning:

"Thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it: 'HOLINESS TO THE LORD' . . . and it shall be upon Aaron's forehead . . . **that Israel be accepted before the Lord**" (Exo. 28:36-38).

How could Israel be acceptable unto the Lord with such a crown removed? In its place they had set the gaudy tinkling symbols of idol worship. How urgent is the lesson for each of us, that we constantly place the mark of God in our foreheads, that our minds receive the Divine impressions, that they be always as a crown of glory upon our head! To those who carry the crown of holiness unto the Lord, will the words of Rev. 22:4 apply,

"They shall see His face; His name shall be in their foreheads."

\* \* \*

"The mountain of Zion is desolate, the foxes walk upon it" (v. 18).

The original for "fox" appears to be the jackal (as the Rev. Stand. Ver. renders it). The jackal is an unclean animal, and a scavenger. Its appearance in the vision, speaks of corruption and desolation and death. We obtain the same thought concerning Assyria and Babylon, when the prophets speak of their perpetual destruction. So it was in Israel's case.

Actually the outside nations have taken over the ruins, and have quarrelled over Mount Zion for centuries. In a broader sense the nation of Israel has been trodden under foot of the jackals in all kingdoms. *Such was the last sad vision the prophet experienced of Mt. Zion, the object of all his hopes and prayers.*

Jeremiah, alone in vision, saw the ruins of all that he had labored for, all that was left of the splendor of Jerusalem. He saw the scavenging jackals, the "doleful creatures", moving stealthily from stone to stone. These, as the Creator's servants, performed the purging of what was left. Their presence spoke of the death of the body. The Master in similar vein declared,

"Wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together" (Matt. 24:28).

Bro. Thomas wrote in Eureka, Vol. 2: "*When the 'Israelites indeed' as the chosen generation, died off from the arena, the nation became a carcase, fit only for the talons of the Roman Eagle, according to the predictions of Moses, Daniel and Christ.*"

Jeremiah had made the contrast between the glorious Abrahamic prospect and the scene of desolation. But his mind was fixed on a higher and more enduring state than the immediate failure of his people to keep their part of the covenant.

"Thou, O Lord, remainest forever; Thy throne from generation to generation" (v. 19).

This was the secret of his abiding faith. It has been the foundation of all the righteous, as they have labored to serve in an acceptable manner, and yet who have lived to see the visible objects of their labors ruthlessly removed by other hands—*hands which have not comprehended the exalted nature of that which has been destroyed.*

We recognize the truth of the fact that the throne of God is in the heavens, and that it endureth forever—

"The heaven is My throne" (Isa. 66:1).

—and that it hath been founded from time immemorial, a fact beyond our powers to comprehend (Psa. 93:2)—

"Thy throne is established of old, Thou art from everlasting."

Yet there is an aspect of the prophet Jeremiah's words in v. 19 which has a bearing upon the preceding thought of the falling of the crown. It was not the ultimate purpose that the throne of God over Israel should be always waste. If it were so, then would the words of Moses be true,

"The nations which have heard the fame of Thee will speak, saying, Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which He sware unto them, therefore He hath slain them in the wilderness" (Num. 14:15-16).

"*The throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel*" (1 Chr. 28:5) will yet have a glorious continuance from generation to generation. All the prophets concur in this joyous prospect. It is comprehended in the work of Christ who will reign for God and dwell with men. The fulfilment of the hopes of the patriarchs hinges upon this very thing.

David wrote of "a good matter," as he said, "touching the king." And he used an expression which the writer to the Hebrews definitely links with Christ. Psa. 45:6—

"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre" (Psa. 45:6).

These words are prefixed in Hebrews 1:8 with—

"But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever . . . etc."

This was the prospect which Jeremiah saw for the future, though many years of weeping would intervene. God's hand is not shortened that it cannot save:

"What though all the world resist Him!  
God will realize His plan . . .  
Then shall Israel, long dispersed,  
Mourning seek the Lord their God . . .  
While the greater Son of David  
Rules a conquered world in peace"—Hymn 110.

The final utterances of the prophet are a pleading for renewed Divine recognition of the nation. As they are set in the Auth. Ver. (the Rev. Ver. makes it a question) they appear hopeless—

"Thou hast utterly rejected us" (v. 22).

But the Psalms were the basis of the prophet's hope. When he said:

"Turn us and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old."

—he was quoting Psa. 80, which outlines the purpose of God through Jesus as the vine out of Egypt. It shows us the righteous nation as the vineyard which the Lord had planted; and the Branch which God has made strong as a means of salvation, accomplishing that which man was unable to effect for himself. This Psalm also indicates an intervening time of sorrow and trouble. But it ends on a note of triumph and resurrection—

"Quicken us and we will call upon Thy Name" (Psa. 80:18).

The necessity for a turning to the Lord is clearly manifest. There must come a declaration of repentance and turning from evil. God will then direct the steps into the ways of right. He will turn about the circumstances *if we place our confidence in Him*. But in His own order. So also the nation of Israel will be finally brought to Divine favor. Goodspeed renders Lam. 5:22 this way:

"If Thou wert to reject us completely, Thou wouldst be going too far in Thine anger against us."

Not too far for just deserts, but too far *according to His previous utterances*. Such a proposal would be out of harmony with all the promises of God. Moses said that God would raise unto Israel a Leader like unto him, whom they would hear.

They rejected this Leader when he came the first time, but their hearts will be turned from stone to flesh when he returns in power and glory; when their pride and self confidence is abased before the Northern Hosts, and when God fights for them as in the day of battle. Then shall they open the gates of their hearts unto him,

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in . . . The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of glory" (Psa. 24:9-10).

Then shall they say (Luke 13:35)—

*"Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord."*

E.F.H.

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## To Know Wisdom

*"To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment and equity"—Prov. 1:2.*

That is the preamble. That outlines the purpose of the book. Then he lays his foundation—the basis of all wisdom (v.7),

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge."

"The fear of the Lord is the *beginning* of knowledge"—any learning or activity that does not include, or is not based upon, the fear of the Lord is foolishness, ignorance, lack of knowledge. Any accumulation of knowledge that is not founded on the fear of the Lord is like putting new wine into old bottles—in a very short time the vessel perishes and the knowledge is lost and the effort is wasted and the laborer is shown to be a short-sighted fool. It is like building an imposing edifice on the sand.

And it is foolishness because it is being done *when something infinitely more important should be done*. Worldly knowledge is not always of itself foolishness, but the pursuit of it is, because it has no ultimate value to the pursuer, while a similar expenditure of time and effort in the right direction will bring eternal life.

We haven't begun to build anything permanent or valuable until we acknowledge the fear of the Lord, and our position in relation to Him.

"Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth" (Ecc. 12:1).

That is, remember Him *now* in the day of opportunity. Realize the folly of earthly pursuits before decrepit impotence and failing powers of old age force upon you the realization of opportunities for ever lost.

Of those who scorn wisdom and pursue evil, Solomon says (v.18):

"They lay wait for their **own** blood; they lurk privily for their **own** lives."

Little do they realize this deep and fundamental truth, but it is undeniably so. Everything we do is really done to, or for, ourselves. In the ultimate, we ourselves are the recipients.

"If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself: but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it" (Prov. 9:12).

We determine our own judgment. Solomon says later (Prov. 26:27):

"He that diggeth a pit shall fall therein; and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him."

And Jesus confirms this divine law of retribution (Matt. 7:2)—

"With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

If we mete out mercy and love, we are meting it to ourselves. If we mete out selfishness and severity, *that too is to ourselves*.

All will come back, like bread upon the waters. All will return either to bless or curse us, though we may have long forgotten it:

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7).

Therefore, concludes Solomon (Eccl. 7:25 RV)—

"Wickedness is folly, and foolishness is madness."

Wickedness is folly because a course contrary to divine law is self-destruction. We cannot mock God. We either accept His love or we receive His anger. Selfwill is suicide. Solomon in the

second chapter likens the desires of the flesh to the appeals of a strange woman enticing the simple to their own destruction.

"None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life" (2:19).

On the other hand, wisdom is a friend, safe counsellor and companion—faithful handmaid of God and instructor of His children:

"Wisdom crieth without: she uttereth her voice in the streets."

The excellence of wisdom over folly is such that verily shouts at us from every hand:

"She crieth at us in the streets, in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of gates."

At every turn, in letter of fire, it is proclaimed that

"Wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness."

And what is wisdom? A recognition of the *facts*, and acting in harmony with them. A perception of things as they *really are*. A discernment of the true proportion and relative importance of things, all founded on the fear of the Lord.

There are things that remain and there are things that perish. Wisdom distinguishes between them. Wisdom leads us to ask ourselves why we do things and insists upon a satisfactory answer. Wisdom demands a conscious and candid examination of our activities in the light of the things that are eternal. Are we spending our substance for that which is not bread? Are we foolishly throwing our efforts and labors into a bag full of holes?

"Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she will keep thee" (Prov. 4:6).

"For whoso findeth wisdom findeth life, and shall obtain favor of the Lord. But he that sinneth against wisdom wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate her love death" (8:35-36).

"Let every man examine himself" counsels the apostle (1 Cor. 11:28). And again, "Let no man deceive himself" (1 Cor. 3:18). For self-deception there is little cure.

"In many things we offend all," says James (3:2), and there is always hope, if we are prepared to meet the verdict of conscience and wisdom, but if we refuse to face a self-examination—*if we will not recognize at least to ourselves how miserably short our best efforts come and how much God's service demands—where is the possibility of improvement?*

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## **"Thou Hast Left Thy First Love"**

It is those who have least cause for fear that are most acutely aware of the necessity for fear in its proper sense and place.

"Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips," said the faithful Isaiah (6:5).

Daniel, the greatly beloved, in a vision that enacted the resurrection, stood trembling until the angel twice assured him:

"Fear not, peace be unto thee, be strong" (Dan. 10:12, 19).

When Paul says, "*Be not high-minded, but fear,*" he gives us an idea of what he means by fear. It is the opposite of high-mindedness. It is not terror or cravenness, but the humble and intelligent recognition of the exalted majesty of God and the unworthiness and insecurity of man at his best estate.

If one sin could plunge the race into 6000 years of misery and death—if an entire lifetime under the tremendous strain of flawless perfection, followed by the most terrible of deaths, was necessary to establish a basis on which man could approach God—if we see around us and behind us the carcasses of millions wasting in the wilderness—then what other enlightened viewpoint is there for us than, as Paul says,

"Fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, we should come short of it" (Heb. 4:1).

The accepted in the day of judgment say (Matt. 25:37-39)—

"When did we those things for which we are being commended?"

The rejected say (v. 44)—

"When did we have an opportunity to do more than we did?"

The only safe and acceptable frame of mind is that which *strains every effort to render the best possible account* of time and talents, with a clear recognition of the deceptiveness of the flesh and the ever-present danger of failure if the efforts are relaxed.

Any other course is gambling with eternity. *And other counsel is the mind of the serpent.* If we could be doing more, and we are not doing it, how can we hope to be among the few chosen when myriads are swept away like a drop in the bucket? What distinguishes us from those myriads, that we should live forever, and they should die? Is God a respecter of persons or have we that one thing they lack—*an entire, consuming devotion for the things of God?* It won't come overnight—it won't just happen to us while we sleep—it can only come as the result of purposeful and sustained application and effort.

Do we, in moments of leisure or relaxation, turn to natural pleasures or to the Word of God? Here is the test of what is the deep undercurrent of our natures, and whether it will carry us to life or death. Do we do God's service as burdensome necessary work, *longing for a "vacation" from it*, or is it a constant pleasure because of our great love for the One we are serving and our desire to be near Him and approved of Him?

When we seek to "judge ourselves" (as the apostle exhorts—1 Cor. 11-31), we must get right down to *basic motives and influences*, for they determine the value of what is done. Consider the message to the Ephesian ecclesia in Rev. 2.

If we just read vs. 2 & 3, what verdict would we give of Ephesus? "*Works . . . labor . . . patience . . . canst not bear evil . . . hast tried and exposed false professors of the Truth . . . hast borne and hast not fainted.*" What more could be asked? What more could be done? They had fought the fight and kept the faith—surely they could say with assurance,

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown."

But what do we find is the Spirit's verdict? "*Thou hast left thy first love . . . thou art fallen . . . repent or I will come quickly and remove thy candlestick.* The outer shell of works and labor and patience continued, but the original inner love has gone. They worked and endured and had patience faithfully, but just as a matter of duty, and were doubtless glad to get away from it all occasionally

when they felt they had legitimate excuse to do so. They were quite conscious of their own patience and self-sacrifice. They performed the service of God as a necessary burden, faithfully done, but without the spontaneous pleasure and enthusiasm of love.

This does not please God. If, after all God has done and revealed and promised for the future, men are not sufficiently enlightened and spiritually motivated to discern that the only real pleasure and satisfaction and relaxation is in Him and in His service, then He does not want their labors as a matter of burdensome duty, no matter how faithfully or patiently performed.

We cannot give God anything. Even the service He requires is but the provision that His love has made for us to discover and enjoy the highest pleasure He has conceived and made possible.

He offers us an opportunity to work and live and commune with Him throughout eternity. All He wants is our full appreciation and wholehearted acceptance of the offer. He simply asks us to choose between Him and the world upon every occasion when the choice is before us, *not as a matter of self-denial, but of enlightened love and true preference.*

The fundamental requirement is that we must want to serve Him, whenever and however we can. We must desire Him above all things through a fully developed recognition of His infinite desirability. We all desire many things. *Why?* In many cases we could not give the reasons.

We say they are "natural desires." We desire things because we think, or feel, that they are desirable—that they will satisfy certain longings within us. *God has assured us that in Him, and in Him alone, all desires find their ultimate, eternal fulfilment.*

The purpose of the Scriptures is to bring a full realization and conviction of that fact to the minds of those whom God has loved and chosen, so that they may be drawn to love and choose Him.

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## **Rewards in This Life**

There are such things as this-life rewards (of both good and evil). Leaving out of account those of whom Jesus says that they do what they do "that they may have glory of men" (and who, therefore, "have their reward" from mere human sources)—there are, outside of these, undoubted cases of this-life rewards from God Himself.

In some instances this may be all the subjects of it will get. In others it may not. The examples to be quoted are evidences of the existence of a principle, of probably far more extensive application than the instances recorded.

God under certain circumstances taxed Himself as it were with differing degrees of indebtedness or obligation to those who do for Him, or act a friendly, or kindly and hospitable part towards His chosen nation or His believing people; and this whether the service come from "them that are within," or "them without."

Or, varying the case a little, He sometimes blesses or prospers one for the sake of another—a God-fearing and righteous man whom the one blessed may have taken into his service, or under his care and keeping.

Foremost in this line of things may be mentioned the case of Nebuchadnezzar, to whom God gave Egypt as the reward of his "great service" against Tyre (Eze. 29:18-20)—

"I have given (said God) the land of Egypt for his labor, wherewith he served against it, because they wrought for Me."

It was said to Abraham,

"I will bless them that bless thee, & curse him that curseth thee."

This promise may be said to have both an individual and a national fulfilment. It was Laban's confession that Yahweh had blessed him for Jacob's sake (Gen. 30:27). So with the Egyptian's house, which Yahweh blessed for Joseph's sake (Gen. 39:5)—

"The blessing of Yahweh was on all he had in house and field."

God dealt well with the (apparently Egyptian) midwives of the Hebrews in Egypt (Ex. 1:15-21) because they saved the newborn Hebrew males alive contrary to the decree of the king. ("Midwives of the Hebrews" is a corrected translation, Puah and Shiphrah being Egyptian names).

God also blessed the house of Obed-edom the Gittite "because of the ark of God," which he had received under his roof for the space of 3 months (2 Sam. 6:10-12). Again, God gave Caleb the land that he had trodden upon, because, as saith the Scripture, he had wholly followed Yahweh (Deut. 1:36).

God also rewarded the zeal of Phinehas, by making him and his seed the subject of His "Covenant of Peace" (Num. 25:6-15). Israel was not to abhor an Egyptian, because they had been a stranger in his land (Deut. 23:7).

An Ammonite and a Moabite were not to be received into the congregation of Yahweh unto the tenth generation, because they did not meet Israel with bread and water when they came up from Egypt, and because they hired Baalam against them (Dt. 23).

Again, God says, concerning the king of Babylon,

"And now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon My servant; and the beasts of the field have I given to serve him" (Jer.27:6).

Nebuchadnezzar was God's servant in the execution of His judgment upon the surrounding nations; and these lands were, as it were, his wages for work done for God, as in the case of Tyre. It is also said of Uzziah (2 Chr. 26:5)—

"As long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper."

Christ recognized the same principle, for, said he,

"Whosoever shall give a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily he shall not lose his reward."

This is implied in the words

"When ye come into an house, salute it; and if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it be not worthy, let your peace return unto you" (Matt. 10:12-13).

Again, the crew and company on board the vessel, in which Paul sailed as prisoner to Rome, evidently *owed their lives to the fact of an apostle being on board* (Acts 27:23-25).

It is one of the many comforts of the Truth to know that come weal or come woe, God has the most supreme control of all the forces of good and evil; and can—at any time that it suits His purpose, and the requirements of the situation—either open the windows of heaven or hedge our path round with thorns and pricking briars. As the apostle saith (Rom. 8:28)—

"ALL things (whether good or evil) work together for good to them that love God, to the called according to His purpose."

This working together of a mixed state of suffering and patience, hope and waiting, infirmity and groaning, vanity and corruption (vs. 18-26), with final (and to some extent even present) results, is a view of the whole situation to which the Truth stands related which at once yields comfort and tranquilizing reflections, whatever may be the circumstances of the hour.

Circumstances in which the human element may appear to preponderate over the divine, are no exceptions to the rule. Everything on the earth's surface is subject to divine control and supervision. To such an extent is this the case, that not even a falling sparrow escapes the all-seeing eye of the Eternal. Even the king's heart is "like rivers of water in the Lord's hand," which He "turneth whithersoever He will" (Prov. 21:1).

Nations sometimes appear to act with little discernment, from all mere human points of view. But looked at from the attitude of the divine purpose, the most bungling work may *better forward the work of God* than the best and most judicious statesmanship.

That is how it is that governments and parliaments lay themselves open to constant reproach; for their own incompetency to rule the world in the interests of peace and well-being, often coincides with what God more immediately requires. For God, Who maketh the wrath of man to praise Him (Ps. 76:10), doeth absolutely as He will among the armies of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth (Dan. 4:35).

He hardeneth one man's heart, and softeneth another; setteth up one and putteth down another; prospers one, and frustrates the objects of another. To some it is said, "God shall send them a strong delusion;" of others, "They shall proceed no further."

"I form the light, and create darkness. I make peace and create evil. I, Yahweh, do all these things" (Isa. 45:7).

"Shall there be evil in a city and the Lord hath not done it?"

—asks Amos (3:6). God had such hold of human affairs, that no one can do either good or evil that is unknown to Him or without His permission; for He can arrest anything that He wills, in the twinkling of an eye, as He did the uplifted knife in the hand of Abraham, where His present or future objects require it.

Even human mistakes, and humanly-devised hurt, can make no headway beyond the point that it ceases to coincide with the results God requires, or the point at which He deigns to arrest it.

The wonderful interworking of the human with the divine, throughout the history of the Truth is one of its continual marvels. Abraham would have had Ishmael live before him; Isaac would have blessed Esau; Joseph would have had Jacob bestow his principal blessing upon Manasseh.

But all these things were divinely overruled to the contrary; for God escheweth the merely natural judgment all the way through, in favor of the purpose of His Own Spirit,

"Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Mal. 1:2-3).

"In ISAAC shall thy seed be called" (Rom. 9:7).

This oracle is founded in the highest wisdom; for Esau was a mere natural man, whereas Jacob was a lover of God and a link in His purpose.

Jacob's name may be cast out at present, but in the finally fulfilled purpose of God *he* is destined to do the same for the whole house of Esau and all his mistaken sympathisers (Obad. 18).

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### UNHOLINESS WILL BE FATAL

Smoking and chewing tobacco are unclean habits, tending to choke the New Man by the soporific action of narcotism on the nerves. They therefore ought to be avoided by men who are commanded to "Be holy in all manner of behavior," and to "Lay aside EVERY weight."

Unholiness will be fatal to a man's acceptance with the Lord. It is so revealed (Heb. 12:14), and we shall find at the last that we cannot alter the Lord's appointments.

The fact that a man sickens at the first attempt to smoke, is proof that he is at war with God in nature in the indulgence of the habit.

The universality of the habit is no argument in its favor from a divine point of view. "The whole world lieth in wickedness." Its popularity with the world that is the "enemy of God" is rather AGAINST than FOR its countenance by a man of God.—Bro. Roberts, 1898.

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### A Letter to Our Children

Hello, dear children! This month we are going to visit another building in the city of London, England. The building we are visiting this time is called the Tower of London. This is a very large castle and is well protected by 2 walls. One of the walls is 1900 years old. There are 18 towers, all important in England's history.

We are going to visit the Wakefield Tower. This was built in 1221 and in this ancient tower are kept the "crown jewels" of England. There are eight crowns and the Imperial Crown (the most valuable), and many other things. These crown jewels are very closely guarded by men called the Royal Fusiliers. We are allowed to look at these jewels, but there is a very thick glass that keeps us from coming too close to them. The lights that shine on these jewels bring out their brilliance, and they make us think how God creates such wonderful precious stones. Imagine—this is what man makes with God's stones: can we imagine the beauty of a crown made by God?

And God is preparing a beautiful crown . . . a "crown of glory" . . . for everyone who pleases Him. Paul said, just before he died . . .

**"There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord will give me at that day (when he comes), and not to me only, but to all them that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:8).**

Crowns stand for victory and ruler ship and majesty. As we look at this crown of England, we remember that Jesus—when he comes again—wears "**many** crowns upon his head" (Rev. 19:12). This crown will be among them—he will rule all countries of the world."

The Bible teaches us another beautiful thing about crowns. It tells us that God is preparing a crown for Himself . . . that everyone who is faithful and good is a jewel belonging to God and He will, when the time for the Kingdom comes, put them all together as the stones of His crown. Look up Mal. 3:17 and Zech. 9:16.

As we look at these beautiful jewels shining in the light, it makes us think of the faith we have. We always should be ready to show the brilliance of our faith to the world. We must hold this Pearl of Great Price to our hearts truly, but we must not be selfish and keep it to ourselves. And we must let the world know what it is that we continually guard against . . . the imitation jewels of the

world. These jewels of the world do not interest us because the jewel (faith) that we have outshines everything else in the world today.

When we speak of the "imitation jewels of the world," we mean the things of the world that tempt us to follow it and lose our crown. We all know how the world tempts us, and it is only by continually looking at our Great Jewel and keeping it shining in our hearts that we will have the "crown of righteousness" . . . that wonderful, priceless crown in that beautiful Kingdom that will be set up in Jerusalem with the four towers clearly shining throughout the land of Palestine, ruling the whole world.

So we leave the crown jewels, and as we do we think on the Truth (or Jewel) and remember that no amount of money can buy this Jewel, and we have an opportunity to have it for our own by accepting God and Jesus and learning their commandments and keeping them shining in ourselves all day, every day. Jesus says:

**"Hold tight to what you have, that no man take your crown."**

That means, do not let anyone cause us to do anything that will make us lose this beautiful treasure we have of becoming God's children. It will help us if we always remember that in order for us to be able to have this crown of life, Jesus—because he loved us—patiently suffered and wore a cruel crown of thorns and was crucified. As you grow up you will understand why this was necessary and what you must do to be a part of God's plan. —Uncle Joe.

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