

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.

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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

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EDITORIAL

All Things Must Be Fulfilled

Anyone, who reads the Bible with care and thought, must soon conclude that it is not a book of pious platitudes, or devotional exercises, as many seem to think. If we examine it carefully, we find the Bible to be distinctly a revelation of God and, therefore, divinely designed to bring before man the truth concerning God's existence and creative power. It also reveals what He has done in the past, and what He intends to do in the future, with the earth and the human race upon it.

Let us follow Jesus briefly, and listen to him as he places implicit confidence, and supreme faith in the Scriptures which "cannot be broken." We meet him first at the end of 40 days and 40 nights during which time he had fasted, and was hungry. Three basic or fundamental trials, or temptations, were placed before him, but in each case he responded, without hesitation, saying, "*It is written.*" Christ's response is deeply impressive, for in each phase of the temptation he uses the Scripture to defend himself.

Do we fully grasp the significance of this narrative? Does it not teach us that, when we are faced with unusual trials, or problems, *we will only protect ourselves in proportion to how we have read, pondered and remembered the Word of God.* Therefore we should strive to be like the Psalmist, able to say:

"Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee"—Ps. 119:11.

Our next contact with Jesus is in the synagogue at Nazareth, when he stood up to read. The book of the prophet Isaiah was given to him, and he found the place where it was written,—

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

As Jesus looked up from his reading, he addressed the people saying, "*This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.*" What an unusual claim for a man to make! But Jesus was not an ordinary man, for the incomparable works which he did were overwhelming evidence that he was the

man to whom this prophecy referred. We hear him next, as he concludes the parable of "The rich man and Lazarus"—

"And he said unto him, **if they hear not Moses and the prophets**, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead"—Luke 16:31.

In this statement, he directs attention to the writings of Moses and the prophets, as he did on many occasions.

When the excruciating pain of scourging had merged into the throbbing agony of crucifixion, and was forgotten in the joy of resurrection, Jesus met two of his disciples on the way to Emmaus. Not recognizing him, they spoke of his death as though it had brought to an end of their faith and hope in him. But on that same day he made himself known to the disciples, and said unto them,—

"These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that **all things MUST be fulfilled**, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me"—Luke 24:44.

Throughout all his radiant and arduous ministry, these familiar words were heard, "*Thus it is written.*"

About four years later, on the way to Damascus, we meet another unusual man, described by Jesus as,

"He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my Name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will show him how great things he must suffer for my Name's sake"

—Acts 9:15-16.

Here we are introduced to Paul who, because of his unwavering faith in God, and his assiduous labor in the duties assigned to him, was able to say (1 Cor. 11:1)—

"Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ."

Repeatedly, throughout his letters, we hear that familiar phrase, "It is written." In the fourth chapter of Romans, Paul writes concerning the unstaggering faith of Abraham, who was:

". . . fully persuaded that what God had promised, He was able also to perform" (v. 21).

Because of this, says the apostle, in v. 22, "Therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness." Then he adds,—

"Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead"—vs. 23-24.

This one example brings added force to the oft-repeated phrase in Rom. 15:4 that, "*Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our instruction.*" And again in 1 Cor. 10, where Paul writes concerning certain transgressions of Israel during the exodus from Egypt, he says in v. 11,—

"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples (or types): and they are written **for our admonition**, upon whom the ends of the world (or age) are come."

The original word rendered "admonition" means a *putting into the mind*. This is what we are expected to do with our daily Bible readings. If we do this, we will be,

"Laying up in store for ourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that we may lay hold on eternal life"—1 Tim. 6:19. —Editor

A SOUND MAGAZINE

The Truth would long ago have become extinct, but for such "pestilential" publications as the Herald, whose "mission" is to agitate the waters, that stagnation may not arise. They are like the great Teacher, in that they "come not to bring peace, but a sword." As soon as they cry "peace" their "mission" is at an end.
—**Bro. John Thomas**

The Mystery of Godliness

"Now to Him that is of power to stablish you . . . according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began"—Rom. 16:25

By **BROTHER JOHN THOMAS**

Revolving upon its own axis, and describing an ample circuit through the boundless fields of space, is a planet of the solar system bearing upon its surface a population of over a thousand millions subject to sin, disease and death. This orb of the starry heavens shines with a glory similar to that of its kindred spheres. Viewed from them, it is seen sparkling "like a diamond in the sky"; and with the rest of the heavens, declares the glory of God, and shows forth the handiwork of Him that did create it.

This celestial orb, which is a world or system of itself, is styled THE EARTH. It is the habitation of races of animals which graze its fields, lurk in its forests, soar through its atmosphere, and pass through the paths of its seas.

At the head of all these is a creature like themselves, animal, sensual, and mortal. He is called MAN. He has replenished the earth and subdued it, and filled it with his renown. His crimes, however, rather than his virtues, have illustrated and distinguished him with an unhappy pre-eminence above all other created things. His heart is evil; and, left to its uncontrolled impulses, he becomes licentious, merciless, and more cruel than the fiercest beast of prey.

Such is the being that claims the independent sovereignty of the globe. He has founded dominions, principalities, and powers; he has built great cities, and vaunted himself in the works of his hand, saying (Dan. 4:30)—

"Are not these by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?"

He repudiates all lordship over him, and claims the inalienable and inherent right of self-government, and of establishing whatever civil and ecclesiastical institutions are best suited to his sensuality and caprice. Hence, at successive periods, the earth has become the arena of fierce and pandemoniac conflicts; its tragedies have baptized its soil in blood, and the mingled cries of the oppressor and the victim have ascended to the throne of the Most High. Skilled in the wisdom that comes from beneath, he is by nature ignorant of that which is—

"First pure, and then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy" (Jam. 3:17).

This is a disposition to which the animal man under the guidance of his fleshly mind has no affinity. His propensity is to obey the lust of his nature, and to do its evil works, which are—

"Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, sects, envying, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like" (Gal. 5:19).

All these make up the character of the world (1 John 2:16)—

"The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life."
—upon which is stamped the seal of God's eternal reprobation—

"They who do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God."
—but "*they shall die.*"

Such is the world of human kind!—the great and impious enemy of God upon the earth. Its mind is not subject to His law, neither indeed can it be. What shall we say to these things? *Is the world as we behold it a finality?* Are generations of men, rebellious against God and destroyers of the earth, to occupy it successively through an endless series of ages? Are men to repeat the history of the past forever? Is the earth always to be cursed, and sin and death to reign victorious?

Who can answer these inquiries? If we survey the starry canopy, thence no sign or voice is given expressive of the truth. They declare the eternal power and divinity of their Creator, but they speak not of the destiny of the earth or of man upon it. If we question the mountains and hills, the plains and valleys, the rivers, seas, and oceans of the earth, and demand their origin, why they were produced, to what end created—their rocks, their strata, their fossils or deposits, afford us no response.

Turn we to man and ask him, "Whence comest thou, and what is thy destiny? Whence all the evil of thy nature, why art thou mortal, who made thee, who involved thee in the widespread ruin and calamity on every side?"

Ask an infant of days the history of the past, and he can as well detail it as a man can answer these inquiries without a revelation from Him Who is before all, and to Whom is known from the beginning all He intends shall come to pass. So true is it that, unaided by light from heaven (Isa. 64:4)—

"Since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him."

But, adds the apostle in his inspired comment upon these words:

"God hath revealed these things unto us by His Spirit . . . which things we (apostles) speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth; interpreting spiritual things in spiritual words" (1 Cor. 2:10).

To the Bible, then, all must come at last if they would be truly wise in spiritual things. This is a great truth which few of the sons of men have learned to appreciate according to its importance. A man may be a "theologian" profoundly skilled in all questions of "divinity"; he may be well versed in the mythology of the heathen world; be able to speak all languages of the nations; compute the distances of orb from orb, and weigh them in the scales of rigid calculation; he may know all science and be able to solve all mysteries—but if, with all this, he be ignorant of "*the things of the Spirit*"; if he know not the true meaning of the Bible, he seemeth only to be wise, while he is, in fact, a fool. Therefore, the apostle saith—

"Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be **wise in this world**, LET HIM BECOME A FOOL, that he may be wise; for the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, for it is written,

"He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, the Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.

"Therefore **let no man glory in men**" (1 Cor. 3:18-21).

If our contemporaries could only attain to the adoption of this great precept, "*Let no man glory in men,*" they would have overleaped a barrier which as a fatal obstacle prevents myriads from understanding and obeying the Truth.

But while God lightly esteems the wisdom of the reputed wise, there is a wisdom which he invites all men to embrace. This is styled (1 Cor. 2:7)—

"The wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world, which none of the princes of this world knew."

It is said to be hidden in a mystery because, until the apostolic age, it was not clearly made known. This will appear from the following texts—

"Now to Him that is of power to establish you according to the revelation of THE MYSTERY, **which was kept secret** in the times of the ages, but **now** (in the time, or age, of the apostles) is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets made known to all nations **for the obedience of faith**" (Rom. 16:25-26).

"By revelation God made known unto me, Paul, THE MYSTERY, which in other ages (former ages under the Law of Moses) was not made known unto the sons of men **as it is now** revealed unto the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, **that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel**" (Eph. 3:3-6).

Here is "*the knowledge of God*" in which are contained "exceeding great and precious promises," the understanding of which is able to make a man wise, and a "*partaker of the divine nature*." Now, although these hidden things have been clearly made known, they still continue to be styled the mystery, not because of unintelligibility but because they *were* once secret.

Hence, the things preached unto the Gentiles, and by them believed, are styled by Paul, "*The mystery of the Faith*," and, "*The mystery of godliness*, some of the items of which he enumerates, such as—

"God manifest in the flesh, justified by the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory" (1 Tim. 3:9-16).

Thus an *intelligible mystery* characterises the once hidden wisdom of God, and becomes the subject matter of an enlightened faith.

"Wisdom" (say the Scriptures) "is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee; she shall bring thee to honor when thou dost embrace her.

"She shall give to thy head an ornament of grace; a **crown of glory** shall she deliver to thee" (Prov. 4:7-9).

If thou wouldst, O reader get this wisdom, happy art thou if thou findest it (Prov. 3:14:18)—

"For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies, and all things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.

"Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a TREE of LIFE to them that lay hold upon her; and happy is everyone that retaineth her."

Before the Son of God sent forth his apostles to proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom in his Name (Luke 24:45)—

"He opened their understanding that they might UNDERSTAND THE SCRIPTURES."

If thou wouldst gain the knowledge of the wisdom of God which is so inestimable, and which is contained in the Word they preached, thou must also be the subject of the same illumination. This is indispensable, for there is no obtaining of this commodity except through the Scriptures of Truth. These are—

". . . able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. For all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

What more dost thou want than *perfection*, and a crown of life and glory in the age to come? Search the Scriptures with the teachableness of a little child, and thy labor will not be in vain. Cast away to the owls and to the bats the traditions of men, and the prejudices indoctrinated into thy mind by their means; make a whole burnt offering of their creeds, confessions, catechisms, and articles of religion; and, after the example of the Ephesian disciples, hand over your books of curious theological arts, and burn them before all. These mountains of rubbish have served the purpose of a dark and barbarous age. The WORD, the *Word of the Living God* alone, can meet the necessities of the times.

A HOLY CALLING

We have to remember that the world at large have not only forgotten the theory of the Truth, but that they have never realized WHAT IT IS THAT MEN ARE CALLED TO when they are called to be sons of God, and brethren of Christ, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

From this unenlightened world most brethren have but recently come. Consequently they are liable to bring the world's maxims with them. Casting about for the right one, the only safe plan is to rely for guidance on the Word only.

Brethren are only trustworthy insofar as they echo the Word's sentiments and principles. If they complain of the way of godliness being narrow, or the standard high, they complain against the Word.

If the way is narrow, and the standard high, it is God Who has made them so, and it would be madness in us to tamper with them while PROFESSING to accept them.—**Bro. Roberts.**

Bible Questions Answered

BY BROTHER ROBERT ROBERTS

Can brethren be constables and soldiers?

The question is, Has Christ forbidden violence? Nothing is clearer. Peter says (2 Pet. 2:21)—

"He hath left us an example that we should tread in his steps."

Christ himself said to his disciples:

"I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:15).

Now the example of Christ, as to the matter in hand is plain. The testimony is that he did no violence, neither was deceit found in his mouth (Is. 53:9). As Peter tell us:

"When he was reviled, he reviled not again: when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously" (1 Pet. 2:23).

Can we imagine Christ acting as the special constable at Jerusalem at the bidding of the Scribes or magistrates; smiting and driving a turbulent mob on the plea of protecting life and property? If he once drove a crowd of market people out of the Temple court—

" . . . overthrowing the tables of the money changers and the seats of them that sold doves," —it was not at the command of human authority but *in the Name of the Father*, Whose house of prayer had been transformed into a den of thieves. The law was yet in force, and Jesus as under the law (Gal. 4:5), was empowered to enforce its requirements as against his rebellious brethren, like Nehemiah, who drove out of the same place a similar class of people for a different offence (Neh. 13:7-31).

When the authority of God is re-established, the saints will take the sword of judgment, and be required to do the same work on a vaster and more effectual scale; but the question is *what is their duty NOW*, in the times of the Gentiles, while on probation for the Kingdom of God? On this, Christ's example points distinctly in the direction of non-resistance.

* * *

"And Jesus . . . was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being 40 days tempted of the devil"

—Luke 4:1-2.

No man can say positively who the devil was that tempted Jesus. The great point is that it was not the orthodox devil, because there is no such being. There need be no special effort to identify the particular form of Bible diabolism that was at work. It cannot successfully be done.

The Bible word "devil", which is an untranslated Greek word in an Anglicised dress, does not tell us. It has its moral equivalent in the word *Deceiver*; but there are many deceivers. Sin is a deceiver, but so also is a man, as in the case of Judas (Jno. 6:70); or the world, as in the case of "the god of this world," of whom Paul speaks, blinding the eyes of its devotees (2 Cor. 4:4); or the authorities, as in the case of the devil at Smyrna, who should cast some of Christ's friends into prison (Rev. 2:10); or the power of sin's flesh organised in the states and kingdoms of Europe (Rev. 12:9; 20:2).

Because "devil" has this wide significance in the Scriptures—(morally identical, but in form various)—no wise man will dogmatise on the particular form the generic devil assumed in the temptation of Christ. He may form an opinion; he may speculate; but that is a different thing.

That it was an external tempter (as the analogy of the two Adams requires, and also the complete subjection of the mind of Christ to the Father) does not interfere with the internal susceptibility of the Lord's nature to evil suggestion. No external temptation can be a temptation if there is no internal response to temptation, as in the case of the Lord's hunger and the suggestion that he should illegitimately make bread.

Nor does the existence of internal susceptibility dispense with the need for external suggestion; rather the reverse. Latent tendency to evil does not, in the case of moderately-balanced minds, stir till it is appealed to from without. The Lord's mind was more than moderately balanced. He did "always" those things that pleased the Father (Jno. 8:29). He was "about his Father's business," (Luke 2:49). It was his meat and his drink to do the will of the Father (Jno. 4:34).

Such a strength of mind in divine directions required unusual power of external temptation. The devil that tempted the Lord "departed from him for a season," which cannot be affirmed of his nature.

If a man think it was all subjective (all in his own mind and nothing outside) let him think so, but he will not insist on others thinking so if he is wise. We must bear with him. His opinion does not

injuriously affect any first principle, unless he make Christ to have been the worst instead of the best of men.

* * *

"The Lord was with Judah, and he drove out the inhabitants of the mountain, but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley because they had chariots of iron"—(Jdg. 1:9).

Your question is, how was it that Judah, having Jehovah with them, was unable to cope with the Canaanitish charioteers? The answer is to be drawn from the fact illustrated at every stage of Israel's history, that *though God was in their midst, His co-operation depended on compliance with His will.*

When they lacked faith, doubted His word, or neglected His commandments, evil befell them, although He was in their midst. Thus, the first invasion of the Land of Promise was a failure, though Jehovah was in the camp (Num. 14:40-45) *because the congregation had not believed His word* in the first instance, but had refused to go up to possess the land on account of the discouraging report of the spies, and now went up in opposition to instruction. Again, Israel's attack upon Ai was repulsed, though God was with Israel, *because there had been trespass* in the congregation.

The cause of Judah's powerlessness against the chariots of iron probably lay in his fright thereat; faith in Jehovah quailing in the presence of the ironclads. But, independently of this (of which there may be some doubt), a distinct cause of weakness appears in the *incompleteness with which Judah and the other tribes carried out the divine instructions* as to how they were to treat these nations. We learn from the same chapter (Jdg. 1)—

"The children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem" (v. 21).

"Neither did Manasseh drive out the inhabitants of Bethshean and her towns, nor Taanach and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Dor and her towns . . . It came to pass that **when Israel was strong** that they put the Canaanites to tribute, and **did not drive them out**" (v. 27).

So also we read of Ephraim (v. 29), Zebulun (30), Asher (31), Naphtali (33), etc. God's displeasure at this is thus declared—

"I have made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you into the land which I swore unto your fathers, and I said,

"I will never break My covenant with you. And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land: ye shall throw down their altars, but ye have not obeyed My voice: why have ye done this?"

"Wherefore I also said, **I will not drive them out** from before you: but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you" (Jdg. 2:1-3).

Herein we perceive the cause of Judah's powerlessness, though Jehovah was with them. They were *not working out the subjugation of the land in accordance with the commandments*, and therefore Judah, though wishful, "could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley," who defended themselves in chariots of iron. These inhabitants were left as a thorn.

* * *

"Suffer yourselves to be defrauded"—1 Cor. 6:7.

Considering that the precepts of Christ were enjoined on believers for the *proof of their obedience*, and not for their convenience as citizens of the present world, the suggestion that these precepts apply only to "circumstances of persecution," must be held to be the thought of a man whose combative nature rebels against these flesh-crucifying precepts, and yet who is not prepared to go the length of openly denying Christ.

It is a suggestion that is absurd in itself that we should be allowed to fight for ourselves, and forbidden to fight for the Lord. One would imagine that the distinction, if it existed, would work just the other way: that we would be allowed to repel and retaliate when it was the authority of the *Lord* that was in question, but that we should be submissive when it was a mere question of taking our purse. But the fact is, *no such distinction is made*. It is a distinction that *cannot*, in fact, be made; for how are you to know when a man hurts you for your faith, and, when from his own cupidity? Before we could work this distinction we need the power of reading men's motives.

The command of the Lord is absolute—that we are to act the part of sheep in the midst of wolves; wise as serpents, but unharmed as doves. The faithful of the first century recognised this as involving non-resistance. This is evident from James' incidental remark to the wanton rich of the 12 tribes (5:6):

"Ye condemned and killed the just, and he doth not resist you."

It is also distinctly evident from Paul's words in 1 Cor. 11:20,

"Ye suffer if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you in the face."

As much as to say, "It is a usual thing with you to submit, without resistance, to personal injury; how much more may you endure my words." This shows that the duty of non-resistance in these cases was *recognized and practised among the disciples*, led by Paul. Indeed, he expressly enjoins it. He says—

"Dearly beloved, **avenge not yourselves**, but rather give place unto wrath, for it is written: Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him, if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but **overcome evil with good**" (Rom. 12:19-21).

Again, he says (1 Cor. 6:7)—

"Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?"
"See that no man render evil for evil" (1 Thes. 5:15).

Such commandments are *hard for flesh and blood*; but they are only prescribed for those who are called to an exaltation which it has not entered into the heart of man to conceive. It is wise and needful that, as James exhorts, we—

"Humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt us in due time."

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The Glory Which Shall Be Revealed

"For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross"—Heb. 12:2.

There is also a joy set before us. A consideration of this great joy will stimulate, and encourage us to stand fast in the Faith. Its full extent is not revealed in the Scripture of Truth—

"For eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God had prepared for them that love Him"—1 Cor. 2:9.

But we have this assurance through Moses that—

"All the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord."

And Isaiah testifies that—

"The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together."

Isaiah's 26th chapter forms the basis of our message, and it refers to a song that will some day be sung in the land of Judah.

"In **that day** shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks."

What day? It must be some day previously spoken of by the prophet, so we go back to ch. 25 and find the same words (v. 9):

"And it shall be said in **that day**."

Farther back in the same chapter, we find the day in vs. 6-8—

"In this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.

"And He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations.

"He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces."

What a beautiful word picture! There is no doubt about the day mentioned; it is the day to which every true believer looks with intense longing—a day in which his hopes are centered.

It is the DAY OF SALVATION, concerning which Job said:

"For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand, at the **latter day**, upon earth.

In Acts 17-31, Paul speaks of the same day in this manner—

"Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will **judge the world in righteousness** by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised him from the dead."

Therefore, says Paul again (Heb. 10:24-25)—

"Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembly of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another, and so much the more, as ye see **the day** approaching."

But what of the song that will be sung in the land of Judah in that day—"We have a strong city"? Surely it is not a strong city as we understand strong cities today. No, we think not. It must be the one Paul speaks of, when he says of Abraham—

"For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God"
—Heb. 11:10.

We read much of this city in the Apocalypse. Listen to John—

"And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God.

"And her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;

"And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

"And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones.

"And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof"—Rev. 21:10, 11, 14, 19 and 23.

This great city will supersede the present world's holy city of Rome. It is spoken of in this 26th chapter of Isaiah—

"For He bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, He layeth it low; He layeth it low, even to the ground; He bringeth it even to the dust"—v. 5.

The destruction of Rome is foretold in detail in Apocalypse 18, and illustrated in v. 21—

"And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying,

"Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all."

Do we realize the significance of this illustration? If not, then go to a large pool of water, and cast a stone into a deep place, and ponder the picture. Now we turn to the other portion of the song in v. 2—

"Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which **keepeth the truth**, may enter in."

Does this not stir up our minds by way of remembrance, and make us think of the words of the Psalmist? (Psalm 24)—

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in.

"Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle, He is the King of Glory."

But who is this righteous nation, and why do they enter through the gates into the city? Jesus gives us a lead for the first part of our question in words addressed to the Scribes and Pharisees, when he said—

"The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof—Matt. 21:43.

Peter completes the answer to our question—

"Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an **holy nation**, a purchased people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light"—Pet. 2:9.

We, brethren and sisters, form a part of that nation that shall enter through the gates of the city IF we walk in the Truth, and show forth the praises of our Father in heaven.

And that is not all—we must "hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope FIRM unto the end," and "continue in the faith grounded and settled."

But what about the second part of our question? Why do they enter through the gates? Jesus gives us the answer in the last chapter of the Bible—

"Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter thru the gates into the city."

There are two prominent features in this statement of Jesus. The keeping of the commandments brings blessing, or happiness, and gives a right to the tree of Life. There is no other way.

We come back to Isaiah 26, to look for a short time at another side of the picture in that day, and we read in v. 9—

"When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."

Judgments: This word has a peculiar effect on the mind of a great many. We hear them speak of the "dread tribunal" as though we had to appear before some judge of this world, instead of before Christ, whose judgment, we know, will be just.

But some may say, "I fail so many times, that I do not feel worthy," or as Jacob said (Gen. 32:10)—

"I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which Thou hast showed unto Thy servant."

That, brethren and sisters, is the spirit that our heavenly Father likes to see displayed. He does not look to the proud, or arrogant, for has He not said (Isa. 66:2)—

"To **this** man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth (or is exercised) at My Word."

If we are truly walking in that newness of life of which Paul speaks, and doing the commandments set forth by the Lord Jesus, and keeping ourselves unspotted from the world, and all its evil, the judgments will not be for us. As to who they *are* for, we read in v. 21 —

"Behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity."

Truly, He comes with vengeance, but listen to what He says—

"Be strong, **fear not**: Behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; He will come and save you"—Is. 35:4.

Of course, if we are not faithful, and are not living as strangers and pilgrims in the earth; but have drifted back into the world, like Demas, then the judgments will come upon us, and we will never see the tree of life.

For seven full days, at the Texas Gathering, we stepped out of the world of turmoil, and gave ourselves wholly to the exercise of our minds and affections, drinking from the fountain of the water of life freely.

Though of necessity "in the world," we must live *all our time* in this same spiritual atmosphere of sanctification and separation, that we may have confidence to look forward to the day of the Lord, and rejoice in the hope of salvation.

In v. 19, we read of one of the greatest events that will take place "in that day"—

"Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise.

"Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."

Our thinking powers seem to come to a stop as we try to understand this infinite miracle. The whole Body of Christ—covering a period of six thousand years—all that have died, shall "awake and sing." And what will they sing? Let us listen:

"And they sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof.

"For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth"—Rev. 5:9-10.

O, what stupendous things we are related to because of our belief and obedience of the Gospel! Truly, brethren and sisters, it is too precious a heritage to be bartered for any consideration pertaining to the present fleeting existence! And now we read those beautiful words of v. 20—

"Come, **My People**, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast."

Who are the people addressed? Our answer comes from our beloved brother Paul, and he is addressing a body of people who have believed and obeyed the Gospel (Eph. 2:19-22)—

"Now therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy Temple in the Lord; In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

Yes, these are *God's people* that He is taking out of the Gentiles for His Name. As He has declared—

"I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

God has made some gracious promises to His people, therefore:

"In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved."

Or as it is expressed by Peter—

"And who is he that will harm you, if you be followers of that which is good?
"For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers"
—1 Pet. 3:12-13.

Let us always keep these things uppermost in our minds, and clearly understand "That the glory to be revealed" in the earth is *for the people of God only*. Not for those who claim to be the people of God, but those who are "walking in the Truth."

What are we to understand by "*the Glory which shall be revealed?*" As to how it will be revealed, or manifested, it can be expressed in four words—*THE KINGDOM OF GOD*.

The prophet Daniel, when interpreting the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, gave a summary of world powers that would lead up to the closing days of the power of man, and then made this remarkable statement—

"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a Kingdom, which shall never be destroyed.

"And the Kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever"—Dan. 2:44.

This, in fact, was the subject matter of the Gospel preached by Jesus, being based upon the promise made to Abraham—

"In thee and thy seed, shall all nations of the earth be blessed"—Gen. 12:3; 22:18.

At the appointed time, Jesus will return to the earth, and take unto himself this great power that is vested in him. He will then fulfil the promise of the angel to his mother Mary, that—

"He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his Kingdom there shall be no end"
—Luke 1:33.

In *that* day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah—

"Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation **that keepeth the Truth** may enter in."
"Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together."

Figuratively speaking, let us close our eyes to this vale of tears, where we are burdened with sin, disease and death, and open them to behold the "new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." In that day the saints will be clothed upon with the oil of joy, and the garment of praise, that they might be called trees of righteousness.

"High is the rank we now possess; But higher we shall rise;
Though what we shall hereafter be, Is hid from mortal eyes.
But this we know, when he appears, We'll bear His image bright;
For all His glory, full disclosed, Shall open to our sight."

But come, brethren and sisters, let us endeavor to penetrate these things by the eye of faith. Let us look upon the new earth where men and women will rejoice in the freedom and power of spirit nature; when they shall run and not be weary or faint.

Yes, behold the earth! God has fulfilled His great promises: the wilderness is now like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness everywhere abound; thanksgiving, and the voice of melody fills the air.

This is the day when the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion: everlasting joy is upon their heads; sorrow and mourning have fled away. Hear their song—

"Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord hath comforted His people. He hath made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God."

As we gaze upon this scene, we can no longer refrain, so we, too, break forth and say—

"We will greatly rejoice in the Lord, our soul shall be joyful in our God; for He hath clothed us with the garments of salvation, and covered us with the robe of righteousness.

"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; And He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the Law and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

As we approach the city of God, we think of the words of David,

"Beautiful for situation, **the joy of the whole earth**, is Mt. Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King."

Then we hear the voice of Isaiah—

"Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city."

But in that day the pilgrims will not linger there. They will go on to the magnificent Temple, God's great House of Prayer for all people. It will soon burst upon their view. And they will cry out, "What beauty! What majesty!" As we continue to view these things with the eye of faith, we see them advancing towards the Tabernacle of Yahweh. Here, as Zechariah has foretold, thousands have assembled from all parts of the earth to worship the King and keep the Feast of Tabernacles. As they pass on to the inner circle, and look around, they behold that great multitude, all in white raiment, and they soon realize that,

"These are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them."

When John beheld this scene, he tells us that the angelic host broke forth into song, saying—

"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory and blessing" (Rev. 5:12).

Then the Living creatures answered and said—

"Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever."

At this point in this enchanting scene, one can almost visualize Jesus taking his place among his brethren, who have been redeemed from among men, and saying to them—

"I have been to my Father, and your Father. I went away because it was necessary; but I have come again as I said. You have all had sorrow; but now you rejoice, and your joy no man can take from you. Come ye blessed of my Father."

Then the multitude arise and break forth into song—

"Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God Kings and Priests: and we shall reign ON THE EARTH"

(Rev. 5:9-10).

Yes, the redeemed shall reign on the earth. They will be co-rulers with him who overcame the world, and soon will judge among the nations—

"And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. And all nations shall be blessed in Abraham and his seed. .

"In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.

"For the earth shall be full of knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea"

(Isa. 2:4; Psa. 72:7; Isa. 11:9).

The Glory to be revealed is divinely and resplendently beautiful; far beyond the power of the human mind to comprehend. *It is glorious, because it is based upon righteousness, and this foundation is being laid now in the midst of evil.* The way that leads to it is narrow, and the pathway is rigorous, because it is a way of obedience.

The trials we endure are sometimes severe; but they do not last for ever. Tomorrow, they may be gone. The glory of the future age is the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ. We must keep it before us so we can fully realize that:

"The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with **the glory that shall be revealed.**"

This morning we partake of the memorials in memory of Jesus Anointed. In this exercise, we find a peace and a joy that is unknown in the world. And may we always keep in memory those parting words in his final message (Rev. 22:14)—

"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
—G.A.G.

THE MAN OF SORROWS

Behold him! Was ever sorrow like unto his sorrow? He came to his own people with heart full of the pity of God Who was enshrined in him. He looked on them with tears in his eyes and bewailed the infatuation that resisted all divine entreaty. He sought to bless and do them good, in turning every one of them from their iniquities.

But they hid their faces from him. They despised and rejected him. They gave him to insult and death. They esteemed him smitten of God and afflicted, little knowing that he was wounded for their transgressions, that he was bruised for their iniquity. The burden was too grievous to be borne. It broke the heart and whelmed the sufferer in death.

Ah, thou Man of Sorrows, whose cry of agony rings down to this dark century of sin, and opens anew the fountain of thy grief in the hearts of such as love thee, thou shalt yet see of the travail of thy soul and shalt be satisfied! A seed shall arise from the dust of the earth, who shall praise thy glorious Name, when, surrounding thee in the day of thine exaltation, they shall sing,

"Blessing and honor, glory, and riches, and wisdom, and strength be unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb.

**"Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth."
—Bro. Roberts.**

"Lord, Teach Us to Pray"

All who read the Scriptures will readily remember that Jesus was a man of prayer. On the occasion when the above question or request, was made, Jesus had prayed to the Father, and when he ceased the desire was from one of his disciples that he would instruct them in the proper manner or form of speech they should use in their petitions to God.

Although Jesus had indicated in his wonderful teachings on the mount (Matt. 6:9-13) the form of approach and supplication that would be acceptable, perhaps among the many other important lessons this might be but vaguely remembered.

Also, Jesus would be desirous that they should *exhibit a desire*, hence he prayed for them that they might give evidence that the desire for this spiritual food existed in them before he gave it to them. This is in accord with his teaching in that matchless address (Matt. 5:6)—

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

Doubtless we are all aware that many prayers are daily being offered which are at variance with scriptural teaching. Vain repetitions and empty phrases not only offered wrongly, but not even addressed to God the Father and Creator—

"Who made heaven and earth and the sea and all things that are therein" (Acts 14:15).

They are offered to Jesus whom they address as God, also to the "Virgin Mary" whom they ignorantly suppose is in heaven, and to a host of "saints" who in their imagination are still living, whereas, in truth—

"The dead know not anything" (Eccl. 9:5).

As true followers of the Lord, let us endeavor to present our petitions in a manner that will be acceptable to our Heavenly Father, and address them to Him.

The English words "pray" and "prayer" are translated from various Hebrew and Greek words having such meanings as—*ask, supplicate, to bend or bow down, petition, intercession, pouring out, beseeching, etc.*

James tells us (1:17) that—

"Every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights."

Hence we should "ask of God," as he advises in v. 5.

It will be profitable to consider some of the notable prayers of the "holy men of old," that we may ascertain the manner of approach and form of phraseology they chose in their supplications. In Gen. 18:27 we read—

"And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes. Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous; wilt Thou destroy all the city for lack of five?"

Do we always approach God in fear and reverence, with a full consciousness of our insignificance and His exalted majesty? Let us ever guard against the slightest presumption or carelessness or forgetfulness of His greatness and holiness. It is so easy to slip into this habit, especially in giving thanks for our meals. We must always approach in the frame of mind of David as he gazed at the immensity of the night heavens:

"When I consider the heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained—**what is man**, that Thou art mindful of him?" (Psa. 8:3-4).

Again James tells us (5:16) that the—

"Effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

We see this well illustrated in Moses, the "man of God"—

"When Moses prayed to the Lord, the fire was quenched."

The fire had been sent as a punishment upon Israel (Dt. 9:26)—

"I prayed therefore unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, destroy not Thy people and Thine inheritance which Thou hast redeemed through Thy greatness, which Thou hast brought forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand."

The prayer offered by Solomon on the occasion of the dedication of the Temple at Jerusalem is a beautiful one and worthy of much study. How happy Israel—and Solomon himself—would have been if they had maintained the spirit of this wonderful prayer (1 Kings 8:23-43)—

"Lord God of Israel, there is no god like Thee, in heaven above, or in earth beneath, Who keepest covenant and mercy with Thy servants that walk before Thee with all their heart.

"The heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee.

"What prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all Thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands toward this house:

"Then hear Thou in heaven Thy dwellingplace, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart Thou knowest: for Thou, even Thou only, knowest the hearts of the children of men.

"Moreover, concerning a stranger, that cometh out of a far country for Thy Name's sake, when he shall come and pray toward this house, hear Thou in heaven Thy dwellingplace, and do according to all the stranger calleth to Thee for; that all people of the earth may know Thy Name, to fear Thee."

And he concludes with the majestic words (2 Chron. 6:41)—

"Now therefore arise, O Lord God, into Thy resting place, Thou, and the ark of Thy strength: let Thy priests be clothed with salvation, and let Thy saints rejoice in goodness."

Deep humility and godly reverence is manifested by the great king of Israel. How well and worthily he began!

We turn now to the righteous Daniel, who is classed with Noah and Job as the three outstandingly righteous men of their times, as indicated by the words of God to Ezekiel (14:14)—

"Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it (the land of Israel), they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God."

The sins of Israel had reached such a point that even the "effectual, fervent prayers" of these righteous men could not have helped them. From Dan. 2:18 we learn how Daniel advised his companions (when the decrees of Nebuchadnezzar went forth) to pray, urging them—

". . . that they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret, that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon."

And as a result, we are told, "The secret was revealed to Daniel." We call attention especially to his reaction. Often we pray earnestly for something in a time of stress and danger, and then as soon as the danger passes we go our way and forget to be thankful. But Daniel exclaimed (vs. 20-23)—

"Blessed be the Name of God for ever and ever. I thank Thee and praise Thee, O Thou God of my fathers, Who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of Thee."

In ch. 9 we find an outstanding and instructive prayer which shows us the deep humility and reverence which should characterize God's servants in approaching the Great Creator in prayer and supplication. We note first the intenseness of Daniel's desire and entreaty (v. 3)—

"I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes."

Then his address to God, recognizing His greatness, and the certainty of His Word, and the class to whom alone He looks with mercy and favor (v. 4)—

"O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love Him, and to them that keep His commandments."

Then see how in love for his people he classes himself with the wicked Israelites and prays for them. We are reminded of how Jesus was made one with his erring people, that he might mediate for them, and bring God's blessing upon them. See how many times throughout this prayer he says "we," "our," and "us," in speaking of Israel's failures and transgressions—

"We have sinned and committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled. . . Neither have we hearkened . . . O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto Thee, but unto us confusion of faces" (vs. 5-7).

What a model prayer for Israel and all God's servants in all ages! This was at the end of the pronounced 70 years of punishment, at the beginning of which Ezekiel was told that even Daniel's prayers would be of no avail to avert the punishment. But now the long-awaited time of promised regathering was at hand, and Daniel prays earnestly for its fulfilment.

We turn from the prayers of Daniel, the "man greatly beloved," to Jesus himself, the "beloved Son in whom God was well pleased." Prayer was his great strength and comfort. On occasions he "continued *all night* in prayer to God."

Where do we find any support for the teaching that we may pray to any but *God alone*? Truly Jesus did tell his disciples that they should "Ask *in my Name*," and God would hear—

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father **in my Name**, He will give it you.

"Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my Name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:23-24).

There is much meaning to "asking in Jesus' Name." *We* must be "in his Name," and our prayers must be in harmony with the great purpose that is centered "*in his Name*."

In the model prayer which Jesus gave his disciples in answer to a request from one of them, there are many things we may learn. First, it is worth noting that Jesus *set the example* by praying before them, and then allowed scope for the disciples to ask that they might receive the spiritual instruction. This is in harmony with his teaching—

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

God delights in the prayers of the righteous, even though His purpose is established and He knows all the needs of His people before they ask Him. He delights in their prayers, for it indicates their interest and desire toward Him, and He is pleased to let them be "workers together with Him." Therefore we should never neglect prayer. "Pray without ceasing" is the Spirit's injunction. Our whole life must be a constant prayer.

The prayers of all true saints should be modelled after the pattern of this one known as "The Lord's Prayer."

"*Our Father*"— we realize that God is our Father in a special sense, apart from the genealogical descent from Adam who in one sense was the "son of God" (Luke 3:38), for as Paul says of the faithful few who are "in Christ" by baptism (Gal. 3:26):

"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

In Rom. 8:15-16 Paul speaks of our privileged position—

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father, the Spirit itself bearing witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

"*Which art in heaven*" is a phrase which reminds us the Father is a real Being located in a dwelling-place, which, although far removed from the earth, is readily accessible by prayers which ascend like sweet-smelling incense to the throne of grace, through our High Priest and Mediator "who ever-liveth to make intercession," for—

"There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"
(1 Tim. 2:5).

Arising from this thought, Paul continues (v. 8)—

"I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting."

There is much food for thought in the expression "*holy hands*."

"*Hallowed*"—or, as the Hebrew word implies, *Set apart* "be Thy Name." With what awe and reverence we should always approach and call upon that holy Name! "*Name*" implies many things—identity, authority, power, honor, majesty, purpose, allegiance, protection, security, manifestation—all the scriptural thoughts bound up with the great purpose arise from the contemplation of the Name of God—

"The Name of the God of Jacob defend thee" (Psa. 20:1).

"I will write upon him the Name of my God" (Rev. 3:21).

"Save me, O God, by Thy Name" (Psa. 54:1).

"*Thy Kingdom come.*" The all-important thing comes first; requests for our own needs are always secondary in importance. Do we realize this in our prayers?

For "*Lead us not into temptation,*" the Diaglott has, "Abandon us not to trial," which would seem to be the intended meaning, in accord with other Scripture, as 1 Cor. 10:13—

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

James (4:3) rebuked some who—

". . . ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."

This should be a deterrent to us from asking in a similar selfish, thoughtless manner, for that is not the purpose of prayer—just to petition for a satisfaction of our desires. Few men pray except when they want something, but the children of God know that prayer has a much higher and more beautiful purpose—even *praise and worship and adoration and gratitude for the glory of the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

We know from Paul's request for the brethren's prayers that it is our duty to pray for our brethren; also for the sick and afflicted, for "The prayer of faith shall save the sick." That is, the combined prayers of faithful brethren and sisters will be helpful if offered in reverential faith, and if it is in harmony with God's will and all-seeing love to grant their request.

The example of Elijah's strong faith in prayer is cited for our profitable contemplation. When trials or temptations assail us, Jesus' words to Peter and the other disciples should warn us to:

"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit (or mind spiritually enlightened) indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt. 26:41).

Jesus' gentle words of warning and exhortation to his disciples when he returned to them from his terrible vigil in Gethsemane—"Why sleep ye, rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation"—seem a fitting watchword for all his saints. Let us keep them ever before our minds.

And may we, dear brethren and sisters, follow the example our Lord and Master so often has given us by precept and example, and "*Pray always, lifting up holy hands*" to our Heavenly Father, "without wrath and doubting."
—H. A. S.

Out of Egypt Have I Called My Son

PART FIVE

"*Israel is My son, even My firstborn*"—Exo. 4:22.

We take our leave for the present of "the backside of the desert," while retaining in memory the deep and lasting lessons derived from the consideration of the divine interview between Moses and the angel of God at Mount Horeb, and take our journey with Moses into Egypt. In pursuance of the divine arrangement Moses returned home with a view to make preparations for the journey; and while in Midian God said to him—

"Go, return into Egypt: for all the men are dead which sought thy life" (Exo. 4:19).

This interesting item recalls to memory the striking coincidence in the life of the Prophet like unto Moses. In both these instances we have before us the fact of angelic guardianship beautifully illustrated. Both Moses and Christ were fugitives, and neither of them allowed to return into the land of their nativity during the lives of their enemies. The shadow is very complete, the only difference being that Moses was fully grown at the time of his flight, whereas Christ was a child.

This gives us an insight into the protection by angelic supervision of the lives of those of whom God makes choice in the working out of His purpose, and enables us to see how impossible it is for man to circumvent and defeat that purpose.

What a privilege to be permitted, in the divine revelation from God to man, to *perceive the workings of God* in relation to the great salvation, to the realization of which His children are intently looking forward! How eminently calculated to increase their confidence in Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will in all their evil surroundings!

The interview between Moses and the angel of the Lord in Midian brings before us a principle of divine truth which deserves special and careful consideration, as it reveals a feature of the purpose of God with Israel which is explanatory of much that is involved in the promises made to Abraham. The principle to which we refer is contained in the words of the angel in his instructions to Moses before he left Midian for Egypt—

"See that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart that he shall not let the people go. And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, **"Israel is My son, even My firstborn."**

The principle underlying this form of words will be found in the promises made of God unto the fathers. When Abraham was 99 years old, the Lord spake to him, saying—

"As for Me, behold, My covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee" (Gen. 17:1-6).

"And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her" (vs. 15-16).

These testimonies are of themselves very suggestive of the true meaning of the words we are considering, but we link with them other testimonies with a view to make the matter more clear, calling to our aid the original promise to Abraham—

"I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing . . .

"And in thee shall all families (nations) of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:2-3).

Also the promise to Jacob (Gen. 35:11), that—

"A nation and (even) a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins."

We also add to these testimonies, the direction subsequently given to Jacob by the angel of the Lord, saying (Gen. 46:3)—

"Go down to Egypt; for I will there make thee a great nation."

And, finally, the blessing of Jacob upon Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh (Gen. 48:16-19)—

"The angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name (Israel) be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.

"But when Joseph perceived that the right hand of Jacob was placed upon the head of Ephraim, who was the younger of the two children, it displeased Joseph, who held up his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's, saying,

"Not so, my father, for **this** (Manasseh) is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head.

"And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it; he also shall become a people (that is, be reckoned as one of the tribes of Israel), and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his (Ephraim's) seed shall become a multitude (fulness) of nations."

The reader will, doubtless, know that by this blessing and sanctification of Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, provision was made whereby the twelve-tribed nation was preserved in its original number after the taking of the Levites from among the children of Israel for the service of the Tabernacle. By this blessing Joseph had a double portion in Israel in the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, who, as Jacob said, were his even as Reuben and Simeon were his.

And as Reuben, by his conduct, had forfeited his position in Israel as the firstborn of Jacob's twelve sons (1 Chr. 5:1), the birthright was transferred from Reuben to Joseph, and from him to Ephraim—an arrangement of Israel's national affairs which Jacob was divinely directed to carry out in view of the purpose of God. The birthright then being Joseph's, it developed upon *Ephraim* instead of Manasseh, so that the name of Ephraim came to embrace the whole of the tribes of Israel, except Judah, who (v. 2)—

"Prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler."

With these facts well before the mind, there will be little, if any, difficulty in understanding the angelic announcement that Israel is God's firstborn (national) son, and that which is involved in it; for it follows that "*firstborn*" implies *other* (national) sons, and these, when developed in the working out of God's purpose, will constitute a *family of nations*, blessed, as announced in the Gospel, in Abraham and his seed. This Israelitish national firstborn son of the Deity, who has proved so stubborn, obstinate, and stiff-necked in the past, is the subject of many very pathetic allusions in the prophets; but we will confine ourselves to one or two of these for the present. Jehovah, speaking by the prophet Jeremiah, says:

"The people which were left of the sword found grace in the wilderness; even Israel, when I went to cause him to rest.

"The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore, with loving kindness have I drawn thee. Again, I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel: thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and shalt go forth in the dances of them that make merry. Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria.

"For there shall be a day that the watchmen upon the Mount of Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the Lord our God . . . Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth . . . a great company shall return thither.

"They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them . . . I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is My first born." (See the whole of ch. 31).

Again, allusion is made to this firstborn son of Jehovah in his infancy, as follows (Hos. 11:1)—

"When Israel was a child I loved him, and called My son out of Egypt."

The fact that this scripture is applied personally to Christ in the circumstances of his mother's flight with him into Egypt from the murderous intent of Herod the Great (Matt. 2:15), does not at all detract from its unmistakable reference to the *national* son when enthralled in Egyptian bondage, whom Moses was sent to deliver; for it was divinely developed in Egypt in the providence and purpose of God. This is one of many instances in the Scriptures where a double application is intended, as with the quotation from Psalm 2 by the apostles (Acts 4:25-28). Bearing upon the personal application to Christ of Hos. 11:1, is a prophecy which speaks of Christ as "Israel"—

"Thou art My servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified . . . It is a light thing that thou shouldest be My servant, to raise the tribes of Jacob, and restore the preserved of Israel.

"I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth" Isa. 49:3-6.

There can be no other reasonable application of this text than to the *personal and multitudinous Christ*, the one body, of which he is the head; and the work to which he and they stand related in the purpose of the Father with Israel. The testimony of the apostles will enlighten us upon this. Paul speaks of those who had believed his Gospel, and been baptized into Christ, as:

"Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3).

These he calls, "*the Israel of God*" (Gal. 6:16). In accordance with the principles involved in these statements, he says (Rm. 9):

"They are not all Israel who are of Israel; neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children; but in Isaac shall the seed be called. That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed."

These children of Abraham, Jew and Gentile, who "walk in the steps of that faith of our father, Abraham," Paul styles—

"Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17).

The preparatory development of these "heirs of God" upon the principles of faith and obedience, is an absolute necessity in view of the promised restoration and regeneration of the scattered nation which is to be brought into the bond of the New Covenant *under the headship of Christ as their God-provided king*. And when the nation shall be so restored and regenerated it will have become the *Kingdom of God*, to the inheritance of which the Gospel invites its believers, who, in the words of the apostle James (2:5), are—

"Heirs of the kingdom he hath promised to them that love him."

—a position which the possession of the inheritance involves a change of nature from that which is mortal to that which is immortal; for, as Paul declares (1 Cor. 15:50)—

"Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God."

We see, then, that there is an "*Israel of God*," as well as the *national* Israel, God's firstborn, which came out of Egypt under Moses. This "Israel of God," in its complete development, will constitute, with Christ, the firstfruits of that salvation which belongs to the chosen, firstborn, nation, as said Christ—

"SALVATION IS OF THE JEWS" (John 4:22).

These *firstfruits* will precede that nation in its attainment to immortality by a thousand years. They will be the sum total of that individual selection from the race of Adam since the expulsion of

our first parents from Eden to the establishment of God's Kingdom at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ from Heaven to restore the Kingdom again to Israel, when they will be constituted the *Son of Man in its multitudinous manifestation* as the saints to whom is to be given—

"The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven"

(Dan. 7:27).

—"the *kings and priests unto God*" (Rev. 5:10) who shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years over the world of nations of which Abraham, by promise, is the heir; and also including the nation of Israel, God's firstborn, in the day when the "many nations" —as they will then exist upon earth—shall have been "joined to the Lord" as the result of their having learned righteousness by the judgment of God which will have been brought to bear upon them in connection with the restoration and regeneration of the covenanted nation.

At the end of the thousand years there will be but one nation upon earth; for God will then "make a full end" of all nations except His own chosen nation of Israel. Such of the individuals of the nations upon earth during the millennium as shall have been enlightened under the law emanating from Zion, and, with Israel, be accounted worthy to participate in life eternal, will become immortally incorporate with God's chosen nation in the everlasting Kingdom which shall have been prepared from the foundation of the world, and which will consist of His immortalized children of all ages and generations since the world began—a divine family of sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty, every individual of which will be equal to the angels.

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

As Beloved Children

"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

PART TWO—EPHESIANS, ch. 6

To whom does the apostle address himself next?—

Eph. 6:1—"CHILDREN, obey your parents."

This is one of the very few places in Scriptures addressed directly and specifically to children. It is very important. It is the one great thing that children have to be concerned with in pleasing God.

Parents will not always be perfectly just and right, for they too have much to learn, but that is not the children's concern—their command and duty is clear, if they desire to please God and be blessed by Him, and be used and useful in His purpose. The full command is—

"Children, obey your parents **in the Lord**."

The obedience must be *for, because of, and in harmony with the Lord*. This is the great *reason* and *motive* of obedience. Parents will vary, just as masters will vary, but the one must be obeyed, and the other served faithfully, *as unto the Lord*. Obedience to parents is obedience to God, and disobedience to parents is disobedience to God.

Here again is the divine provision for family harmony and any violation of it creates serious responsibility for all the evils that may follow.

The command does not cease when the child ceases to be dependent upon the parent. It becomes even stronger in later years as the child reaches developed maturity. Then it becomes—

V. 2: "Honor thy father and thy mother."

—a guiding principle through life. All God's arrangements are beautiful; all violations of them are ugly and self-destructive.

V. 4: "And ye, fathers, provoke not your children to wrath."

What does the apostle mean? Why does he *begin with* and *emphasize* an aspect we might think very minor and negative?

"Provoke not your children to wrath."

This command is worthy of much meditation. It warns of a danger that can destroy all good efforts, and one that only true divine love can protect against. In giving the same command to the Colossians, he adds—

“. . . lest they be discouraged."

It does not mean that there should not be strict discipline for fear of arousing anger. The Scriptures are very clear on the necessity of that. In fact, *the necessity of strict discipline is what makes this command so essential.*

The parent is in the position of the strong having complete control over the weak. The bully is latent in us all, ingrained in our fleshly natures. There are a thousand subtle ways in which a parent can provoke a child to wrath, agitating and arousing the natural evil of the flesh, often with great and pompous self-righteousness, and the parent can always save face by taking refuge behind his divinely-given authority.

The child has no recourse except to impotent, inward turmoil against sarcasm, and oppression, and impatience, and foolish teasing, and habitual unjustified harshness in giving instructions, and passing whims and passions of the flesh, and a discouraging attitude of petty fault-finding and antagonism.

"Provoke not your children to wrath, lest they be discouraged."

There *must* be a basic foundation of gentle love, manifest even in correction. We cannot teach what we do not practice. Teaching is by example, and a bad, fleshly example is much more quickly imitated than a good one, that is the natural trend of the flesh. We cannot *teach* gentleness without consistently *manifesting* gentleness. Whatsoever is not done in godly love and patience is evil, and out of evil will come evil.

"Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

"Nurture and admonition" means "*chastening and instruction,*" as the RV has it. Here again, it is "of the Lord"—"in the Lord." Everything must be done in the Spirit, and according to the instruction, of the Lord—within the circle of the Lord's blessing and superintendence—in *God's way*—or all will fail.

Vs. 5 to 8 concern servants—our daily work—our relationship to our employers. No brother of Christ is a slack, or careless, or disinterested workman, whatever he may be doing. Christ's brethren are only those who do the will of his Father, and his Father's expressed will is that *everything* be done *heartily and cheerfully*, with singleness of heart, as if each task is done for God Himself. And work so done, whatever it may be, will be so accepted by God as service to Him.

Brethren of Christ must be constantly on guard against drifting into the world's evil way of serving as little as possible, afraid of giving more than enforced minimum, always seeking more

payment for less labor. *This is an evil, selfish, grasping manifestation of the flesh that brethren will have no part of.*

V. 9 concerns those who in any way have oversight over others. Such are instructed to apply the same principles—to be more anxious to give abundant measure than to take. This is not the way the world's industry is run, and a brother of Christ will often find himself very much out of place.

V. 10: "Finally, my brethren, be strong **in the Lord**, and in the power of **His** might." (Always, and in everything, "*in the Lord*"). Jesus said to Paul—

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

And Paul, in response, recognizing the principle, said—

"When I am weak, then am I strong."

It is a contrast and a comparison between natural and spiritual strength. To the world, Christ's brethren are weak. Instead of being strong and self-assertive they are mild and yielding and submissive to evil. But the brave strength of the flesh is but a passing and impotent shadow—the foolish puffing up of toad in a pond. The worms of the grave soon conquer the mightiest among men. We must seek a more substantial strength and satisfaction than that.

"Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of **His** might."

How can *we* be strong in the power of *God's* might? Do these words have any real meaning? *If they have any meaning at all, then surely they refer to something very marvellous and un-earthly.* Paul fervently prayed, earlier in the epistle (3:16), that God would grant them—

". . . according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might **by His Spirit** in the inner man."
—and that they may be—

". . . FILLED with all the fulness of God" (3:19).

And he speaks (3:20) of God being—

". . . able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, **according to the power that worketh in us.**"

Surely there is a glorious reality to these things that we must strive to attain unto—even the things of the Spirit of God which are foolishness to the natural man—the transforming power that can overcome the evil motions and reactions of the flesh and perfect characters of beauty and holiness in the fear of God.

V. 11: "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

Paul continues his comparison between the strength of the flesh and of the Spirit. He says further (v. 12)—

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood . . ."

Paul's fight was not against *people*, and neither is ours. We are sometimes apt to forget this and slip into the world's way of antagonism and belligerence against people.

". . . but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

What are these "*principalities and powers*"? The word translated "principality" is *archee*, commonly rendered "beginning," "old," "chief or ruler," throughout the New Testament.

Here it means "leadership—rulership—control—dominion." The word for "powers" is not the Greek for power as *strength*, but the word meaning *authority*. What then is the headship and authority against which Paul fought?

We know it was not the *political* powers of the world, for he testified that such governments, though evil, were ordained by God for the present for general order among men, and he commanded submission and obedience to them.

When Jesus appeared to Paul on the way to Damascus (Acts 26:18), he said he purposed to send Paul to the Gentiles—

". . . to open their eyes, and to turn them from **darkness to light**, and from the power (authority—same word) of Satan unto God."

And Paul told the Romans brethren that they *had been* the servants, or slaves of *Sin*, but that they were *now* servants of God and of holiness. It was *this* kingdom, rulership, dominion, authority, of Sin against which Paul fought. This Kingdom of Sin is personified and corporealized in the Kingdom of Men, but it was not the Kingdom of Men as such that Paul fought. *He went deeper than any outward manifestations to the basic individual elements of fleshly motives and conduct.* Rom. 7:23—

"I see a law in my members warring against the law of mind, and bringing me into **captivity** to the law of sin."

That was the arena of Paul's warfare—the battle for, and within, each mind and heart. He is very clear in Eph. 2:2-3—

"In time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the **prince of the power of the air**, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.

"Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in **fulfilling: the desires of the flesh and of the mind.**"

What then was the "*spiritual wickedness in high (or heavenly) places*" of which he speaks at the end of v. 12 of Eph. 6?

The Pharisees are surely the best illustration of that, and Jesus' encounters with them well illustrate the warfare of which Paul speaks. They sat in Moses' seat—in "heavenly places"—they even controlled the High Priesthood and the House of God and the worship He had established.

Among the ecclesias the same things soon became manifest, and we see the result in the ecclesiastical institutions of today. It is an ever-present danger and requires a perpetual warfare—*the mind of the flesh exalted and ruling in the very Temple of God*. All the things he warns them of in these 2 chapters illustrate the same warfare against Sin's principalities and powers, for *its seeds are in every heart*.

V. 13 "Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God."

We notice that the armor is "*of God*"—from God—for it is only in the power of *His* might that we can be strong—

"That ye may be able to withstand in the evil day."

Let us never presume on our ability to stand. The Spirit warns:

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

Without the whole armor of God we have no hope of success, but are like soldiers going to battle lacking essential equipment.

". . . and having done all, to stand."
—having accomplished the warfare—when it is all over—when the last enemy is destroyed—to be found among those who are found still standing alive on the battlefield, and to join in singing together the glorious victory song of Moses and the Lamb.

Vs. 14 to 17 particularize the whole armor of God—the belt, or girdle, or binding together of *Truth*; the protective breastplate or heart-covering of *Righteousness* (*not* self-accomplished, but "it is God that worketh in you" and "we are His workmanship, created unto good works"), feet shod with the "preparation"—the preparedness—the eager, enthusiastic *readiness* to serve the Gospel of *Peace*—"How beautiful are the swiftly running feet of him that bringeth good tidings of peace!"

"Above all," the shield of *Faith*—belief, confidence, assurance—the unassailable conviction that *God is*, and that He *will* unfailingly reward all who diligently seek Him with all their heart. This shield will defend against every attack, every assault of the enemy—all his inflammatory darts of temptation and evil desire—all his shafts of discouragement and doubt.

And take *Salvation* for your helmet, or more fully, as in 1 Thess. 5:8—"for an helmet the *Hope of Salvation*." Why a helmet and a breastplate, if the Shield of Faith is all-sufficient protection? Because "*Faith without Works is dead*."

The head must be enclosed by the hope that Paul says comes by a tested steadfastness, and the heart must be covered by the righteousness that comes from God.

And finally, the Sword of the Spirit, which is the *Word of God*. That is the weapon against all the rulership and authority and dominion of evil, both within and without. The Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, the one and only weapon of offence—sharper and more piercing than any literal sword—searching and dividing between soul and spirit—between that which is fleshly and that which is of the Spirit. Only the Word can discern, and *teach us to discern*, our own hearts and motives.

He has mentioned six elements of the armor of God. What is the seventh? That he describes in vs. 18-19—*Prayer*.

"Praying always, with all prayer and supplication **in the Spirit**, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."

Another version puts the thought perhaps a little clearer—

"Use every kind of prayer and entreaty, and at every opportunity pray in the Spirit. **Be on the alert about it**; devote yourself constantly to prayer for all God's people."

It is those who bring their lives to this state of devotion who will stand approved before Christ. There must be an urgency and intenseness about our supplications—a great consciousness of inadequacy and shortcoming and spiritual need.

"*Fear and trembling*" is the required frame of mind, as specified in v. 5. The slightest tendency to complacency, or to relax our efforts, or take salvation for granted while we please ourselves from day to day, is fatal. There must be a constant pleading—a constant sense of abasement

and unworthiness—*never of despair*, but always of earnest entreaty. The Great Example was pre-eminently a man of constant, fervent prayer—

". . . offering up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him Who was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared" (Heb. 5:7).

* * *

V. 19: "And for me, that utterance may be given me that I may open my mouth boldly . . . as I ought to speak."

Even Paul's preaching was not something to be taken for granted, great and especially-appointed apostle to the Gentiles though he was. Even Paul felt the need of their prayers, that he might have the courage to carry on his ministry to the end. Paul, too, was just a man like us, of our own same weak flesh and blood. Weariness, and labor, and pain, and ridicule, were just as real and hard for him as for us.

"To make known the mystery of the Gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds" (literally, "in chains," as RV).

An ambassador in chains! The great God of heaven had graciously sent an ambassador to men, fully verified by divine credentials, and they had put him in chains! *Had we forgotten that Paul was writing all these beautiful things from the confinement of a prison cell?*

Paul could have been very bitter about his unjust detention, and about not being able to be where he wanted to be. He could have depressed all around him by his childish moping and ungraciousness. But rather in all things he gave thanks and was not only *content*, but intensely *joyful*, accepting the will of the Lord as best, and doing all he could to spread the sunshine of his contentment and joy.

He concludes with his usual gracious salutation—peace, and love, and grace to all who love our Lord Jesus in sincerity.

"Sincerity" here is literally "incorruptness." He is speaking of the unchanging, spiritual, and enduring love that united Christ and his brethren—

"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ with an imperishable and unconquerable love."

—G. V. G.

Signs of the Times

"The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked"—Isa. 57:20

As we write this article, we are faced with a state of affairs in the world which, in itself, is a momentous sign of the times. The tense situation in the Middle East has flared into war; revolutions in Poland and Hungary have, as it might appear, made a dent in the "Iron Curtain" which not only has demanded Russian attention but bids fair to bring about definite changes in Soviet policies in dealing with the satellite governments. The present state has been summed up by a well-known commentator:

"The best way we can describe the world situation is to say that it is in a mess. Israel is invading Egypt; Britain and France are invading the Suez Canal zone; Russia is up to her neck in Eastern European revolutions; the United States has broken with her two best friends over Mid-Eastern policies and votes with Russia in condemning Britain and France in their move to re-occupy the Suez Canal zone."

As the U. S. and 65 countries vote with Russia in demanding cease-fire in Egypt, they look askance at Russia's movements in Eastern Europe, fearing a trap or a double-cross.

Regardless of other considerations, this fact stands out clear: Russia has driven a wedge between the U. S. and her strongest allies—a thing she has been striving to do for a long time; and she has been able to lead a movement in the U. N. that has enabled her to stand forth as the champion of peace, the foe of the aggressor and the friend of the little nations. And further, her prestige has been greatly enhanced by the fact that on the day she threatened to intervene if the aggression was not stopped, Britain and France agreed to a cease-fire—an action they had refused a little earlier at the request of the U. N.

While the present world situation is confused in the minds of the world's statesmen, who are distressed, perplexed and fearful over the things coming on the earth, yet there seems to be a pattern, still dim, emerging from this confusion.

In the first place, we can see at least a partial fulfilment of a number of prophecies relating to the time of the end. Jerusalem is becoming more and more a "burdensome stone" to the nations who will eventually be "cut to pieces" (Zech. 12:3); there is a great state of "anger" among the nations (Rev. 11:18); evil is "going forth from nation to nation" which is to culminate in the raising up of a "great whirlwind from the ends of the earth" (Jer. 25:31). The state of fear, perplexity and distress is so pronounced that it cannot be doubted as a fulfilment of Luke 21.

Eze. 38:11 requires that Israel dwells "confidently . . . without walls and gates" when Gog descends upon them. The world-shaking developments now occurring in the Mid-East, threatening world conflict, may lead to the policing of the frontiers of Israel by the U.N. so effectively as to act as "bars and gates" for Israel, enabling them to dwell safely, or confidently.

Be that as it may, mere coincidence cannot account for present occurrences in the Mid-East and elsewhere. Britain for a number of years has followed a policy favorable to the Arabs and detrimental to Israel. Britain also went all-out to appease Nasser, even to the extent of withdrawing her forces from the Canal Zone. Then Nasser seized full control of the Canal, aided and abetted by Russia, while the U. S. kept hands off and held Britain back from any effective action.

We have not a doubt that God, Who changes the minds and purposes of men to suit His Own purpose, has caused Britain to change her policies and help Israel. Let us notice how it all worked out: Egypt seizes the Canal, and the modern Pharaoh's heart is hardened and he stubbornly refused all compromise in dealing with the other nations in the management of the Canal, though it might mean his overthrow. And just as Pharaoh refused to let Israel go, so Nasser refused to surrender the Canal.

Britain and France were forced to attack Egypt. There was no other course left open. And whether by collusion with Britain or not, Israel took advantage of the situation to strike a hard blow at Egypt and took over the Gaza strip which has been a thorn in the flesh of Israel as it furnished a rendezvous for Egyptian commandos to conduct raids across Israel's border.

The British-French air force destroyed the Egyptian air force and air fields and held the greater part of the Egyptian army in check while the army of Israel took over the Gaza strip and the entire Sinaitic peninsula. It is notable that all this took place while Russia was occupied with revolutions in Europe and the U. S. was in the throes of a national election campaign, placing both of these nations in a disadvantageous position for taking any kind of drastic action against the alleged aggressors.

We must await the final outcome to get a view of the whole picture. What we do seem to see taking shape at present is this: Britain reversing her policy of withdrawal, appeasement to the Arabs, and her opposition to Israel, and coming more into the position prophecy requires; Russia feeling her

great strength and forcing her way more and more into the Middle East scene; world opinion gradually shifting from the West to the East. The desperate action of Britain and France in defiance of the U.N. though doubtless forced upon them by Egypt's Russian-inspired squeeze, has greatly accelerated this trend. The roaring of the Asiatic, African and Oriental sea and waves, long ruled by Europe, constantly gains in fury. Two ominous signs: China announces a quarter million soldiers have "volunteered" to help Egypt; Russian troops reported massing on the Turkish border.

Now new and startling developments are occurring in the tense world situation, which may suddenly change the whole outlook. UN forces are moving into the Canal zone, but apparently have little idea of just how they will go about taking over the situation. Russia and Egypt are demanding return of the Canal, Sinai, and the Gaza strip to Egypt. They also demand that Egypt be fully compensated for all damages and losses in the invasion.

The two groups seem to be as far apart as the poles, with no basis for compromise, as Britain and France demand restoration of the Canal to international control and Israel plans to keep the Gaza strip.

Russia continues her effort to impress the world that her objectives are peaceful, while Soviet soldiers slaughter Hungarian patriots and send trainloads of them to Russian slave camps. Her latest move is offering to reduce armaments and outlaw atomic weapons, which the Western powers dare not fully accept, though their rejection might place Russia in a favorable position. The UN meanwhile is on the horns of a dilemma with no power to extricate themselves. They must submit to Egyptian and Russian demands or run the risk of direct Russian intervention. If they do this the Middle East tension is made worse, and Nasser and Russia encouraged to make stronger demands, and the Arab nations encouraged to incite more trouble with Israel in their avowed intention of completely destroying the Jewish state. Nasser seems to be using the UN police move entirely to his own advantage. There is a vast build-up of Russian tanks and munitions in Syria, the original "King of the North." There can be little doubt that Armageddon is near.

"Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

—O.B.

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