

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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We are anxious to send the Berean FREE to any desiring it that way. Please do not hesitate to request it. If you know of any who might like it, please send us their names.

CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

Ecclesial News

WHANGAREI, New Zealand—YWCA Hall, Rust Ave.—Memorial 10:30 am; Lecture 7 pm—Bro. M. J. Griffin, PO Box 55, Whangarei.

LOVE and greetings to the Household of Faith.

It is with sadness that we report the sudden falling asleep in Christ of our beloved brother Leslie Fisher, after a pilgrimage of nearly 34 years in the Master's service.

These occasions are a reminder of the essential weakness of all flesh, and of the great love and mercy of our Heavenly Father in the gift of His only beloved Son that we might have hope of life.

It is our prayer that he might soon return to awake his sleeping saints, to take unto himself his great power when the evil and sadness of this present age will give way to the glory and beauty of the Kingdom of his promise.

With love in the Truth from the brethren and sisters of Whangarei,

--bro. M.J. Griffin

Bible Questions (Genesis to 2nd Kings)

WHAT DID HE (SHE, THEY) DO WHEN—

- | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. She opened it | 17. Jehoram saw Jehu | 33. She came to threshold |
| 2. She saw Isaac | 18. They sought Saul | 34. Jezebel slew prophets |
| 3. He saw Rachel | 19. Goliath saw David | 35. They arose in morning |
| 4. Sun waxed hot | 20. Their money failed | 36. David came to Bahurim |
| 5. He saw angels | 21. Israel saw Goliath | 37. He heard ark was taken |
| 6. He saw wagons | 22. She heard his fame | 38. They had eaten & drunk |
| 7. Samuel was old | 23. She had weaned him | 39. He saw blood on lintel |
| 8. Cloud taken up | 24. She saw his wisdom | 40. He saw he prevailed not |
| 9. Baasha reigned | 25. They came to Marah | 41. Amnon's heart was merry |
| 10. Solomon was old | 26. Jehoram read letter | 42. He came down from mount |
| 11. Fowls came down | 27. They saw him afar off | 43. Priests' feet lifted up |
| 12. She pressed him | 28. Saul enquired of God | 44. He saw there was respite |
| 13. Minstrel played | 29. They came to Samaria | 45. His counsel not followed |
| 14. He smote waters | 30. He heard small voice | 46. Athaliah heard the noise |
| 15. He let down hand | 31. He saw Leah was hated | 47. Angel stretched out hand |
| 16. Trumpets sounded | 32. He saw city was taken | 48. Stronger cattle conceived |
| | | 49. He touched Elisha's bones |
| | | 50. She saw she had conceived |
| | | 51. He heard sound of her feet |

ANSWERS

- | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| It melted | Drove them away | Rolled away stone | He opened their eyes |
| They parted | Opened her womb | Said, Is it peace | Made his sons judges |
| He cursed him | Waters returned | Shimei cursed him | Despised her mistress |
| The child died | People journeyed | Came to prove him | Laid rods before them |
| He hanged self | Answered him not | Lighted off camel | Conspired to slay him |
| His face shone | Amalek prevailed | Servants slew him | Burned house over him |
| Brought cattle | No spirit in her | He revived & stood | Were all dead corpses |
| He passed over | He said, Come in | She cried, Treason | Told her all his heart |
| He hid himself | The Lord repented | Took him to Shiloh | Fell off seat backwards |
| Walls fell flat | He touched thigh | They fled from him | Wrapped face in mantle |
| Obadiah hid 100 | She saw the child | Hardened his heart | Wives turned away heart |
| Could not drink | His spirit revived | He rent his clothes | Smote house of Jeroboam |
| | Elisha prophesied | Sent them to master | Said, This is God's host |

IMPERFECT COPIES OF THE BEREAN

These are bound to occur occasionally (blank pages, etc.). If you receive one, please just drop us a card. We shall be very happy to replace it.

Nehemiah and Paul

"Lo, this is our Yahweh; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation!"

DURING the past week, we have been in godly company with Ezra, Nehemiah, Hosea and Paul. The dates of some important events leading up to the time of Nehemiah will be found interesting and useful in giving us a balanced historical picture (These dates will vary 1 or 2 years (or more) according to different authorities.) —

588 BC: Judah carried captive by Nebuchadnezzar.

538 BC: Babylon taken by Cyrus.

536 BC: Cyrus proclamation to rebuilt the Temple in Jerusalem.

The first 6 chapters of Ezra deal with what was accomplished during the period in which Haggai and Zechariah prophesied as the Temple was being rebuilt under Zerubbabel.

457 BC: Ezra takes up his personal record.

446 BC: Nehemiah begins his record.

Taking our daily readings in order of date, we have—

785 BC: Hosea's prophecy; 457 BC: Ezra; 446 BC: Nehemiah;

54 AD: Paul's letters to the Thessalonians (500 years from Nehemiah).

When we read from Nehemiah we have to note the dating of the chapters, for the events recorded are not in sequence—

Ch. 1 to ch.7:5 cover the years 446 & 445 (Nehemiah's own time).

Ch. 7:6 to end goes back to 536 (Zerubbabel's time).

Ch. 8 returns to Nehemiah's time, and runs to the end of ch. 11.

Ch. 12 goes back again to 536 (Zerubbabel), and continues to v.26.

Ch. 12:27 brings us up again to 445, and continues to the end of the book.

The name Nehemiah means "Yahweh comforts." The only personal information we have is that he was the son of Hachaliah, & had a brother named Hanani, as we read in 7:2. But further personal information would not give added strength to his record.

Though not a prophet he was an outstanding man of Israel in 3 ways:

1. *He adhered rigidly to his duties.*
2. *He was stern and firm when opposing wrong doing.*
3. *Above all, he had an unwavering faith in God.*

He comes to our attention in the 20th year of the Persian king Artaxerxes I (Longimanus), for whom he served as cupbearer in the royal palace of Shushan. Thirteen years before this, Ezra had headed a great company who had returned from the captivity to the land of Judah. In spite of great difficulties, Ezra completed repairs to the Temple, and did much to help the people to settle in the land. But they encountered great hardships and perils: the walls of Jerusalem were broken down; the gates burned with fire.

Nehemiah, having learned of this through his brother Hanani, sat down and wept and mourned, and fasted certain days, and prayed. His fervent and passionate prayer appears in ch. 1:5-11, and it is a noble example for all believers. Unlike the Pharisee in the parable of Jesus, he did not thank God that he was "not like other men." Nor was he unmindful of the dreadful majesty of God. Note how he addresses the Father—

"I beseech Thee, O Lord God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love Him AND OBSERVE HIS COMMANDMENTS" (v. 5).

It is well to compare his prayer with that of Daniel (9:4)—

"And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love Him, &: to them that KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS."

The word "terrible" in Nehemiah's prayer, and the word "dreadful" in Daniel's, both mean "to be had in reverence." Let us ever keep before us the infinite greatness of God, and when we approach Him in prayer, let our attitude and manner of addressing Him be of the examples we find in the Scriptures.

Nehemiah not only recognized the supremacy of God, but he also fully realized his own position, for he not only confessed the sins of the people, but he also said—

"Both I and my father's house have sinned."

It is well for us to remember that no matter how hard we try to walk in the Truth, we still make many mistakes and come far short of the standard of submission and obedience set by the Lord Jesus. The mental or emotional disorder forming an individual's response to the discovery that he has made a serious mistake, was well exhibited by Peter when he "went out and wept bitterly." But the sequence to Peter's mental suffering is the beautifully infinite forgiveness that the Lord Jesus extended to him after his resurrection. We can almost hear the voice of Jesus as he said—

"Simon, son of Jonas, *LOVEST THOU ME?*"

What a wonderfully tender and spiritual method of rebuke! —and after such a terrible failure as denying his Lord with cursing and swearing. Would we be as gentle and loving in such a case?

Going back for a moment to the thoughts that are generated by the prayers of Nehemiah and Daniel, we are reminded of a serious thought generated by the words of Jesus in Mark 11:25-26—

"When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

"But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses."

In Neh. 1:10-11, he appeals for mercy and help in the presence of the king, for he said—

"I was the king's cupbearer."

The meaning of the word is "one who gives drink." It was an officer of the household who tasted the wine and passed it to those at the table. In ancient oriental courts, he was always a person of rank and importance, greatly trusted.

Nehemiah's prayer was answered, and he found favor in the presence of the king, who sent him to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, and to seek the welfare of the people. Under the protection of a military escort which the king chose to send, Nehemiah came to Jerusalem in 444 BC and remained until 432, a period of 12 years during which time he was actively engaged in promoting the welfare of the people.

His principal work was the repairing of the city walls which was accomplished in 52 days, in spite of the opposition caused by Sanballat the Horonite, an officer of Persia, and Tobiah an Ammonite. These men sought to hinder the work, first by scoffing at the attempt, then by threatening the workmen.

When these things failed, they tried to weaken his authority—for Nehemiah was the governor. And they threatened to kill him. But none of these things moved him, as we see in 6:11 —

"And I said, Should such a man as I flee? And who is there that, being as I am, would go into the Temple to save his life? I will not go in."

The schemes all failed, and the work was completed. But Nehemiah's troubles were not all from without. He encountered trouble from his own people, arising out of the general distress, which was aggravated by cruel exactions and oppression by their own nobles and rulers. As ever among mankind, the powerful preyed on the misfortunes of the weak.

Solemn remonstrance by Nehemiah brought about prompt redress, for he had set a striking example of his generosity—

"Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah . . . for 12 years I and my brethren have not eaten the bread of the governor.

"The former governors that had been before me were chargeable to the people, and had taken of them bread and wine, besides 40 shekels of silver: yea, even their servants bare rule over the people;

"But so did not I, because of the fear of God" (5:14-15).

The outstanding feature in the building of the wall is revealed in 4:13-18. The manner in which they worked is comprehended in one word: COOPERATION—

"So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together, for THE PEOPLE HAD A MIND TO WORK" (4:6).

How wonderful it is when this spirit and condition prevails!—when there is loving unity, and zeal for the work of the Lord. When all forget their own petty little feelings and selfishnesses— when minds are big enough to live in the Spirit and not in the childishness of the flesh. The same idea is expressed by the apostles in such words as "like-minded," "one mind," & "one accord."

We should think very seriously about this, remembering that we must all stand at the judgment seat of Christ in the presence of our brethren—for this is the ONLY way possible for an ecclesia to succeed and prosper.

One of the engrossing features in this book is in 8:8—

"So they read in the Book in the Law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading."

But in this they had no advantage over us: for many of our brethren can read distinctly and give the sense. As to "causing to understand," no people have ever been more blessed than we are. The works of brethren Thomas and Roberts were designed for that very purpose. In the providence of God, we have them to thank for bringing us to a knowledge of the saving Truth of the Gospel, and if we have any wisdom we shall be humbly thankful and not ashamed to confess our debt to them and their labors.

The deep spiritual joy—far surpassing any natural joy—that comes from the knowledge and understanding of God's Word is manifested in 8:12—

"And all the people went their way to eat and drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth because they had understood the words that were declared unto them."

Should there not be a similar great and continuous gladness among us—banishing all petty unhappiness and discontent—as we assemble on the basis of this same glorious knowledge and understanding of the wonderful works of God? As Paul so beautifully expressed it in our readings on Thursday (Col. 2:6-7)—

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the Faith, as ye have been taught, ABOUNDING therein with THANKSGIVING."

Is it not *knowledge of the Word* that causes us to appreciate and rejoice in the great provision God has made, of which we are reminded by the emblems on the table? Surely these are joyful things—joy that overflows and transcends every sorrow.

There is an item in v. 10 that should receive our attention—

"Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet."

But in Lev. 3:16-17 it is commanded—

"All the fat is the Lord's. It shall be a perpetual statute for your generations throughout all your dwellings, that ye eat neither fat nor blood."

The explanation is that the Hebrew word "khaleb" is always used when speaking of the fat of animals, but the word "mashman" signifies "a rich dish," and that is the word in Neh. 8:10.

Coming back to the subject of knowledge and understanding of God's Word, we find that we often become so absorbed in our own daily vocations that we are apt to overlook the dangers and evils of the age that are gnawing at the very vitals of our existence.

By all means, let us always keep before our minds the remembrance that the Truth of God to which we have covenanted our heart is the only real thing of any value in life.

Our daily papers are full of the strivings in business, full of every kind of worldly problem and interest. Let us remember they are not our problems and interests. We are strangers and pilgrims in this evil age. Our interests are

spiritual and heavenly. Some trust in their wealth, and some boast themselves in the multitude of their riches: but when death comes upon them, they perish for ever like the beast.

Where then lies wisdom? Not in the cares of this life, nor in present advantage, because when we become silent in death our cares will have ceased and our advantages will have disappeared.

Wisdom, then, lies in this—that we "seek first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness. If we do that, we will have strong faith in God, and will do our best to live soberly and godly—thankful, joyful, peaceful and content — and will be diligent in every good work. In Eccl. 7:4 we read—

"The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth."

Are we then not to be cheerful and happy? Yes, by all means we must be. Anything less is a reflection on God's infinite goodness toward us. But our cheerfulness and happiness are comprehended in the "joy that is set before us." Our happiness does not blindly ignore the evils of the present, but it sees far beyond their brief span, into the glories of the eternal future. Therefore Jesus could say in Matt. 5:4—

"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

The wise see the full truth of the situation. They see through to the end. They see at present sin, disease and death reigning among the people of the world, and realize that God is a stranger among them. Mirth has its place among us, but it is a deep, spiritual, abiding mirth. It is not the shallow, fleshly mirth of fools, such as Jesus describes in one of his parables, wherein a man said to himself (Luke 12:19)—

"Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry."

When Jesus said "those who mourn shall be comforted," he no doubt had in mind the prophecy of Isa. 61:3 —

"To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion; to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness: that they might be called trees of righteousness."

In our efforts to meet with favor when the Lord Jesus comes, let us keep before us such examples as that of Nehemiah, for surely few men in any age have combined in themselves a more rigid adherence to duty, a sterner opposition to wrong-doing, a more unswerving faith in God, than Nehemiah. He was like Paul in many ways, and as we are now in the latter's company, let us look at a few highlights in his teaching.

In 1 Timothy 6:20, Paul pleads with his son in the Faith—

"O Timothy, keep (or guard) that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings (that is, empty sounds), and oppositions of science falsely so called,
"Which some professing have erred concerning the Faith."

This is the mission and duty of each one of us: to guard the Truth that has been entrusted to us.

The word used by Paul and rendered "science" signifies scientific knowledge—a form of teaching that has been creeping into some groups using the name Christadelphian. It is the same pattern as that found in the 2nd century, and which soon developed into the Roman Catholic system.

In Acts 20:17, you will recall that Paul called the elderly brethren of the ecclesia in Ephesus, and had considerable to say to them by way of warning, but in particular (v. 29)—

"I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.
"Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."

You will notice that he did not say "a long time after I have left you," but "after my departing," and members of your own ecclesia shall arise and distort the truth. This has been going on ever since. Brother John Thomas gave us the Truth in Elpis Israel and Eureka, and ever since brethren have been picking at Eureka.

The latest is a new exposition of the Apocalypse by a well known brother in another group who claims that Eureka is not a true and biblical exposition, that Jerusalem and not Rome is Babylon, and that the book refers only to either the first century or the very last days. This is what the Catholic Church teaches about the Revelation.

Every brother or sister should be aware of and on guard against this trend. The situation today is as it was when Paul said—

"O Timothy, guard that which is committed to thy trust!"

Brethren and sisters, we *do* have the Truth. It is the greatest heritage that can come to any man or woman. It has become our birthright through our belief and obedience of the Gospel. As a Body we have had the Truth, thanks to the labors of bro. Thomas, for over 100 years. We must stand fast against these efforts to pervert it. In 1 Tim. 4:13, Paul says to Timothy—

"Till I come, give attendance to (attend to) reading, to exhortation, to doctrine . . . Meditate upon these things, give thyself WHOLLY to them."

It is impossible for us to keep the Truth bright and fresh and powerful in our minds unless we persist in our daily Bible readings, and in faithful attendance at our meetings whenever possible. The natural man requires water every day so he will be refreshed and alert: so the spiritual man or woman requires the Water of Life to sustain and refresh us.

God's counsels will never guide us unless we *know what they are*—unless we keep them fresh in our minds. Is it not reasonable, therefore, that in proportion as we read thoughtfully and prayerfully from His Word, in such proportion shall we know and understand what He requires of us?

Coming to the word of exhortation, one of the first thoughts that will arise in our minds is Paul's instruction to—

"Suffer the word of exhortation."

—for it should *stir up our minds*: make us stop and think deeply. We all tend to drift into the natural way, to pass through each day absorbed in present things—often necessary things, but still passing things. But if we let exhortation do what it should, and we become exercised about it, we will remember to constantly examine ourselves by the Spirit Word. It will pull us back from the natural into the spiritual, and strengthen us in it, and help to keep us in the narrow way that leads unto eternal life.

There are other pointed statements of the apostle that stir us up to think, as—

"Hold fast the form of sound words . . .

"Hold fast that which is good , .

"Hold fast your confidence . . .

"Hold fast our profession of faith . . .

And finally the words of Jesus himself—

"HOLD FAST TILL I COME."

Clearly holding fast is not something that is just going to naturally happen as we go about our busy daily activities. It is something of which we need constantly to be reminded; something that needs constant effort and remembrance. We understand from these appeals that we must make the effort to keep the Truth firmly fixed in the forefront of our minds, whatever we are doing; that we must be ever steadfast in the Faith, and not be moved, or shifted around, or unsettled in our minds.

And finally Paul says to Timothy (2:15)—

"*STUDY* to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing (discerning, handling) the Word of Truth."

The idea embodied in the word "study" is to make an effort, to be in earnest, to be diligent, to apply oneself to something in a consistent and disciplined way so as to learn it thoroughly and deeply. This does not come naturally to the slothful mind of the flesh. Truly some will apply themselves deeply to study, and make great sacrifices, where there is material gain or power or prestige to be acquired; but how many are ready to completely set aside the interests and advantages of the present, and really, deeply devote themselves to study of spiritual things—*with a view to their own personal transformation?*

But do not these words of Paul imply clearly that if we do not diligently "study to be approved," we may—yea, we will—be "ashamed" when we stand before the Son of God. That brief moment, *so sure to come*, of standing before all at the judgment seat, should be the focal point of all our thinking and all our planning.

Making our calling and election sure gives us plenty to occupy our time, and leaves no place for the discussion of unprofitable questions, or the pursuit of unprofitable activities. Spiritual benefit must be the measuring rod of all we do. There are some who bring up questions, in Bible Classes and elsewhere, just to create discussion of a subordinate nature, without real purpose. Such a course has the effect of lowering the moral and spiritual standard of the ecclesia, and creates an atmosphere detrimental to spiritual welfare. All study and discussion should be directed toward the practical goal of godliness, but we must be careful how we judge others in this endeavor, for this can be done both directly and indirectly. Whatever promotes knowledge or helps memory of the Word helps in this vital battle for spiritual transformation.

Let us then be among the truly wise who fear the Lord, and rejoice in the Truth, and comfort and strengthen one another in this ever-increasingly sinful world. Let us, like the noble Nehemiah, be unwavering in faith, and stern in opposing wrong, BUT—we must not forget to be always kindly affectioned to one another with brotherly love.

In our readings on Friday, there is a commandment (and let us note that it is a commandment) given by Paul that every one of us should memorize and make a constant rule of our life. It would purify and sweeten all our activities, especially at times when we feel in faithfulness we must take issue with something we believe to be wrong. It is oft quoted, but never often enough in this day of the poor weakness of the flesh—

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you RICHLY in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

Is it not interesting and thought-provoking that he says "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly"—as if it is just a matter of sitting back and letting it flow in? Truly in one sense great effort and self-discipline is required, but in another and perhaps deeper sense what is required is a complete yielding and submitting to the refreshing, purifying influence of the Word: putting aside the wilfulness of the flesh, so the Word can work its wonders in us.

May the Lord build us up by the great power of His living Word, that we may truly become Wisdom's children, and that we may so order our steps that when the Lord Jesus comes we may be among those who are able to say—

"Lo, this is our Yahweh; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation!"
— G.A.G.

The Three Destinies

ABSOLUTISM, DEMOCRACY, OMNIPOTENCE

"He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations. And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers"—Rev. 2: 26-27

BY BROTHER JOHN THOMAS—HERALD, 1852

THERE are 3 potent antagonists that stand related to mundane affairs, who propose each for themselves 3 distinct destinies for the nations of the earth, in which they shall each be supremely glorified. These 3 hostile powers are Absolutism, Democracy, and Omnipotence.

ABSOLUTISM

The destiny which Absolutism proposes to carve out for the human race is entire and unreasoning submission, in things spiritual and temporal, to the imperial authority of mortal rulers whose sword is their sufficient title to a sovereign and absolute disposal of the lives and fortunes of mankind forever. Under this condition of affairs, that "order" would reign throughout the earth which is the watchword of reactionism, and which now triumphs amid popular groans and execrations in Rome, Naples and Vienna.

Representative government would be abolished. Priestism, which among the nations is diabolism—God-dishonoring, soul-destroying, men-corrupting and debasing superstition—would be established. Civil and religious freedom, the voice of truth and righteousness, the Bible and the Press, would all be suppressed. The human mind, by

being reduced to inaction, would be prostrated, enfeebled, idiotized; and the race would become universally brutish, and fit only for beasts of burden to their imperial masters.

This is what Absolutism will establish in the world if it can. It already exists in Rome, Vienna and St. Petersburg, where its effects are conspicuous in the miserable creatures whose souls are devoted to its law. Would not the universal and eternal triumph of Absolutism over the earth fully realize the idea of Hell? Yea, verily, but with this exception: it would be the friends of freedom, righteousness and truth who would be tormented and made to burn therein, & not the wicked! Yes, it would be "Hell"; and whenever, in whole or in part, such a consummation should obtain, there would be manifest 'the Dragon, the Old Serpent, surnamed the Devil & Satan.'

Unfortunately for the Germanic, Slavonic and Romanian nations of continental Europe, their destiny is to be subjected to this power. Happily, however, it will not triumph over them forever: yet sufficiently long to fill the heart of humanity with dismay, but not long enough to idiotize their minds. There is hope of deliverance, but that deliverance cometh not from man.

DEMOCRACY

Democracy, which is not obedient to God, wishes well to itself. It is the prophet of what it conceives to be the interests of humanity; and is therefore the natural antagonist to Absolutism, which seeks only the gratification of its own satanic selfishness.

Democracy predicts a destiny for all the nations of the earth which, through their own efforts, they shall attain by the overthrow and entire destruction of Absolutism in its present divided form; and in which every nation shall have its own constitutional government elected by universal suffrage.

It predicts that all governments will then be republican; and that consequently all popes, emperors, kings, priests, and aristocracies will be suppressed: that every man will be his own priest & prophet, and worship God or not as he pleases, and according to his own forms: that the largest liberty short of anarchy will prevail; that the press will be untrammelled; the earth a perfect network of railways, telegraph lines and steamboat routes; and its lands equitably apportioned among its inhabitants, so that every man may have a vine and fig-tree of his own; that education will be universal; that agriculture and commerce, arts and manufactures, literature, science and philosophy will be perfect and unboundedly prosperous; and that the nations, having then accomplished the work of their own redemption and regeneration by the sword, by education and philosophy, will constitute one universal brotherhood which shall perpetuate itself by its own wisdom and virtue upon the earth for ever.

It will be remembered that Democracy confides in its own prowess for the introduction of its millennium upon earth. It proposes to falsify the predictions of its enemy by an appeal to arms, while Absolutism threatens to suppress Democracy completely by the same means. Both parties are in earnest even unto blood. Now let the reader mark what we say—

The Bible reveals that the war commenced will end in the ruin of BOTH, one after the other; in the introduction of a destiny that will falsify the predictions of Absolutism AND Democracy, and relieve the world of the presence of them both.

OMNIPOTENCE

Omnipotence hath decreed a destiny for the world in which the happiness of all nations will be in harmony with the rights of Jesus Christ, and the honor due to God. The rights of the Lord Jesus Christ are based upon the underived, inherent sovereignty of the Creator of all things, Who has indefeasible right to dispose of mankind and their affairs according to His Own will and pleasure. In conformity with this principle, He has decreed that all governments now existing, or that shall exist, shall be transferred to Him—peaceably if they will, by force and arms if they refuse: under any circumstances, they *must* be His.

Omnipotence victorious, the Eternal and Incorruptible God presents the absolute dominion over all peoples to His well beloved Son, whom He authorizes to appoint over the nations whomsoever he pleases. Being possessed of all authority in the heaven and the earth, Jesus, the divinely constituted King, places the lives and fortunes of men at the disposal of his brethren the Saints, whom he associates with himself in the government of the conquered world. Every one a king and a priest to God, the Saints become the lords spiritual and temporal, the royal princes of the nations.

Having once been mortal men, denizens of a state then passed away in relation to themselves, they are now incorruptible and deathless, having risen from the dead to eternal life. In the past state, their faith in God and their

character for truth and righteousness were severely tried. They were condemned by men as evil; but justified of God, and promoted to the honor, power, glory, and riches of His dominion.

By such is the world to be ruled in the future state: by a Hierarchy, or Sacred Order, of immortal and righteous men. Under these the nations will be wisely, justly, and strongly governed. Standing armies will be disbanded. Peace that cannot be disturbed by war's alarms will be established. Good will obtain among all classes of society. The poor and needy will be cared for. Ignorance and superstition (Paganism, Mohammedanism, Catholicism and Protestantism) will be exterminated. The fertility of the earth will be increased; the duration of human life extended; trade & commerce regulated upon just and liberal principles; vice suppressed; evil restrained; good triumphant; all nations of one enlightened faith; and the will of God performed on earth as in heaven.

Such is the blessedness Omnipotence hath in store for future generations of nations. It is manifest, however, that so long as Democracy and Absolutism prevail, such a destiny must be in abeyance; for the contemporary existence of either of them is incompatible with the sovereignty of Jesus and his brethren as the princes over all the earth.

Absolutism will subdue the Democracy of Europe, and prove to this generation the falsity of its predictions.

It is cheering, however, to the believer to know that the triumph of Absolutism is only temporary, and that although it crush Democratic liberty, God has something better in store for mankind. The honor of 'breaking to pieces the Oppressor' He has conferred upon Jesus, the Redeemer and Enlightener of the nations. He, the King of the Jews, with Israel and the Saints, are the regenerating army under his vicegerency with which he will combat the destroyers of the people, break in pieces & consume all their kingdoms, and plant the liberty of Truth and Righteousness in the earth.

THEN will the Gospel of the Kingdom have become a fact, and all the nations will be actually blessed in Abraham and his Seed.

After This Manner Pray Ye

"Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few"—Ecc.5:2

BY BROTHER ROBERT ROBERTS

IN PAUL'S brief epistle to Philemon, there is a matter twice referred to which deserves our most serious consideration—

"I thank my God, making mention always of thee *in my prayers*" (v.4)

"I trust that *through your prayers* I shall be given unto you" (v. 22)

You will recollect that, on one occasion, the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray, as if they felt their incapacity or ignorance of how to approach God. Jesus in answer said—

"When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do, for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking.

"But when ye pray, say after this manner . . . "

—and he gave them the brief form of prayer which is called "The Lord's Prayer."

The first feature, then, of acceptable prayer is brevity. Prolivity of petition is the very opposite of real prayer. For what is prayer? It is the request of limited intelligence to infinite intelligence—the address of a feeble creature to One Who does not require to be talked aloud to in order to hear, and Who does not require to be importuned with many words in order to be moved.

The gods of the heathen were represented in an opposite light. Their worshipers were told that the longest and most energetic devotions were likely to be most effectual. The difference between the 2 kinds of worship was never more signally illustrated than in the case of Elijah and the false prophets on Mt. Carmel. Elijah gave the false prophets the first chance. He set them to work at once to call upon Baal; and they were very earnest in their entreaties, and without doubt sincere. They evidently thought Baal a reality, and so they cried aloud and shouted. And as the time went on and no answer came, they began to get excited and frantic in their exertions. They cut themselves with knives, and jumped upon the altars. And Elijah taunted them. He ironically told them to pray on, and pray louder: perhaps their god was asleep, or on a journey, or was hard of hearing.

After they had exerted themselves in vain all day long, Elijah said, "Come near." They came near, and at his command they dug a trench around his altar, and poured water over it 3 times, till the trench was filled, and the whole place in a swim. This done, he simply knelt down and said—

"Lord God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Israel: let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel, and that I am Thy servant, and that I have done all these things at Thy word.

"Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that Thou art the Lord God, and that Thou hast turned their heart back again."

Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. The people, seeing this, fell on their faces and exclaimed—

"Yahweh, He is the Elohim! Yahweh, He is the Elohim!"

Elijah's prayer shows that we have no need to pray long. Realize this fact—that God's mind is far more susceptible than ours, and that He is more willing to give good things than we are to ask them—then we realize how in few words we may pray effectively.

This effectualness of prayer will not consist in the tone in which our words may be uttered. A pious tone is one of the absurd and nauseous features of the system that happens to be in vogue in the days in which we live. A man of true godliness—a man who has got his religion from the Bible and not from the pulpit—is just as sensible in his dealings with divine things as with human things. He is no brother to the man who puts on a pious face when religion comes on the board, and begins to talk in a "religious" accent. True religion has nothing to do with cant. A religious tone and manner is the dress of hypocrisy or superstition.

It is true that a person under the influence of religious feeling will show it. This is the language of that faculty in our nature which, enlightened by the Truth, gives power of approach to God, but it has no affinity with the cant and pietism of the hypocrite.

Let us be *short* in our prayers. There should be no prolixity. Brevity and intensity should be their characteristics. It is no prayer at all if you merely say words. Prayer is a concentration of the mind upon the Deity in adoration, gratitude, or entreaty. This cannot be attained without words, but you may use words without the act of true devotion.

Neither can it be attained without *understanding*. Understanding is the basis of our relations with men; much more is it so with God. We must become enlightened with regard to the fact that He is, and that He is everywhere present—that no distance is any barrier to the divine ear. Wherever we pray, we ought to feel that God is there, because we know that—

"He is not far from every one of us" (Acts 17:27).

"He besets us behind and before" (Psa. 139:5)

If a man fail to realize this, He fails in the first qualification of acceptable and profitable prayer. God is a spirit (John 4:24), and He fills heaven and earth (Jer. 23:24), although He is personally in light that no man can approach (1 Tim. 6:16). His mind is so unlimited in grasp that it matters not that 10,000 persons pray to Him at the same time; He can notice all. You cannot get away from His presence. To communicate with Him, you have only to turn your thoughts to Him. Realize you are speaking to God, and that He hears, and you will then—if you are righteous—pray the effectual, fervent prayer that availeth much.

As to the *subject* of prayer, about which some people are at a loss sometimes, Jesus has told us all we need care to know, in the model prayer given to his disciples. You will find that it contains everything about which we may or can pray. It is addressed to—

"Our Father Who art in heaven. "

That address does not occur again in the prayer: there is no need of repeating the Name of God as the modern heathen do. Such repetition indicates that the person praying is standing afar off, and feels a difficulty in securing God's attention.

Jesus fixes our attention on the fact of the Father being in heaven as the basis of all prayer. Therefore let us grasp this to begin with, that though He is everywhere present, the center of His presence is away from the earth in the starry vastitude around us. Thither our minds should rise in prayer. Do not, as it were, pray to anyone in the room in which you kneel; let your thoughts mount to heaven.

Remember that there is something in you and about you which connects you with the Father, far off as He personally is; and that something is what the Scriptures describe as His Spirit. But remember also this: God hears only the prayers of those who are pleasing in His sight. The prayers of the wicked are an abomination, & there are wicked people who have the name of Christ upon them. He only hears those who honor Him—

"To the pure Thou wilt show Thyself pure; to the merciful Thou wilt show Thyself merciful; to the froward Thou wilt show Thyself froward."

"The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous: His ear is open to *their* cry" (Psa. 34:15).

But His ear is shut to those who are displeasing to Him. They may pray, but He takes no notice (though He knows their words, of course, just as He knows of the sparrow's fall). People who choose to walk according to their own devices, He leaves to their own devices—

"Commit thy way unto the Lord, and He shall direct thy steps."

If you do not, He will not. How important to know you are walking in the course that is well-pleasing to God!

But it may be said, How can we tell when this is the case? Well, we cannot expect God to send us a special message how we stand in His regards: that is hereafter to be declared when the judgment is set. Nevertheless, He has done all that is necessary to enable us to know, and if we have not the answer of a good conscience, it is our own fault. He has declared His mind most minutely by the prophets and apostles—

"Line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little."

All we have to do is to make ourselves familiar with what He has said—daily waiting at wisdom's gates, watching at the posts of her doors. If we are living in neglect of His Word, and allowing the things of this life to drive it into the corner, our ignorance, uncertain conscience, and unanswered prayers are the due reward of our folly. But if we are like the man spoken of by David, whose—

". . . *delight* is in the Law of the Lord, and in His Law doth he meditate *day and night* . . ."

—and whose steps are conformed thereto, then we may know that the Father is well-pleased with us, and that He will listen to our prayers and do what we require of Him.

Some starving creatures doubt the utility of prayer. They cannot see any good in it, and live in neglect of it. This shows that they have not yet risen to the position of real children in Christ, but are groveling in the mire of the natural man. We must not take our cue from such, but resist them—steadfast in the Faith.

We must be guided in the matter by Jesus, who was in the bosom of the Father when he gave his disciples this prayer; and who was expressly sent to declare to us the mind of the Father. He directs us to pray, and tells us how to pray. The first thing that he puts into the mouth of an acceptable worshiper is—

"Hallowed be Thy Name."

What does this mean? The Name of God is equivalent to God Himself. The name of a man is the symbol of the man, and any slight to the name is an insult to the man himself. "Hallowed" means sacred, held in great reverence. This is what God's Name must be by us. David says—

"Holy and reverend is His Name."

—and it was a precept to Israel that they were not to take His Name in vain. The first lesson, then, that Jesus teaches with regard to our approach to God, is that it ought never to be undertaken without a reverential sense of His greatness and holiness.

To realize this, we have only to use our brains. We can see that God is the only power—that all things about us are but the creations of His eternal energy. His greatness is beyond the reach of our puny intellects. He is from everlasting to everlasting. He was before all things—before any part of the splendid universe we now see. And when we consider the perfection of His wisdom, the excellence of His goodness, and the greatness of His might, we are enabled to feel that in our approaches to His presence we can only be acceptable to Him if we carry with us a due sense of His supremacy and our own utter nothingness.

Having acknowledged the greatness of "Our Father Who art in heaven," we are permitted to say—

"Thy Kingdom come."

This is in natural sequence to the first sentiment. What is the highest desire of the mind filled with the fear and love of God, but that His will may become law on earth? Such a mind feels at present as David expressed it—

"In a dry and parched land where there is no water."

A state of society prevails in which God is almost unknown, & His will universally set at nought, in consequence of which joy is no dweller with the sons of men. What can a lover of God desire but this: that the time may come, and soon come, when the will of God will be as much considered in all transactions on earth as it is in heaven? And since we know that the means He has appointed to bring about that state of things is His Kingdom, the most natural petition we can present is—

"Thy Kingdom come: Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven!"

Then comes "daily bread." The spiritual is first in acceptable prayer. Ascription to the Deity, based upon a rational apprehension of His greatness, is followed by the prayer that His will and love may become the rule and delight of the world. Then come the matters pertaining to our individual fortunes in the present time. God first, the future next, then the present: this is the divine order of ideas—

"Give us this day our daily bread."

In this, Jesus teaches that our temporal concerns are not too insignificant to be the subject of prayer. Indeed, how can they be insignificant to us? Why, they constitute the stepping-stone to the things that are coming. No man can attain to the Kingdom of God until he has passed through a period of probation now. Therefore the things pertaining to that probation are most important.

It is not God's will that we should starve—that is to say, for starvation's sake. He may place men in straits sometimes for their good; or allow them to be put—like Jeremiah—in a loathsome pit for His Word's sake: that is another thing. If men are cast into prison for Christ's sake, they will—if they are true sons of God—rejoice like the apostles that they are counted worthy to suffer for his Name. But apart from this sort of thing, God doesn't wish that we should be ill-fed and ill-clothed. The very opposite, for Paul speaks of such blessings as things that—

"God hath created to be received with thankfulness of them which believe and know the Truth" (1 Tim. 4:3).

And of God he speaks thus—

"He giveth us richly *all things to enjoy*" (1 Tim. 6:17).

Also in writing to the Corinthians, in the chapter in which he says that God loves a cheerful giver, he says—

"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye, always *having all-sufficiency in all things*, may abound to every good work."

Consequently, it is compatible with the Truth to have abundance, *IF that abundance is used faithfully*—

". . . as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Pet. 4:10).

ALL depends on this. If a man use it for his own aggrandizement, he is an unfaithful steward, for the wealth that is entrusted to him is not his own. He is not even himself his own: he and all he has are the property of Christ, who will hold him responsible for the disposal of his life.

If he keep his abundance with a close hand—refusing to render the assistance it is in his power to render to the needy, or to the struggling cause of the Truth, he will be pronounced unworthy of his trust, and stripped of all he has, and cut off from the greater riches of the age to come.

God is willing that we should have enough and to spare. Therefore Jesus instructs us to pray—

"Give us this day our daily bread."

—and God can give it: only we must have faith. The man who thinks the provision of livelihood is a thing in his own hands entirely, in which God will take no part, argues irrationally, disbelieves the testimony, and harms himself. Upon how many circumstances beyond control does our living depend at present! And although God won't send an angel to lift a piece of bread from the ground when we can stoop to pick it up for ourselves, yet what we *cannot* effect for ourselves, He will be entreated to do by the prayer of faith which makes the divine will the basis of all petition.

It may depend on the mood of a certain man: God has the hearts of all men in His hand, and can turn them whithersoever He will. He can so temper the mind of the man as that our bread may be secure. Or how often does it depend upon the accident of meeting a certain person, which meeting God can easily bring about. All things are possible with God: it only requires faith—

"Give us this day our daily bread . . . *we believe Thou canst and wilt.*"

If you do not believe that, you had better not pray, for God is insulted by faithless prayer. Then come the words—

"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us."

In this, Jesus recognizes that while in the flesh, we are liable to fall into transgression; and he teaches that these transgressions may be forgiven. But you will observe that this privilege is burdened with a condition which Jesus elsewhere (Matt. 21:18-35) gives us to understand will be stringently enforced—God will grant forgiveness only to those who do for others what they ask for themselves. Jesus adds—

"If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil!"

This implies that we are to believe that our circumstances are so entirely in the power of God that if we ask Him—and are *very anxious* to be kept in the right way and to be protected from evil—our request will be granted.

Would Christ have taught his disciples to pray these prayers, if they were not prayers to be answered? The reason of all prayer is that all things belong to God and are at His disposal, and that He delights to be entreated as to their disposal in behalf of those whose heart is perfect towards Him.

Well, here is a model prayer given by Jesus himself, and therefore one which we should all do well to follow. At the same time, we need not restrict ourselves to the very words of it. It is rather given as a sample of the *kind* of prayer we ought to pray. "After this manner" is Christ's indication of the use he intended us to make of it. The continual use of a set form of words is apt to extinguish the true prayerfulness that is conscious of addressing the Deity. In our intercourse with men, we should dislike being addressed in a stereotyped form of words. We most appreciate the spontaneous and unstudied expressions of intelligence and friendship, and the Scriptures reveal that God is not less concerned as to the manner of our approach.

The "Lord's Prayer" may be used in its very words if the spirit so incline and the heart go warmly with the words, but the best use we can put it to is to fix it before our eyes as a standard of guidance as to how we ought to pray and what we may pray for, leaving the wording to the inspiration of scripturally-begotten prayerfulness.

Another point of importance not specially brought out in the Lord's Prayer is that we ought to pray *often*. Our minds are so feeble that we are liable to forget the things that are out of sight. We remember best the things which we have always to do with. Things out of sight die out of memory. Now, God is out of sight. In prayer, we keep Him in sight, and are enabled to—

"Endure as seeing Him Who is invisible."

We must, therefore, "pray without ceasing." This does not mean that we are always to be praying: it means that our praying must be a matter of continual practice. Let it be always attended to, like the reading of the Word. We have an illustration of what is acceptable in the matter in the case of Cornelius, of whom it is said that he "prayed to God *always*," and his prayers came up for a memorial before God, and led to his being guided in the way of Truth.

Now he was commander of 100 men, and had to attend to military business. Consequently he prayed "always," not in the sense of non-intermission, but in the sense of daily practice.

Daniel is another example of acceptable practice in the matter of prayer. He was a "man greatly beloved," and he—

"Kneeled upon his knees 3 times a day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God" (Dan. 6:10).

David, the "man after God's Own heart," says of himself—

"Seven times a day do I praise Thee because of Thy righteous judgments."

Then we find that Jesus himself frequently withdrew from both the people and his disciples, and spent *all night* in prayer to God.

Let us then "continue instant in prayer." The practice will make us feel acquainted with God, and greatly assist us in ordering our conversation aright before Him. It will build up a divinely-approved character upon the foundation laid by the Word, and qualify us for the inheritance of the saints in light, in which God will be over and in all—*blessed for evermore*. —1870.

Spread Thy Skirt Over Thy Handmaid

"Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried."

THE STORY OF RUTH

MATT. 1 gives us a genealogy, leading to Joseph, the husband of Mary. In this long list of names we find mention of 5 women: Tamar (v. 3), Rahab and Ruth (v. 5), Bathsheba—"her that had been the wife of Urias" (v. 6), and finally (v. 16)—

"Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary."

If it had been our choice, perhaps we would not have selected this line of descent, with these names, from which to look for a Messiah and Savior for mankind, even the only-begotten Son of God. There were certain peculiarities in that group of names, and the circumstances connected with them that, humanly speaking, we would doubtless have avoided.

Thankfully, the decision was not in the hands of man: but it rested with the Creator. All was purposed for the glorification of God, and not for man's honor.

There are 2 genealogies in the New Testament: the first (as noted) in Matt. 1 leading to Joseph; the other in Luke 3 to Mary. These 2 genealogies appear to converge at the time of the Babylonian captivity in the names of Shealtiel (Salathiel) and Zerubbabel. The line leading to Joseph (Matt. 1) came through Solomon. The line in Luke comes through another son of David by Bathsheba—Nathan, a younger son. Very little is recorded of this last line except in this genealogy which brings us to Jesus' mother.

Our attention at the moment is to be centered on Ruth, whose name appears as the 3rd woman in the line shown in Matt. 1: a Gentile ancestor in the line of Jesus. The circumstances of Ruth are recorded in the 4 short chapters of the book bearing her name. This record stands out as a shining light, on which our eyes have been set many times: a beautiful adornment to the historical record of God.

Outside of that book, Ruth is mentioned only in this one place in Matthew. But what a wonderful record has been kept of this woman of virtue! Thus we read of her (Ruth 3:11)—

"All the city doth know that thou art a virtuous woman."

"All the city doth know"—the world, if they will consider, will recognize in her a woman of virtue.

The book of Ruth is placed in a remarkable connection. It follows the book of Judges. When we read through the book of Judges, as we do in God's mercy year by year, we are saddened by the record we find there. We realize, if we are moved by the record to understand what God is telling us, that this recording is no mistake: that it is a message to tell us of the weakness and frailty of human nature, and of the depravity unto which the natural, unguided mind will lead men.

How refreshing, then, to find the book of Ruth at the end of the record in Judges. It comes as an illustration, greatly comforting, that though wickedness may prevail on every hand, there is in any generation a small, faithful preservation of the Truth of God.

"Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, (only) a remnant shall be saved"

(Rom. 9:27).

The writing of the lives of the righteous on the "inside" of the Scroll of divinely-controlled history will continuously appear as we read the Word of God; while the record of those who are without the camp (outside the scope of salvation) is written on the outside of the Scroll. The story of Ruth is a comforting example of Rev. 5:1—

"A Scroll written *within*, and on the outside."

God is completely aware of everything that is happening: nothing misses His observation. We therefore find a godly family in the midst of wickedness and unrighteousness, among a nation that had rejected the love of their God.

* * *

Ruth 1:1 —"Now it came to pass in the days when the Judges ruled that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons."

"A famine in the land." This is not a chance happening. The lives of God's people are directed by His constant supervision in all things, even to the control of the elements of nature. There was a famine in Israel for 3 years in the time of David. The wickedness of Saul and his house, which God could not overlook, was thereby manifested. God was using the seasons, the coming of the early and the latter rain, to impress His people with the lessons of righteousness. And thus when there was a famine, David enquired of the Lord for the reason, and was told—and the evil was brought out in the open and corrected.

There was a famine when Abraham first entered the land of Canaan, and he went down to sojourn in Egypt—to his sorrow. He thus came back into the land which God had promised to give him. Shortly afterwards, when Lot departed from him, came the restatement of the Everlasting Covenant.

It was a famine that forced Jacob down into Egypt, with the Divine assurance that He would be with them and, though persecuted and sorely tried, they would be brought away from thence as a mighty nation.

This was to be a type of the trial of all the faithful, and the final deliverance of the 144,000, given everlasting life. The 144,000 are hidden in the earth of nations, as this faithful family were. Israel was at last delivered with a mighty hand. This faithful family of Bethlehem would know of the circumstances of the past, would know of the writings of Moses, and would be impressed of the fact that God was still in control.

We, too, must learn from these illustrations to await the Divine deliverance, rather than turning to another land. There is no other land of salvation. We are instructed to endure the tribulations which come upon us, in meekness and humility. God has not forsaken us. He will *never* forsake His true servants.

Out of all these trying events, there must be glory to God Himself, with the subjection of the flesh. That is the lesson. By these 2 principles—God exalted, flesh subjected there will come salvation for His people. The key to unlock the door of salvation is set before us in the story of Ruth.

* * *

1:2—"And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his 2 sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehem-Judah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there."

Elimelech and Naomi—a name combination providing a beautiful picture. Elimelech (*God is King*); Naomi (*Pleasantness, Grace, Beauty*). With their 2 sons they went down into the land of Moab. The names of the sons are in striking contrast to the parents—Mahlon (*weak, sickly*); Chilion (*consumption, failing*). The lesson is to teach us that salvation would not come through the flesh. This is what we are to learn from this record.

This family of 4 crossed the Jordan river to the land of Moab, to the land of their relatives after the flesh. Paul said—

"Henceforth know we no man after the flesh" (2 Cor. 5:16)

That must be our position. The Moabites were the descendants of Lot, those who chose the well-watered plain of the Jordan—that which descended into death, into the Dead Sea; those that fell to idolatry. Israel already had been impressed with the principle of salvation from these people, in the incidents of Baal-Peor, where Moab enticed the people to sin, and many perished. Had they forgotten the tragedy of that failure? Do we remember to apply the same lesson in our daily activities—to keep completely separate from the world, to stay in the land, west of Jordan?

The loving mercy of God is shown, however, in this picture—that He can bring good out of evil. Do we not read—

"In EVERY nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him" (Acts 10:35).

But let us be careful not to presume upon this thought of God bringing good out of evil more than is said, nor to misplace the application. Paul is emphatic when he states (Rom. 3:8)—

"We be slanderously reported, and some affirm that we say, 'Let us do evil that good may come'—whose damnation is just."

* * *

1 :3—"Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died: & she was left & her 2 sons."

This was the first move in these events by the hand of God, in their exile. The two sons in this 10 year tribulation married the daughters of Moab—another mistake. Mahlon married Ruth, and Chilion married Orpah. God, we know, was to bring good out of evil; but let us again emphasize with Paul—let us *not* do evil that good may come, thus tempting God.

To Naomi, these events may have appeared as the establishment of a new hope, based on the flesh. But this sojourn in Moab was to teach Naomi (and us) that the flesh profits nothing. But it also teaches that there is an overruling Hand in our salvation.

1:5—"Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them, and the woman was left of her 2 sons and her husband."

Naomi's hopes in a strange land were to be frustrated. Yet her presence there, her manifest trust in ultimate Divine salvation, implanted the truth of Israel's God. And this seed would grow—she knew not how—to God's glory. But there was to be no hope in the flesh (for her 2 sons died childless); no hope in the "failing" and "sickly" condition of Mahlon and Chilion which epitomized the flesh in all its helplessness—not necessarily waywardness, but—

"In the flesh dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:18)

Salvation can come by God alone. The 2 sons died, and Naomi is left with her 2 daughters-in-law. Her humble recognition of the failure of the flesh is illustrated in her words to Ruth and Orpah—

1:11-13—"Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? Are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?"

"I am too old to have an husband, if I should say, I have hope; if I should have an husband also tonight, and should also bear sons, would ye tarry for them till they were grown?"

"It grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me."

There is an interesting contrast between the names of these 2 daughters-in-law. Orpah means stiff-necked, turned down, or turned away. It illustrates the position of all who, having heard the Word of God, are not influenced by it, but—

"*Turn again* to the weak and beggarly elements (of the flesh and the world) whereunto they desire again to be in bondage" (Gal 4:9)

When Orpah turned back, Naomi said to Ruth—

1:15—"Behold thy sister-in-law hath gone back to her people and her gods."

—unto the gods of the Moabites. She had rejected the God of Israel. Ruth was different, in name and in nature. Ruth means *Friend, Companion*—

"A friend loveth at all times" (Prov. 17:17).

This lays the foundation for the character of this woman of virtue.

* * *

After the duration of the famine (brought by God), the Lord visits His people—

1:6—"She (Naomi) heard in the country of Moab how that the Lord had visited His people in giving them bread."

It was one of those times of chastening for Israel under the Judges, when Israel cried unto the Lord, and in His mercy He heard their cry. Now again, as we have seen in the incidents in Judges, a limited salvation was brought for the nation: a type of God's merciful kindness is brought about when Israel repents. The land would now flourish and blossom, an indication of the unlimited blessings of the people when they turn to Him.

The Covenant made to Israel on the banks of the Jordan (Deut. 28), and upon a previous occasion (Lev. 26), was that when Israel would turn unto the Lord, He would bless them. Thus we read—

"When the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, He raised up a deliverer to them, which delivered them" (Judg. 3:9)

David turned to the Lord after the 3-year famine, and he found something was necessary: something had to be done. God has turned unto mankind, in that—

"While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).

—if we look to Him and cry to Him for salvation. He has raised up a Deliverer for all mankind, of which these things are but types. This deliverance we memorialize each week, as we partake of the emblems of the sacrifice of Christ.

Naomi turns back to the Promised Land, with hope that God now would look upon her affliction, and work out a salvation where Elimelech, Mahlon and Chilion had failed. These events are pictures of something far deeper, far more profound, working out in our own lives, and—indeed—in the lives of all the faithful. When we try to establish our hopes and our purposes through the works of the flesh, they are certain to be frustrated in due course. They may appear to prosper for a short time, but they will prove to be groundless. Only by confidence and assurance in God can there be any real hope of eternal salvation.

First we notice that the 2 younger women were impressed with the sincerity of Naomi in her faith, and they turn with her to go back to the land of Judah. But Naomi presents her age as a detriment, that any prospects of a further generation from her are dead:

1:12-13—"Turn again, my daughters, I am too old . . . the hand of the Lord hath gone out against me."

But had the hand of the Lord gone out against her? Actually, a far greater deliverance than in Elimelech, Mahlon and Chilion was to be brought about. Looking ahead to the final outcome, we find rich blessing, as in the case of Job—

4:15-16-"Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman . . ."

—a Redeemer: for the word for kinsman in this record carries the meaning of redeemer—

. . . that his name may be famous in Israel. He shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter-in-law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than 7 sons, hath borne him."

Here is a Kinsman, a Redeemer, provided by God. God in His great love and mercy had not forsaken Naomi.

Orpah turned back to the gods which had been a snare to Israel in the past. Ruth, with far more perception—perhaps even more than Naomi of the working of the hand of God (the same perception manifest in the mind of Rahab the harlot who said "*I know* that the Lord is with you"), thus could declare those famous and beautiful words that still move the heart—

1:16-17—"Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried.

"The Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me."

Wonderful words! Words which indicate the confident assurance of a deep and abiding faith in the God of Israel—

"He that cometh unto God must believe that He IS, and that He is a Rewarder of them that DILIGENTLY seek Him" (Heb. 11:6).

That is the key to life; that is the faith that every one of us must have. Ruth certainly had it. Ruth and Naomi were to be completely inseparable except in death—but forever united in the hope of Israel.

But Naomi still had to learn in fulness that God was the prime mover in every aspect of her life—

1:20-21—"Call me not Naomi (Pleasant), call me Mara (Bitter), for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty:

"Why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?"

All must learn the principles of what is written for our instruction in Heb. 12. Following after the long list of faithful servants in Heb. 11— all enduring in faith the trials of affliction, the tribulation necessary for the development of character—the record continues in ch. 12, teaching that unless we have this chastisement we are strangers, and not sons and daughters of God—

"Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? If ye be without chastisement (whereof all are partakers), then are ye bastards and not sons . . .

"No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous. Nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them who are exercised thereby.

"Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down . . .

—certainly Naomi needed this exhortation and comfort—

". . . and strengthen the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which be lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed" (Heb. 12:6-13).

In all our dark trials and sorrows, God is not afflicting us: He in love is developing and chastening and correcting and purifying us, that we may be fit to be His sons and daughters. Unchastened flesh is not fit for the companionship of God.

Naomi and Ruth came to Bethlehem at barley harvest—

1:22—"So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest."

This was the solemn time of the yearly Passover season. They had crossed the Jordan ("*Descender*"—into the Dead Sea). They had gone down together into death, as it were, and they had risen to a newness of life in Promised Land. The famine was over. A new bright springtime had come. God's blessing was upon His people.

Ruth—industrious, faithful and considerate, as already manifested in her statement of devotion to Naomi and Naomi's God—goes forth in further service to the Almighty, by service to her mother-in-law. Solomon wrote of this kind of woman in Prov. 31, and his words have deep spiritual import for the Bride of Christ—

"Who can find a virtuous woman?—for her price is far above rubies. She will do good and not evil all the days of her life.

"She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. She riseth up while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.

"She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms . . .

"In her tongue is the law of kindness . . . she eateth not the bread of idleness . . . Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates."

This is THE WOMAN, the Spiritual Woman, the Woman of virtue and of wisdom, of kindness and of love.

2:2—"And Ruth said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace.

"And she said unto her, Go, my daughter."

With continued confidence in God, regardless of the setbacks that her adopted family had received in the land of Moab, regardless of the wickedness of the nation into which she had now become related—she could see that she would find grace and mercy if she cast her life into the hands of Him Who was in control of all things. God certainly was in control of this young woman's life, though it may not to this point have become manifest.

2:3 -"And she gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech."

The record continues to tell us that in process of time Boaz as he visits his workers meets this young reaper. The command of distinction and separation is immediately made—

2:8-9—"Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens.

"Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee?

"And when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels and drink of that which the young men have drawn."

Very gracious, but authoritative instruction not to be ignored. The principle of separation is clear: the wisdom of Boaz is immediately manifest herein. We note also his use of the term "my daughter," implying that he was considerably older than Ruth—further confirmed by his remarks in 3:10.

We also observe the character of Boaz, shown as he approaches the field of reapers, greeting them: "The Lord be with you"; to which they replied, "The Lord bless thee." What a clean, godly atmosphere! What a foretaste of the purity and wholesomeness of the Kingdom! What a contrast with present conditions! The character of Boaz is clearly manifested in all his works. From the prophets and Christ we learn that—

"To this man will I look, saith the Lord, even to him that is of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My Word."

How kindly did Boaz look unto those who were his brethren and sisters!—certainly an example for us to follow. This is true service to God, the real spirit of the Law of Moses and of Christ—

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself. Upon these 2 commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

This principle is beautifully reflected in the life of Boaz.

Boaz means "strength." It was the name of one of the 2 pillars in front of Solomon's Temple. The other was named Jachin (*He will establish*). The purpose (illustrated in that Temple) is "*Established in God's strength*," not in the strength of the flesh. God's strength made perfect in weakness: of trial, experience and faith.

Ruth, in humble recognition of mercy wrought by God, asks—

2:10—"Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?"

The faithful are never strangers to God; though they may be strangers scattered abroad"—strangers to the world in walk and conduct: but never strangers to God. They will always find "grace" in the eyes of God. He will bring forth their righteous desires in His own good time. Boaz replied to Ruth—

2:11-12—"It hath fully been showed me all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband; and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people thou knewest not heretofore.

"The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel under Whose wings thou art come to trust."

This word "wings" is *kanaph* in Hebrew, meaning also "skirt," leading to an interesting fact, as we shall see.

Similar to the call of Abraham to become a wanderer and a stranger, Ruth followed the same course, "coming out" unto the God of Israel. She had come to the people of God, to this bright spot in the general wickedness of Israel, to the house of Boaz.

There would truly be other faithful families at the time whose lives are not recorded in the Word, but they are safely recorded by God. This illustration is sufficient to prove the righteousness of God, in the lives of the faithful, through the long centuries, as the sons and daughters of God's family have been developed—

". . . under Whose wings thou art come to trust."

"Under Whose wings"—our minds are carried to the wings of the Cherubim on the coverlid of the Ark, where the Shekinah Glory rested, in the Most Holy Place. "Under Whose wings," then, speaks of Divine protection and care. It is under the safety of these wings that we also must place all our trust and confidence. The record continues with a gracious invitation from Boaz to Ruth:

**2:14—"At meal time come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar (sour wine).
"And she sat beside the reapers, and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left."**

Parched corn—that wheat or bread of life which has been prepared through the heat and affliction of trial, necessary in the refining of God's people—is held out to Ruth as a portion to eat. Here is true fellowship with the reapers of God, the reapers of Boaz—of "strength." Ruth, the young widow, now takes her part as a gleaner, in fellowship, eating the bread and drinking the wine.

So Ruth returned to Naomi in fulness, because the law of God in this Man of Strength was manifest.

2:20—"Blessed be he of the Lord, Who hath not left off His kindness to the living and to the dead . . . The man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen (our Redeemer)!"

Here is a change in the perception of Naomi. She now realizes that God is indeed working out a salvation which, naturally, her husband and sons could not accomplish. "He is one of our next kinsmen"—*gaalim*—redeemers.

Again the injunction to strict separation—

2:22-23—"It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in another field (a stranger's field).

"So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley harvest and wheat harvest; and dwelt with her mother-in-law."

From barley harvest to wheat harvest—from the Passover unto the Firstfruits—

"Christ the Firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."

—incorporating all the time from the sacrifice of Christ until the judgment of the saints.

The picture of salvation enlarges in chs. 3 & 4. The principle of redemption for all is unfolded, that a family in Israel should not fail because of the weakness of the flesh.

3:1—"My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?"

This is instruction to Ruth to go to the threshing floor of barley, and to perform certain things. The threshing was taking place at night (v. 2), because of the strong winds to separate the chaff from the grain. It speaks of a night of judgment and trial—of winnowing and threshing, and the final redemption and reward of the righteous in the morning. Ruth now realizes that she is an instrument to be used by God in the development of His purpose—

3:2—"Is not Boaz of our kindred (our redeemer), with whose maidens thou wast? Behold, he winnoweth barley tonight in the threshing-floor."

With characteristic humility and obedience, Ruth responds in the same way as Mary to the angel concerning the birth of Christ:

"Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it unto me according to Thy word."

Thus Ruth replied—

3:5—"All that thou sayest unto me I will do."

In obedience to Naomi's request, Ruth enters the scene of the threshing floor, having put on her raiment--

3:3—"Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor."

Typical is this statement of the necessary cleansing, anointing and pre-clothing of the servants of God with righteousness—

"Clean linen, which is the righteousness of saints."

—before they appear for judgment and redemption.

Ruth marks the place where Boaz is lying: she goes softly to him and uncovers his feet, and thus reclines at his feet. The wonderful plan of redemption is now about to begin. To put oneself at another's feet is to submit to their authority and seek their help.

Boaz is startled, suddenly aware a woman is lying at his feet—

3:9—"Who art thou? . . . I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt (kanaph —thy wings) over thine handmaid, for thou art a near kinsman."

—'thou art a Redeemer.' This is the key verse of the whole record —

"Spread therefore thy protective wings over thine handmaid, for thou art a Redeemer unto me."

Here was a humble and obedient submission by Ruth to the requirements of the Law of God given through Moses. Boaz too would know the Law, and the circumstances of Naomi's family. Ruth would also have been acquainted with the stipulations of the Law relating to the one required to raise up seed to the dead.

Why did not Boaz act before Ruth came to him with her petition? For 2 reasons. First there had to be the freewill offering of Ruth to the service of God. And 2nd, there had to be the revelation of the nearer of kin, the nearer redeemer, and of his inability—or unwillingness—to bring redemption. The principle of redemption is defined in Deut. 25:5-10—

"Her husband's brother . . . shall take her to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her . . .

"The firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out in Israel."

Then follows the consideration of the possibility of the next of kin refusing to perform this duty, of the presentation of the case before the elders of the city, the removal of his shoe, and the spitting in his face: with the odious name being given—

"His name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed."

This principle was embodied in the patriarchal code long before the Law of Moses. We see it in the ancestral line of Boaz in the case of Judah's son Onan, and the unusual circumstances brought about by the failure of Judah to perform his promise to Tamar in relation to Shelah. The Divine displeasure toward Onan was clearly evident. Tamar—the Gentile—taking the initiative, caused Judah himself to perform the law which was required, producing thereby the line of Pharez, from whom came Boaz, David and Christ—another strange link in this chain of man's redemption.

The basic teaching of this Law is of death and resurrection: a raising up of the name of the dead— a renewal of that which is broken off by death—through redemption. There are no mistakes in the purpose of God. He requires His people to act upon the unselfish principle of loving our neighbor as ourselves, of doing to others as we would that they should do unto us—even if so doing would, naturally speaking, "mar our own inheritance."

Matthew, Mark and Luke all record the Sadducees' illustration of the woman that had 7 husbands, and the beautiful and conclusive manner in which the Master answered the hypothetical question posed by the petty and caviling opposition—

"Whose wife shall she be in the resurrection?"

The very fact that Christ teaches that marriage is only a passing stepping-stone to the glorious spirit state of resurrection shows the underlying lesson of this ancient law—that resurrection from the dead has always been understood as the only avenue to life everlasting. Verily, the natural line of Elimelech had died, but a new beginning was to take place.

We see the high principles of Ruth: no presumptuous advance toward Boaz, but a humble acceptance of God's requirements. She was a willing vessel in the hands of God. Boaz declared his recognition of his responsibility—

3:10-11—"Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter: for thou hast showed more kindness in the latter end than in the beginning, inasmuch as thou followest not young men, whether poor or rich.

"And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman."

There was no desire for personal advantage or satisfaction on the part of Ruth, no desire to follow after young men. This again illustrates that Boaz was older than Ruth.

Boaz, however, has to instruct Ruth that there is a kinsman of nearer relationship than he, who had the primary duty to carry out the law—but that failing this, Boaz would perform that which God required. There was a closer relation than Boaz—in the flesh, in Adam. Paul said—

“In Adam all die.”

The natural, closer redeemer was of the flesh. But Boaz would not impose himself until the inability of the flesh was manifested. Paul further declared—

“Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

Certainly the flesh cannot redeem. Paul answers his own question—

“I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (Rom. 7:24-25).

Boaz asked Ruth to *tarry all night* (v. 13). “I will, *in the morning*, perform thy desire, if the closer redeemer does not.” Once more Boaz’ characteristic of love to his neighbor is illustrated—an assurance that God will provide that which is necessary, if we tarry close to Him until the morning light.

3:15-17—“Go not empty unto thy mother-in-law. And he measured 6 measures of barley, and laid it on her: and she went into the city.”

Naomi is satisfied her suggestion is of godly origin. She says—

3:18—“Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter shall fall: for the man will not be in rest until he have finished the thing this day.”

God never rests; He never wearies; He slumbers not nor sleeps. But we must await His pleasure.

Later in the day, when the morning arose, an assembly of the elders of Bethlehem is called—at the gate of the city, the usual place of judgment. Then came by the kinsman of whom Boaz had spoken. Said Boaz to him—

4:1—“Ho, such an one! Turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside and sat down.”

The kinsman’s name is not recorded. He comes and goes undistinguished, unidentified. Those who do not, or will not, perform the will of God have their names blotted out of the Book of Life. Boaz, who did that which was required, has a perpetual memorial.

A proposal was made for the unnamed kinsman to perform the requirements of the law by the purchase of the property of Elimelech. The response was in the affirmative with eagerness—

4:4—“I will redeem it.”

How naturally the flesh is responsive to take advantage of a situation! The unknown kinsman would take advantage of Elimelech, of Naomi, Mahlon and Chilion, in Naomi’s distress and need, if it suited his purpose. But Boaz pursued the proposal—

4:5—“What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.”

But to the kinsman, this was unacceptable, and he declined because of assumed personal disadvantage. He would have redeemed it for himself, but not to help Ruth—

4:6—“I cannot redeem it to myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance. Redeem thou my right to thyself, for I cannot redeem it.”

“Lest I mar mine own inheritance.” The flesh again. When it is to disadvantage, marring the natural inheritance, refusal is encountered. His natural inheritance and possession was far more important to him than the inheritance which God had promised to them that love Him in obedience. But how shortsighted! Could not, and would not, God bless him abundantly for kindness and obedience? Thus his name is not recorded in the Book of Life.

Under the Law, the removal of the shoe—the symbolic removal of the right to walk in God's land—was commanded: a removal of the right to walk on his brother's inheritance. The word "shoe" in Hebrew is *naal*, "a binding, bolting, or locking together." It ensured the enclosing of the covenant: a binding of the covenant.

In the parable of the 10 Virgins, the door was shut, bolted against the entry of the 5 foolish and unprepared virgins, when the announcement of the return of the Bridegroom was made. The judgment is pronounced—
"Depart from me: I never knew you."

The name was not written: there was no recognition.

This man had his shoe removed: the unknown, unwilling redeemer. He declined all right to the inheritance of God, for indeed all the land was God's. It was God's Own land, His eternal possession, lent to Israel only upon the condition of continued obedience. His shoe was removed from walking thereon, and the door was locked against him forever of receiving that land again.

Now the part of the glorious Redeemer comes into play—

4:9-10—"Ye are witnesses this day (said Boaz), that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi.

"Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased (redeemed) to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place.

That the boundary of the inheritance should not be moved, that the ancient landmark should stay in its place— all the people at the gate and the elders of the city said—

4:11—"We are witnesses. The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which 2 did build the house of Israel. And do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem."

Boaz did worthily. He was a restorer of the line that had been cut off by death—a worthy type of the Redeemer of all mankind, even our Savior. Not only was he a restorer of the natural line of Elimelech, a seed raised up to the dead, but also that the designated spiritual line would continue through David and Christ.

It would appear from the statements which we have read, and from the words of the elders of Bethlehem, that Boaz had no seed, no descendants. Possibly he was not married, or was a senior widower without children. Thus the seed which should be born to succeed in the line of Elimelech would be united in Boaz as well. This gives more force and beauty to the faithful character of Ruth in the statement of Boaz—

"Thou followest not with young men, whether rich or poor."

He was a restorer of the line, through the handmaid of the Lord. He was a restorer of broken lines, which would have ended with Elimelech and Boaz.

Ruth, the mother of Obed, in the line from Tamar by Judah: Pharez, Hezron, Ram, Amminadab, Nahshon, Salmon. Salmon was the husband of Rahab the harlot. Nahshon was the leader of the tribe of Judah, selected by Moses at the numbering of the people at Sinai, and director of that tribe through the wilderness wandering. It was this tribe that led the armies of Israel, preceded by the pillar of fire and cloud, and the Ark of the Covenant.

The women of Bethlehem say to Naomi—

4:14-15—"Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee without a kinsman . . . He shall be unto thee a restorer of life, a nourisher of thine old age. Thy daughter-in-law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than 7 sons, hath borne him."

How had she borne him? Notice these words in v. 13—

"The Lord gave her conception (a Divine intervention) and she bare a son."

She had had no children by Mahlon (in a period of up to ten years). Possibly she was barren. This appears to be parallel to the case of Sarah, of Rebekah, Rachel, and Elisabeth. These are all types of the Divine provision of the Son of God—of the Spirit of God coming upon Mary in the birth of Jesus, the Restorer of Life for all those who put their trust in God. Here was Ruth's faith in God, that she should have a son by Boaz, a man apparently of considerably greater age than she: and the faith of Boaz that God would provide. The son is named Obed—servant— the servant of the Lord—

"Ye are my *friends* if ye do whatsoever I *command* you."

The names of Ruth and Obed are linked in this expression of the Master: Ruth, *Friend*, Obed, *Servant*. Obed—the servant—a reflection of his mother's beautiful service to God—was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

The final verses of the book of Ruth give the line of descent from Judah to David, a genealogy given twice in the Old Testament, and twice in the New. But Ruth's name appears only once—in Matt. 1—other than in this story of her faithfulness and godliness. What more do we need? A whole book bears her name: Ruth, a *Friend*, our Friend.

"All my city doth know that thou art a virtuous woman!"

—E.F.H.

Current Events Fulfilling Prophecy

"Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?"—1 Cor. 1:20

THE PALESTINIANS. Scattered thru-out Mideast are 3 million Palestinians, who passionately believe they've more right to land of Israel than the 3 million Jews who live there. Arab summit at Rabat last wk. designated terrorist PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) as sole representative of Palestinians. Israel says it will never negotiate with the PLO.

Till recently, much of world viewed Palestinians as ruthless terrorists who blew up airliners, murdered athletes, slaughtered schoolchildren. Even now, Palestinian leadership predicts more terrorism. But since '73 War, Palestinians have gradually replaced campaign of terror with coordinated political & diplomatic effort. By 105-4 vote, UN has invited PLO to participate in UN Palestine deliberations. Last week, PLO got French support: Foreign Minister met publicly with Arafat, called him a "statesman." By demanding a non-sectarian state in all of Palestine, PLO is restating its long-standing commitment to dismantling Israel. (Nwk 11:4)

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Palestinians become a power: last wk., Rabat Arab summit radically & dramatically altered Mideast situation, unanimously designating Arafat & PLO as sole spokesman for Palestinians—detonating biggest Mideast explosive yet. Israel in agonizing dilemma. They've consistently refused to even consider discussions with "terrorist organizations whose avowed aim is destruction of Israel." Premier Rabin reiterated this after Rabat decree.

Russia delighted at turn of events. Arafat told Rabat summit: "Victory's at hand. This military gang (meaning Israel) is a pack of wounded wolves. They're planning a 5th war: we must get ready for it." To emphasize their hard stand against Israel, Rabat summit allotted \$1-billion a yr. each from oil income to both Syria & Egypt for arms.

Hussein was bitter. While Hussein appeared sinking, Arafat rising rapidly. Next wk. he'll be honored at UN. Palestinians expected to form govt. in exile.

For the over 3 million Palestinians scattered across world, Arafat & PLO rocket to recognition was heady event. Though deprived of a homeland, most are educated. Palestinians hold key positions in many Arab govts.; serve as teachers, doctors, engineers & administrators thru-out Arab world.

Since '67, PLO terrorists have killed at least 800 Israelis & wounded well over 200 more. Goals of Israel & Palestinians seem irreconcilable: PLO directly opposed to Israel's existence. It's hard to believe Israel will concede any land to PLO as long as it's committed to Israel's destruction. (Tm 11:11)

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New & perilous situation. In Rabat, Arabs took bold—possibly perilous—step by handing over to PLO the responsibility of "liberating" West Bank. Decision was major blow to Hussein, who claims it as part of Jordan. Possibility of war greatly enhanced by victory of PLO, a group publicly dedicated to dismantling Israel. Israel made it plain it had no intention of dealing with PLO; Israel leaders began speaking of another war as inevitable.

Sadat & Feisal had promised support for Hussein at Rabat, but when showdown came, they kept silent. US now faced with entirely different situation. PLO's objective is to take over Jordan & Israel to form a "Greater Palestine." Neither Hussein nor Israel likely to submit without fight. Tough talk from Rabat deepened growing sense of foreboding in Israel. (Nwk 11:11)

NOTE: This is a startling new development: a sudden & complete new dilemma for Israel & US. But it is wonderfully in the right direction. It seemed for a while that—under the magic of Kissinger, the Arabs were sincerely getting close to actually officially recognizing the right of Israel to exist, but that was apparently just a trick to get land concessions. That implied promise has suddenly vanished, & there is now eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation between Israel & PLO as to who shall possess the whole land, with the might & wealth of the Arabs backing PLO, to the servile world's oil-bought & treacherous applause. The radical, militant Arabs are in the ascendancy. The moderates—Jordan, Egypt & Saudis—caved in & backed down. But they are not happy, for they see the hated hand of

Russia pulling the strings. We know there must be the orientation of Syria, Iraq, Persia & Libya to the King of the North; and Jordan, Egypt & Saudi Arabia to the King of the South. This could be a big step in that direction.

PROFITS: BEST EVER. For months, US economy sinking deeper into recession, but corporate profits have gone higher & higher. Recent quarter-year has established another record. J&L Steel, for example, enjoyed 332% rise; Reynolds Metal 461%. Sizable gains in oil, paper, steel, aluminum, copper, chemicals & drugs, where shortages have sent prices soaring. Banks cashing in on record interest rates. Some companies would have reported even heftier earnings if they hadn't changed accounting procedures. (Nwk 11:4)

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Sugar prices, over past year, have increased 300%. US's largest refiner reports 250% increase in profits. Largest refiner of beet sugar reports 1120% increase. (USN 11:11)

NOTE: Truly greed & profiteering on shortages & misfortunes have always been the common hallmark of man's inhumanity to man, but these current developments somehow seem more ominous. We cannot help but wonder if we are not seeing the beginning, thru greed & immorality running rampant, of the collapse of the whole "democratic" capitalistic system. As evidenced by the gross excesses of the US administration that has just collapsed in shame & disgrace, all limits & restraints seem now to be cast aside, as everyone claws for more & more—all heedless of others, & all full of glib self-justification. Surely it's the grisly twilight of man's wicked rule on earth.

GRIM SCENARIO FOR DOOMSDAY. 5 months after Protestant general strike brought down short-lived coalition govt., the sides in Ulster increasingly & intractably polarized. In past month Protestants in new campaign of sectarian violence: several young Catholics gunned down on streets. Protestants say violence would stop if IRA, which started bloodshed in '69, would agree to ceasefire. Britain uncertain: no longer leading events, & barely managing to respond to them. \$1-billion yrly. drain on Britain's economy.(Tm 11:4)

NOTE: Here is exposed the ugly raw edge of supposedly "civilized" humanity—a deadly, hopeless, bitter, bare-knife conflict, right on Britain's doorstep. In her heyday, when it suited God's purpose, a mere handful of Britons kept 250 million Indians in servile & profitable slavery. But now she cannot stop murderous bloodshed between a few "Christian" neighbors right at home.. God sets them up, and puts them down.

FRANCE BLOCKS OIL UNITY. Since oil embargo, major nations have been trying to work out mutual sharing agreement in case of another embargo. Last week, agreement was reached. Ten countries, including US, Britain, Germany, & Japan will sign. But France was a holdout, calling agreement an "oil NATO." France boycotted planning sessions, regarding undertaking as US-inspired & US-dominated. (Nwk 11:11)

NOTE: How comforting to see France continually running true to form—just as bro. Thomas foresaw! The frog-like spirits are doing their work well.

BUILDING UP RUSSIA. Russia so eager for US trade that they've made unparalleled decision to allow outside monitoring of their domestic affairs: agree to freer migration of Jews: 60,000 a year. US firms already helping Russia solve consumer, technological & agricultural problems. Even so, US far behind Europe, whose trade with Reds is 10 times US's. (Tm 11:4)

NOTE: How blind of Europe & US to play Russia's (to the enlightened eye) so-obvious game! To gain her ends, Russia submits to the humiliation of dictation on her Jewish policy. But, like the Cuban missile showdown, she will not forget, but will bide her time for revenge.

SCOTTISH NATIONALIST PARTY campaigned for self-government in recent British elections, & won 30% of Scot vote. Upsurge of nationalism is prompted in part by desire to control North Sea oil, but oil isn't primary issue. There's general dismay with way England has governed Scotland. Scots measuring costs & problems of independence, like establishing own army, & defining separate foreign policy. (Tm 10:28)

NOTE: There are Tower of Babel seeds of conflict here. Nearly 2000 yrs. of uneasy union have not assimilated English, Irish, Welsh & Scotch, though near kin, & crowded together on 2 tiny islands. What hope then for world peace?

CUBA RIDING HIGH. If US & Cuba make up, will be on Castro's terms: he's in no rush. Cuba has survived 15 yrs. of opposition & economic blockade by world's strongest power. They now consider blockage and isolation broken, with their revolution intact. Cuba's very cocky: things going their way: demand US lift trade & travel embargo before any talks. Cuba better off today than any time since Castro took power. (USN 10:14)

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Russia in Cuba. Moscow once viewed Cuba mainly as missile base from which to threaten US. Now, however, Russia hopes to build Cuba into American showcase of Russian-sponsored Communism. Little chance US

could break Havana-Moscow friendship. Neither Russia nor Communist Party has any intention of ever losing foothold. They've survived US blockade, & think they'll be there forever. (USN 10:28)

NOTE: Another ignominious failure for once-mighty US. Another victory for Russia—& right on US's doorstep. Ruthless, determined, unified Russia can act with lightning speed, & crush large countries like Hungary & Czechoslovakia in overnight blitzes, & most of world applauds or is fearfully silent, but US dare not try force to bring little Cuba into line.

SCHOOL BOOKS STIR UP STORM. (USN 11:4)

NOTE: In W. Virginia, a tremendous public outcry over blasphemy, profanity, immorality & corruption in new school textbooks. Excerpts given in the newsmagazine show how shockingly low US morals have fallen, and how coarse the language being taught to young children. This is modern "new light," which is animalism. How necessary are the soon-coming judgment fires of God to purge the earth of its deepening abominations, when the Son of Man shall "gather out of his Kingdom all things that offend, & them that do iniquity, & shall cast them into a furnace of fire" (Matt. 13:41-2).

Jan. Answers WHAT COLOR?

				WHITE:	BLACK:	RED:	BAY:
				(Cont'd)	Sun	Sea	Horse
BLUE:	GREEN:	MULTI:	WHITE:	Manna	Hair	Sky	BROWN:
Lace	Bed	Veil	Hair	Fields	Skin	Eyes	Sheep
Robe	Herb	Coat	Snow	Basket	Horse	Wine	Cattle
Cloth	Figs	Ephod	Robe	Throne	Raven	Esau	SCARLET:
Loops	Tree	Girdle	Wool	Apparel	Locks	Horse	Sins
Ribband	Ears	Curtain	Linen	Raiment	Heaven	Heifer	Robe
GRAY:	Leaf	Hanging	Teeth	PURPLE:		Dragon	Cloth
Hair	Withs	Pavement	Cloud	Robe	YELLOW:	Pottage	Beast
Head	Grass	Breastplate	Horse	Cloth	Hair	Apparel	Thread
Hound	Pastures	Pomegranate	Stone	Raiment	Gold	Ram-skins	Wool

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