

The Berean Christadelphian

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

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

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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.

We few here continue to strive to maintain a lightstand in this far-off corner of the Vineyard; but, oh, how few feel themselves in need of that Light! And yet how very, very sick is the world of today!—which surely presages the arising of the Sun of Righteousness with healing in his wings. Truly what glorious things await those that overcome.

In October last we were strengthened by a visit from bro. & sis. Hodges of Western Australia on their way home from a visit to the American ecclesias. We had the pleasure of re-living with them many of their experiences and meetings with the brethren and sisters—especially those highlights of ecclesial life, the Fraternal Gatherings at Richard and Hye.

This, together with slides and photos of the various groups, did much to bring us closer in spirit to our American brethren and sisters, and was a source of pleasure and encouragement to all.

Love in the Truth to all, from the brethren and sisters at Whangarei,

—bro. M. J. Griffin

WINNIPEG, Manitoba—3449 Assiniboine Grove, R3K 0H5—Bro. Joseph Jackson

GREETINGS of love to the Brotherhood.

Several years ago the Berean carried a series of articles entitled "How Some Have Met the Truth." They were interesting and instructive, and we feel it would be beneficial to have a similar series once again—not only for the interest they generate, but more particularly to help us all to develop a plan of approach to strangers. We ask all in fellowship to forward relevant material to us in order that we may collate the articles and then forward them to the Editor for publication. They need not be long, and names omitted if desired just a general outline of the method of presentation and introduction taken.

We are pleased to see Ecclesial News in the magazine, and ask all to continue to support this section, even though it may be only a line or two. Those in isolation, such as we are, find ourselves turning to this section of the magazine first, to see what our "family" are doing. We find news of lectures, visitors, and general activities of ecclesias most interesting, and ask everyone—in isolation and the ecclesias—to contribute regularly to this section.

Some may not be aware of the fact that the Law of Moses, the excellent book by bro. R. Roberts, has suffered over the years from change. When the changes transpired we are unable to say, but between the 2 copies we have in our possession we discovered over 30 differences. Some changes are minor, while others are quite major. We will supply a copy of the long deletions and major changes to any who request them.

—bro. J. Jackson

DETROIT, Mich.—13308 Denver Circle West, Sterling Heights, Mich. 48077. Phone (313) 979-0209—Class 10 am; Memorial 11:30 am.

Dear brethren and sisters: Loving greetings in the Hope of Life Eternal.

Through the love and mercy of our heavenly Father we continue to meet in this area, with a desire to maintain our faith and confidence in the purposes of God. The daily reading of the Word of God, weekly exhortations, our prayers and praises all combine, as God has assured, to enliven our minds to the realities and surety of the unchangeable plan of world events leading to the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

The raging of the sea of nations, casting up mire and dirt; the instability and corruption of world governments; the declension of morals; the unabated and increasing wave of crime—constantly cause men's hearts to fail for fear as they observe the world confusion, and "distress of nations with perplexity" (the no-way-out situation) unto which the age is being inexorably drawn.

These events, while distressing for millions of earth's inhabitants, are necessary in the wisdom of God, designed to humble mankind and to ultimately cause a desire for God to take a hand with remedial powers. We are indeed in a blessed position to know the broad course of world events, and of the happy issue which has been foreseen and planned by God—foretold centuries ago by God's faithful prophets and apostles.

But such knowledge brings great responsibilities and requirements of those who profess to be followers of God's Son. Let us ever remember that—

"The Lord, whom we seek, shall suddenly come to His Temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant whom we delight in: behold, he shall come. . . Who may abide the Day of his coming?"

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly (suddenly). Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus!"

Such is the urgent message with which we conclude our daily readings at year's end, and look with renewed desire and eagerness for the Master's return as the new year dawns. "What manner of persons ought we to be, in all holy conversation (conduct) and godliness"—as the world moves toward its appointed date with destiny.

Visitors whom we have welcomed around the Lord's table since our last report are: bro. & sis. Braden Edwards (Canton); bro. & sis. Paul Neely (Houston); bro. & sis. David Clubb, sis. Connie Clubb, bro. R. Martin, and sis. Helen Boyce(London). We were encouraged to faithfulness by words of exhortation from brethren Edwards, Neely, Clubb and Martin.

We have also been strengthened by association with brethren and sisters of like Faith at several gatherings, and appreciate the labour of love in God's service extended by those who have arranged such blessings. Among these have been meetings at Niagara Falls, London, Houston and Hye.

We have also been encouraged by the activities of brethren and sisters at Richard, Worcester and Winnipeg, opportunities for the mutual strengthening of the believers and their families, in the Truth we hold dearly.

Such assemblies have drawn believers together from many parts of the globe. Indeed, as in the case of bro. & sis. Ray Hodges, from half way round the world. This association is most beneficial to all. And again these benefits are shared with others unable to attend, by visits and correspondence. Bro. & sis. Hodges conveyed their experiences to those of our company in New Zealand; and the benefits of the Richard and Hye Gatherings were communicated to many by the very descriptive letter of sis. Annetta Jones.

During the last year, our bro. & sis. Fred Higham Jr. have moved to Houston. We miss their weekly association with us, and pray that their new environment with the Houston ecclesia (to whom we commend them) will be mutually spiritually beneficial.

Our weekly studies during the past year have brought us to the conclusion of bro. Roberts' wonderful treatise on the life of Christ in Nazareth Revisited. Our journey with him through this book took 8 years, years of much spiritual benefit and insight into the faithful labours of our Master Christ Jesus.

We have now begun a weekly consideration of Israel's Hope as outlined by bro. Thomas over 125 years ago, in Elpis Israel The correctness of his expositions, confirmed by subsequent events, assure us of things now taking place and yet to happen in the earth. We find the foundations of faith clearly delineated herein. We rejoice that God has brought such witness to light in these latter days, and that we have been invited to such knowledge.

Let us hold fast to our Hope, and resist with all our mind and strength the trends of those who would modernize the unchangeable Word of God to suit a passing and ephemeral age. As bro. Thomas wrote—

"To the Bible, then, all must come at last, if they would be truly wise in spiritual things. This is a great truth which few of the sons of men have learned to appreciate according to its importance."

Please note the new address of our activities and meeting place. With love in the Truth from the Detroit ecclesia,
—bro. Fred Higham Sr.

EDITORIAL

Remembering Christ

"I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ."

THE primary purpose of our assembly each first day is to remember Christ. Here are 3 ways in which we might remember him—

THE WORLD'S WAY: To many, he is a remote figure in the history of the world and, therefore, of no particular importance.

THE PIOUS CHURCH MEMBER: Many think of him in a sentimental way: perhaps as an ideal human character, and a founder of a sublime code of ethics.

THEN THERE IS THE COLD AND PRECISE MANNER: A symbol of doctrine to maintain, after the manner of a lawyer. And I fear that is the manner that many Christadelphians, zealous for contention, have looked upon him. That was the manner in which the Scribes and Pharisees treated the Law of Moses. You will recall the case of the disciples plucking ears of corn on a sabbath: the Pharisees said—

"Thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day" (Matt. 12:2).

Summing up his answer, the Lord Jesus said to them—

"If ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless" (v. 7).

For God had said through Hosea (6:6)—

"I desired mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings."

THE TRUE WAY TO REMEMBER HIM includes all these 3, to a certain extent, but goes far beyond them, and stands on a threefold foundation of Knowledge, Understanding, and Love. Paul exhibits this strongly in Eph. 1, where he prays for the believers—

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the Hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (vs. 17-18).

We realize that to understand Christ, we must have knowledge. But when some obtain a little knowledge, they become conceited, and think they know more than their teachers. But Paul says love *edifieth*, or builds up. That kind of knowledge will bring forth our love for him. That we must have *understanding*—spiritual discernment—is clearly and emphatically demonstrated in Prov. 2:10-11—

"When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee "

And again in Prov. 4:5-7 we read—

"Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee.* Wisdom is the principal thing: therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting get understanding."

* Many get a form of 'wisdom,' but fail to get understanding. Nominal Christianity has missed this altogether. They have a 'knowledge' of Christ, and love him in a way of their own, but it is a form of love without understanding.

Paul's strong desire for the brethren and sisters in Ephesus is brought out in Eph. 3:17-19—

"That Christ may *dwell in your hearts* through faith: that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye may be FILLED WITH ALL THE FULNESS OF GOD."

What a beautiful expression is here given by Paul! How well he realized the vital importance of deep and constant application to the life-giving, mind-transforming wisdom of the Scriptures. It all depends on Christ *dwelling in our hearts*—that is, being always before our minds in all we do. Surely with so much at stake, so much to learn, we have no time for passing things. Paul was certainly well established on all points of the Gospel, his love for the Lord was ardent and all-consuming, and his knowledge deep-rooted. And it was his burning desire that his listeners be so also. His personal love for Christ is abundantly illustrated in Gal. 2:20—

"The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

And again, in Phil. 1:21—

"*FOR ME, TO LIVE IS CHRIST.*"

Can we honestly join with him in saying this? It *must* be so, if we are to attain to life eternal. True love for Christ is aptly exemplified in Scripture in the figure of a bride, for an outstanding feature of a bride's love for her future husband is her unfeigned faith in him. All true lovers of Christ look forward to the consummation of God's purpose, as expressed in Rev. 19:7-8—

"Let us be *glad, and rejoice,* and give honour to Him! For the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his Wife hath made herself ready.

"And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the *righteousness of saints.*"

Christ is therefore the Bridegroom, and the "saints"—the chosen from among the called—will be the Bride. This great event is beautifully illustrated in the Song of Solomon. The Bridegroom's love for the Bride (4:9-12)—

"Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my bride #. Thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck.

"How fair is thy love, my sister, my bride! How much better is thy love than wine! And the smell of thine ointments than all spices!

"A garden inclosed is my sister, my bride; a spring shut up; a fountain sealed."

AV has 'spouse' here, but original is same word wherever AV has 'bride,' which is much to be preferred. The word (**kalah**) is beautifully taken from **kalal**, 'to complete, make perfect.' It also very fittingly means (and is frequently translated) 'daughter-in-law'—that is, 'Son's wife'—thus completing the cycle of the divine relationships.

How wonderful is Christ's tender love for his Bride, for whom he has joyfully laid down his life! His love is based on her beauty—her *spiritual* beauty. Where there is no beauty, there is no love, no Bride. The whole purpose of our life is to develop that beauty, that we may be part of the beautiful Bride whom he loves.

The Bride's love for Christ follows in Song 5:10:16—

"My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. *This* is my Beloved and this is my *Friend*, O daughters of Jerusalem!"

This beautiful and noble love is expressed by Paul in Phil. 3:8—

"I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ."

As we think of those words of Paul, the question arises in our minds: Can we join with Paul in these words? Let us strive and agonize that it may truly be so. In John 14:23 Jesus said—

"If a man love me, he will keep my words."

To do this, and thus love Christ in a scriptural sense, we must first of all be intimately *familiar* with his words. No matter how noble our intentions, we cannot keep what we do not well know. Therefore the apostolic exhortation is to—

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" (Col. 3:16).

It cannot dwell in us richly, nor can we be familiar with his life-bringing words, unless we read and meditate upon them daily and faithfully—not just read, but lovingly *meditate*: get rid of all empty activities and take the *time* for this most vital daily activity.

We turn now to the Gospel records for thoughts relating to important events in the life of our Master, to stir up our love and thankfulness. We read of his humble birth; and at the age of 12 we hear him say to his mother (Luke 2:49)—

"How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

At age 12 he knew, and was wholeheartedly dedicated to the one thing alone in life that has value and meaning. When he reached the age of 30, we read of his baptism by John. This was followed by his repeated temptation in the wilderness, of which Paul says—

"He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15)

The highlight of the wilderness trials is reflected in the manner in which Jesus rejected the temptations by quoting 3 times from Deuteronomy. That is an excellent example for us to follow when we are tempted—to turn immediately to the power of the Word.

His ministry of over 3 years is a fascinating record, during which he accomplished so much that the beloved apostle said—

"And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (John 21:25).

We see him a homeless and untiring worker; for his was a life of self-sacrificing service to others, as he said (Mark 10:45)—

"For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

In Matt. 5-7, we listen to his gracious words as he sits with his disciples on the mountain side. It is true a great many people were listening, but Matthew clearly says (5:1-2)—

"And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain, and when he was set, his DISCIPLES came unto him, and he opened his mouth and taught THEM."

It is well for us to remember that although the crowd was listening, it was the disciples that Jesus was addressing. Some, to support a theory, say he was merely teaching the Jews about the Law. Do you think he would say to the Jews under the Law—

"YE are the salt of the earth . . . YE are the light of the world."

Later, we hear him say to a leper—

"Be thou clean."

And to the sick of the palsy—

"Be of good cheer: thy sins be forgiven thee."

And finally, to a sinner—

"Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more."

Concerning those of his own people who opposed him we read—

"Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand" (Matt. 12:25).

And that is also true of the Brotherhood. For ecclesial health, there must be oneness—not a forced and artificial eye-shutting union of Truth and Error, but the true unity of oneness of mind. During the past 100 years, many brethren have failed to observe this important saying of Jesus. Let us therefore be united in our work and teaching, so the Word of the Lord may prosper in our midst.

In the days of Solomon, God had chosen to put His Name in Jerusalem. But the people had defiled the temple, and now we hear Jesus as he beholds the city, and in Matt. 23:37-39 he speaks—

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee! How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth till ye say, Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord."

At the end of his ministry, the night in which he was betrayed, they observed the last Passover in an upper room in Jerusalem. Afterwards, he instituted the memorial by which faithful believers remember him in love.

It is stated that Jesus took bread from the table, and gave thanks for it, and explained what it signified. Following that, he took the cup of wine, and also gave thanks for it, and likewise explained its significance. Then he said—

"Do this in memory of me."

With regard to giving thanks for the bread and wine, let us try to avoid the tendency, when called upon to offer thanks, of giving long prayers, and then ending up by casually mentioning the bread or wine, or even failing to mention them. In the *Ecclesial Guide*, bro. Roberts gives us sound advice. He says the unwise way is to—

"Make no reference to the bread and wine at all, but pray and preach about everything that happens to come into mind."

The wise way, he says, is to—

"Limit the thanksgiving to actual thanks for the bread and wine as briefly and appropriately as possible, to the exclusion of matter that would find its proper place in other prayers."

It is prominently noticeable in the apostolic records that Jesus took bread and gave thanks in a simple manner. If we follow the example of the Lord, we shall be coming within the scope of the words of Paul in 1 Cor. 14:40—

"Let all things be done in a becoming manner" (*Diag.*).

After the memorial, we follow them to the Mt. of Olives, and there we see a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Then from there to the Garden of Gethsemane, where in Matt. 26:38-39 we hear his sad voice—

"Then said he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here and watch with me. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying,
"O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me! Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

When we stop and think that Jesus knew what lay before him, it is easy to understand the great mental suffering through which he passed at this time.

In a short time a crowd appeared, headed by one of his—enemies? No, no, no! Headed by one of his own *apostles*, one of his closest, most intimate companions, who came up to Jesus to *kiss* him, for that was the signal for the rabble to seize Jesus. It is not possible for us to fully realize the sensation that swept over Jesus —

"Judas, *betrayest* thou the Son of man with a *kiss*?"

We follow him as he was led away and taken to the home of the high priest, where he was shamefully treated in being blindfolded and struck in the face. From there he was taken before the Council and accused of blasphemy: then bound and led unto Pilate who ordered him "to be scourged." Just a few words, but oh, what a story they tell! Scourging was the usual procedure before crucifixion. What horror! First they would strip him in public, and make him kneel down while they tied his hands to a stake. Next a strong man with a knotted scourge would strike his bare back, tearing the flesh and drawing blood at every stroke.

Then followed the terrible crucifixion by nailing his hands and feet to the cross, and dropping it in a hole in the ground, where he hung for 6 dreadful hours in helpless agony.

The sun was darkened. And the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. And Jesus hung lifeless.

This is what he did for you and me. As a result of his ministry, and perfect, moment-to-moment victory over every motion of the flesh, and his intense suffering in patient, loving obedience, even to the death of the cross—he opened up a glorious way of salvation to which we could attain by belief and obedience of the Gospel.

What can we do for him? There are many appointed ways to show our love and thanksgiving. Here is one stated by Paul—

"Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

The disciples felt that their hopes were shattered. But on the first day of the week, the sun burst forth in all its glory, for the Lord had risen from the dead! Now we see 2 of his disciples on their way to Emmaus, about 7 miles from Jerusalem. Doubtless with their heads bowed in sorrow as they discussed the recent events.

Jesus went along the same road, and caught up to them, but they did not recognize him. He said to them (Luke 24:17)—

"What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?"

One of them named Cleopas answered and said—

"Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?"

"What things?" said Jesus. Then they told him of Jesus, who was considered to be a prophet mighty in deeds and words before the people; and how the chief priests had condemned him, and had him crucified, and this is the third day since these things were done, and—

"Certain women also of our company . . . were early at the sepulchre, and when they found not his body they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive.

"And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said, but him they saw not . . ."

"We are deeply saddened, for we all thought he would redeem Israel at this time." Jesus could hold back no longer—

"O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?"

"And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."

By this time they had reached Emmaus, and Jesus acted as tho he would go farther, but they said—

"Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent."

So Jesus went in with them and sat at a table on which they had placed some food. Jesus took a loaf of bread, and gave thanks for it, and broke it, and gave it to them. Then (Luke 24:31-32)—

"Their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?"

They lost no time in returning to Jerusalem, and found the eleven, who told them that—

"The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon!"

Then the 2 told them of their experience at Emmaus. And while they were talking, Jesus appeared in their midst. We can imagine how terrified they all were, but Jesus calmed them as he made himself known, and he said to them (v. 44)—

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

"Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures."

What a wonderful privilege these men had to have Jesus to open their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures!

We do not have the physical presence of the Lord Jesus, nor do we have a Paul or Peter. But we do have the results of the loving labours of bre. Thomas and Roberts, both of whom have, in God's providential mercy, "opened the Scriptures" for us. Surely we must realize, in the simple wisdom of humility, that without them we would all be strangers from the Covenants of Promise, having no hope, & without God in the world. Jesus was seen of them 40 days—

"Speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God . . .

"And while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, 2 men stood by them in white apparel, which also said,

"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:3-11).

What a glorious prospect! This same Jesus whom we weekly remember, has said—

"I will come again, and my reward is with me."

He has also said—

"Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching."

If we are of those wise and faithful servants who have completely forsaken the world, and who as the Bride watch and prepare daily for his return, then to us apply the Psalmist's joyful words—

"Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord!"

—Editor

A Prophet Like Unto Moses

"The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, *LIKE UNTO ME*, unto him shall ye hearken"—Deut. 18:15.

BY BROTHER JOHN THOMAS

THE history of Moses is representative—from his flight into the country of Midian to his death, when the Lord hid him from his nation. There was a likeness, indeed, between Moses and Jesus in their infancy; for while the life of Moses was jeopardized by the decree of Pharaoh, Jesus was also endangered by the mandate of Herod. But Jehovah preserved them, and thus were they "cast upon Him from their birth," and kept in safety or "made to hope" upon their mothers' breasts (Matt. 2:13-18; Psa. 22:9-10).

There was a resemblance also in the high qualifications and faithful self-denial of these 2 personages in their manhood—

"Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds" (Acts 7:22).

This was previous to his attaining the age of 40 years. To this time—though the adopted grandson of Pharaoh, and heir apparent to the Egyptian throne, and surrounded by the licentious notables of its court where the God of Abraham was unknown—Moses was a man of faith; a learned, mighty and faithful man, who might have worn the crown of the greatest monarchy of the age, with all its treasures. But he renounced them all, and became a fugitive, and companion of oppressed bondmen, that he might share in the Kingdom to be established under Abraham's seed in the adjoining country of the Canaanites (Heb. 11:24-26).

Jesus, too, was the most learned and the wisest man of that or any other age before or since. He was wise and learned by divine intuition (John 7:15-17), and in the language of Cleopas (Luke 24:19)—

"Was a prophet mighty in word and deed before God and all the people."

His political self-denial was as conspicuous as that of Moses. He refused dominion and a crown at the hand of any power inferior to God (Luke 4:5-8; John 6:15). Yea, like Moses, "he had respect unto the recompense of the reward" and "for the joy that was set before him" he refused to let the people make him king—

"Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."

The Kingdom is *not from hence* (John 18:36). It can only be received with eternal honour and glory *from thence*—that is, from God, not from Satan nor the people. Moses and Jesus understood this well. Therefore Moses forsook Egypt, and Jesus forsook Palestine, that they might receive the royalty from God at the appointed time.

Thus far the resemblance between Moses and Jesus is complete. Cradled in peril, saved of God, and hopeful of the same Promise, they were men of renown in word and deed, whose faith was "made perfect" by their works, after the example of their father Abraham (James 2:22), leaving behind them illustrious exemplifications of the truth that *the enjoyment of the pleasures of sin for a season is incompatible with and fatal to an inheritance of the Kingdom of God.*

But here the present similitude between them is suspended. Moses and Jesus were indeed the rejected of the nation, as is already implied in the allusion to their departure from their people—the one into Midian, where he met with God in the bush; and the other to a "far country" where he is still in the presence of Him Whose glory illuminated the rocky Arabia. But as yet, unlike the case of Moses, Jehovah has not yet sent Jesus from "*holy ground*," shining with unapproachable light, to be a Ruler and a Deliverer, to bring the tribes of Israel out of the land of the enemy, even those tribes which said unto him—

"Who made thee a ruler and a judge? . . . Away with such a fellow; we will not have him to reign over us!"

But *Moses*, whom they refused, they *afterwards* received as their commander, legislator and king. They placed themselves under him as Jehovah's representative, through whom the nation should obtain political independence and organization, and by whom it should be put into possession of a country, even of that country from which their fathers came before they migrated to Egypt, and which was promised to Abraham for an everlasting possession (Gen. 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 15:7-21; 17:5-6). This was an acceptance of Moses which finds no counterpart in the annals of Israel and the history of Jesus. They have refused him, as they refused Moses. But a like *acceptance* of him is *yet to come*.

From Moses' accession to the leadership of the 12 Tribes, his history is that of the nation also. He is no longer to be contemplated as an individual isolated from his people; but as a prophet (Deut. 34: 10), a mediator (Ex.24:2, Deut.5:5, Gal.3:19), a lawgiver (John 1:17), a man of war (Ex. 14:25-27, Num. 21:34), and a king (Deut.33:5).

These were his relations to Israel from his *second appearing* in their midst to the end of his career. He was a mediator-prophet, a lawgiving-prophet, a warrior-prophet, and a royal-prophet. He was not simply a man through whom God spoke to the tribes of Israel as He spoke to them through the prophet Ezekiel—a man whose functions were restricted to the *utterance* of the divine purpose—but a man who was not only to speak but to *execute* the will of Jehovah, Whose servant he was.

Now the reader will see by consulting the references just given that Moses was precisely the kind of prophet we have indicated. During his administration of the national affairs, Jehovah spake by him *alone*. At the commencement of his career, before he was accepted by the nation, he was sent to the people as a prophet-preacher, announcing that the time had arrived to redeem Israel from the power of them that hated them, and to establish the Kingdom of God in the Promised Land—that glorious Kingdom of which they were to be the priestly and holy nation (Ex. 19:5-6).

This proclamation of the "everlasting Gospel" they believed for a while; and in consequence placed themselves at the disposal of Moses, that they might obtain its promises at his hand. "The Gospel," says Paul, "was preached unto them"—that is, by Moses—but it did not profit that generation, because their faith failed them (Heb.4:2). They had faith enough to escape from Egypt; but they had not faith enough to enable them to enter the promised country, and to possess it *Mosaically*; much less faith had they to obtain a right to it *everlastingly*, under the Covenant which provides for the priesthood and royalty of Christ.

But as is well known, the character of Gospel-preacher was merged into that of prophet-judge of Egypt, and warrior-prophet of Israel. For Moses, having preached salvation to the tribes, executed judgment upon their oppressors, and by the hand of Jehovah his Strength, gave the nation baptism into himself in the cloud and in the sea, as its sovereign under God.

Henceforth, Moses was *everything* to the 12 Tribes. Having once heard Jehovah's voice thundering forth the Decalogue from Sinai's cloud-capped, burning, and trembling mountain, God granted the petition of their terror-stricken hearts that thenceforth He would speak to them *only* through His servant Moses, *lest they should die*.

Jehovah spoke to Moses in their hearing that they might *believe him forever* (Ex. 19: 9), for if they should believe Moses they would not fail to believe in him of whom he was afterwards to write. As Moses was to Aaron, so he was to all Israel— "*In the place of God.*" He gave them the bread of heaven to eat, and water out of the flinty rock to drink, and clad them with raiment that waxed not old.

What a perfect king was this! Truly the father of his people, who sustained them in life with food and raiment, and taught them wisdom from above. What nation ever had such a king as Moses? As the Servant of Jehovah, he gave the nation an existence, ushering it into being amid storm and fury and the ruin of a mighty host in the depths of the sea. He sustained it from the storms of heaven for 40 years; beat down their enemies and trampled them as the mire of the streets; gave them a holy, just and good-but inexorable—law; and brought them to the verge of Canaan's land a well-trained and disciplined nation, fit and prepared to take possession of it under the conduct of a successor worthy of himself. He was Jehovah's servant—

"Faithful in all His House for a testimony (or representation) of those things which were to be spoken after."

He was the greatest character the world has known, with one exception. The world's great ones are not to be named in the same breath! *Moses!* What meekness, disinterestedness, faithfulness, self-denial, wisdom, knowledge, power, honour, glory, exaltation—doth that name represent!

Study Moses, and see if he was not the *kind* of prophet herein described. Do you think you would have a true conception of his prophetic character if you knew no more of Moses than as a preacher of the Gospel to Israel before he visited the court of Pharaoh? No indeed! You must know the *whole* written history of the man to be able to say, "I know the prophet Moses"; for Moses was a prophet *to the end of his career*.

You cannot separate his prophetic office from his mediatorship, or his legislative, or his regal functions. His Code is a great symbolic, as well as verbal, representative of the Truth—a speaking prophecy to the eyes and ears of his nation, and to all others who comprehend it. You must contemplate him in the *entirety of his mission*. You must view him as a whole. And then, and not till then, will you be able to say if Ezekiel or any other prophet be a prophet like unto him."

Moses, the prophet thus fully manifested in Israel, was a representative man. This is evident from the following passages in his writings. Addressing the 12 Tribes, he says (Deut. 18:15-19)—

"Jehovah thy God shall raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee of thy brethren *LIKE UNTO ME*. Unto him ye shall hearken; according to all that thou desirest of Jehovah thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying,

"Let me not hear again the voice of Jehovah my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not.

"And Jehovah said unto me, They have well spoken what they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet of their brethren *like unto thee*, and I will put My words in his mouth: and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

"And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which he shall speak in My Name, I will require it of him."

This passage plainly and explicitly declares that the prophet Moses was typical of a future Prophet who was to appear in Israel. In other words, *that this future Prophet was to be "like Moses."*

Now, suppose you and I had been living at the time Jehovah spake these words by His servant Moses, with whose extraordinary history, which was national, we were quite familiar: *what should we have expected would be the mission of the Prophet to come? I say, "the mission"—for it is the mission that supplies the characteristics of the Prophet by which his resemblance to Moses can be determined.*

Should we not expect the Moses-like Prophet to preach the everlasting Gospel to the tribes of Israel; to overthrow their oppressors; to baptize the nation into himself as their Deliverer by its passage through the sea; to stand between them and Jehovah; to speak to them all that He should command him; to give them a law; to build a temple in their midst; to organize the nation; to fit and prepare it for entrance into the land of Israel under the Covenant of an everlasting possession (which is the nation's hope)?

Should we not expect a Prophet whose mission should be to accomplish something like this? Should we not expect him to perform these things *in the midst of the 12 Tribes*, after the manner of Moses? Certainly we should!

This Moses-like Prophet was expected for 16½ centuries. During all that long period, though *many* prophets appeared in Israel, not one of them was accepted as the one *LIKE UNTO MOSES*. None of them *claimed* to be the one like him, not even Elijah. Yet why should he not, if a great miracle-working prophet were the sum of the similitude to Moses? At length Jesus came—

"A Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people."

And some said—

"We have found him of whom *Moses in the Law* and the Prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

While others said—

"This is of a truth *that* Prophet which should come into the world."

—and as a result of their conviction, they meditated the taking of him by force and making him a king (John 6:14-15). This shows what sort of a Moses-like Prophet the people expected: to wit, a Prophet-King. Hence Nathanael, when he saw the man announced by Philip as the Prophet foretold by Moses, recognized him as Son of God and "*King of Israel*" (John 1:49). Zacharias, the father of John, thus defines the mission of the Prophet-King (Luke 1:68-75)—

"Jehovah hath raised up an Horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David, as He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been from the beginning of the age:

"That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us: to perform the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember His holy Covenant, the oath which He sware to our father Abraham.

"That He would give unto us that being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life."

These are the ideas imparted to Zacharias by the Holy Spirit with which he was filled. They define the work to be accomplished by the Moses-like Prophet, who is styled—

"A HORN OF SALVATION for Israel."

This is *just* the sort of prophet Moses was. He was a "horn" by whom Jehovah saved the Tribes from Egypt. Moses was raised up in the house of Levi; but the Horn, or Power, like unto Moses was raised up in the house of

David. His mission was as stated. It was Mosaic: *first*, to deliver Israel from their oppressors; and *secondly*, to perform the good thing promised to their fathers in the Holy Covenant, and confirmed by an oath to Abraham.

The work which Moses performed was but the *earnest* of that to be executed by the Moses-like Prophet. Moses delivered Israel, but the deliverance was not the *everlasting* salvation of the nation. They fell under the power of their adversaries again, and their condition has become worse than Egyptian.

In the days of Jesus, 10/12ths of the nation were outcasts among the nations beyond Parthia; and the other 2/12ths, though still occupants of the land, were oppressed by the Roman power. The Holy Spirit in Zacharias taught them to expect that the child about to be born would complete the work that Moses had begun in saving the 12 Tribes with an *everlasting* deliverance, so that they—

"Might serve Jehovah without fear in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of their life."

The "mercy" promised to Israel's fathers is the execution of judgment and righteousness *in the land of Israel* by the Branch of righteousness which was to grow up to David (Jer. 33:14-15). In perfecting this work, the Holy Covenant confirmed by an oath to Abraham would find its manifestation in the Kingdom of God restored again to Israel. The Tabernacle of David, which is fallen down and whose ruins are trampled under foot, will then have been built again "as in the days of old" (Acts 15:16; Amos 9:11). This work being accomplished, the Restorer will stand in the midst of Israel as the Moses-like Prophet in full and complete manifestation.

His resemblance to Moses must be based on the *historical* representation of that distinguished man as the prophet-sovereign of the 12 Tribes. No account is taken of Moses in the history during his 40 years' absence from Israel, further than that he was a keeper of sheep in an obscure country. Figuratively speaking, this is the employment of his Antitype. *He* is superintending the affairs of his "little flock" in this nether wilderness—making reconciliation for his Household—until the time shall arrive to leave "holy ground" where the glory of the God of Israel shines upon him.

But in this there is no similitude between him and Moses as a prophet IN Israel. The Moses-like Prophet must be *present* in Israel's midst, surrounded by the 12 Tribes, and discharging the duties which it is the function of a high priest, mediator, law-giver, king, and commander, to perform. Of the mission of Moses' Antitype, Zacharias testifies that it is *to save Israel from their enemies and all that hate them; and to convert what Jehovah promised to Abraham into an accomplished fact.*

The Holy Spirit testifies, I say, that the babe of Bethlehem was the Horn provided in David's house to perform this work, which is as political, national, and warlike a mission as that of Moses. When this goodly child attained to manhood, did he save Israel from all—or even *any*—of those that hated them? Did he not, on the contrary, *strengthen those very enemies*, and send them against them to slay them, to burn up their city, and scatter them abroad?

O, but we hear some Word-corrupting mystic piously observing that the real enemies that hated them were their sins and the devil, not sinners; and that when the Jews "confessed the Lord" and obtained a hope or "got religion," they were the "saved"—and consequently "saved from their enemies and all that hated them" in the "spiritual" sense of the words!

The "spiritual" sense of the words is the obvious sense, which is in strict accordance with the grammatical or literal. "The Lord added to the church daily"—not the saved, but *tous soromenous*, the present participle passive—"the *being saved*" (Acts 2:47); persons who are the subjects of a salvation which begins with the remission of their past sins, and is perfected when, having been raised from the dead, they inherit forever "the Kingdom restored again to Israel," at their national reconciliation with Jehovah, and deliverance from their enemies and the power of all that hate them.

Hence Paul says "we are saved by the Hope" (Rom.8:24) IF we be not moved away from it (Col. 1:22-23), but keep in memory what he preached (1 Cor. 15:1-2).

But granting that salvation is complete at baptism in *some* sense, the baptized of Israel were certainly not saved from *all that hated them*, which is the salvation under Jesus that the words of Zacharias called for. The opposite is true; for those that hated them prevailed against the saved, delivering them over to torture and death—as they have prevailed against them to this day, and will prevail against them till the Ancient of Days come, and the saints possess the Kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the Kingdom forever "under"—*not above*—"the whole heaven"

(Dan. 7:18, 21, 22, 27).

Seeing then that Israel is NOT saved, but continues a "people scattered and peeled, a nation meted out and trodden under foot," whose land invading armies have spoiled; and that there is no king in Israel "executing judgment and righteousness in their land"; and that the Holy Covenant sworn to Abraham has only been *dedicated* with the precious blood of his Seed, and beyond this no more performed than in the days of Moses—seeing all this, the

conclusion is inevitable:— *The Lord Jesus has not yet accomplished his mission, and he has not yet appeared as a Prophet LIKE UNTO MOSES.*

Now because this conclusion is true and cannot be refuted, the Jews of our time refuse to confess Jesus as their Ruler and Judge—

"Whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting" (Mic. 5:1-2).

Gentile theologians rightly affirm that he is the Prophet of whom Moses wrote; but they do not affirm the truth in maintaining that in his appearing he resembled or was "like unto" him.

"The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of the prophecy" (Rev. 19:10).

That is, the testimony of the prophecy is the Spirit which *testifies of Jesus* (John 15:26; 16:13-14; 6:63; 1 John 2:27). This Spirit-testimony **DEFINES THE MISSION OF CHRIST**, which the apostolic history plainly demonstrates was performed by Jesus to a *very limited extent*. They who affirm it was fully accomplished aver what they cannot prove. They are stumbling-blocks in the way of Jewish acceptance of Jesus as the Prophet like unto Moses.

"Admitting (say the Jews) that all that is affirmed of Jesus in the New Testament narratives be true, proving him to be a true man, and no impostor, still he is manifestly—from that account—NOT the Messiah promised in Moses and the Prophets IF, as Gentile philosophers teach, he is to appear no more upon earth, and do no more for the 12 Tribes of Israel, as such, than feeding a few thousand at 2 meals, and healing the diseases of a few Jews, as reported of him."

This is an impregnable position, well fortified by the testimony of God. The New Testament history proves Jesus to have been Son of God, a great prophet, mighty in deed, son of David, raised from the dead, and translated from the earth.

But—deny that he is to appear in Palestine again, and to reign there in the midst of the 12 Tribes of Israel, on David's throne, wearing the crowns of all earth's kingdoms—deny this, and prove that he is to remain forever where he is, and you deny that Jesus is the Christ, the Prophet like unto Moses, concerning whom Jehovah hath testified in His Word since the foundation of the world was laid.

On the other hand, that our Jewish friends may not boast themselves against Jesus (however justly they can exult over his pretended friends, which we admit they have ample ground to do), we remark that if any prophet should appear among them, and re-establish them in Palestine, and make them a great nation, rebuilding the Temple and restoring the Law, and reigning over them in Jerusalem—yet he would not be the person of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets did write, *if he had not previously been the subject of all that the New Testament relates concerning Jesus.*

He might be Moses or Elijah: but the Messiah of whom Moses wrote?—Impossible! Such a king could not maintain them in everlasting possession of their land; he could not give them rain from heaven and fertility of soil; he could not blot out their transgressions as a thick cloud; neither could he bestow upon any of them eternal life. In brief, he could not perform the oath sworn to Abraham by God, that—

"They might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness, before Him all the days of their life." —as a *nation* to die no more by the hand of hating Gentiles; as *individuals* under their vines and fig trees, none daring to make them afraid.

Jesus, the great power of God, alone can accomplish this. It is the great work for which he has been prepared, a preparedness to which he has attained through suffering unto obedience and perfection. Moses suffered affliction before he was exalted to the throne of Israel. He was an absconded homicide, keeping sheep in the desert, a fugitive from his people—before he exchanged his crook for the sceptre of Jeshurun's king.

This is Jehovah's rule—*probation before exaltation*. Israel's Messiah cannot be exempt from this law—a principle working out its result to this day in the experience of all who, with him, are the "heirs of God."

Receive Him Not Into the House

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN

"This is love, that we walk after his commandments."

BY BROTHER ROBERT ROBERTS

JOHN'S second epistle brings out a few things about "love" which it is important to recognize. "Love" in the world is one thing; "love" according to the ideal of the sects, another; and the "love" of apostolic discourse yet another. The 2 former we may dismiss. The world's love is an ephemeral affair: having its foundation in the instincts, dying with use and age, and passing away in death. Orthodox "love" is a sickly distortion, lacking the elements that give strength and comeliness to the "love" of the Scriptures. It works spiritual mischief now, and is destined hereafter to vanish like smoke.

The "love" of John's epistles has *foundations*, without which it cannot exist. This partly comes out in the very first sentence—

"The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love IN THE TRUTH" (2 John 1).

Outside the Truth, a brother's love is not operative. He loves not the world, neither the things that are in the world, remembering—

"If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15).

His friendships are bounded by the Truth, as regards both men and things. In Christ, he is a "new creature" (2 Cor. 5:17). After the flesh, he knows no man (v.16). The friendship of the world is enmity with God (James 4:4). Therefore he cultivates no friendship with those who know not God and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. His love is bounded by the Truth.

Does he, therefore, shut up his bowels of compassion against those who are without God? By no means. He recognizes the obligation put upon him by the same law, to salute not his brethren only, but to do good unto all men as he has opportunity, *even to his enemies*.

But there is a difference between doing good to unbelievers, and cultivating friendship with them. And the saint is careful to observe this difference, lest he come under the rebuke that greeted the ears of Jehoshaphat on his return from friendly cooperation with Ahab—

"Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them who hate the Lord? *Therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord*" (2 Chron. 19:2).

We can have our conversation towards the world in all courtesy and benevolence, without going onto their ground and joining affinity in schemes of pleasure, profit, or friendship.

The "love" that belongs to the Household of Faith is (v. 2)—

"*For the Truth's sake that dwelleth in us, and shall be with us forever.*"

This is John's definition of its source and scope. Everyone that is truly of the Household responds instinctively to it. To the carnal mind it appears very "narrow," but this is an illusion of ignorance. It is the true BREADTH, for it relates to that which *shall be forever*, while the world—which would have us unequally yoked—passeth away. The Truth connects us with "the shoreless ocean of eternity " while the friendship of the world is confined to "a narrow neck of land"—the brief existence of this animal probation.

The (presently) "narrow" operation of apostolic love is also founded in wisdom, for unrestricted friendship with the world is full of danger. It draws away from the fear of God, the hope of the calling, and the holiness of the Master's House—

"Whose House are we, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end" (Heb.3:14).

It is, therefore, a snare: pleasant and advantageous meantime, but having the suction of the maelstrom with it, drawing us to death. For when the Lord of Light stands on earth, to set in order destiny according to the Father's purpose, the "world" will have—from his presence—"fled away."

John rejoiced concerning those to whom he wrote, that he had found them "walking in the Truth." *Saints* walk not otherwise. Their actions, plans of life, friendships, aims, enterprises, hopes—everything connected with them—in some way or other comes from, originates in, and is conformed to the Truth. The Truth is their inspiration—the controlling life-stream—

"If any man be IN Christ, he is a *new creature*" (2 Cor.5:17).

Not that all answer to this. There are professed believers who serve not our Lord Jesus, but themselves; but such are abortions and bastards. None but sons will be mustered in the day of the 144,000. They are few now, as they have always been, and the world "knoweth" them not, in many senses. But they know what they are about. They are not dreaming; they are not fanatics. They are the children of Wisdom, and Wisdom is justified of them all, though they

may be hard to read sometimes. They understand the world too well to be entrapped into its fellowship. They are known of God, and will be publicly revealed in due time—in glory, honour, and immortality.

Meanwhile, they "walk in the Truth." On this ground they are to be met and understood. Approached on any other ground, they will seem not what they are. They are not to be comprehended "after the flesh."

"*This is love,*" says John (v. 6), "that we walk after his commandments." No man loves after the Spirit's fashion who *disobeys*. Apostolic "love" is that state of enlightenment and appreciation in relation to the things of God that impels a man to be a "*doer* of the Word." John gives this an application that was special to his day; and yet not special, as it is appropriate wherever the same need and the same danger manifest themselves. He says (v. 6)—

"This is the commandment, that AS ye have heard from the beginning, *ye should walk in it.*"

We are wondering what he means, when presently the light dawns—

"For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus is come in the flesh."

He means that they should hold fast to the doctrine of Christ as originally delivered; because many were drawing the disciples away therefrom. The obedience of this commandment is the evidence of New Testament "love," and it is also necessary for our acceptable standing before the presence of the Lord's glory at his coming. This is John's view, as evident from the words immediately following:

"*Look to yourselves that we lose not those things which we have wrought; but that we receive a full reward.*"
(v. 8).

There would have been no need for these words if the things that had been "wrought" were not imperilled by the doctrine of the deceivers of which he is speaking. He indicates, in strong language, the consequences to the individual ensnared by the deceivers—

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, *hath not God*" (v. 9).

This may seem a strange saying in view of the fact that the "deceivers" referred to believed in one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and also in Christ—after their own fashion. But the apparent strangeness disappears when we look closely at the matter John is writing about. To "have" God in the sense of John's words is to stand in His favour, both now and hereafter. All things are in His goodness. As David says—

"Thy goodness is over all Thy works."

But the goodness of God in common benefits that come upon all alike is a different thing from that personal "favour" which guides, attends, and prospers (even if by chastisement), with a view to a perpetual sonship in the Spirit-nature. The enjoyment of this favour is a thing of *conditions*. One of those conditions is a recognition of the channel in which He offers it. *Out* of Christ, sinners cannot come near. They have the goodness of God as creatures—like the sparrows, not one of which can fall to the earth without the Father's knowledge—but they are not in the privilege of *children*. They have not the Father's favour and purpose concerning the ages to come.

This is only to be enjoyed in Christ: but even here, it must be the Christ of God's appointing. Any other than this is presumption, and a mockery of His wisdom; and they who teach otherwise than the truth concerning Christ preach "another" Christ, though it be intended to refer to the Christ of Nazareth.

This is evident from the case of those to whom John is referring. They believed that the person known as Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ. But in their reasonings upon him, they reasoned away the truth about him; and consequently believed and preached another Jesus than the Son of the Father. There were different sorts of the class, but all their heresies had a common origin: an attempt to bring the mystery of Godliness within the rules of human reason, instead of accepting the testimony with humble and childlike simplicity.

One set argued that such a character as Jesus was a moral impossibility in flesh and blood; and that, therefore, his whole life was a mere accommodation on the part of a spiritual being to the senses of mortals. Another, believing him to be flesh and blood, philosophized in a contrary direction; concluding that, as such, he must from the nature of things have been a "mere man," and that the idea of his being God in flesh-manifestation was preposterous. The Papal breed blended the two, and taught that though flesh, his flesh was not the corrupt and mortal flesh of men, but a superior, clean, "immaculate" sort.

In our own day, as recent painful experience has made us aware, a class of believers is treading the same dangerous ground, in teaching that the flesh of Jesus was destitute of that which, in the flesh of his brethren, constitutes the cause or source of mortality. In relation to all of them, John's declaration reveals the mind of the Spirit—

"Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, *hath not God*. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son" (v.9).

The doctrine of Christ is that he is God made, and manifested in, the mortal flesh of Abraham's race for the deliverance thereof—on His own principles—from "that having the power of death." Those who hold fast to this have both the Father and the Son; for in Jesus they have the Son, and the Father manifest in him.

As to those who "bring not this doctrine," John's command is—

"Receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed!" (v.10).

This command we can no more evade than any other commandment delivered unto us. The obedience of it may cost us something. It is crucifying to the flesh to refuse friends—some of them excellent people as human nature goes—who in one way or other have been seduced from their allegiance to the doctrine of Christ. But there is no alternative. Friends are but for a moment: the Truth is forever. And if we sacrifice our duty to the latter from regard to the former, the latter will sacrifice us in the day of its glory, and hand us over to the destiny of the flesh, which as the grass will pass away.

"He that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (v.11).

This applies to all without distinction, and erects a barrier to fellowship with even some who hold the Truth; for though they may hold the doctrine of Christ themselves, yet if they keep up a "Godspeed" connection with those who don't, by John's rule they make themselves partakers with them, and therefore cut themselves off from those who stand for the doctrine of Christ.

The epistle as a whole is singularly applicable to the situation in which we find ourselves this morning. We have been obliged to stand aside for the doctrine of Christ from some we love. The epistle of John justifies us in our course, both as regards those who have departed from the doctrine of Christ, and those who—while holding on to it themselves—see not their way to break connection with those who have departed.

It is a painful situation, but we must not falter. Nor need we fear, or be discouraged. God is with us in the course of *obedience*, and we shall see His blessing in the increase in our midst of zeal and holiness, and love and preparedness for the great day of the Lord, which is at hand.

This exhortation, sad yet filled with quiet confidence and rejoicing, was given in 1873, at the time of the faithful standing aside from the Renunciationist error and all who supported it in fellowship. To fellowship an error that should be withdrawn from is to support it and share its guilt, as bro. Roberts clearly points out from the teaching of John's 2nd epistle.

"I Will Take Somewhat of Him"

"Let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel"—2 Kings 5:8

NAAMAN THE LEPER

THE Books of the Kings take us through some of Israel's most gloomy, wicked and sad periods. Truly, practically everything we have recorded of Israel and the Jews throughout the Scriptures is sad, gloomy and wicked. Through a span of nearly 4000 years, there have been only a few momentary phases when Israel was seen in faithful subjection to God. The rest is a very vivid picture of disobedience and punishment—a warning to all of us who may read the pages of the Bible, that *obedience* to God in every aspect must be rendered. This is our whole purpose of living: service and obedience to God. This is the general lesson for which Israel's history is given to us.

And to all who are disobedient—both Jew and Gentile, enlightened and unenlightened—there awaits at last a sentence of eternal death. To some, there first shall be a resurrection of damnation, a casting into outer darkness: but again, in the end, a returning to the grave of everlasting death.

2 Kings 5 contains the story of Naaman the leper. But prior to this chapter, we have been reading of the life of one of the greatest prophets in Israel's ancient history: Elijah. All of God's prophets were great, but Elijah seems to have a majestic uniqueness. He would remain in this standing until John the Baptist (Luke 7:28).

Elijah comes onto the scene in 1 Kings 17. It is apparent from that chapter that he had previously been through circumstances that would naturally and gradually lead up to his acquaintance with Ahab; as there would be circumstances that would naturally and gradually lead up to Elijah's development as a faithful man among "the inhabitants of Gilead." And so likewise we see with John the Baptist and Christ, as they would both "grow and wax strong in spirit" and "increase in wisdom and stature," preparing for the days ahead of the great work that they both would do.

It is so with all children of God. We are all, naturally, crude and undeveloped. Purification and overcoming is a process requiring time and strength throughout life; that hopefully, in the end, we are made fit for the Master's use.

In 1 Kings 17, Elijah comes abruptly into the picture. It is a period in Israel's history when the nation is overwhelmed and defiled with idolatry. Perhaps this period is the peak of all their Baal worship, for Ahab is the reigning king, and his wife is the wicked, foreign, worldly Jezebel. The preceding chapter tells us —

"Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him. And it came to pass, as if it were a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshiped him.

"And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And Ahab made a grove: and Ahab *did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him*" {1 Kings 16:30-33}.

Clearly, they were zealous worshipers of Baal. We are aware that kings and priests are made to be leaders of the people. They are comparable to shepherds. It is they who have the control to keep the sheep in the "right paths" or to "lead them astray." And it is clear that during this reign of Ahab practically all of Israel believed and considered their god to be Baal (1 Kings 19:18).

Providentially and fittingly, though, and in striking contrast, Elijah's name signifies "*My God is Yahweh.*" And his mission was to bring idolatrous Israel back to Yahweh. He would show by the undeniable and almighty power of God that Baal was nothing but stones made with hands: inventions of mankind from man's own natural evil thoughts, setup for worship to suit man's desires.

* * *

The curtain opens in ch. 17 with Elijah sending the message to Ahab that drought is to come to the land. It was strictly due to disobedience and idolatry, as the narrative will later state—

"Ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim" (1 Kings 18:18).

So drought comes upon all the land.

Ch. 18 opens with Elijah coming with another message to Ahab. Three and a half years had elapsed. There had been severe drought and starvation. Surely this had been enough time for the god Baal to bring rain back upon the land! But "neither dew nor rain" had come—just as Elijah had prophesied. This doubtless had been a frustrating 3½ years for the priests of Baal. But this was only a preliminary of what would come shortly, in the great test of Elijah and his God vs. the priests of Baal and their god. Again—as we recall the incident in ch. 18—by the visible hand of God Elijah would show the omnipotence and glory of Yahweh, the true God of Israel, as fire would come out of heaven and consume his offering.

Concerning the drought, we are informed 1000 years later by the apostle James (and solely by him) that it was by the earnest prayer of Elijah himself that this 3½-year drought came; and likewise it would be by his earnest prayer that the drought would end. It was through Elijah's righteous initiative that he would hope that the tribulation of drought, and the undefiable power of God bringing rain again, would turn Ahab and Israel from their wicked idolatry.

* * *

Elijah—the man in whose "spirit and power" John the Baptist came, and to whom he is likened—apparently made various helpful preparations for Elisha. And in this we see a relationship between Elijah and Elisha, as there was between John and Christ. John the Baptist, a man seen with "a raiment of camel's hair" (a parallel of Elijah's mantle) "and a leather girdle about his loins," coming and preparing the way for Christ, yet regarding himself as unworthy to loose his shoes.

Elijah was "an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins." And of course he had his mantle. He confessed to being "jealous for the Lord of hosts." But Elisha, the prophet who would succeed him, would receive

a *double portion* of the spirit that had been upon Elijah. We likewise see the nature of Elijah as that of John, at certain times and in some fashions, both "dwelling in the wilderness," and appearing suddenly before Israel with divine messages of great national import. But of Elisha, we find he goes more among the people, and he is seen "sitting with the elders"—more in the manner that we see Christ (2 Kings 6:32; Luke 5:17).

Elisha comes into the picture in ch.19, where Elijah is told to anoint Hazael to be king over Syria, and Jehu to be king over Israel, and Elisha to be prophet in Elijah's room. It is at this time that Elisha leaves all and begins to minister to Elijah. It is also during this period that Syria and its king Benhadad war against and trouble Israel.

* * *

From the time that Elijah anoints Elisha with his mantle in ch. 19, until Elijah is taken up "by a whirlwind into heaven," is about 8 to 10 years. And when 2 Kings 5 opens, it has been about 2 years since Elijah's departure. Ahab has been slain. Jehoram his wicked son is reigning. (Ahaziah, another son, has already reigned and died: leaving no sons). Jezebel is still alive, and Benhadad is still king of Syria. The chapter opens—

"Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man of valour, *but he was a leper.*"

We see here that the power and position that Syria was in at this time was due to the will and hand of God, just as we are shown that Assyria and Babylon besieged the land of Israel by the will & power of God. They were God's "sanctified" and "mighty" ones—but solely for the purpose of besieging Israel. And so Syria at this time was a limited power to afflict disobedient Israel. We see a parallel in these last days of Gentile times, as present-day Syria is a divinely-appointed thorn in the side of Israel.

And Naaman was captain of Syria's army. He was considered great in the eyes of the king, and honourable, because he had brought victory. He was a man full of might and bravery—"*but he was a leper.*"

Leprosy was one of the most feared diseases of ancient times. It was a disease that was detectable by appearance. It attacked the skin, tissues, and nerves. Some forms of leprosy were characterized by only white spots on the skin (as we remember reading in the Law of Moses); while other forms would steadily and inexorably waste away body parts by running ulcers and putrefying sores. The most dreaded forms were incurable: thus we see why it was so dreaded.

At this stage in Naaman's life, his leprosy was a practical curse. Probably anyone who was a victim of leprosy would feel a certain sense of condemnation.

The Law of Moses, we are told, was—by its many examples, laws and types—a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ. We recall that leprosy, under the Law, represented sin. Man, through his descent from Adam and through Adam's condemned nature, is by nature a mortal and afflicted being. We, as Paul says, are "all under sin" and its condemnation. All members of the Body of Christ were once, in the spiritual sense, lepers. But through the Gospel of Christ, and the cleansing waters of baptism, and keeping ourselves undefiled from the world, we have been graciously made "clean," and have been made "new creatures." But in order to keep the leprosy away, we must keep away from the world. It requires a transformation of mind—a walking in the spirit of Christ, and having the fruits of the Spirit. *There must be a constant cleansing of the mind by the Word.* If there is not, then we are still, in some form, victims of our leprosy.

So, we get a glimpse of the lesson that Naaman is to teach us in this chapter. We will see that Naaman's plague of leprosy will bring him the greatest of blessings. It would be through his leprosy that he would find that Yahweh, Israel's God, from Whom Israel had turned away, was in reality the great God of all the earth (2 Kings 5:15). It was this God that brought Naaman from his curse. Therefore, we can in some aspects view Naaman as a type of the servants of God, and of the Gentiles in particular, who are given the opportunity to receive the Covenants of Promise.

Naaman's name means "Pleasantness." Often the Way of wisdom and life requires times of bitterness and tears, for the Way of Life is through much trial and tribulation. But in the end, as we see at the end of this chapter concerning Naaman, they are brought into the "ways of pleasantness."

In v. 2 we are shown that by one of the Syrian victories, a captive was brought back from the land of Israel. She is spoken of simply as "a little maid." We never learn her name, nor anything more about her, but what a character of faith and kindness she manifests! She had been given to wait on Naaman's wife. This doubtless was providential, for it was through this "little maid" that Naaman would hear of and find Elisha, and through him find healing of God.

God works in the lives of most in a very practical and natural way. The mighty power of God is not to be openly seen in our age. We are to live by the eye of faith alone. And yet we are assured that God *does* work in our lives, and that (Rom.8:28)—

"All things work together for good to those who love God."

And *if* we are God's, then His invisible hand is working, but it is deliberately meant to be (visibly) undetectable. And as we see here in the lives of Naaman and many others throughout Scriptures, even when the hand of God was visible, still many providential events would come about by seemingly natural means. Naaman hears quite "naturally" through a "little maid."

Elisha's name means "God is salvation." In some aspects of the chapter, as we have seen, Elisha is a type of Christ. "Jesus" means "Saviour" And "Emmanuel," the name given to Jesus by the angel of the Lord, means "God with us." So we see Christ Jesus, a manifestation of God, who has brought salvation. And thus we see the work of Elisha through the significance of his name.

We also have been provided with a "little maid." It too is providential, but yet is of apparently natural means. It is our Bible. It was through the "little maid" that Naaman would find Elisha and be given the instruction for the cleansing of his leprosy. And it is through the Bible, and only through the Bible, that we are able to find Christ. And in the pages of our Bible we are instructed in the Way of salvation. We are shown the way in which we may be cleansed of our leprosy, and—hopefully—in the end find the eternal ways of "pleasantness."

But Naaman's "little maid" can also be seen as a type of the Bride of Christ. It is apparent from the narrative that she was one of the few in Israel who kept her garments undefiled from the covetousness of the world which Paul says is "*idolatry*" (Col.3:5). She was one of the few who had not bowed to Baal. She was taken as a child to a strange land, and sold into slavery and bondage, because of the wickedness of others in Israel. The natural man would manifest hate, vengeance and bitterness. But instead, she took the steps of love and meekness, and provided the way of *blessing her enemy*—

"Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria, for he would recover him of his leprosy."

It is God's will, and it is our purpose, that every one of us are to constantly be examples of the sons of God, *regardless of the situation we are in*. We are to be examples of Christ, manifesting and demonstrating "The Way" to everyone we come in contact with— even our enemies. This basic life purpose must override every other purpose, reaction, or desire. Everyone we come in contact with, we influence—for good or bad.

The maid saw the opportunity to present the way of God, and she took it. By *her* righteous initiative in telling them of this "man of God," a means of salvation was opened for Naaman and others. And because she so let her light shine both in word and deed, we will see in the oncoming years, in ch.8, that other Syrians would seek the "man of God" to help their king. And here the lesson is clear. By our righteous initiative and disposition and character, we too are to be a light to all in darkness, and (above all) an *example*—showing that this is The Way in which we should live; and this, the Holy Word of God our Bible, is the means in which we may find it:

"*This is life eternal*, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."
(John 17:3)

This is what we must be constant witnesses of, in both word and act.

Vs. 6-8 cover the sending of the letter from Benhadad to Jehoram king of Israel. A letter to the king would be the way in which Naaman would find Elisha. Note v. 6, the essence of the letter—

"I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy."

And see Jehoram's appalled reaction—

"And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes."

And he concludes by saying (end of v. 7)—

"See how he seeketh a quarrel against me!"

It seems that Elisha's actual name was not used in the letter, but perhaps Benhadad would think that Jehoram would be in close association and acquaintance with this wonderful man of Israel's God, who had so much power. So the letter would simply read—

"I have sent Naaman my servant to thee (king Jehoram) that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy."

But Jehoram would not associate Elisha, the prophet of God, with the healing. Note he also says in v. 7—

"Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy?"

This seems to be the reason for the misunderstanding. But there is much irony and food for thought, and there appears to be the working of God's hand in the matter.

In v. 8, Elisha hears of the incident, and he then makes the key statement of the chapter—

"LET HIM COME NOW TO ME, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel."

Here is a Gentile enemy of the Jews, even the Gentile king and his captain, coming to seek help from a prophet of Israel, in a time when they are opposing one another in war.

We are not told Jehoram's immediate reaction to Elisha's intervention. Perhaps, in one way, Jehoram would be relieved, for now he would think the pressure was removed from himself. But in another aspect, surely he would feel humiliated, for Elisha presents the invitation to the enemy—

"Let him come now to ME."

And perhaps there would be much more disgrace when he would hear that Naaman was truly cleansed of his plague—the *enemy* of Israel cleansed and sent away rejoicing, by a prophet of Israel.

The incident was another opportunity, in the loving mercy of God, to open the eyes of Jehoram and Israel. Why could not Jehoram see the glaring lesson? Why would not Israel behold the ways of salvation that this 'man of God' brought? And thus we can look ahead, some 900 years later, to that great Prophet who would come, and how Israel refused to submit to God's words through him. We are reminded of such incidents as, in one journey to Jerusalem, he met 10 lepers. One was a Samaritan and the rest were Jews. All were cleansed of their leprosy, but only one turned back to glorify God—

"And he was a Samaritan."

And Jesus answering would say—

"Were there not 10 cleansed? But where are the 9? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger"—this Gentile.

One thankful, life-seeking Gentile: and 9 stiff-necked and ungrateful Jews. A few Gentiles in the days of Christ would but only receive a touch of the blessing that was being offered to and poured out bounteously on blind Israel. The Gentiles would come, not seeking the blessing of bread from the table, but to only eat of the fallen, discarded crumbs. If God through Elisha, this prophet of Israel, could cleanse the enemy of their leprosy, how much greater things would He do for His chosen people! —

"If only they would turn unto Me, and obey My voice!"

They were a sickly tree on very "dry ground." They were in need of blessing and deliverance from their enemies round about. And the long-awaited Prophet who should come to show them the Way of salvation had come. But Jehoram-Israel rejected him and his word.

Surely Elisha's words would drive hard—

"Let him come now to me."

We recall Jesus' words—

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

To be in *need*: these Jews would not admit it—and the Gentiles would not deny it. Remember the Jews' proud answer—

"We be Abraham's seed! And were never in bondage to any man! How sayest thou, Ye shall be made *free*?"

Jehoram would not; Israel would not; but the Gentile came—

"Naaman came with his horses and his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha" (v. 9).

In the next 5 verses, Naaman has come to the house of Elisha, and has received instruction for the cleansing of his leprosy. But it does not meet his expectations. He does not even get to see Elisha, and he goes away "in a rage." It is by the suggestion of his wise servants that he is reminded of the sole purpose of his journey—to be freed and

cleansed of this condemning plague that he is under: why therefore should he question the conditions and commands given him? Why should he question the physician's prescription of a simple "*Wash and be clean*"? Naaman (v.14) takes heed to these words of wisdom. He repents, and obeys the command.

Under the Mosaic Law, lepers were defiling. They were quarantined: sent outside the camp. And they were not to be touched. So this undefiled man of God, in whom was also found no guile, simply utters the few instructive words that would be sent by his messenger—

"Go and wash in Jordan seven times."

Similarly, in the life of Christ, we would see—not greatness of show and outwardness of act—but simple, life-giving words. To some Jesus would simply acknowledge, such as—

"Go . . . thy faith hath made thee whole.

And to restore another's hearing, he would simply say the word "*Ephphatha*" which means "Be opened." And to some they were words of instruction, as—

"Arise, take up thy bed and walk."

To another—

"Go, wash in the pool of Siloam."

The praise and glory was to be given to God.

Elisha's words to Naaman were no more difficult. The great barrier that caused Naaman to stumble was his own *natural thoughts and pride*. Notice v. 11: it says Naaman "thought"—"*I thought*." The most natural act in life is just to "think"—to suppose, to assume. And if it is yet untransformed by the Word of God, it easily conceives trouble and sin.

A man's outward actions reveal his inward thoughts and moral structure. Naaman revealed his pride by going away "in a rage." At this point, his *natural* thoughts and *natural* unacquaintance with God and His ways were condemning him. The lesson is clear—

"MY THOUGHTS ARE NOT YOUR THOUGHTS, NEITHER ARE YOUR WAYS MY WAYS: for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9).

Naaman's thoughts were rooted in his natural fleshly pride. He had come to Elisha's house in splendour and array, expecting great attention and reception. As v. 1 said, he was of honour, might and valour. But the wisdom of Naaman's servants would reveal that he could not come as a dignified master, but he must rather come as a servant. He could not *wisely* come, he could not *appropriately* come, in the nature of glory and might this time.

He would rather have to manifest realization of his true condition, as a weak, perishing mortal man, coming in dire need—sick and leprous. This must be our attitude. God is everything, and we are nothing. Not only are we always mere servants, but *unprofitable* servants. We must come to God as helpless, dependent little children, eager to learn and obey—coming as the "little maid" in slavery and bondage, ready to obey her master and continually seeking his mercy.

No more action would be taken on Elisha's part. Note v. 11: Naaman's natural expectation was that Elisha would—

"Surely come out to ME . . . and call on the Name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper."

But Elisha's part was already finished. There would be no explanations to Naaman's injured vanity, or soothing of his wounded pride. All had been done that was necessary. The rest would require the *faith of Naaman*—simply to "Go . . . and wash." If Naaman had not found the faith to act on this simple command, the cleansing and freeing from his bondage of sickness would have never occurred. And thus Christ gives us the exhortation—

"Go: thy *faith* hath made thee whole."

The basic necessity of faith is given to us repeatedly throughout Scripture. We have a choice in life, just as Naaman did at that point in his life—a vital choice upon which everything depends. We can either simply obey God's Word, and act in faith; which will give us life. Or we can go on our own way in our own *natural thoughts*—which will assuredly bring us death.

* * *

We definitely see *baptism* in the dipping in the Jordan. But his dipping or washing *7 times* shows that it signifies much more. It actually signifies ALL. Seven is completeness. Baptism is only the beginning of the cleansing process from our spiritual leprosy. The total process involves an every-day, continuous cleansing by the washing of the Word. It is a determined putting away of the old man every day, of his pride and natural thoughts; a transformation of mind from fleshly to spiritual. Seven also signifies perfection. The completeness will have finished when we shall have become spiritual creatures who are nothing short of perfection.

When Naaman was finally cleansed (vs. 14-15), we trust that it brought him unspeakable joy and elation. He was finally and miraculously delivered from this (naturally) incurable and condemning curse. Jesus says—

"With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible."

And Naaman's reply—

"Behold, now I know there is no God in all the earth but in Israel" (v. 15).

* * *

The latter half of this v. 15 begins a new episode in this chapter, and more lessons that are worthy of thought.

Gehazi, by going after the possessions that Naaman offers to Elisha, will represent those who have received the blessing of promise, but have turned their faces and have "run" back to the things of the world. The diseased and defiled world would again bring the leprosy, just as Gehazi would receive. He said, in his lust—

"I will run after him, and take somewhat of him" (v. 20).

How little he realized just *what* it would be that he would take from Naaman, and carry thenceforth to the day of his death. How little we tend to realize the burdens we take on ourselves by "running after" the world, and "taking somewhat" of it.

* * *

Finally, we should note that we hear no more of Naaman after this chapter. And it is interesting to note that in the following chapters Naaman does not appear to be any longer the captain of the host of the Syrian army, but rather it is Hazeel. Perhaps it is a sign of Naaman's change of life: a new and living way.

And Naaman, a type of the true and obedient servant of God, would never forget the blessing he had received. He would see the lepers in the land—perhaps every day—and he would look upon them and forever be reminded that he once was one of them, but he had been called to "*Come now to me*" and be made free. Jesus said—

"Many lepers were in *Israel* in the time of Eliseus the prophet: and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman *the Syrian*."

Are we of the Naaman type? Are we still thankfully and continually aware of the great privilege and blessing we have received?

We must constantly look at the leprous and sick world around us, be ever aware of its deadly contagiousness, and discern the great, high, separated calling to which we have been called.

We are either of the class of Gehazi, who has again "run after" the things of the world; or we are of Naaman, who do and forever shall praise and glorify God, saying with him—

"I KNOW there is no God in all the earth but in Israel!"

—C.S.

One Hundred Years Ago

Many have expressed appreciation of the Current Events, but most who have written consider that their amount is a bit out of proportion. We are therefore omitting them this month in favour of a glimpse of the problems, interests, and activities of the Brotherhood 100 years ago, taken from the January 1876 Christadelphian Magazine. It was less than 4 years after the great loss to the Brotherhood of the death of bro. Thomas.

from the EDITORIAL

THE past year has been an eventful one as regards the development of the signs of the times. What may we not see during 1876? On the very first day of 1875 the brethren were made glad by the restoration of the Spanish monarchy for which they had been looking. They are now looking for the restoration of the French monarchy,

however unlikely that event may appear at present: the reason being the same as in the case of Spain: that according to the Apocalypse the 10 leading monarchies of the Roman system are in existence at the appearing of Christ, and unite in their antagonism to him.

(It is very interesting that, exactly 100 years later, we have just seen again the restoration of the Spanish monarchy. The symbols require autocracies, not democracies. Very few democracies are left: the vast majority in the world are under autocratic dictatorships, and the trend is quickening. It will move faster as Russian power expands. Of course, Spain was a monarchy under Franco: he just did not happen to call himself a king).

Next came the launching of the Montefiore scheme for the regeneration of the Holy Land, which, though not yet greatly advanced, is a great fact in the hands of a responsible committee of London Jews. It is like a plant actually put in the ground: small at present, but its roots are in soil, it must develop.

Then the declaration of Turkish insolvency. Then the re-opening of the Eastern Question by Russia, Austria and Germany. And finally the advance of Britain upon Egypt to secure her Indian communications against the perils of the breaking up of the Turkish Empire.

All these events are so signally in the channel of our expectations that we cannot but feel, on entering the new year, both thanksgiving for the almost visible operations of the hand of God in the affairs of the nations, and strong hopes that a much longer period will not elapse without the great occurrence to which they all point.

It did not come, and has not yet come, as quickly as the eager brethren hoped and prayed. The time has stretched on and on, but how infinitely more intensively and extensively have the signs developed beyond what the brethren could possibly conceive!—the return of 3 million Jews, the worldwide expanse of the power of Russia, the demise of the bright but futile hope of world democracy, the dreadful growth of war and destructive power, of violence and terror, of crime, of immorality and licentiousness, the mad, self-inflicted weakening of the West, the isolation of Israel as centre of world hate—over 100 wild beast nations, in that demented circus called UN, pressing tighter and tighter in fierce jungle rage against the little embattled state of Israel, and only one country standing between her and annihilation. How long, O Lord?

from the **ARTICLE BY BRO. THOMAS**

THE Holy Temple these co-labourers with the Deity were engaged in building in the apostolic age has its Holy and its Most Holy, after the pattern of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, which was a 'House made with hands.' The building of the *Holy* resulted in the Body of Christ as manifested in Paul's day. This was 'the heavenly,' constituted of the holy ones, or saints, collectively.

But the *Most Holy* is not yet manifested, nor will it be until the apocalypse of Jesus Christ in his glory. This Most Holy is a 'house not made with hands, *aionion* in the heavens' (2 Cor. 5:1). *Aionion*: that is, *belonging to the course* to which the things which are not seen pertain. When this House is built (and 'The Builder of all things is God'), it will be constituted of those saints only who in the 'present evil world' walk in the Truth.

Those saints who since they became saints 'walk after the flesh' will be purged out of the flock, and never be reckoned among the 'Most Holy.' Concerning these the apostle says, 'If ye walk after the flesh ye shall die.' This is the death they shall be subject to after their resurrection. They shall die out from among the Most Holy, and be swallowed up of mortality, being found naked. These are the 'wood, hay and stubble' which builders even in Paul's day built upon the foundation he had laid.

The saints who shall constitute the Most Holy are the 'gold, silver and precious stones' of Zion who, when the Kingdom comes to her, shall be her foundations, windows and borders (Isa. 54:11-13; Mic. 4:8).

* * *

'The grace' designed for the saints, purposed to come through Jesus Christ, was not intended to be revealed all at one time. The grace, or gift of the Holy Spirit, was to be rained upon the saints at 2 different periods. The Spirit in Joel shows this. Saith He (Joel 2:23)—

"Be glad, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in Yahweh your Elohim, for He hath given you the former rain moderately, and He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain the first month."

The original of this text is quite remarkable. The Hebrew reads—

"For He hath given to you the **Teacher of Righteousness** *, and He shall cause to descend for you a rain: a **Teacher** and a latter rain in the first month."

This Teacher hath been given in the person of Jesus, and the Father Who gave him caused to descend upon the children of Zion (the saints) 'a rain,' when on Pentecost He poured out His Spirit upon the apostles and their brethren. This, as the substitute for Jesus, guided them into all the Truth, and showed them things to come. Christ is 'the Lord the Spirit,' 'a quickening Spirit,' and from him Holy Spirit rain came in the 3rd month, or 50 days after the Passover and Crucifixion.

But there is to be 'a Teacher and a latter rain in the first month.' That is in the month Nisan, or when the Passover shall be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God (Ezek. 45:21; Luke 22:15-18). The result of the appearing of this Teacher in the time of the latter rain will be that the sons of Zion (Joel 2:26-7) will—

"Eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the Name of Yahweh, and hear Elohim that hath dealt wondrously with you, and My people shall never be ashamed. And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I—[the Spirit made flesh and glorified, and so both Lord and Christ, personal and mystical] —am Yahweh your Elohim, and none else, and **My people shall never be ashamed.**"

But the people of Yahweh, political and spiritual, are now put to shame. Israel after the flesh is a byword and a proverb; and so is Israel after the spirit, or the saints—who have been, are, and will be prevailed against by the enemy until the Ancient of Days shall be revealed in power and great glory. Joel's prediction, then, has not yet been fulfilled, and the latter rain of the Spirit in the first month is yet in the future.

* This is a very interesting passage: see AV margin. It has puzzled commentators.

from **BRO. ROBERTS' EXHORTATION**

'SO much the more as ye see the Day approaching': these are words that increase in their emphasis as each month rolls by. The signs of the approaching end multiply as the end approaches. The Eastern Question, spread out on the political sky, tells us above all other signs that the Lord is near. That Question is entering upon a transformation phase, which is likely to see England in her appointed position in Egypt and the Holy Land . . .

Such a situation is full of an interest almost painful. The effect of it is to make us look more earnestly than ever in the face of the great principles that affect our relation to the Coming Deliverer. Let us look at those a little on the present occasion for comfort. Yet in looking for comfort, let us never forget that the comfort is for them only who are in a position to lay hold of it in having humbled themselves entirely before the God of all comfort in His crucified Son, and given themselves freely to him a *living sacrifice*, and in being of those who do *all* things in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to the Father by him in everything, and who *run* in the way of His commandments.

A man flourishing in this life to the loss of life eternal, is not blessed. If in order to guide a man into the Kingdom of God a crooked path is needed, then God shows Himself a Sun and a Shield in twisting his path for him. It is very natural to argue that prosperity is an evidence of divine favour and adversity the reverse: but it is often far from correct. In the present provisional and preliminary state, trouble is more frequently the portion of the chosen of God than the reverse—the explanation being that trouble is a necessary part of the process by which they are developed for the endless ages of blessedness to come.

"ALL things [good AND evil] work together for good to them who love God." God knows when the good things are safe, and when the evil things are needed; and the scriptural attitude is to accept, with reverential submission, whatever comes. Job is ever a helpful illustration on this point. A man of the thoroughly approved stamp, God overthrew him in all his affairs without letting him know that he was being subjected to a test. Now, why was Job's case recorded? Like all the other ancient examples, it was 'written for our instruction . . . it happened to them for ensamples (to us).' If so, it follows that we may sometimes be put to a similar proof *if we are worthy of the test*. Consequently we shall argue wrongly if we say God has forsaken us when something has gone wrong. Can we expect to be better off in these things than the servants of God who have gone before? And what is *their* history? One and all, they came through sore trouble. The Lord himself was the greatest sufferer of all, and is it not written, 'We must suffer with him'? Nay, is it not the very characteristic of the great assembly of which we hope to form apart that they 'came out of great tribulation'?

There is one form of suffering with Christ which is within every man's reach—nay, in his very bosom—who has the root of the matter within him. It is expressed in these words: 'My soul longeth, yea even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.' The feeling that led David in that channel dwells deeply in every mind that is kin with David. It is a craving for the manifestation of God and the delights of His worship. It is a hunger and a thirst after righteousness. The world is a great wilderness: a dry and parched land wherein there is no water. From the same sense of present desolation as David, we groan together—heart and flesh crying out for the living God. This made up the principal part of the sufferings of Christ.

from the SIGNS OF THE TIMES (7½ pages of tight small print)

WITH a rapidity almost startling, events hurry after one another in the development of the Eastern Question. The declaration of Turkish insolvency and the unveiling of Russian designs have been followed by a movement on the part of England which in the field of politics amounts to the occupation of Egypt. Britain has purchased Egypt's share in the Suez Canal for 4 millions sterling. It is a great political movement, having for its object the protection of England's communication with India from the peril involved from the breakup of the Turkish Empire and the passing of that Empire into northern hands.

In conjunction with the acquisition of the Suez Canal, a British political mission has been dispatched to Egypt to assist in the administration of the country. Egypt is, in fact, virtually annexed. Knowledge of these facts caused a great sensation everywhere. On the Continent, consternation.

As the *Times* says, 'There is an audacity about it which we do not generally associate with a British Ministry. We trace in it the hand of Mr. Disraeli. No waiting for Parliament, no feeling of public opinion. The nation awakes to find it has acquired a heavy stake in the security of another distant land.'

This from the *Moscow Gazette* shows what Russia thinks of it: 'England's ancient preponderance has been immensely increased by the acquisition of territorial rights in Egypt. England most unceremoniously has taken the lead in partitioning Turkey. The English have long been accustomed to have everything their own way in Asia, Africa and Australia, to do what they please in all parts of the world, and to rule the seas without fearing, or indeed expecting, opposition. They now no longer content themselves with seizing distant lands, but pocket the key to the whole of Southern and Eastern Europe.'

Providential manipulation is visible in the matter of the Suez Canal. It was to be the means of bringing England into her right relation to Jehovah's land. Dr. Thomas saw this distinctly, as our readers recollect, writing to Earl Granville advising him to take possession of it. But England was opposed to the Canal, from the first hour of its projection. Her view was that a Canal would give France undue influence in Egypt. She thought the Canal would be a blow to her supremacy on the sea, as it would open a path to Eastern trade for the ports of the Mediterranean, and divert that trade from British hands.

And what is involved in this extraordinary change in affairs? It has always been seen that the English possession of the Canal would involve the establishment of her jurisdiction in the Holy Land, on the ground that possession of the Canal is essential to her Indian communication, and possession of Palestine is necessary for protection of the Canal. With Palestine in the hands of Russia (when Turkey goes to pieces), the Canal would be at Russia's mercy. It has therefore always been argued that when Britain should make her final move on Egypt, she must establish herself in the Holy Land, in which event the return of the Jews would be both a natural result and political necessity.

And so it worked out, but much more slowly than the eager brethren at that time expected. It was 20 years before there was any real stirring among the Jews to return—they were getting too comfortable where they were and had to be prodded by God with hardship. Then it was 20 more years before the Turk was finally dislodged. And then another 30 before the state of Israel was established, and immigration in volume could begin. That's 70 years—and now we've seen 30 more pass as the world has gradually turned against this little country, and edges closer and closer to trying to destroy it.

from an article THE TRUTH OF THE BIBLE by bro. Roberts

THE Bible gives a certain history of things concerning remote times. In many points, that history has been questioned from time to time by those who wanted to get rid of the Scriptures .. At the beginning of this century, the infidels denied there ever was such a man as Christ. Their theory was that the history of Christ was a priestly fable, concocted in the monasteries in the dark centuries. In our day, the infidels have retreated from this ground: they have been beaten off it. They admit Christ was an historic reality, and that he was crucified.

They have held that there were no such places as Nineveh & Babylon. Their argument was this: According to the Bible, these cities were very great and extensive, and important and populous, containing architectural structures of a very solid character, and sustaining a very material political and commercial relation to the rest of the world. This being so, our infidel friends contended it was a matter of impossibility that such cities should so entirely disappear from the annals of human history and from their place in human affairs. They are the fanciful creations of a mythical book. 'Where is Nineveh?' asked they, 'Where is Babylon? Where are any traces or indications of them?' (Unconsciously, they were supporting the Bible, which foretold their disappearance). But since then both Nineveh and

Babylon have been discovered, as you know, by Layard and others, who have exhumed these ancient places from the rubbish of centuries, and shut the mouths of infidels.

Well, then, they used something of the same sort of argument with regard to the Mosaic account of the Flood. They said it could not be a true historical account, or we should have found some traces of it in the archives of other nations. About a year ago, Mr. Smith of the British Museum discovered, and has translated, tablets from the Assyrian ruins containing an account of the Flood. There is a lot of nonsense in it, but the Flood is there: that is the great fact of the case. Here is evidence of knowledge of the Flood among other nations.

So with regard to the history of the Jews. It was contended that there was no contemporary verification, such as might reasonably be expected to exist. You have heard about the Moabite Stone, discovered by a Frenchman named Ganneau about a year ago. This stone is a record of what went on among the Moabites when they were a nation, and it is an exact confirmation of the account in Kings. It is written by authority of Mesha, king of Moab, and gives an account of the various Israelite kings with whom Moab was in contact.

from ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

PAUL commanded that in the assemblies of the saints there should be—

'First of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks for all men, for kings, and for all who are in authority.'

You ask why this is not done at the meetings of the brethren in our day. As a matter of fact, it is done, but it is not a prominent feature, owing to the absence of the circumstances which led Paul to enjoin it in his day. The brethren in the first century were exposed to peril at the hands of the authorities. Persecution of a violent kind was a frequent occurrence. Not only their meetings, but the tenor of their individual lives, were liable to violent interference. It was therefore an urgent matter of petition that 'kings and all in authority' should be so restrained and guided that the saints might be allowed to '*lead quiet and peaceable lives*'. This is the object Paul connects with his injunction to pray for the authorities (1 Tim. 2:2).

In our day the times are different. We live in an age when the hands of the civil power have been tied in a religious direction. We are in no danger of interference or persecution. The absence of the danger accounts for the absence of prayer for protection from it. Certainly, insofar as the wellbeing of the community affects the wellbeing of the House of God, and insofar as the wellbeing of the community depends on the measures of those in power, it is still a matter of reasonable public petition that 'kings and all who are in authority' may be divinely superintended. Yea, that perchance they may be brought to the Truth, as Paul wished concerning Agrippa (Acts 26:29), and as God is willing that all men should do (1 Tim. 2:4).

There are other (perhaps more important and interesting) answers, but they are much longer, and not of the nature to be profitably abbreviated. In his career, bro. Roberts seems to have met all the quirks and crotchets (including all those that moderns think they have invented), and to have answered them all with quiet patience, deep scriptural knowledge, and spiritual insight.

from the ECCLESIAL NEWS

BIRMINGHAM: The Sunday Evening Meetings have been occupied as follows: Nov. 28—Answering of written questions by bro. Roberts.

EDINBURGH: Beginning Dec. 8, a course of 8 lectures (embracing 2 Sundays) was delivered by bro. Roberts.

LEICESTER: On Nov. 7, bro. Roberts lectured on "The Son of God."

NOTTINGHAM: On Oct. 17, bro. Roberts lectured on "Current Public Events in the Light of the Scriptures."

These were just the lecturing activities of bro. Roberts that got recorded this month: there were doubtless others. Whatever issue of the magazine one looks at, bro. Roberts seems on a constant round of activity, all over the country. He must have spent a large proportion of his nights on night trains, which were not very comfortable in those days. (His custom was to travel at night to have the days for work). What tremendous and complete dedication! How do we compare? The reward is for those who give themselves wholly to God's work.

WARNAMBOOL, Australia: Bro. John Betts, who emigrated from England some time ago, writes to say it has been a day of trouble with him ever since leaving England. On the way out, he lost both of his children, and was brought to the door of death himself, while his wife also was down with illness while the children were dying. He was led on deck to see his dear boy (a promising child of 3) cast into the ocean. In course of time, he and his wife got well again, but on landing at New Zealand, there was no work to be had in his own line. He had to turn to heavy brush work, and herded with navvies in the most degrading manner for 5 months. At the end of that time, he fell into the engine

wheel and got crushed. This laid him up for a time. On recovering, he determined to return to England, but could not get the money owing to him.

These adversities, while almost crushing, have taught bro. & sis. Betts more than ever the evil of the present state, and the great need for the promised Deliverer to establish peace on earth and goodwill among men.

In the magazines of 100 years ago, there are many such stories of faith in great adversity. Times were much harder and barer for the Brotherhood—to help themselves, and to help each other. It is sad, but it is also noble and glorious, if these things eventually 'work together for good'—eternal good. It is well to be reminded of, and to think upon, the things others have courageously endured. In these soft and opulent days, it is so easy to get out of touch with reality.

Questions		Match place with area—		19. Tarsus	27. Gadara	35. Nineveh	43. Mars' hill
1. Ur	7. Perga	13. Zorah	21. Riblah	20. Lystra	28. Patmos	36. Antioch	44. Memphis
2. Kir	8. Troas	14. Melita	22. Sodom	21. Riblah	29. Kedesh	37. Antioch	45. Damascus
3. Sela	9. Babel	15. Horeb	23. Jezreel	22. Sodom	30. Salamis	38. Ramoth	46. Achmetha
4. Tyre	10. Tabor	16. Ekron	24. Gibeah	23. Jezreel	31. Rabbah	39. Ephesus	47. Bethlehem
5. Cana	11. Golan	17. Ararat	25. Puteoli	24. Gibeah	32. Corinth	40. Shushan	48. Alexandria
6. Myra	12. Haran	18. Shiloh	26. Cyrene	25. Puteoli	33. Philippi	41. Megiddo	49. Mt. Carmel
				26. Cyrene	34. Tadmor	42. Syracuse	50. Fair Havens
Dan	Sicily	Media	Shinar		Chaldea	Armenia	by the sea
Asia	Moab	Edom	Galilee		Hamath	Lycaonia	wilderness
Italy	Lycia	Egypt	Achaia		Samaria	Benjamin	Macedonia
Sinai	Persia	Egypt	Bashan		Philistia	Decapolis	Aegean Sea
Syria	Mysia	Cilicia	Athens		Ammon	Phoenicia	Padan-aram
Syria	Libya	Gilead	Cyprus		Ephraim	Esdraelon	Mediterranean
Crete	Judah	Pisidia	Assyria		Naphtali	Pamphilia	Vale of Siddim among mountains

December Answers		Match Place With Person		27. Bashan—Og	41. Shushan—Esther
1. Ur—Abraham	14. Salem—Melchizedek	28. Cyprus—Sergius Paulus	42. Babylon—Nebuchadnezzar		
2. Uz—Job	15. Edom—Doeg	29. Chebar—Ezekiel	43. Caesarea—Cornelius		
3. Hor—Aaron	16. Egypt—Necho	30. Assyria—Sennacherib	44. Ethiopia—Candace		
4. Nod—Cain	17. Derbe—Gaius	31. Jericho—Bartimeus	45. Pergamos—Antipas		
5. Tyre—Hiram	18. Joppa—Dorcas	32. Hebron—Caleb	46. Anathoth—Jeremiah		
6. Gath—Goliath	19. Melita—Publius	33. Patmos—John	47. Bethsaida—Philip		
7. Elam—Chedorlaomer	20. Shiloh—Eli	34. Corinth—Gallio	48. Damascus—Eliezer		
8. Eden—Adam	21. Ararat—Noah	35. Philippi—Lydia	49. Areopagus—Dionysius		
9. Nebo—Moses	22. Tarsus—Paul	36. Ammon—Tobiah	50. Arimathea—Joseph		
10. Jebus—Oman	23. Pethor—Balaam	37. Samaria—Omri	51. Bethlehem—David		
11. Moab—Ruth	24. Midian—Jethro	38. Magdala—Mary	52. Mt. Carmel—Elijah		
12. Troas—Eutyclus	25. Jezreel—Naboth	39. Bethany—Lazarus	53. Alexandria—Apollos		
13. Persia—Cyrus	26. Sodom—Lot	40. Ephesus—Demetrius	54. Padan-aram—Laban		
			55. Gethsemane—Malchus		

Who?

Vain was his warlike zeal, his venturesome life ;They could not save him from the assassin's knife:
Vain, royal praises on his coffin shed: They could not cheer the unregarding dead.

Last month's answer: What is the incident? --Jesus—Sea of Galilee

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