

The Berean Christadelphian

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

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

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

CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

Ecclesial News

CANTON, Ohio—Meeting at the home of bro. & sis. Wm. Phillips, 2910 2nd St. NW, Canton 44708—S.S. 10 am; Memorial 11 am. Class Thurs. 7:30 pm at home of bro. & sis. Braden Edwards, 3700 Lincoln St. E, Canton 44707; phone (216) 488-1356.
LOVING Greetings in Christ Jesus.

It is a great joy to all of us here in the Canton ecclesia to announce that one of our Sunday School scholars, **BRADEN P. EDWARDS**, having been obedient to the command "Repent and be baptized," after giving a convincing answer to those things concerning the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ, was baptized November 13, and given the right hand of fellowship the next day, Sunday. Our new brother, at a youthful age of 18 years, has shown true wisdom in remembering his Creator in the days of his youth.

May he strive to serve the true God all the days of his life, as we patiently await the return of the Lord Jesus to establish his glorious Kingdom on earth.

We of the Canton ecclesia are so thankful for the visitors we had around the table of the Lord on this joyful occasion of welcoming our young brother into fellowship and oneness with us, even as our Father and His Son are one.

Our visitors were: bro. & sis. Fred Higham, bro. Growcott (Detroit); bro. & sis. David Clubb (London); bro. Harry Phillips (Worcester); sisters Lois and Sharon Sommerville (Wanaque). All the brethren's work of love was deeply appreciated as they assisted us in lecturing, exhorting and presiding on this happy occasion.

Bro. & sis. Warren Rankin have visited us earlier in the year: on one visit bro. Warren gave us the word of exhortation.

We are impressed again with how lovely the bond of the Truth can be, and we greatly enjoy the companionship and association of those whose hearts are filled with our mutual glorious Hope. We extend an invitation and welcome to all brothers and sisters of like precious Faith.

With love in the Truth, —bro. Braden Edwards

LETHBRIDGE, Alta.—633 Seventh St. S.-Memorial 11 am; S.S. 12:30 pm; Lecture 7:30 pm; Class Wed. 8 pm; Bro. Wm. Blacker, 1225 6th Ave. S., T1J 1A3; Ph. (403) 327-5663.

OUR meetings have been enriched by the company of brethren and sisters from different parts of the Vineyard, and for these we give thanks.

From Richard, Sask., we have enjoyed the visits of bro. Ed and sis. Delma Truelove, with their children. Also bro. & sis. Arthur Jones, sisters Annetta & Shirley Jones, accompanied by Gwen Jones. Sis. Cora Rafuse who was visiting relatives in Lethbridge was present at our meetings both Sunday and Wednesdays. Sis. Tina Fraser, with her husband, also sis. Wanda Fraser, spent one Sunday in our midst.

From Winnipeg we were visited by bro. Joe and sis. Marilyn Jackson, with their 3 boys. It was a flying trip for them but we enjoyed having them.

From Edmonton bro. Dave & sis. Barbara Blacker, with their children, and bro. Norman Blacker, visited with us during the summer.

Bro. Ralph Hobkirk of Vancouver spent 2 Sundays visiting with us, and bro. M. J. Bennett visited with us through the summer.

May we express deep appreciation to the following brethren for their assistance in exhorting and lecturing: bre. Ed Truelove, J. Jackson, A. Jones, Norm Blacker and R. Hobkirk.

We notice that our three brethren, R. McCarty, J. Randell and D. Sleeman of Portland, Ore., have met in fellowship with the Berean brethren and sisters. We are all pleased to know they have reconsidered their position and returned to the Berean fellowship. May God bless them and us too in our walk to the Kingdom.

For all the above visitors we are very grateful, and thankful to have had them at the Breaking of Bread and the evening meetings. We pray God's richest blessing may rest on each and every one. We are also thankful for the happy faces of the children who come along with their parents. They bring a real joy to us older brethren and sisters.

We see the world in quite a tumult, but we also see on the horizon the dawning of a new day. May we all be there to greet our Lord and Master.

In Christ Jesus, your brother, —Wm. Blacker

Making Our Calling Sure

"I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings"—Hosea 6:6

ALTHOUGH Peter does not stand out so prominently in the record of the work of spreading the Gospel in the first century, there are, however, features of his activities that tower supremely high in relation to the Divine program of—

"Taking out of the Gentiles a people for the Name of the Lord" (Acts 15:14).

It is well for us to remember that Peter's earnestness, ardour and vigour marked him from the first as the leader of the disciples. He is always placed first in the lists of the disciples, and also when the 3 most intimate disciples are mentioned. It was he who so boldly avowed the Messiahship of Jesus; and he was one of the special 3 chosen to accompany Christ at the Transfiguration and the agony in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Quite often we think of how he denied the Lord 3 times, after so confidently asserting he could never do so, though all else might. But do we remember just as strongly that, after his resurrection, Jesus received from him a profession of love as vigorous, and as frequently repeated, as his denial; and, after each declaration on the part of Peter, the Lord commissioned him, "Feed my sheep"? And do we always remember, too, how bold and faithful and courageous he was immediately afterward in the face of the wrath and abuse of the authorities? Out of weakness he was made strong, through love and faith.

After the Lord's ascension, we find Peter taking the leadership of the disciples, and it was his fearless voice that was heard on the day of Pentecost as he addressed the people of Israel in such a striking and forceful manner. And later, when the proper time had come, it was Peter again through whom the Word of Life came to the Gentiles, when he was sent to Cornelius to expound the way of salvation.

If, then, we are what we profess to be—members of the flock of Jesus, we shall give eager attention to what Peter has to say by the Spirit in his 2 letters, as he feeds the Master's sheep. Among the many things therein said by this remarkable apostle, 3 statements seem to stand out as beacons on the way to life—

"Be holy in all manner of conversation . . .

"Give diligence to make your calling and election sure . . .

"Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Saviour Jesus Christ."

According to Young's Concordance, the word here rendered "grace" actually has the deeper and broader meaning of *graciousness*. Grace means favour, but graciousness carries to us the significance of an abundance of favour and mercy. Graciousness is living, active beauty of character and comportment. Of Jesus it was foretold—

"Thou art fairer (more beautiful) than the children of men; grace is poured into thy lips" (Psalm 45:2).

Clearly a deeper beauty than mere surface appearance is indicated. Therefore we read—

"They wondered (marvelled) at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth" (Luke 4:22).

But graciousness, though a necessary characteristic of the brethren and sisters of Christ, is *insufficient alone*. Therefore Peter couples it with that which brings completeness to the life of the believer—

"The KNOWLEDGE of our Saviour Jesus Christ."

You will recall that Cornelius was a gracious man, who feared God, and prayed always, and gave much alms; but for him to be saved it was necessary that he receive the knowledge of the Anointed Jesus. This combination—united in him—placed Cornelius in a position enabling him to grow in wisdom and understanding.

As we meditate upon the words of Peter, our minds turn to the future, for we realize that someday soon we will stand face to face with the Master; and our reception will depend on how we have assimilated his words and commandments during our days of opportunity. Unless we realize, and keep in memory, that important truth, it will not be possible for us to apprehend clearly the vital necessity of continually *growing* in graciousness and in knowledge.

However, before growth can take place, it is essential for us to make the acquaintance of that which will supply the *nourishment* for such spiritual development.

The supreme importance of knowledge of Divine things cannot be estimated too highly. Through the prophet Isaiah, we have God's declaration that His people had gone into captivity—

"Because they had no *knowledge*" (Isa. 5:13).

And in like manner also, Hosea says they were—

"Destroyed for lack of *knowledge*" (Hos. 4:6).

But knowledge does not stand alone, for it is possible to have our minds full of knowledge without understanding it. We must by meditation and application, transform our knowledge into character.

If, then, we would grow in graciousness and in knowledge and understanding of Jesus and all that is bound up in him of the wisdom and glory of God, we must come out and be separate from that by which we are surrounded on every hand and which presses ceaselessly in upon us; and keep ourselves unspotted from the world. We must *fill* our minds with healthy, eternal, meaningful, spiritual things—sweeping out all the meaningless trivia of the present. As bro. Roberts says in his excellent introduction to the *Bible Companion*—

"Salvation depends upon, the assimilation of the mind to the divine ideas, principles, and affections exhibited in the Scriptures."

From this source only can we develop a zeal for God. But it must be "a zeal according to *knowledge*," because it is through knowledge that the just will be delivered (Prov. 11:9). Therefore let the words of God to Israel be vividly impressed upon our minds—

"I desired mercy, and not sacrifice, and the KNOWLEDGE OF GOD more than burnt offerings" (Hosea 6:6).

If we are to attain to the essential high standard of knowledge, we must permit the enlightening influence of the Gospel to have first place in our lives. It must never be lost sight of, nor give place to any other desire, interest or ambition. We are apt to overlook this great truth, but to do so is fatal. Therefore we must be on the alert constantly. Growing in graciousness and in the knowledge of our beloved Saviour must be the undeviating guiding star of our lives. Watchfulness and self-examination must be our keystones.

In view of the indisputable fact that our friendship of the Anointed Jesus depends on our believing into him and keeping his commandments, let us awake to the responsibility that rests upon us because of our belief of the Gospel of salvation. It is essential, as Peter exhorts, that we "give diligence to make our calling and election sure," and that we be "holy in all manner of conversation (conduct)," so that we may build up a character that will be well-pleasing to our heavenly Father. Such a character will be indicated by the spirit of thankful and joyful humility at all times, and supported by courage and determination to do what we know to be right.

Following this course will cause us to be edified, and built up in love; and the beautiful and peaceable fruits of the Spirit will have free course among us. Then shall we have joy and confidence as we walk in the Truth, and Yahweh's Name will be glorified.

—Editor

An Ensign Upon the Mountains

"Two parts in the land shall be cut off and die, but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried. They shall call on My Name, and I will hear them. I will say, It is My people, and they shall say, The Lord (Jesus) my God!"

—Zechariah 13:8-9.

In the June 1852 Herald, bro. Thomas had an article in which he said—

"Before Messiah returns there must be a lifting up of an ensign upon the mountains of Judea . . . There must be a re-settlement of the land by the Jews to a limited extent before the battle of Armageddon, for it is the prosperity of the Jewish Colony that whets the avarice of the Autocrat . . . It will be a sure and certain sign of the speedy appearing of the Son of Man in power and glory. No one need expect that appearing to be manifested until a Jewish Colony be lifted up 'as an ensign upon a hill'."

The editor of another magazine took issue with this, and wrote an article strongly opposing several points in bro. Thomas' article. He concluded with this—

"Here is an invulnerable point from which we all shall do well not to depart: there can be NO restitution of either the people, land, or city, in full or to a 'limited extent,' until the great Restorer shall come."

Bro. Thomas reprinted this article in full in the Herald, and wrote the following in reply. It is an interesting example of his attitude toward those sincerely seeking the truth, even though they strongly opposed him. It is a striking illustration, too, of his comprehension of prophecy, long before there was any hint of its fulfilment. Some lesser details have not worked out according to his expectations. Today's Israel is not a "colony" of Tarshish — its technical "independence" is one of the great complicating factors of the present situation. But in actuality Israel's continued existence is wholly dependent on the overshadowing Tarshish wings. Apart from US's support and tremendous material aid and arms, it would have been wiped out years ago by its enemies, with the world's blessing. Bro. Thomas longingly and confidently expected the return of Christ "soon," but he also clearly recognized that certain events and developments had to occur first. Those events took much longer than he anticipated. We can learn much wisdom from both aspects. When bro. Thomas wrote, the idea of backward Russia conquering mighty Europe in spite of the opposition of the tremendous power of Britain, was preposterous. Today it is clearly inevitable.

BY BROTHER JOHN THOMAS

THE remarks in the preceding article are offered, the writer says, "in the spirit of kindness, and for the sake of eliciting light." I accept them in the same spirit. I am satisfied he wants to be convinced if in error. This is the sort of man I like to talk with, because his object is to get at the truth, and so is mine. Neither he nor I is infallible: I have made a "confession and abjuration" of errors as well as he. So we can meet upon an equal footing in this respect, and endeavour to enlighten one another.

His idea is that there will be no return of the Jews at all (save as they have journeyed thither as pilgrims for ages) before the Lord appears. We agree the 12 Tribes will be restored to the land of their fathers; but he considers it entirely post-adventual, and immediately subsequent to the battle of Armageddon.

I differ from him in believing that there will be a pre-adventual limited colonization of the country by Jews, under the protectorate of Britain; and that the prosperity of this colony, together with a desire to cripple or subvert the British power in the east, will be cause of the country's invasion by the Russian 'Clay,' styled Gog, etc., by Ezekiel. *I consider that this colonization is going on while Russia is engaged in the conquest of the West*—while it is mixing with a fragile union the iron leg and toes therewith the 'miry clay.' The invasion of Israel's land and conquest of Jerusalem is the end of the formative process; for then the eastern and western legs and the 10 toes are fashioned into feet, being combined together by Russo-Assyrian Clay.

This is the crisis to which things are now working, and by which a necessity is created for the appearing of the Lord. The Anglo Jewish colony is just an element in the situation, planted in Palestine in the interests of Britain; providentially as an ingredient in the bait to tempt the Gog-nations to come up to battle against Jerusalem, that the Lord may—

"Plead with them there for His heritage Israel" (Joel 3:2).

The invasion will be a time of great trouble to the colony, for—

"Two parts in the land will be cut off and die, but the third part shall be left therein" (Zech. 13:8).

It is this third part that calls on Jehovah's Name for help. The Lord says, "*I will hear them;*" and in consequence of so doing, descends and smites the assembled host, and, by Michael their great prince, delivers them (Dan. 12:1). Then comes the resurrection (v. 2).

They who cry for help are *in the land*. To be there they must have previously returned. They cry because of the oppressor; they cry of necessity before they are heard; and the oppressor is broken in pieces *in answer to their cry*.

The post-adventual restoration of the 12 Tribes is a work of time. It will not be consummated till the end of 40 years after the battle of Armageddon. I have shown this in an article soon to appear in the Herald. The 40 years occupies the space between the advent and the commencement of the 1000 years, and affords scope for Elijah to '*restore all things*', and for Jesus and his brethren to torment 'the devil and his angels.'

The latest news from the east is but a shadow of coming events. What I wrote concerning that news was hypothetical. I said—

"It is *probable* that the financial scheme of the Turkish government may be the *initiative* of the pre-adventual colonization of the Holy Land."

However the colonization be brought about, it will be THE sign of the time indicative of the speedy coming. There are signs that the practised eye can already see, but *THAT will be a sign which, if men were not stone-blind, NO ONE could fail to discern aright.*

It is just because the colony I speak of will not possess the land by faith (which is what I suppose my friend means by 'right of inheritance') that they are so terribly disturbed in their possession by Gog. There can be no continued peace and prosperity there for Jew or Gentile till the land is inherited by right of the Covenant dedicated by the blood of its future king.

I have but little confidence in the idea of settling the land as the result of a money transaction with the Turk. It may, and it may not. Britain may subsidize the Turk against Austria and Russia, and assume the protectorate of Egypt and the Holy Land in return. I do not see the *details* of the affair in prophecy, but *the colonization itself I perceive without obscurity.* This is the great thing. The measures leading thereto are merely matters of interesting speculation as they arise.

I do not adduce Isa. 30:17 to prove that the settlement of a colony is to be the being "as an ensign on a hill" referred to *there*, but to show that a small number of Israel as compared with the whole nation is, in Scripture language, likened to "an ensign on a hill," or a "beacon on the top of a mountain."

To be "*left as an ensign*" (Isa. 30:17) and to be "*lifted up as an ensign*" (Isa. 18:3) are different ideas. I speak of the colony being as a pre-adventual ensign. Now, before the Lord appears, the fair ensign so gaily wafting in the breeze under the shadowing wings of Britain (Isa. 18:1) is torn down and trampled underfoot by the *Prince of Ros.*

The silver and gold, cattle and goods, unwallled villages and peaceful dwellings, become a prey to the spoiler. The "merchants of Tarshish and the young lions thereof" (that is, the British power) threaten and oppose the destroyer in vain. None can save, or *lift it up*, but the Lord God of Israel. He comes to do this, and when He comes—

"All the men on the face of the land shall shake at *His presence*" (Ezek. 38:20).

The result is the destruction of the army of the Gog-nations, of which only '*a sixth part*' (Ezek. 39:2) escapes; and the setting up of the ensign erect again, no more to be trampled under the feet of the Gentiles.

"The Lord their God shall save them in that day as the flock of His people; for they shall be as the stones of a crown, LIFTED UP as an ensign upon His land. For how great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty!"
(Zech. 9:16).

The colonization I termed "a lifting up of an ensign" to distinguish it from the lifting up of the Lord and by the Lord. It is an ensign lifted up by the British power: itself however unconscious that the colonization was a sign.

The passage quoted from Ezekiel by our friend (39:9-12) proves a settlement of the land to some extent before the advent, by implication. The *battle* of Armageddon, which breaks the Image, is at the Lord's coming; the war, which reduces its fragments to chaff, is *after* his return. Ezekiel speaks of the battle in particular; and in conclusion of his prophecy announces the result of the *general war*, which is not only the pulverization of the whole Image, but the full accomplishment of the work of restoration, as expressed in the words—

"I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them anymore there (in the enemy's country)—Ezekiel 39:27-28.

"They that *dwell* in the cities of Israel" (Ezek. 39:9) who go forth to burn the weapons and bury the slain, are precisely the survivors of that colony *residing* in the land at the time of the battle, to save whom the Lord strikes the blow. The salvation of this third part by the Advent victory is the beginning of deliverance to the whole nation.

It must have been pre-adventually settled in the land, or it could not be there to witness the fight. The circumstances of the case evidently necessitate a pre-adventual settlement to some extent.

True, the Jews were to be—

"Led away captive into all nations."

But it does not say that they were *all* to continue captives in exile, without remission, till the times of the Gentiles were fulfilled. It is *Jerusalem* that is to be trodden down of the Gentiles until the fulfilment of their times. But a little transient good fortune to the city in no way affects the verity of this. In the days of the Crusaders, it became the throne of a kingdom which continued many years.

"*King of Jerusalem*" is one of his Austrian Apostolic Majesty's titles, derived from his ancestral relation to that kingdom. Hence, as in the days of Pilate the Jews acknowledged "no king but Caesar," so now Caesar, imperial chief of the "Holy Roman Empire," claims the same sovereignty. His "rights" will in due time be assumed by the Russo-Assyrian Gog—whence comes his present sensitiveness in regard to the Eastern Question; so that none, Jew, Turk or infidel, can become Emir, Bey or King of Judea without having the Autocrat for his inveterate foe. But Britain will see to this in due time.

I refer to Jerusalem's medieval royalty her to show that her transient independence is quite compatible with a continuance of Gentile times. But a colony with Jerusalem for its provincial capital is still a Gentile dependency. A Jewish colony surrounded by Ottoman, Russian, Persian, Arab and Egyptian could not sustain itself unless protected by a strong maritime power. It must therefore be like Judea under the Persians of old—a *province of a Gentile dominion* till the Lord shall come.

But its prosperity under the power shadowing with wings (Isa. 18:1) will soon pass away. The Assyrian river will overflow it even to the neck, and breach the very walls of the Holy City, which Sennacherib could not do, for—
"The city shall be taken" (Zech. 14:2).

The worst of the Gentiles then trample it in the dust. Its brief colonial well-being will have vanished like a dream, and have given place to a barbaric degradation, evincing that the "wickedness" of her captors IS indeed "great" (Joel 3:13). For—

"The houses shall be rifled, and the women ravished" (Zech. 14:2).
—and half of its inhabitants sent off as prisoners by the enemy. This semi-deportation of the people by the Chief of the "all nations" assembled at the siege characterizes the *future* capture of the city.

Zechariah prophesied after its Chaldean overthrow, and during its restoration under the Persians. He must, therefore, have referred to a *future* overthrow. His prediction could not have been fulfilled under Titus, because *all* the people who remained were led away captive, and the city was *wholly* destroyed; whereas Zechariah intimates the city will not be destroyed, in saying that—

"The residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city."

The city therefore remains, and half the Jews with it, earnestly desiring their Messiah to appear and deliver them, if ever they did.

There has been no siege in which the Jews withstood a Gentile assault since the Roman armies (who were the Lord's hosts for the destruction—Dan.9:26 & Matt. 22:7) destroyed it. It can therefore only be a future event, and contemporary with the going forth of the Lord to "fight against those nations" (Zech. 14:3). He did not fight against the Romans; but on the contrary, he fought against Judah and Jerusalem until they were destroyed utterly.

But in the future siege he will fight against the Gog-armies of the nations "*as when he fought in the day of battle*"—Jos. 10:11, in victorious defence of Jerusalem and the Jews of the third part. It is "*then*"—(after the coming capture of the city garrisoned by the Jews and their protectors)—that the Lord goes forth with his "mighty ones" (Joel 3:11; 2 Thess. 1:7), and stands with his feet on the Mt. of Olives, the place from which he ascended to "the right hand of power. His electric tread evokes an earthquake that divides the mount.

All these things characterize the siege and capture as one unexampled in the history of the world. The deliverance of Jerusalem and the fall of Rome are the glorious incidents that mark the fulfilment of the Gentile times; and *until they happen no arithmetical calculation of the 1335 days can be admitted which does not stretch forward to that desirable consummation.*

It is readily agreed that there are but 2 gatherings of Judah from captivity (and one of the 10 Tribes, which is *subsequent* to Judah's second, for—

"The Lord shall also save the tents of Judah first" (Zech. 12:7).

But the colonization of which I speak will not be a gathering of *the tribe of Judah*. The great bulk of the tribe will be shut up in the nations subject to Gog—the North and the South which "keep back" and refuse to "give up" (Isa. 43:6). But there will be sufficient for British policy forthcoming from other parts. The Lord saves the tribe of Judah while Elijah is fulfilling his mission with the Ten; which will be perfected by the reunion of the Twelve into one stick in Messiah's hand, by the Lord himself (Ezek. 37:16-28).

The colonization of Judea by Jews under the protection of a Gentile government is neither "*restitution*," "*restoration*," nor "*regeneration*." Nothing short of a NATIONAL establishment in the land under Messiah and his brethren constitutes either of them in the scriptural sense. Restitution is not simply a return of the race, but the *setting*

up again of institutions that once existed there—the restitution or restoration of the Kingdom again to the 12 Tribes. *This* is the re-institution, or "restitution" spoken of by all the prophets from Moses to the Revealer of the Apocalypse to John. No Gentile powers can accomplish this, though aided by all the Jews on earth; for the restored Kingdom exists under an *amended Mosaic code*, whose emendation (*diorthrosis*—Heb.9:10) can only be defined, administered, and adapted to the exigencies of the world by the King of Israel himself and his associate priests and kings.

Our worthy friend is, no doubt, very anxious for the appearing of the King in power and great glory. So am I, and for more reasons than need be expressed. But we must take care not to allow our wishes or desires to lead us to conclusions not in harmony with the testimony and sound reason. I would have no delay; but I am compelled to confess that there will yet be some. The working out of the approaching judgment upon principles illustrated in God's past dealings with nations and empires requires time.

This brief delay will, perhaps, be the salvation of many, for how numerous are they who are *praying* for the appearance of the Lord who have not even begun to *prepare* for his appearance. Let us not, therefore, be impatient of arguments that do not confirm us in our wishes. "Thy will, not mine, be done" should be pre-eminently the disposition of the student of the prophetic word.

I see a war among the powers resulting from antagonism to French ambition which must *precede* the battle of Armageddon. The Great City has also to be divided into 3 parts. And the feet of Nebuchadnezzar's Image have to be fashioned into shape out of the materials that exist. This requires time; and during this time the colony is forming and prospering to *tempt the spoiler* to his destruction by the Stone Power on the mountains of Israel.

But I need add no more at present than to say that these explanations of points of difficulty are submitted to my friend and his readers in the same frank and benevolent spirit so graciously manifested on his part, by his sincere well-wisher.
—SEPTEMBER, 1852

God Hath Commanded All Men

"As many (that is, all who) have sinned under law shall be judged by law . . . in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my Gospel"—Rom. 2.12-16

BY BROTHER ROBERT ROBERTS

THERE is much to be said in proof of the conviction which has been entertained by the bulk of believers from the beginning, that enlightened rejecters of the Truth will rise at the resurrection to answer for the responsibility which comes with the knowledge of the will of God enjoined on the human race. The following is a condensed analysis of the evidence: —

1. That though sentence of death was passed upon Adam because of transgression in Eden, and therefore upon all men through him, the race was not dismissed to die and cut off from all further responsible relation to God; but was brought into subjection to a new form of the authority of God, in which there was promulgated a hope of reconciliation for all who should exercise an obedient faith.

PROOF: The institution of sacrifice; the acceptance of Abel, Enoch and Noah; the corruption of God's "Way" by the antediluvian population (Gen. 3:21; 4:4; Heb. 11:4-5; Gen. 6:12; 7:1).

2. That under this new form of God's authority, God punishes the ungodly or disobedient with reference wholly to their disobedience, and not with reference to any consideration on their part, whether they *think it worthwhile* to consent to be obedient.

PROOF: Cain and the Flood (Gen.4:10-12; 6:5,11,13).

3. That God not only punishes them in the mass during mortal life, but has appointed a day for *individual* judgment.

PROOF: "The Lord *cometh to execute judgment upon all*, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all the ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed" (Jude 14-15)—*spoken by Enoch before the Flood*. "The work of a man shall He render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways"

(Job 34:11).

"God shall judge the righteous and the wicked. There is a time for every purpose and every work . . . God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil" (Ecc. 3:17; 12:14).

4. That this individual judgment will be administered by *resurrection from the dead* at the "*time of the end!*"

PROOF: "The time of the dead that they should be judged" (Rev. 11:18).

"At that time . . . many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake . . . some to shame and the contempt of the age" (Dan. 12:2).

"There shall be a resurrection of the dead , both of the just *and of the unjust*" (Acts 24:15).

"They shall come forth . . . *they that have done evil*, to the resurrection of condemnation" (John 5:29).

5. That the judgment will be administered by Christ at his appearing, he having been appointed the Judge of the living and the dead, the Lord of all mankind, to whom every knee must bow under penalties.

PROOF: "Jesus Christ shall judge the living and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom" (2 Tim. 4:1).

"Thou (God) hast given him power over all flesh" (John 17:2).

"It is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of the living and the dead" (Acts 10:42).

"The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John 5:22).

"The hour is coming when all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and come forth" (John 5:28).

"He is Lord both of the dead and the living" (Rom. 14:9).

"At the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow" (Phil. 2:10).

6. That the multitude who shall appear before his judgment seat will be composed, not only of the faithful and unfaithful members of his own immediate Household (who are but a comparatively recent development of the divine principles that have been operative in the earth for 6000 years), but *of all who have refused to submit* to the law of God when reasonably attested.

PROOF: "He that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark 16:16).

"To them that perish . . . (the apostolic message was) a savour of death unto death" (2 Cor. 2:15-16).

"Those mine enemies *who would not that I should reign over them*, bring them hither and slay them before me" (Luke 19:27). This is in addition to the servants entrusted with the talents.

"The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness . . . God shall render to every man according to his deeds: to them that are contentious and do not obey the truth but obey unrighteousness, (God will render) indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish . . . in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my Gospel"

(Rom. 1:18; 2:6,8,9,16).

"Taking vengeance on them that *know not God* (that is, are not acquainted with Him in the sense of *submission*) and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 1:8).

7. That it is according to righteousness and justice that those who rebel against the light should be brought to punishment, even though they be "without."

PROOF: "We are sure that the judgment of God is according to *truth* against them that commit such things. After thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the *day of wrath* and revelation of the righteous judgment of God?" (Rom. 2:2-5).

"Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4).

"*Because of these things* cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience" (Eph. 5:6).

"We were by nature the children of wrath, *even as others*" (Eph. 2:3).

"Knowing therefore *the terror of the Lord*, we persuade men" (2 Cor. 5:11).

This is connected with the "judgment seat" of the previous verse. It is true that "*we shall all stand*" there, but this does not exclude the fact that others will stand there, like Felix who trembled at the prospect (Acts 24:25).

8. That nevertheless, as God is "just in all His ways," these results will be limited to those who are aware of the divine requirements. Ignorance is a bar to accountability. The ground of responsibility is the light of knowledge.

PROOF: "Just and true are Thy ways." "Just and right is He." "He will not do iniquity"

(Rev. 15:3; Deut. 32:4; Zeph. 3:5).

"Men that have no understanding are like the beasts that perish" (Psa. 49:20).

"The times of this IGNORANCE God winked at" (Acts 17:30).

"*This is the condemnation*, that *light is come*" (John 3:19).

"If ye were blind, ye should have no sin" (John 9:41).

"To him that *knoweth* to do good, and doeth it not, to *him* it is sin" (Jam. 4:17).

"He that *heareth* these sayings of mine and doeth them *not*" (Matt. 7:26).

"Who *knowing* the judgment of God, that those who do such things are worthy of death" (Rom. 1:32).

"He that believeth not (the gospel preached) shall be condemned" (Mark 16:16).

"The servant that knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes . . . for to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required" (Luke 12:47).

"I received mercy because I did it *ignorantly*" (1 Tim. 1:13).

"He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my word, *the word that I have spoken*, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48).

"Whosoever will not hearken to My (God's) words which he (Jesus) shall speak in My Name, *I will require it of him*" (Deut. 18:19; Acts 3:22-23).

9. Responsible men are to be punished at the resurrection because they are *worthy or deserving of it*, and not because of any technical compliance on their part with the divine institutions.

PROOF: "Of how much sorer punishment suppose ye shall he be thought *worthy* who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God" (Heb. 10:29).

"They who commit such things are *worthy of death*" (Rom. 1:32).

"He that knew not and did commit things *worthy of stripes* shall be beaten with few stripes" (Luke 12:48).

"How shall we escape *if we neglect* so great salvation?" (Heb.2:3).

"Depart from me, *ye that work iniquity*" (Matt. 7:23).

"If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the *ungodly and the wicked* appear?" (1 Pet. 4:18).

"*They that have done evil* (shall come forth) to the resurrection of condemnation" (John 5:29). It is "evil" to disobey God, and God has "commanded all men to repent," as Paul declares in Acts 17:30.

10. Resurrection, in the sense of mere restoration of mortal life (which is the only resurrection of which rejected sinners are the subject) does not depend on connection with Christ. It has occurred in recorded cases without any such connection, and it is declared that *it will occur* to those who reject Christ under responsible circumstances.

PROOF: Resurrection of the son of a Canaanitish woman of Sidon by Elijah (1 Kings 17:21).

Resurrection of the son of a Shunamite woman by Elisha (2 Kings 4:35)

Resurrection of a dead man on touching the bones of Elisha (2 Kings 13:21).

Resurrection of the daughter of a ruler (Matt. 9:18).

"The dead are raised" (Matt. 11:5).

Resurrection of the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11).

"He that *rejecteth me* and receiveth not my words . . . the words that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48).

"They that have done evil (shall come forth) to the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:29).

"Whosoever *speaketh against* the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither *in the world to come* . . . I say unto you, that every idle word men shall speak, they shall give account thereof *in the day of judgment*" (Matt. 12:32-36)

"Whoso shall *offend one of these little ones that believe in me*, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea. Woe unto *the world* because of offenses

. . . Woe to that man *by whom the offense cometh* . . . It is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having 2 hands or 2 feet to be *cast into everlasting fire*" (Matt. 18:6-8).

"He that *believeth not* the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" . . . "The *unbelieving* . . . shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire & brimstone; which is the second death"

(John3:36; Rev.21:8).

The idea that none are to rise to punishment but those who have obeyed the Truth in baptism is founded upon a wrong understanding of the words of Paul in 1 Cor. 15:22—

"As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive."

It is supposed that Paul here by "made alive" means restoration to mortal life. The evidence of the context is that this is not Paul's meaning, but that by 'made alive' he means delivered from death in being made immortal.

That it is a wrong idea is manifest from the language which describes baptism as *obedience* (Acts 6:7; Rom.6:17; 1 Pet. 1:22; Rom. 1:5; 16:26; 15:18). Obedience implies *command*, and this command is addressed to the unjustified nations of the Gentiles (Rom. 1:5; Acts 17:30). If those only are to rise to punishment who have been baptized, it would mean that those only are to be punished who have been obedient, which is a self-evident anomaly.

"The wrath of God cometh upon the *children of disobedience*."

—as has been quoted above. It is true that none but those who submit to the institutions of God in Christ can attain to eternal life; but it is not true that a man must submit to those institutions before he can receive the punishment of disobedience. *Nothing* so effectually secures that punishment as rebellion against those institutions; and—

"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31).

The idea that an unsuccessful candidate for eternal life who obeys God in baptism will be raised to be punished by reason of that amount of obedience, while another man who refuses to submit to God at all will escape punishment by reason of keeping out of the water, is inconsistent with the testimony that God is just and will do no iniquity. It compels those who entertain it to lay down the extraordinary axiom that in His dealings with mankind, God does not proceed on principles of justice. This is its effectual condemnation.

Paul recognized the 'terror of the Lord' as involved in his approaches to men with the Gospel (2 Cor. 5:11). If the notion we are considering were correct, there would be no terror in it. A man would simply have to decide not to be baptized to be effectually screened from the consequences of rebellion.

Though fear is not the ruling motive appealed to, it *is* a motive appealed to all through the Scriptures; and it is according to "nature itself" that it should be appealed to. It has on all men an influential part in the determination of action. We have got away from the orthodox hell; but we must not get away from "the wrath of God revealed from heaven" against all unrighteousness of men (Rom. 1:18). This we should do if we were to hold that the wilfully disobedient escape responsibility by making their disobedience sufficiently thorough.

The cases of resurrection that have occurred apart from atonement are proof that the divine law admits of the resuscitation of men under sentence of death, if the divine objects otherwise require it. If such a departure from law (as we might consider it) were permissible to show the *power* of God, it cannot be maintained that it is unpermissible in the case of rebellion to show the *justice* of God. The fact is, permissibility or unpermissibility are not affirmable of any divine action. Who is there to permit? Who to hinder?—

"He doeth according to His will . . . none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?"

(Daniel 4:35).

If He has purposed the resurrection to punishment of those who know and reject His Word, we have but to bow to the revelation of His purpose. The thought that God had tied His hands by a previous sentence of death is totally unworthy of the subject. If there were any force in it, it would prevent the resurrection of any wicked at all, for all sinners are under sentence of death—sinners after baptism as well as sinners before. —AUGUST, 1893

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Trust Not Thine Own Understanding

"The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise. He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul, but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding"—Prov. 15.31-32

PROVERBS CHAPTERS TWENTY-FIVE TO THIRTY-ONE

OF all the books of Scripture, Proverbs contains the most *detailed* commands and instruction recorded by the Spirit for our benefit. It is a book of honesty: open and outspoken words that deal with things as they are. It tells us, in a factual manner, searching things about our natural selves, the sins and weaknesses that are always present due to our mortal, sin-stricken constitution.

It is a book where there is absolutely no catering to the flesh, but rather the continual exposure of man's natural wickedness and corruption, in contrast to God's holiness and pureness. Proverbs shows us the way that leads to death, the natural way, the wide gate; and the way that leads to life, the spiritual way, the narrow gate. It manifests that, as Paul wrote in Heb.4:12—

"The Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

If we will *let* it, this Word of Truth will help us to determine our true position in God's sight, and to correct it as the need may be. It can show us how we stand, either as "fools" or "wise." God's Word distinguishes between

natural and spiritual things, between the works of the flesh and the works of the Spirit: and is a discerner—a decider, a decisive and critical judge—of the hearts thoughts and intents. This is the purpose of God's revealed Truth—that we may see things in their true perspective—that we may fully realize that unless we are striving to be righteous in *all* things, we are *not walking as God's people*.

The book as a whole is divided into several sections. The portion we would like to consider, chs. 25-31, deals explicitly with the fool, the slothful, the wicked, in contrast to the wise, earnest, righteous worker in God's Truth. Ch. 25 begins—

“These are also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out.”

We remember that Hezekiah was one of the most righteous kings of Israel. In 2 Kings 18:5-6 it is recorded—
"He trusted in the Lord God; so that after him was none like him of all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him. For he clave to the Lord and departed not from following Him, but *kept His commandments*."

Here is the secret of Hezekiah's righteousness before God. He took the time to learn and obey God's commands with his whole heart. He realized the importance, and value, and blessing of divine instruction in the Way of Life. Just as all the previous chapters, so these proverbs are the Spirit's voice through Solomon, faithfully copied out and compiled for our learning by the righteous Hezekiah. It helps us to know that the faithful Hezekiah valued these proverbs, and was providentially instrumental in preserving them for us. If we would be wise and righteous, we must study and obey them in detail.

Some of the proverbs are difficult to fathom, and lest we be discouraged we are told (v. 2)—

"It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter."

King Hezekiah realized this was his true honour, greater than all temporal power. How many of us truly *seek* to search out the concealed wisdom of God's Word in every chapter and verse? Why do we so often forget these Spirit-words, and waste our precious time unprofitably? If we ever want to be acceptable in God's sight, we must derive from Scripture all the lessons and teachings we can. By doing so, we will be strengthened and purified, and will be enabled to overcome our weak human nature in doing righteously continually.

Only by a constant striving to absorb and assimilate God's Word can we be transformed into a righteous and acceptable servant of God. It is so natural and easy to drift along in the state Solomon describes over and over as—

"The way that *seems* right to a man."

We always tend to think—to assume—that we are naturally righteous, that we are doing good; but we are fatally deceiving ourselves unless our every action is weighed by God's Word. The human mind forgets all too easily. It is not possible to remember God's commands unless we *keep at them* by reading—searching with interest and love what God has graciously caused to be written for our welfare.

"Take away the dross from the silver, and there shall come forth a vessel for the finer (refiner)."

Several times in Scripture we have examples placed before us of the refining of metals. When ore is refined, such as silver, it is heated to a high temperature to separate and burn away the impurities that make the metal of no use in its natural state. This is likewise true of ourselves, for we are as raw, rough metal ore in the Divine hand. Through trial and tribulation we are continually refined and perfected to attain a purer state. This is the purpose of our trials and difficulties from day to day: not that we should be discouraged, but perfected.

". . . and there shall come forth a vessel for the refiner."

Once the dross—the impurity, the corruption—is gone, a good vessel will be formed, one that is fit for the eternal use of the Great Refiner. If the dross remains, the metal is no good: it has neither beauty nor strength: it is unfit for use. The thought in this is obvious. The good vessels, cleansed from all dross, beautified and purified, will adorn God's glorious spiritual Temple in the Age to Come. In order to be these vessels, we must be cleansed and sanctified in this our day of trial, painful and sorrowful though the process may be, just as the vessels of old in the Mosaic Tabernacle. The vessels of God are silver vessels, for they are the *redeemed* from among mankind, and only these shall enter, for—

"There shall nothing unclean enter therein" (Isa. 35:8; Rev. 21:27).

25:8—"Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame."

If we are quick to enter debate and strife we will usually be sorry afterwards, because it is so easy to speak before thinking in a godly Christlike manner concerning a problem—

"A fool uttereth all his mind, but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards . . . He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding, but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly" (Prov. 29:11; 14:29).

* * *

25:9-10—"Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself, and discover not a secret to another; lest He that heareth it put thee to shame, and thine infamy turn not away."

It is remarkable how often this command, urgently repeated by Christ himself, is deliberately or thoughtlessly ignored by those who claim to be his loving and obedient disciples. How *often* all of us fail in this! We ignore both precept and example, and continue setting up our own laws, according to the mind and reactions of the flesh. This is foolishness, and hurtful in many ways. This is why God hates it. Love seeks to cover sin, and correct it privately. God commands us to deal directly with one another, and not publish the shortcomings of others. If we do, it will be at last exposed, and we will be put to a shame that *will not turn away*.

This proverb is embodied in the Law of Christ as given in Matt. 18. This is a lesson it is so easy to forget—the vicious, gossipy flesh glories and delights in talking of others' faults. But if we are the children of God, we will keep silent. We will constantly bridle the fleshly viper tongue. If something another does troubles us, we will go directly to the one involved, not blaze it to third parties. Matt. 18:15—

"If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother."

—and not only that, but we have saved ourselves from righteous divine wrath. Our fault in speaking of others is often—perhaps always—worse than the fault we are condemning. What hypocrisy!

25:16—"Hast thou found honey? Eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it."

Naturally speaking, if we over-indulge in the consumption of sweet and rich foods such as honey, we become sick. That is commonsense to all. But what is the *spiritual* lesson? We find the clue in v. 27—

"It is not good to eat much honey: so for men to search their own glory is not glory."

The Proverbs describe honey as "pleasant words"—words that please and flatter, just as honey is sweet and pleasing. While words of praise have their proper place as encouragement, they must not be overdone or done for wrong motives, because of the flesh's natural tendency to pride. A little honey is sufficient. Accepting praise must be done in the right spirit—keeping a proper balance between pride and despair, for neither of these are right. We must not be overpleased with ourselves; nor should we be overly discouraged and give up. We must cheerfully, thankfully and diligently labour, humbly giving the praise and glory to God, for He has given us all good things by His mercy and love. What has anyone that they were not given? (1 Cor.4: 7). All need encouragement, but all need to guard against pride.

Another aspect of the use of the word "honey" in other places is in relation to spiritual words. God's words are frequently described as honey, or compared to honey. We often sing—

"How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth" (Psalm 119:103).

Hopefully, we are thinking what we are saying, and have the wisdom to mean it. In this sense, the honey of God's Word is good and acceptable. The Bride the Lamb's Wife in Solomon's Song has this honey in her Speech (4:11)—

"Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb: honey and milk are under thy tongue."

This is the point we should be striving for, that Christ may in love say this of us. When we reach it, we are on the border of acceptance.

25:21—"If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink."

On a natural basis, who would give an enemy in a battle food and water to strengthen him? By the world's standard, it would be foolishness. But we are not of the world: we are of God, and must heed His Word, for it is our life. In this verse we have the Law of Christ (Matt. 5:44)—

"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which spitefully use you and persecute you."

Over and over this basic lesson of Christ's Law is brought home to us. Are these just so many high-sounding words to us, or are we really trying to *practise* them and to obey God's commands. Are we among the few wise who do as God tells us we must, or are we among Solomon's "fools," deceiving our own selves with a, *form* of religion while in reality denying its *power*?

V. 22 may be a puzzle to us. It may appear to teach a vindictive motive for v. 21, but we know this cannot be. The "coals of fire" must be the pure and holy coals from the altar (Lev. 16:12) that cleanse and purify, and cause the protective incense prayer of repentance to ascend.

26: 1,8—"As snow in summer and as rain in harvest, so honour is not seemly for a fool . . . As he that bindeth a stone in a sling, so is he that giveth honour to a fool."

Here is the same lesson we considered concerning honey or sweet words. In order to receive honour, we must become wise by the Scriptures, and not be puffed up and vain in natural ignorance. We must remember the examples given us. Moses spoke unadvisedly with his lips: he took the credit to himself in one brief thoughtless second, and so he was denied the longed-for privilege of entering the Promised Land—a terrible type, but happily not final for him. Herod in vanity glorified himself as a god, and was smitten dead on the spot. Let us keep the dreadful majesty of God always before our eyes, and follow the example Christ has set for us—

"I seek not mine own glory . . . I seek not mine own will . . . If I honour myself, my honour is nothing. . . I seek His glory that sent me" (John 5:30; 7:18; 8:50-4).

Rain, like honour, is good, but how destructive and out of place at harvest-time! It can ruin the entire year's labours. And to bind a stone in a sling not only defeats one's purpose of conquering the enemy, but assures personal injury from one's own weapon. The lesson is probably not so much (as we might suppose) a warning not to give honour to a fool, but rather to make sure we ourselves are transformed from the natural fools that all men are, to spiritual wisdom, so God may safely and profitably give us honour and authority.

26: 3—"A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the fool 's back."

A whip, bridle and rod are used for guidance and correction. Each is necessary in guiding in the right way. Chastening and correction by God are necessary for us now, to drive out our natural foolishness, just as it is necessary to chastise children to keep them in right paths until maturing wisdom and love take over the task.

26: 4-5—"Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit."

This appears to be a contradiction, but when we consider it, we find it is not. Perhaps the thought is best explained by Solomon's words—

"To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven . . . a time to keep silence, and a time to speak" (Eccl. 3:1, 7).

In this we can consider Christ in his dealings with the Pharisees and the authorities. Many times he simply answered nothing: but at other times he answered them according to their own folly. His words were of life and truth, and they were silenced. In this we see the power of the Truth and the power of God. In all his words and actions Jesus sinned not, but always spoke in wisdom appropriate to the occasion. He is our perfect guide. We must answer a fool (or not) according as his folly requires; but we must not answer a fool in the spirit of, or on a level with, his folly. Who of us has not on occasion forgotten this, and by a foolish rejoinder has found himself humiliatingly trapped into apparent fellowship with worldly folly and worse?

26:11—"As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly."

The Scriptures make the rejection of God's Truth—turning again to the filthy world after coming to a knowledge of the holiness and purity of God's Way—very repulsive. In God's eyes, this is how we look if we decide to go our own way and just drift along with the world His enemy, after receiving His glorious and gracious invitation and promise. And it is not necessary for us to actually leave the Truth for this to happen. We can unconsciously be doing it *now*, while offering lip-service to God. To see if this is so with us, let us think of all the things of the world's ways we enjoy and do, when our minds should ever be full of spiritual things.

26:23—"Burning lips & a wicked heart are like a potsherd covered with silver dross."

As we have seen from 25:4, the silver vessels are the saints, purified and beautiful. Here Solomon speaks of those who do not heed God's purifying Truth. They are only an artificial *imitation* of the righteous. These are distinguished by their outward burning lips of pretence, and inward wicked heart full of perverseness. They are like a potsherd, or broken piece of pottery, glowing with the false disguise of silver refuse, of no use as vessels. The Hebrew root for potsherd (broken pottery) means to fabricate or devise in a bad sense. If we think and speak evil, while professing worship, we are in this category. If we face and overcome these evils within us, we are wise and good, unbroken vessels of true silver throughout, filled with God's Word. Out of our lips and heart will come forth only righteousness, goodness, joy and love. Unless this change occurs, we are—

"A potsherd covered with silver dross."

We *look* good, but in reality we are out of harmony with God. We act and look like silver, the redeemed, but we are earthen potsherds like the rest of the world. We are not inwardly *transformed*, but just outwardly plated over. In that condition the day of judgment will find us unworthy and unacceptable when God makes up His jewels.

27:1—"Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."

How often we are thoughtlessly guilty of this! How often we tell others or ourselves that tomorrow we are going to do a certain thing, all heedless of Solomon's caution. If we say or think such things, we are among Solomon's "fools," for we do not know the events of the next day, or even of the next moment. James wrote (4:13-14) —

"Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell and get gain.

"Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life?—even a vapour that appeareth for a little while, then vanisheth away!"

This present life is only temporal: the wise constantly keep this fact in mind, while the fool ignores it to his own destruction. We are always in the presence of death, but we act as though we expect to live forever. God looks after tomorrow. Let us look after today by using its precious moments to the full in growing and developing into the perfect man in Christ Jesus: each day should produce some measurable movement in this direction.

27:12—"A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on and are punished."

There are many and varied aspects in this verse that can be brought to light. The greatest lesson is that a true saint perceives and recognizes evil, and wisely shelters himself from it; gets as far from its influence and danger as he can. By using wisdom, he will not be found associated with evil, but only in God's glorious goodness and holiness. He sees the distinct line between right and wrong, wisdom and foolishness, life and death; and stays in the right. The simple (silly or foolish) pass on heedlessly over that line, and become bogged down with evil. They are trapped like Lot in Sodom, and the end result is their punishment and humiliation.

27:20—"Hell and destruction are never full . . ."

Hell (*sheol*: the grave) is never full. Daily it consumes, as mortal man dies and returns to dust, but there is always room for more—a continuous, endless flow of empty, finished lives. This fact should make us stop and think, in the midst of all our brave temporal plans: make us examine our lives and our actions of today, with the sobering knowledge that someday soon it will all end abruptly. Today is full of wonderful opportunity to seek and serve God; tomorrow may be sudden darkness. If Christ remains away, all of us will enter the grave, as we have seen so many of our close companions do already. When the end comes, will we be prepared? Will we be happy and satisfied with the record we have made? Will we be able to joyfully face our Judge? These are questions the wise will constantly ponder.

". . . so the eyes of man are never satisfied."

Just as the grave is never full, so the eyes (desires) of man are never satisfied. John calls it the "lust of the eyes," and tells us it—

". . . is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof" (1 John 2:16-17).

We must not waste our brief and precious lives with wanting and desiring the things we see and fancy around us. Such things are perishing. No matter how much we attain of what we behold, we will never find any real happiness

and satisfaction therein: there is always more to see and want. There is no true happiness in natural desire: it is a cheat and a sham that mocks us at the last. We must keep in mind that all the desirable things we see today are mere passing trinkets. We must lay hold of and keep that which is unseen (Heb. 11:1)—

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for: the evidence of things not seen."

"We look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen: for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:18).

28:13—"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

In this we are reminded of Adam who after sinning tried to hide from God. We remember also how Cain tried to conceal his sin; but God cannot be deceived. If we try to hide our sins, we only deceive ourselves for a time, then retribution will come. On the other hand, the Psalmist, though committing two of the gravest of sins, received mercy and forgiveness from God (though still grievously punished)—

"I acknowledge my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin" (Psa. 32:5).

By facing and confessing and forsaking our sins, we clear their great burden from us, we receive mercy and forgiveness and relief, and in the glorious new day, the gift of pure, sinless new life.

28:26—"He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool; but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered."

Have we learned this primary lesson of all lessons? If we drift along from day to day, trusting ourselves, doing what we want to do and what *we* think we should, *we are fools*. We are unable by ourselves to know how to walk wisely and righteously: the Scriptures tell us that over and over. If we desire to be delivered from the bondage of the foolish, from sin and death, we must walk *wisely*, and to walk wisely we must *seek, and find, and keep, divine wisdom*—

"But where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding" (Job 28:12, 28).

29:1—"He that being often reproveth hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

"Hardeneth his neck"—obstinately refuses counsel often called "stiff-necked." This is another evil natural reaction we all have to overcome. When we receive advice or criticism, the way of the flesh is to rebel, to defend ourselves, to refuse to listen, to strike back in anger and counter-charges. If we continue in this very natural way, we can never grow up into the spiritual man in Christ Jesus, but will finally be destroyed in our own conceit. We all make mistakes, we all err, and it is the course of wisdom to humbly listen to all voices of advice, friendly and unfriendly. All criticism has *some* value and usefulness. Even if it is biased and unfair, there will sure to be some element of truth in it from which we can learn. We should therefore be thankful for it, for it often reveals to us our dangerous and unsuspected blind spots. Of course the Scriptures are the surest, safest truest voice of counsel, and we should humbly study their searching criticism of our natural mind, and not react in the ugly way of the flesh.

"The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise. He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul; but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding" (Prov.15:31-32).

29:20—"Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? There is more hope of a fool than of him."

We must be reminded of this continually, because we will keep drifting back into the natural way of fools unless we keep these divine precepts before us. How often have we stupidly blurted out something before thinking, and then bitten our tongue in regret. The tongue, our words, are the hardest of all things to keep under control. But we *must* learn to control them (Matt. 12:37)—

"By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

We *must* learn the gentle, meek, self-controlled way of Christ if we hope to be accepted by him. It is fatal folly to just excuse ourselves by saying that's "just the way we are." The "way we are" naturally is the way of death. To control ourselves is not just an unreachable, fanciful ideal. It is an essential, required step, something that with God's help and guidance all of us *can attain*, and *must attain*: the promise is only to—

"Him that OVERCOMETH."

29:23—"A man's pride shall bring him low, but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit."

This is a striking principle; the opposite of the world's way. If we seek prominence and are lifted up in pride, we shall be abased: if we are lowly and humble, we shall be exalted and honoured. If we would have true honour, we must render lowly service. Christ himself both taught and exemplified this beautiful paradox that the way to rise in God's sight is to abase oneself, for this is true wisdom as we are of ourselves nothing and can do nothing. To aim for advancement and power and prominence is to manifest the proud folly of the flesh—

"The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister . . . whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" (Matt. 20:26-28).

There is deep wisdom here, worthy of meditation: submission and self-abasement is exaltation, and the true royalty is loving service.

30:8-9—"Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches: feed me with food convenient for me. Lest I be full and deny Thee, and say, Who is the Lord? Or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the Name of my God in vain."

Here we are told there is always danger of 2 extremes. It is important we keep a proper balance in all things. There are temptations in both riches and poverty, abundance and hunger. It is best to be content and thankful with the middle portion, which all of us in God's goodness have. God has blessed us with food and clothing and shelter as we need. In God's wisdom, it has not always been so with His people. For these things we should be grateful, and not lust after more, which may lead us to greater trials and temptations. "Having food and raiment, let us therewith be content," as Paul commands, and devote all our time and energies and interests to eternal things.

30:24-28—There be 4 things which are little upon earth, but they are exceeding wise: The ANTS are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer; the CONIES are but a feeble folk, yet they make their houses in the rocks; the LOCUSTS have no king, yet they go forth all of them by bands; the SPIDER taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces."

These 4 small creatures God has endued with ways of wisdom. We may learn profound lessons for our lives by considering these natural things. Ants: we have often observed the constant busy industry of these tiny labourers, working together in selfless and purposeful harmony. Conies or rock badgers: these weak and defenceless little animals wisely build their houses in the impregnable rocks. David in Psa. 14:18 points out this same fact. What is the lesson of wisdom? We should be building our houses on the Rock, God and Christ, not on shifting sands. Summing up his wonderful teachings in Matt. 5-7, he says:

"Whoso heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock" (Matt. 7:24).

Locusts: although they have no king, yet they sally forth a great and unified irresistible army. If these have the wisdom to work together with no leader, how much more should we work together for the welfare and benefit of the Truth and the Household, who have the greatest and best of all leaders!

The spider: tiny and of no consequence, yet wise in her dauntless persistence and the beautiful, delicate symmetry of the labours of her hands. She finds her way even into the gorgeous luxury of kings' palaces. Will we be found by our industry in the Palace of the Great King?

Considering these 4 together, we note that they are all small and insignificant, but still mighty and of great steadfastness in their diligent efforts. In this Solomon says they are exceeding wise. Are we? Are we—who are so much more greatly favoured, and so much more greatly endowed with the *potential* of wisdom—thus diligent in the blessed and joyful work of the Truth? Unless we work long and hard and *enthusiastically*, we will accomplish little or nothing. The reward is for the steady, earnest, persevering labourer: not for the foolish, the wishful, the idle, the self-pleasing and the self-satisfied.

Proverbs closes with the picture of the Virtuous Woman—

31:10—"Who can find a virtuous woman?"

The Virtuous Woman, the Bride of Christ, the Ecclesia—
"... for her price is far above rubies."

Her value is precious in the sight of God. Do we fit this description? Only they who do will be part of that glorious multitude—

- V. 12: *She does good and not evil all her life.*
13: *She seeks materials, and works willingly with her hands.*
15: *She riseth early, and provides for her household.*
16: *She extends her operations, and plants fruitful vineyards.*
17: *She girds her loins and strengthened herself continually.*
18: *She makes sure her productions are good, her candle is always shining.*
19: *She weaves her cloth and clothes her household.*
20: *She remembers the poor and needy, and provides for them.*
21: *She has well prepared, and has no fear of the outside elements.*
22: *She adorns herself with rich and honourable garments.*
23: *Her Husband sitteth in the gate of the City, among the Elders.*
25: *Strength and honour are her clothing; her future shall be rejoicing.*
26: *She always speaks with wisdom and kindness.*
27: *She takes good care of all her household: she is never idle.*
28: *She is praised and called blessed by her Husband and children.*
29: *She excelleth far above all the daughters.*
30: *She has true inner beauty; she feareth the Lord; she shall be praised.*
31: *She shall be given the reward of the fruit of her hands.*

Truly this all has a useful natural application, but it is quite clear that this beautiful conclusion to this marvellous book of divine instruction is primarily spiritual in its teaching. In all these varied aspects of wisdom, labour and excellence, the eye of faith will trace a deep spiritual meaning. Let us constantly strive to make our lives rich and productive and worthwhile in emulation of this ideal of bridehood and helpmeetship, that we may at last be a glorious element of the perfected Ecclesia of Christ throughout eternity. —D.C.

It Was of the Lord

"We are come down to bind thee, that we may deliver thee into the hands of the Philistines . . . Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us?"—Judges 15.11-12

SAMSON—JUDGES THIRTEEN TO SIXTEEN

OUR purpose in life is to be transformed from natural to spiritual—to be transformed by and to the teaching of the Word of God. Most of the teachings of the Bible are presented through the surroundings and the lives of real people: both of those who have accepted its teachings and lived by them, and those who have rejected and disobeyed them. We have many examples of both righteous and wicked individuals, from the beginning of the first book, Genesis—where we find the lives of Abel and Enoch, and also Cain—right down through the New Testament, containing the lives of Christ and Paul, and also Judas.

Overwhelmingly, they are the lives of Jews, of the nation of Israel, from Abraham to, 42 generations later, Christ and the 1st century age. Paul tells us that the lives of these people, righteous and wicked, were given to us as examples: 'written for our admonition' 1 Cor.10: 11, and for:

"Correction (and) instruction . . . that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

In Judges we have a portion of Israel's history, and the lives of individuals who judged Israel after they were settled in the land. Israel as a whole has, all through its ages, been disbelieving and weak. The few bright spots in the whole span of history are attributable to the lives of various judges, kings and prophets: a few particular men and women who came periodically through their history, and who struggled to be pillars of light and strength, examples and shepherds raised up in God's mercy to lead this disbelieving nation.

But when we read of the life of Samson, we do not quickly or clearly see a picture of another great man who stood as a pillar of righteousness: one who is outstanding among godly men. His life appears full of tragedy, and weakness after weakness. But he is mentioned in one other place in the entire Scriptures, outside these 4 chapters of Judges, and this one instance reveals the true, important picture of this man Samson. He is honourably listed with other faithful in Heb. 11.

What made Gideon, Barak and Jephthah outstanding individuals and saviours to Israel? That precious and peculiar quality which made these men pillars in Israel and unique in the earth, is the same feature that we must see thriving in the life of Samson as we read these sad chapters in Judges. It is simply explained: *they had a mighty faith*. Paul, in his "faith chapter," says Samson was a man of faith. And he further adds that he "obtained a good report" through that faith.

* * *

As Judges begins, we find Joshua, one of those shining pillars, has died. He had brought the children of Israel into the land, and had led the work in subduing a great portion of it. But that subjugation had not been completed at his death. There were many areas still possessed by the original inhabitants.

Judges 1 presents us with the continuation of the important task of *purifying the land* after Joshua their leader had died. So the question was asked after his death (v. 1)—

"Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them?"

The narrative tells us that Judah and Simeon went up, and they obtained a considerable amount of victory, but—

"Judah could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley" (v. 19).

Their success was not complete. We are told in this chapter that Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites; nor did Zebulun drive out the Kitronites; nor did Asher drive out the Acchoites. The same was the failure with Ephraim and Naphtali and Dan. *None of them went all the way*. They did not *completely* purify the land. And this one primary failure at the beginning would be a snare throughout their entire history. They would experience the principle that there will never be peace till there is purity. Perhaps this was a sad living prophecy of all who have lived in the Truth throughout the history of the world: that most of us would and will never *go all the way*. The essence of purity is the removal of all that is unclean: separation from the world and all its ways.

This first chapter of Judges would set the picture for Israel's future for ages to come. *Israel settled for toleration, mixture, half-measures*. Their periods of peace came only when one of these faithful pillars—as Deborah, Barak, Jephthah, Gideon — would be raised up and come on the scene, and give them victory over their enemies. At times through the history of these Judges, Israel would find themselves under foreign rulership and bondage to their enemies. But periodically, in the providence of God, a saviour would arise.

This is actually the sad condition in which we find Israel in Judges 13. They are in bondage to the Philistines: but this same chapter tells us of the birth of Samson, their next deliverer. This condition of bondage and its cause are described in v. 1 —

"The children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord delivered them into the hand of the Philistines 40 years."

Each generation of Israel since the giving of the Law knew of God's promise and warning through Moses, that if they would hearken to His voice and obey His Word, they would be blessed and be—

"High above all the nations of the earth" (Deut. 28:1).

And if they would not hearken and obey they would be cursed—

"Thou shalt serve thine enemies which the Lord shalt send against thee . . . and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck" (Deut. 28:48).

And so, in Judges 13, again because of their disobedience, they were in bitter servitude to their enemies. Here we find our first lesson in the chapter. This will be the principle on which the destiny of all will be based: the principle of *obedience and faith* working in our lives. Through repeated failure and experience, Israel was supposed to finally learn. But the majority never developed to that point, though God provided opportunity after opportunity.

Now, during our days of probation, the test is before us. Through our continually reading of Israel's repeated failures and their subsequent divine punishment, and sure certain; and through our gradual development, we also have the opportunity to learn and grow.

And because of our failures and sins, and our past bondage, God has provided a Saviour in His Son, of whom—as we shall see—Samson is a type to natural Israel. But this probated time of learning and development must finally make us learn, and must finally create that required *transformation of character*, or all is in vain.

* * *

In v. 2 Samson's father is introduced. His name is Manoah*, meaning *rest* or *quiet*. It would be through his seed that Israel would once more find rest and peace and quiet from their enemies.

* (It is the same name as Noah, with the prefix 'M' which appears to be either an intensive (Great Rest) or an attributive (For Rest). Can anyone give further information?)

In vs. 3-23 we see the prophesied birth of Samson from a barren woman, which is not a unique event in Scripture, though a very significant one. God has dealt similarly with other highly favoured women: women who would experience years of shame and sorrow due to their barrenness, but later would be blessed with bearing a child raised up for a peculiar and particular purpose with God.

Sarah would bare Isaac after many years of barrenness. Hannah, after God opened her womb, bore the illustrious Samuel. Elisabeth, the wife of Zecharias, would bear the Messiah's mighty forerunner John in her old age, after a lifetime of barrenness.

A second feature common to these incidents is the angelic appearance foretelling their future motherhood (in the case of Hannah, Eli the High Priest portrays the divine messenger). And both the years of barrenness and the divine prophecy of their birth were to be proof that the children of these women were being raised for a divine use.

The most outstanding case of a divinely-arranged birth is of course that concerning Mary, who would conceive a child miraculously as a virgin: this also being preceded by the angelic appearance and prophecy of the birth.

And in these verses before us in Judges 13 we have these 2 familiar occurrences: a barren woman and an angelic appearance, prophesying the birth and instructing Manoah's wife concerning her future son. In these verses we begin to see one of the greater lessons to be found in the life of Samson: the fact that he was to be a Nazarite, not just during a portion of his life, but (v. 7) from the womb to the day of his death. He shares this exclusive distinction with 2 other divinely energized births to barren women: those of Samuel and John.

This was an institution established by God under the Mosaic Law. A Nazarite was not to cut his hair; and he was not to drink wine or eat the fruit of the vine. Here the type begins to unfold in the life of Samson depicting the Bride of Christ. Certainly it also depicts a type of Christ himself, who was a Nazarite *spiritually* from his birth to the day of his death—a lifelong Nazariteship that never met defilement. But it is more striking and instructive that we see *ourselves* in Samson's lifelong Nazariteship, portraying the Bride who labours throughout life for that one preparation to meet the Bridegroom undefiled.

In Samson we see the Bride who, from the beginning of Nazariteship, sets her life on divine purposes and goals but is met by the power of sin, experiences of weakness, tragedy and sorrow, trial and tribulation, and a continual fight and struggle mixed with sad failure: but who, in the end, by faith made strong is made ready and prepared to meet the Bridegroom all cleansed and pure and beautiful.

Our Nazariteship begins at our watery birth: the new man comes out of the waters of baptism: a covenant, a vow, is made that we undertake to keep from the day of our birth to the day of our death.

Samson was never to drink wine or strong drink. His mental faculties were to be kept clear and undulled, in order to carry out the divine appointment. Wine is depicted in both a good and a bad sense in Scripture. Here the spiritual lesson is a command to abstain from something that is not good. We are quickly reminded of the wine of the Ecclesiastical Woman in Rev. 17, the Mother of Harlots who deceives and intoxicates the whole world with her wine.

Certainly we see the warning to the Bride concerning the Apostasy by which the ecclesial world has been made drunk. But we should see more than false *doctrine*. There are also a host of intoxicating false *practices*, the common Rome-based ways and customs of the world. In the spiritual sense we should see the injuriousness of all the things of the world that might dull our senses or fog our minds toward our divine appointment and single-minded purpose in life. The Nazarite was forbidden to partake of *anything* connected with the vine "from the kernel even to the husk." That is, we must keep from *every* aspect of the unfruitful works of darkness: we must keep our garments *completely* unspotted from the world. So we see the urgent force of the command for us which says (2 Cor. 6:17)—

"Come out from among them and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean."

Samson was never to cut his hair. As it grew longer and longer, it would become more and more noticeable, peculiar, reproachful to the natural eye, feminine and shameful in that it was on a man. He would experience this keenly as a growing boy. What does it signify? It signifies *unswerving faithfulness to Christ*: complete consecration and separation from the world will inevitably bring shame and reproach. It depicts our peculiarity in life: our

consistent devotion to God. Uncut, long hair would depict a new and different way of life, entirely unlike the world around (a contrast with the Jewish world *then*). It would be a permanent, outward, obvious sign to all: such a testimony is useful in letting our light steadily shine in the world.

When ch. 14 opens, Samson is a grown man. Actually there are only 2 basic episodes given us in the life of Samson, other than the brief 3-verse incident of Gaza: two events out of a whole lifetime, and a judgeship of 20 years. There are 2 events, and 2 women.

We are to keep in mind that Samson was specially raised up by God to do God's will in delivering Israel from the Philistines. He accomplished that purpose by God working in him, and in a certain sense by God manipulating him: not as a robot but as a willing agent acting in *faith*. In this, Samson's life presents us with 2 lessons. First, that we must realize it is God Who has called us: that we have likewise been specially raised up to carry out the purpose of *doing His will in the earth*. We are not our own, to do as we please. Secondly, that we must *let God work in us*, shape and develop and mould us, that His Word might manipulate us, not as robots but as willing agents with an understanding of His plan: not necessarily knowing what the future holds in current detail, but working and acting *by faith*.

The first episode opens (14:3) with Samson having seen a woman of Timnath, and desiring her to be his wife. She is one of the women of the uncircumcised Philistines, Israel's enemy. As we know, this was in opposition to the Law of Moses, and thus we see his parents deeply troubled, and asking him the question (v. 3)—

"Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines?"

Certainly this was a grief to his parents. But there was one fact they did not know, and this fact appears to be the key to understanding the actions of Samson, and therefore to understanding his life (v. 4)—

"But his father and his mother knew not that it was of the Lord, that He sought an occasion against the Philistines."

"It was of the Lord." Here is another of the numerous examples in Scripture as to how God works out His ways of providence, and how His unseen hand works through natural actions. Here we see Samson, touched by a natural admiration and attraction of a woman: a picture entirely according to nature, and we see that a perfectly natural influence may be used "of the Lord" in His eternal purposes.

Of course it all depends on whether God has anything to do with a matter, with this matter He had something to do. But we must keep in mind that with a 1000 other matters He may have nothing actively to do. We are His servants, and we are to simply act as obedient servants, and are not to be especially concerned *when* and *how* He is at work in a matter, and when He is not. We know and have faith that He constantly watches over all His children for their welfare and wellbeing. Our aim begins and ends with the desire to do the Lord's will in all things, committing our way to Him, in the determination to thankfully accept all things, good and bad, as being from His loving and wise hand—keeping in mind that even though an event seems quite natural and normal, that is no evidence it is not divine. The picture here of Samson is proof and an example that God's invisible hand works by such apparently "natural" events.

And the narrative will show us that by God entering the event of Samson taking this alien wife, *Samson will in the end gain victory*, though through much sorrow. This one act is the spark that creates a chain of events in which, as the end result, Samson has slain a host of the Philistine oppressors. Let us trace this chain: —

14:5-19. Samson goes to take his wife, at which time he feasts with the Philistines. Because the Philistines cannot solve his riddle, they work treachery with his wife and find the answer—an act which Samson terms 'plowing with his heifer.' Because of this dishonourable act with his wife, he goes with the Spirit of the Lord upon him to Ashkelon, where he slays 30 men for their spoil to pay off the Philistines. Then he immediately returns to his father's house (v. 19).

15:1-5. Because Samson's wife is given to another (whom he had treated as a friend), he burns the Philistines' harvests.

15:6-8. Because of this, the Philistines burn his wife and her father, for which Samson smites them "hip and thigh with a great slaughter."

15:9-10. Because of this, the Philistines arm themselves to come in revenge to capture and punish Samson.

15:11-19. When fearful, disbelieving, unfaithful Israel learn of the coming of the Philistines' armies, they bind Samson and cravenly deliver him over to the enemy. But again by the power of God, and with the jawbone of an ass, he slays another 1000 of the enemy.

So we see that, because God worked through a natural influence of Samson, Samson—at the end of this episode and in God's manipulation upon him—has dealt punishment upon the enemy on four different occasions. He is executing God's will and delivering Israel.

But in relation to Samson taking this alien wife outside the Law, we must not see it as God *causing* Samson to sin to carry out His will. We must spiritually perceive that we may not do, or justify, evil that good may come; but that God has many times brought His good out of man's evil. (In passing, perhaps we vaguely see Samson in this event as a type of Christ in some aspects: Samson going outside the Law, ending as a victor; Christ going outside the Law—'without the camp'—and (sinlessly) coming under its condemnation to bring salvation).

In the death of Christ we see the greatest example of God bringing good out of evil. The righteous, obedient, innocent Christ is despicably betrayed, dishonestly convicted, and cruelly killed—all of the greatest depths of vicious evil—yet we see that in God's wisdom and love, our salvation from death hinged upon that death.

We see further another case in Joseph. He is sold into slavery because of the natural fleshly jealousy of his wicked brethren, but God entered upon the actions of their natural tendencies so that because of Joseph's plight and dishonest conviction and punishment, in the end he would bring salvation to himself, his brethren and their kinsmen. God in His foreknowledge can and does bring good out of evil.

* * *

There are doubtless many other deep spiritual lessons in these 2 chapters. Surely there must be something significant in the riddle—

"Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness."

—sustenance for life coming forth out of the slain destroyer; and sweetness coming forth from strength.

Samson's name means 'little sun.' He was not *the* Sun, but a lesser, typical, representative sun. He thus portrays the future Saviour who is "THE Sun of Righteousness," as Malachi prophesies (4:2)—

"Unto you that fear My Name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings."

Perhaps we are to see Samson again as a type of Christ in 15:11-14, as some of the incidents of Samson's betrayal are similar to those of Christ's. In v. 11 we see a sad picture: the same picture we would see of Christ 1200 years later. Why could not Israel see that this man was a man of God? He came with great power and strength as a God-provided saviour from their enemies that oppressed them. Both he and Christ did wondrous miracles, yet Israel stayed in unbelief and faithlessness. Here we actually see Samson being "despised and rejected" by his own countrymen. He was forsaken and alone among them—

15:12—"We are come down to bind thee, that we may deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines."

And 1200 years later Israel *had not YET learned*. As Jesus prayed in the Garden, a vicious mob came with swords and staves. Hard-hearted Israel—disbelieving Israel—would again deliver their Saviour over to the enemy: an enemy who had them in subjection and bondage!

15:11—"Knowest thou not that the Philistines are RULERS over us?"

Fearful, faithless Israel—supposedly Yahweh's bold witness to the world—cravenly acknowledging as *their only ruler* these unclean Philistines: pagans and idolaters! And centuries later they would deliver up another Saviour, acknowledging as *their only ruler* Caesar: the pagan and idolatrous Romans—

"We have no king but Caesar!" (John 19:15).

The Israelites say to Samson—

15:13—"We will bind thee fast and deliver thee into their hand, but surely we will not kill thee."

So Samson was delivered into the hands of sinful men by his own faithless and treacherous countrymen. And thus we see Jesus—

"The Son of man ... delivered into the hands of sinful men" (Luke 24:7).

As Israel at that time had no power or authority to put to death, so Jesus was given over to the Romans for execution.

But why did Samson yield?—a man who possessed so much power. For the same reason that Christ yielded: they were born to perform the will of God. That was their object and goal in life. Samson could easily have freed

himself from the Israelites, but in faith he submitted and allowed himself to be delivered bound to his deadly enemies. And as the mob was taking Jesus away, he would say—

"Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than 12 legions of angels?" (Matt. 26:53).

But both went in *faith* and *obedience*—

"Not my will but Thine be done."

Perhaps the cords with which Samson was bound represent not just a picture of the bondage of death, but of death and resurrection—for both the binding and the breaking off are significant. (Judges 16 will foreshadow the necessity of death for victory, but without a type of resurrection). Death alone would not have been victorious for Christ, so we see here in 15:13-14 that Samson is bound with cords of death ('new cords' = *new* sepulchre of Joseph). But in v. 14 the *Spirit of the Lord* comes mightily upon him, and these cords or bonds of death can no longer hold him. So he rises to victory over his enemies.

15:14—"And when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him."

It is here at Lehi that Samson finds the jawbone and slays the enemy. Lehi means "jawbone," and apparently it was a place of bones. Jesus was delivered to the enemy and taken to Golgotha, meaning "skull hill" or "place of skulls." It was at that place of bones that Jesus was victorious over his enemies: it was there he destroyed the great enemy:

"Him that hath the power of death" (Heb. 2:14).

* * *

Ch.16 is the second and last episode in Samson's life. The story of Samson and Delilah is not a romantic one. It is a sad and cruel story of folly and treachery, and it presents lessons both natural and spiritual. Samson's experience with his wife (chs. 14-15) contained much sorrow and grief, but his dealing with the false Delilah struck tragedy.

Samson again, by natural influence, is attracted to Delilah who, from the location and the circumstances seems certainly to have been a Philistine. But this time the situation was more foolish and dangerous. This Nazarite unto God is attracted to a harlot who lives in the valley of Sorek—*vineyard*." She was surrounded by the fruit of the vine.

It was through Samson's keeping his Nazariteship that his hair was never cut. And it was through his uncut hair that he showed his unswerving faith. And it was through his unswerving faith that God continued to provide him with strength. And now we see this Nazarite, by the weakness of the flesh, being led into the valley of grapes, from which he had been commanded to keep strictly separate. We are quickly reminded of another harlot, the Ecclesiastical Woman—

"With whom all the kings of the earth have committed fornication" (Rev. 17:2).

—and with her Sorek-wine she has made the whole earth drunk.

But there is another lesson here; a brighter, happier lesson: the principle that in weakness a faithful man can be made strong. Samson is a living example of being made strong through weakness, because Paul says he "*died in faith!*" Likewise Paul says of himself—

"I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions for Christ's sake: for *when I am weak, then am I strong*" (2 Cor. 12:10).

And he stated further in that "faith chapter" that all these pillars—

"Through faith subdued kingdoms, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire . . . *out of weakness were made strong*" (Heb. 11:33-34)

So Samson is seen joining himself to a woman of the world who could not rest until she had broken down the sacred bond of faith and obedience between him and God—

16:6—"Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth."

Through his voluntary association with the temptress, Samson was worn down and finally persuaded by continual contention, until at last he foolishly gave in against his better judgment, *for the sake of "peace."* And as he all unawaredly slept and slumbered in this valley of vineyards, he lost his Nazariteship. And "*peace*" never came.

His suffering and punishment were great They cruelly put out his eyes, and he was used as sport to the glory of their idol Dagon, and to the jeering mockery of the heathen.

But this most miserable period of Samson's life was his most profitable and developing. He had kept the faith: and he was learning obedience by the things he was suffering. The loss of his natural vision opened the eyes of his understanding. And his hair again began to grow. A renewed vow: a strengthened faith: and Samson is led to the temple arena. Perhaps in this picture—in the last days of his life—we are reminded of Paul's words in his final days — "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; *I have kept the faith*. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness" (2 Tim.4:6-8).

And thus Samson takes hold and pulls down the pillars of the idol temple. And the life of Samson ended.

To the natural eye, Samson is seen as a man with glorious aims, but who died as a captive in defeat. His life was filled with anguish, grief and hardship; and in the end he was reviled and despised and a spectacle of shame. The natural eye cannot see a man obtaining victory if he must likewise die as the enemy. But the fact is seen by the spiritual eye that *he accomplished God's purpose*, and thus his glorious aim was reached. All the great men of the Philistines were destroyed in Samson's death, and this oppressor did not trouble Israel again for many years.

16:30—"The dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life."

And we see the same picture in the antitype, Christ. To the natural eye, and even to present day historians, he is seen as a man with glorious aims: but who died in misery and defeat. In the end he was reviled, mocked and despised, and was made a spectacle of shame on a humiliating cross. But the fact is seen by the spiritual eye that *he accomplished his purpose*—he accomplished *God's purpose*: and so his glorious aim was reached.

The picture of these 2 men is clear. It was not a life of defeat for Samson or for Christ. Through death they obtained the victory. —C.S.

Current Events Fulfilling Prophecy

BREAKUP OF CANADA? Astonishing victory of political party pledged to take Quebec out of Canada & make it independent nation shook Canada to its foundation in mid-November. Points to long stretch of political instability. Canada has already lost much of appeal to US & other investors: now even less attractive. Result was sharp setback to Trudeau. (USN 11:29)

* * *

If a majority votes Yes in a separation referendum, Canada could be Pakistanized. Economically depressed Maritimes separated from Ontario & West by over 300 miles of alien territory. (Tm 11:29).

* * *

Trudeau—whose govt. was in deep trouble after series of Cabinet resignations, unpopular wage-price controls & English-speaking backlash against forced expansion of French language use—viewed Quebec election with dismay. Separation not expected, but 'regionalization' likely. If Quebec gets regionalization, some western provinces, convinced they're being drained of wealth by federal govt., may follow Quebec lead. If this trend develops, western provinces will be tempted by US, Maritimes will be cast adrift, Ontario will lose its markets in rest of Canada & be forced into greater dependence on US. (Nwk 11:29).

THE newsmagazines paint a dark picture, which may or may not materialize. Levesque & his Separatist Party got 41% of the vote, & 69 of the 110 Quebec Parliament seats—a very firm control. Quebec is Canada's largest province, & has 6 million people—1/4 of Canada's population. 4.8 million are French-speaking; 800,000 English-speaking; 400,000 recent immigrants from Europe. The current (now-ousted) Liberal govt. (same party as Trudeau), to curry French favour, in '74 passed a law forcing all children who could not speak fluent English into French schools. The manoeuvre didn't increase their French vote, & alienated the English & foreign, helping to lose them the election.

Levesque's election does not indicate separation soon, or even ever. Recent polls show 20% for separation, 60% opposed. But it does indicate increased friction & disunity & weakened central govt. Quebec has 10% unemployed, & gets more federal aid than it pays taxes. If it ever separates, it would probably seek union with France. If Quebec left, rest of Canada would be hard to hold together: there are already strong & diverse regional interests.

Quebec is legitimately French by all rules except that of the gun, which triumphed here, as it did in India and So. Africa, the more militant British driving out the French & Dutch. Quebec has never reconciled itself to British dominion, imposed by force with Wolfe's victory in 1759. Before that, France was well on the

way to a dominant position in N. America, having explored and settled more area than any other nation. Quebec's hostility represents 200 years of accumulated French resentment & hatred. It bodes ill for Canada.

RHODESIA. The Geneva Conference between Whites & Blacks for the orderly transfer of power to the "majority" drags on. It took a month—filled mostly with wild & meaningless rhetoric—to tentatively settle one minor point: whether the transfer should take 1 or 2yrs. A compromise of 1½ yrs. was finally accepted. The demand is for "majority rule," which is a deceptive catch-phrase, as (with perhaps 1 or 2 very minor & precarious exceptions) there is no majority rule in any of the 40-odd nations of Africa, Black or White.

There are half a dozen Black factions battling for control of Rhodesia, & some of them are very obviously (& for good reason) not at all keen on elections, or of allowing sufficient time to prepare for informed and effective elections. Newsweek says—

The Blacks are still struggling for power among themselves. Each Black leader is using the conference as a device to have himself selected as leader of an independent Zimbabwe (Black name for Rhodesia).

The favourite to become Zimbabwe's first leader is Joshua Nkomo, father of Rhodesian nationalism, who has spent 11 yrs. in prison for his political activities. His grass-roots political organization is envied by every other Black leader. But he belongs to the Ndebele tribe, which accounts for only 15% of Rhodesia's 6 million Blacks. (**Tribal identity is very important in Black Africa**).

One of the other Black leaders in Geneva, Ndabaningi Sithole, broke away from Nkomo's relatively moderate ZAPU in '63 to form the rival ZANU party. For 13 years they have been bitterly opposed. But Sithole's influence has waned.

A greater threat to Nkomo is Bishop Muzorewa who also appeals to the majority of Blacks who want a peaceful transition: he belongs to the largest tribe.

With his violent rhetoric & Marxist politics, Robert Mugabe is the wild card of the conference. He has few followers inside Rhodesia, and he is far from being the undisputed leader of the widely dispersed and faction-ridden guerrillas operating from bases outside the country. (Nwk 11:15)

Mugabe appears to be Russia's entry in the Rhodesia sweepstakes. He is the noisiest & most intransigent, but the others have to conciliate him for fear of being regarded as weak collaborators with the Whites. He clearly would prefer Russian guns to Rhodesian ballots. If the conference founders, & war follows, he could be a principal reason.

Actually, Rhodesian Blacks are better off than those in the surrounding Black dictatorships, but that is not to deny the fact that they do not fairly share the country's wealth & opportunities. The whole economy has been geared to White privilege & Black disadvantage.

The whole conference could turn out to be a meaningless, time-marking charade, like the Paris peace talks on Vietnam. The end could well be just one more Black dictatorship, and possibly another Russian beachhead in Africa, like Angola & Mozambique. As the conference sputters on inconclusively, the war intensifies. Time says (11:15)—

October was bloodiest month in the nearly 4 years of fighting, with a death toll of 181 guerrillas, 20 soldiers, 12 White & 88 Black civilians. In retaliation for the accelerated insurgency, Rhodesian forces swept at least 50 miles into Mozambique to strike at guerrilla camps, killing at least 500.

The guerrillas are building their forces and armaments, happily supplied by Russia, and with the support, blessing & refuge of the surrounding Black dictatorships. The intensity of the war is increasing, & is bound to increase. We watch these developments with interest, as it is part of the overall Gog-Tarshish skirmishing & conflict.

LEBANON CIVIL WAR ENDS. Rebuilding has already begun. Syria—the geographical King of the North & Israel's bitter enemy—is in full control. A long-time Syrian ambition has been realized, & Israel has another hostile border. Syria rules the whole country except a narrow 15-mile wide strip along Israel's frontier. Israel threatens military action if Syrian troops come any closer. Tension is building as US tries to mediate. The Palestinians guerrillas are clamouring to be allowed back to their southern border positions where they can again attack and harass Israel.

Israel had threatened intervention if Syria intervened in the war, but it was all done so gradually, and ostensibly in the name of "peace-keeping" that Israel was left helplessly watching while Syria took control of the country. Now the Arabs have brought the war to an end, and have achieved a semblance of unity, Israel is again in the lone spotlight.

Syria has been authorized by the Arab powers to disarm both the Christians & the Palestinians. Both are resisting, but they seem to have little choice in the long run. All indications are that Syria is in Lebanon to stay. It will be up to her to rebuild the Lebanese army & internal security forces, & they will obviously be after her image & under her control.

Arab & world attention now is swinging back to the basic Mideast problem, so long diverted by the Lebanese crisis; and the overwhelming consensus is to force Israel back to the 1967 borders and out of Jerusalem, & to set up a Palestinian state in the West Bank & Gaza strip. That would render Israel strategically indefensible. Israel faces hard choices. US has a new President: a new Mideast policy will be needed. Perhaps the time has come for specific US-guaranteed borders for Israel. Somehow the 'dwelling without bars and gates' must be brought about before the final stage. It should be an interesting year. According to Time (11:29), Sadat now says—

"I am in favour of signing a document formally, legally, publicly ending the state of belligerency between Egypt & Israel. I would insist on complete Israeli withdrawal from occupied Arab territory & establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank & Gaza. If the Israelites don't take my word that I will allow free shipping in the Gulf of Aqaba, I am willing to accept a UN force. Also, I am willing to accept a UN force along our frontier."

There will be intense pressure on Israel to accept this. The Israeli withdrawal from all the strategic territory would be permanent & irreversible. The documents & promises & guarantees would be worth as much as any international guarantees have ever been worth, which is nothing. UN is now very anti-Israel: a UN force would be no assurance for her. Perhaps Sadat is sincere. We expect Egypt to be an ally at the end. But we know there are others to whom an exposed Israel would be a constant temptation. And will Israel ever voluntarily give us Old Jerusalem, which is part of the demanded conditions? Jerusalem is to be in the hands of Israel when the nations come against her: this would certainly seem of necessity to include Old Jerusalem, the basic, original site. We watch with great interest.

WAR IN SPACE. A terrifying new dimension is being added to what has always been man's most popular activity, and the one on which he has spent and is spending the most treasure and ingenuity—war, devastation, destruction. Newsweek says (11:29)—

Within the last year, Russia has tested devices that can cripple or destroy satellites in space. US is working in the same direction. Military analysts are beginning to take seriously the notion that one day war maybe fought in space. Armies, navies & air forces now are heavily dependent on space technology; they use satellites for communications, surveillance and navigation by bombers and warships. By '80s a full-blown war in space could leap off the drawing boards.

The battle for control of space could determine outcome of a war on earth by crippling one side so badly it would be forced to surrender.

New computers, guidance systems, sensors & lasers have created a breed of "one shot, one kill" weapons. The stunning kill rate of tanks & other vehicles by "smart bombs" & wire-guided missiles during the '73 Mideast war gave an early hint of changes to come.

It is now possible to build hunter-killer satellites that can stalk enemy spacecraft & destroy them. Russian hunter-killer satellites pose the greatest immediate threat to US in space. Beginning in '67 Russia conducted a series of 16 experiments with such satellites. Last February, they resumed hunter-killer testing with a new series of 5 shots, now a note of worry has crept into US statements. Pentagon says "We are making aggressive basic technology research efforts to protect out satellites from this Russian threat."

By the '80s the laser may be the basic weapon in space. There is strong evidence that Russia used lasers last year to temporarily blind US early-warning satellites. In the past 5 years technology has taken a spectacular leap forward with the development of high-intensity chemical lasers that could be put in orbit. Chemical lasers have produced pulses of 200 billion watts for 20-billionths of a second. Even so short a burst can vaporize metal and produce destructive shock waves. The chemical laser will be a revolutionary weapon. Its beam flies dead straight to its target at the speed of light—making it easy to aim & almost impossible to dodge. US is believed to be ahead in lasers. Russia may have a strong lead in hunter-killer techniques.

The Pentagon's Director of Research says: "Russia has seized the initiative in an area we hoped would be left untapped. They have opened space as a new dimension for warfare, with all that implies. I would warn them they have started down a dangerous road." Just how far the Pentagon plans to go down that road is a military secret, but clearly the journey has begun.

Surely we must be everlastingly thankful that a wise God and not maniac man is in final control of events, & will let man go just so far. This diabolic & criminal folly—heart-failing as it must be to the thoughtful of the world—is to us a sure sign that the end must be very near. In his blind, Frankenstein tampering with forces far beyond the puny capacity of his animal intellect, man is now achieving in his evil way what he has long striven toward—the capacity to destroy the race & the whole global living environment. And coming to more down to earthly, but possibly just as ominous statistics—

The proposed XM-1 tank would help US counter Russia's huge armoured force: 40,000 tanks compared with US's 8300. And 600 to 700 of Russia's are the new T-72 models already in service: faster, more powerful & more

heavily armed than anything US has. The proposed XM-1 generally equals or outstrips the T-72. Production could start by late 1979 or 1980. (Nwk 11:22)

This seems hardly reassuring. The tank is today's basic land weapon. Russia has nearly 5 times as many as US. And Russia has already built up to 700 of an advanced model that US will begin in late 1979 to build a model to compete with. And the comparison is hardly encouraging either: the Russian tank has a bigger gun, longer range, a smaller crew, and faster, automatic loading to US's manual loading. Apart from any considerations of prophecy, this and other similar items give evidence that Russia is straining every effort to gear itself for a global blitzkrieg far exceeding anything Hitler ever dreamed of. How well we remember how Hitler prepared, & Churchill screamed warnings but was laughed to scorn by the bumbling "statesmen" of that day who babbled of "Peace in our time."

Questions

		WHAT DID CHRIST SAY TO?—	
1. Paul	11. Martha	21. Tempter	31. Nobleman
2. Peter	12. The sea	22. Caiaphas	32. Sadducees
3. Thief	13. Fig tree	23. Pharisees	33. Magdalene
4. Pilate	14. Cleopas	24. Zaccheus	34. His mother
5. Judas	15. Lazarus	25. The leper	35. Deaf man
6. Philip	16. Ananias	26. Jerusalem	36. Nicodemus
7. Jairus	17. Andrew	27. Bartimeus	37. His parents
8. Herod	18. Thomas	28. Centurion	38. Capernaum
9. Simon	19. A scribe	29. Nathanael	39. Palsied man
10. Legion	20. Lawyers	30. Nazarenes	40. The women
			41. The seventy
			42. Widow's son
			43. His brethren
			44. John Baptist
			45. Syrophenician
			46. Moneychangers
			47. Jairus' daughter
			48. Disciples rowing
			49. Rich young man
			50. Epileptic's father
			51. Judas not Iscariot
			52. Samaritan woman
			53. Woman in adultery
			54. Goodman of house

ANSWERS

It is I	Come and see	Ye shall not see—	Woman, where are —
Reach	Take up thy—	Receive thy sight	Thou shalt be with—
All hail!	He is a chosen	To this end was—	Many widows were—
I do cures	Suffer it to be	Woman, behold—	I am the resurrection
Ephphatha	Thy son liveth	Woman, great is—	My grace is sufficient
Wist ye not	Go ye up unto	That thou doest—	Then are the children
No man eat	I spake openly	Thou art not far—	O faithless generation
Come forth	Salute no man	For the hardness—	Fear not, believe only
Come down	Woman, why—	Woe unto you also	I will come and heal—
Talitha cumi	Get thee hence	My time is at hand	Thou shalt see greater
Peace be still	Ye do err, not	Young man, I say	Seest thou this woman
What things?	Have I been so—	Woman, believe me	Show how great things
Offer the gift	If a man love me	Art thou a master—	Thou shalt be
	One thing thou—	My house shall be—	brought down

September Answers

1. Paul, Saul, Shimei—Benjamites
2. Nabal, Lot, Noah—Drunken
3. Dagon, Bel, Molech—Idol gods
4. Saul, Judas, Ahithophel—Suicides
5. Amos, Gad, Ahijah—Prophets
6. Ham, Shem, Japheth—Brothers
7. Cyrus, John, Josiah—Pre-birth name
8. Peter, James, John—Apostles
9. Lois, Eunice, Timothy—3 generations
10. Jubal, David, Asaph—Musicians
11. Doeg, Herod, Esau—Edomites
12. Shebna, Ezra, Baruch—Scribes
13. Paul, Balaam, Peter—Trances
14. Noah, Daniel, Job—Ezek. 14:14
15. Festus, Pilate, Felix—Rom. governors
16. Paul, Priscilla, Aquila—Tentmakers
17. Mary, Martha, Lazarus—Siblings

Add 3rd person:

something in common

27. Aaron, Eleazar, Phinehas—3 generations
28. Simon, Cephas, Peter—Same person
29. Ezra, Hezekiah, Josiah—Famous Passovers
30. Uzziah, Miriam, Naaman—Lepers
31. Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar—Job friends
32. Sarah, Rebekah, Leah—Patriarchs' wives
33. Ehud, Shamgar, Othniel—Judges
34. Deborah, Anna, Huldah—Prophetesses
35. Paul, Bartimeus, Elymas—Blind
36. Achan, Stephen, Naboth—Stoned
37. Joseph, Jeremiah, Samson—In prison
38. Dorcas, Lazarus, Eutychus—Raised
39. David, Solomon, Rehoboam—Judah kings
40. Reuben, Simeon, Levi—Brothers
41. Shishak, Hophra, Necho—Pharaohs
42. Joanna, Susanna, Salome—Ministered
43. Absalom, Amasa, Abner—Joab killed
44. Sosthenes, Jairus, Crispus—Synagogue rulers
45. Rachel, Elisabeth, Sarah—Barren

18. Joab, Abishai, Asahel—Brothers
19. John, Samuel, Samson—Nazarites
20. Crispus, Gaius, Stephanas—Paul baptized
21. Samson, Mary, Absalom—Famous hair
22. Adam, Samson, Sisera—Women deceived
23. Justus, Joseph, Barsabas—Same person
24. Jephthah, Saul, Herod—Rash oaths
25. David, Samson, Benaiah—Killed lions
26. Kezia, Jemima, Kerenhappuch—Job daughters

46. Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem—Nehemiah foes
47. Absalom, Amnon, Adonijah—Brothers
48. Amraphel, Arioch, Tidal—Gen. 14 kings
49. Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah—Daniel friends
50. Candace, Athaliah, Esther—Queens
51. Abigail, Bathsheba, Ahinoam—David wives
52. Tiberius, Augustus, Claudius—Caesars
53. Jehoiachin, Coniah, Jeconiah—same person
54. Timothy, Philemon, Titus—Paul epistles to

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