Articles by Leslie S. Rainey

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Slander (October 1968)

From Food for the Flock, October 1968.

Psalm 7:1 - 17

In the course of Christian experience there are occasions when the man after God's own heart is subject to slander. In the days of David it was certainly true as the Psalmist depicts. One expects to meet it in this lawless age, but how sad when it is tolerated and even engaged in among the people of God.

One thing we are persuaded of is that slander is devilish, and the characteristic of the "father of lies." In the oldest book of the Bible, Satan is seen marking out Job and slanderously charging him with an ulterior motive in serving God. So it is in the Psalm before us when Cush seeks to undermine the testimony of David.

The slanderer is associated with the person "that hath an high look" and a "proud heart" (Psa. 101:5). It is like the colour scarlet, double dyed; it consists of hatred in the heart and an untruth on the tongue. Slander is listed as one of the four cardinal sins and is called the "third tongue" because it slays three people — "the speaker, the spoken to, and the spoken of." It is worse than the criminal offence of stealing money, because it can never be made good, while money can be returned. The reputation of a man may be savagely shattered by an evil tongue. Thus men of honour will supremely value a good man, valiantly defend a fine reputation, and scornfully silence all unproved rumours. It takes a lifetime to build a reputation and yet some would destroy it in a few hours. A man's name is so precious

that the person who slanders it should be loathed. We should shun a slanderer as we do a rattlesnake or a deadly plague.

How necessary to follow the example of David who appealed to God with a conscience void of offence in the matter! David declared not that he is without sin, but that he is falsely accused (vv. 3-5). May God deliver us from acting as Ziba did towards Mephibosheth (II Sam. 19:27), and serve God "with reverence and godly fear."

Another thing about slander is, it brings division. It is the work of the Evil One to scatter and separate the children of God. We play into the devil's hands and become an accomplice in his schemes when we fail to act righteously in a matter spoken or suggested which undermines the testimony of a fellow Christian. Only recently in visiting various Islands of the Sea, we have seen the awful damage caused by slander and the far reaching effect. "A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city" (Prov. 18:19).

Some one has said, "Slander is perhaps the only vice which no circumstances can alleviate as well as being one which we are most congenial in concealing from ourselves. Another has said, "Slander is a poison which extinguishes virtue, both in the slanderer and in the person who listens to it; so that a single calumny may prove fatal to an indefinite number of souls; since it not only kills those who circulate it, but also those who do not reject it." Said Basater [?], "Close thine ear against him that would open his mouth secretly against another. If thou receivest not his words, they fly back and wound the reporter; if thou dost receive them, they fly forward and wound the receiver." "When a mean wretch cannot

vie with another in virtue, out of his wickedness he begins to slander. The envious wretch will slander the virtuous man when he is absent, but when brought face to face, his loquacious tongue becomes dumb."

What then can be done in the midst of such conditions prevalent in Christian circles? Thank God we can be delivered from such wicked work. Learn the lesson of Psalm 7. Even though false accusation is grievous to bear and often is the lot of the Christian, we can do as David did, go to God about the matter. He is still the judge among His people and His law of retribution works with marvellous exactness and severity. "He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate (vv. 15, 16).

Meanwhile we should, upon hearing something that has been perhaps perverted, twisted and added to, ask ourselves: "Is it true? Is it kind? Is it necessary?" Or again, remember the maxim: "The tattler who tattles to you will tattle about you; don't listen in."

May God deliver us then from being tools of the devil and in spite of trying circumstances seek to preserve a "conscience void of offence towards God and towards men," and in this present evil age, glorify God, in practice (v. 8) and in praise (v.17).

The Walk of Faith (July–August 1971)

From Ministry in Focus, July–August 1971.

Editor's note: Leslie S. Rainey is a missionary. He served the Lord in Palestine until refused a renewal of his visa. He is the author of several books especially prepared for college students in Zambia, the country in which he now labours. We always appreciate his thoughtful ministry.

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 11:5

Enoch brings before us the walk of faith. This is God's purpose in relation to man, for walking with God implies faith in Him and fellowship with Him. In Genesis five there is portrayed a catalogue of antideluvian longevities who are overtaken by the cold clutch of death. Yet in the history of Enoch death is not experienced but escaped. Enoch believed in the event that in the minds of the people of his generation would not likely take place. That event was the coming to earth again of the Lord Jesus Christ with His saints to execute judgment upon the ungodly (Jude 14-15). Enoch proved it was possible to walk by faith and live in the light of His coming. In his life is observed the possession, persistence, and progress of faith. The hope set before him was born of faith. In the corruption of his age, Enoch steadily walked with God, he witnessed for God, and was well pleasing to God. In our generation the same principle is to be applied, "for without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him (Heb. 11:6). Enoch was fully persuaded in the Word of God and the necessity of faith as essential to pleasing God. Not only must we

believe God exists but also that He is energetic and active on behalf of men. Even the word "cometh" as used in this verse so closely linked with the biography of Enoch, is suggestive of worship in its sevenfold usage. Inasmuch as we seek after God with all diligence, we shall prove God's wisdom and wealth, and our attitude and actions in the present will be controlled by absolute confidence in things pertaining to the future. "And every man that hath this hope in Him (the Lord Jesus) purifieth himself, even as He is pure (1 John 3:3).

The Work of Faith

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 11:7

The salvation of Noah in the ark is summed up here. In Noah we see how faith works. The divine oracle warned him beforehand of what was coming. Both here and Matthew 2:12 the statement is translated "warned of God," although it may be rendered as "divinely instructed" (Heb. 8:5). Noah's faith led him to fear. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and directly men begin to listen to God, they fear because of sin and wrath. Noah did not wait to see - "he was warned of things not seen as yet." Noah obeyed the voice of God and set to work. Day by day he wrought in the ark proving his obedience to what the Lord had said. His action had a double effect. He saved his household and condemned the world around him. As a preacher of righteousness he warned the people of his day and left on record a spiritual legacy for all who fear God. His righteousness was not a hope for the future but a real present possession by the gift of God. Thus in the study of these men of faith we note that it is faith that opens the way to God (v. 4); it is faith that secures our walk

with God (v. 5); it is faith that works and witnesses for God (v. 9); and it is faith that leads us on to enjoy the wealth of God whose Word declares, 'Without faith it is impossible to please God.'

Few men of modern times have been given to know the meaning of faith in personal experience more than was George Mueller, the founder of the Orphan Homes, of Bristol, England. Mueller's whole life and life's work were a demonstration of implicit faith in God and His unfailing faithfulness.

Mr. Mueller often likened faith to some of the organs of the body. Faith, he would say is the eye, for by it we look to the Lord Jesus. An eye that is dim is still an eye, and an eye, though it be tear-filled, is an eye none-the-less.

Faith is the foot also, for by faith we go to the Lord Jesus. A foot that is lame is still a foot. It may cause a halting walk and delay progress, yet it does not prevent eventual arrival at a set destination. He who walks slowly, nevertheless walks.

Faith is the hand with which we lay hold of the Lord Jesus. A hand may tremble, but it is still a hand. It was a trembling hand that touched the hem of the Saviour's garment, yet that faith resulted in the healing of a stricken body.

Faith, then, is that disposition of trust that looks toward Christ, walks to Christ, and lays hold of Christ, finding in Him the answer to every need. It is founded not upon feelings but upon the promises of God; and His word cannot fail.

Can You Identify These Christians? (March–April 1972)

From Ministry in Focus, March–April 1972.

Editor's note: We are pleased to have another pithy paper from Leslie S. Rainey, a missionary to Zambia. This article provides a measuring line to use on our own spiritual stature.

Scripture Reading III John 1:1-14

In the Third Epistle of John the Spirit of God paints the portraits of three men found in many local churches of the twentieth century. They may be classified: Gaius, the receiver of the brethren; Diotrephes, the rejector of the brethren; and Demetrius, the reviver of the brethren.

Gaius

How refreshing to meet this brother in the local church! The Apostle writes with great affection of this brother because of his spiritual health (vs. 1, 2); his loyal help in the truth (v. 3); and his gracious hospitality in the home (vs. 5, 6). Are we acquainted with this good brother in the assembly? Does our spiritual state surpass our physical health, as did that of Gaius? Is our home a modern Bethany where Christ is loved, honored and exalted? While we may not all be preachers or teachers what a glorious privilege to be fellow-helpers to the truth (v. 8)! How much we owe, under God, to the faithful ministry of Christians like Gaius!

Diotrephes

The question is sometimes asked, "Was he a Christian" (v. 9). One thing is certain, he had much power in the early church, going so far as to repudiate the Apostle's authority, and reject itinerating evangelists. His littleness is vividly portrayed in verses 10 and 11, where he is depicted as a bigoted, self-centred, domineering, carnal, vicious gossip. In church life today, how sad to realize there are descendants of this unseemly character. How the cause of Christ is hindered by self-opinionated, self-seeking, self-important "overseers" who adopt dictatorial Diotrephesian methods. Oh! the need to pattern our lives after the godly order set forth in Philippians 2:3-4.

But another lovely brother is before us in the person of Demetrius.

Demetrius

His contribution to the work of God is invaluable because he has learned that creed and conduct, doctrine and duty, can never be separated. As a quiet, godly, self-effacing brother, he follows on in the pathway of faith, ever keeping before him "whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." Thank God for men in assembly life who have not only a testimony in the midst of the Church but also in a wicked and crooked world (v. 11).

It is a shock at times to meet up with rigid advocates of truth who tenaciously affirm who may or may not be recognized, and who have the last word as to the true Church of God. Such individuals usually blight the true grace of God wherein we stand. Would to God we might

study the lives of these men anew, and seek the wisdom that comes from above so that our lives might be worthy examples of the truth of God. Perhaps there is no better recommendation of the gospel than when a Christian impresses and attracts those around him by the reality of his or her life.

Heaven (September–October 1972)

From Ministry in Focus, September–October 1972.

Editor's note: Leslie S. Rainey favours us with another article. We appreciate his interest for the saints at home while deeply involved in the work of the Lord in Africa.

THE Scriptures declare that Heaven is a place of surpassing beauty and radiant life. A great deal of sentimental nonsense has been written as well as spoken on the subject. Many today can only think in terms of golden streets, pearly gates and jasper walls instead of the all important matter of becoming a fit subject for such an abode. It is beyond the utmost stretch of human imagination to comprehend fully that to the Christian it is the Fatherland and our eternal home. May God help us to become better acquainted with the future home of the redeemed of the Lord.

It Is A Place

Before we can enjoy heaven as an established place, we must experience it as an eternal provision through faith in the triune God and His Word, (John 14:1). Heaven is called a Kingdom (Matt. 18:1), over which our heavenly King reigns; a City (Heb. 11:10), with its eternal Architect and Builder and inhabited by celestial residents; a Country (Heb. 11:16), with citizens called, chosen and confessors that "Heaven is their Fatherland and, Heaven is their Home." It is called Home (John 14:2), with its happy blessed household of faith, and an Inheritance (Col. 1:12), with its vast and priceless treasures. It might help to clarify our thinking if we remember how Heaven is classified in its biblical sense.

At times the heavens are referred to as the aerial or atmospheric, the stellar and the celestial. There are four different spheres relative to the Heavens: that of the immediate atmosphere of earth, including the clouds; that of the solar system and the heaven of the stars; that of the lower heavens, presently occupied by the forces of Satan and the scene of his spiritual activity: and that of the far above heavens of the throne of God. It is the latter one that engages our thought and heart the very dwelling place of Christ, "I came down from Heaven" (John 6:38). It is the place where He ascended (Luke 24:51). It is the place of His glory and power (Heb. 8:1). It is no vague illusion or pious delusion of the old and young, but a definite, tangible place of reality and rest.

It Is A Place of Perfection

The palace of the Great King will be a place of eternal radiancy, endless resources and everlasting rest. There will be absolutely nothing to hurt or harm, spoil or stain, defile or destroy for the ransomed of the Lord shall be there. Its joy is unspeakable and its peace is unending. Peter further adds that it's an inheritance that is uncorrupted by the passage of time; undefiled in its purity; unfading in its beauty; and untouched in its security. In other words, what God brings His people into is death-proof, devil-proof, dirt-proof and decay-proof. No demon from Hell nor any man on the earth can rob or ruin all that God has promised for those that love Him. In the midst of the millions from all parts of the earth, the Father's house will resound with harmony, happiness and the fulness of love and God will be in all.

What a contrast to the cities of the earth! Where is Athens with its boasted intellectualism? Where is Babylon with its glory? Where is Rome with all her splendour? Where is Ninevah with all its power? They have all passed away. Like the glory of man and the best of all earth's productions they are marked by death; doomed and decaying. Yet Heaven, like its Eternal Master, is impervious to all decay and the African Slave Trader's testimony is so true, "When we've been there ten thousand years, Bright shining as the sun, We've no less days to sing God's praise, Than when we first begun." The Apostle John, enraptured by the Spirit of God, draws aside the curtain that we may behold the city which God has prepared for the eternal abode of His people. He said, "I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Then, straightway, he described the magnificence of the city, "Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and has a wall great and high, and has twelve gates, all of solid pearl. And there were twelve foundation stones, consisting of the most precious stones, known to men. And besides, the streets of that city are of pure gold, transparent gold. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." What a City! What a future for sinners saved by the blood of the Lamb!

Its People

The people who are going to live forever in God's Home are those who have been prepared, or as Paul says

"made meet" or "fitted" in Christ (Col. 1:12-14). They are born from above and constitute a heavenly destiny. Christians are citizens of Heaven, "For our citizenship is in Heaven; from whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20 R.V.). When Paul wrote to the Philippians, their city was Greek, but their citizenship was Roman. The commonwealth of which the saints in Philippi were citizens had its fixed location in Rome. The Apostle used this fact to illustrate to the believers their heavenly calling with its privileges and responsibilities. What a day for the believer when he is caught up to meet the Lord in the air, for we are told, "We shall all be changed." In reference to our body, we are told, "This corruptible must put on incorruption; and this mortal must put on immortality." Immortality and incorruptibility refer to the body. Corruptibility refers to those who have come under the power of death, because their bodies are corrupt. Mortality refers to those who may come under the power of death. Incorruptibility refers to a state of no decay and immortality to a state of deathlessness. "This corruptible" links us with death, but "this mortal" unites us with the living. Hence, our dead bodies must be changed into incorruptible ones; the living must be furnished with bodies unassailable by death. The body of our Lord is not subject to any pain, or to any disease or decay. Neither shall our body be; it is quite true that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God"; yet it will be this very body of ours that will inherit the kingdom of God; only, that which is corruptible in it, that which is mere flesh and blood, will then have been removed. The characteristics of our Lord's glorified body will be ours in that coming day. As citizens of that new country, we shall have an immortal body, a spiritual body, a body incapable of pain, suffering

and decay, a body which shall be suited to our emancipated spirit, a body having a wider range than this limited earthly sphere, having greater powers of movement, perhaps flying swiftly as light, from world to world, or possibly having the power even to exceed the lightning's flash. We are to be like our glorious Lord.

Its Prospect

Surely the thought of our future home in Heaven should encourage us to be more zealous and diligent during our brief sojourn on this earth. In that land we shall forever be occupied in the most thrilling and satisfying work imaginable. We shall be constantly and devotedly beholding, adoring and serving the Lamb of God who is the theme of Heaven's worship and ceaseless delight. It will be the realization of the crowning day that is coming. It is a time of reward. Did He not say, "Behold I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as His work shall be"? (Rev. 22:12). At the judgment seat of Christ there will be investigation, manifestation and compensation. Before His bema all Christians will stand. Faith in Christ was the gateway to Heaven. Obedience and devotion to Him will determine our reward, for everyone will "receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10). Throughout eternity the rewards meted out will be exhibited and enjoyed (Romans 14:10). It is a time of recognition. One of the prospects of the redeemed of the earth will be the joy of reunion and recognition. Those who have departed this life will not lose their identity and individuality. Scripture abounds with proof. Abraham is Abraham there, as well as here; Moses is Moses there as well as

here; Elijah is Elijah there as well as here; and Lazarus is Lazarus there as well as here. Will a wife recognize her dear departed husband, and a husband his wife; will believing families thus experience a glad reunion? The answer is a triumphant and certain affirmation. The body of Christ was recognizable to His disciples as He dwelt with them for forty days prior to His ascension (1 John 3:2). The story of Hell and its sadness, in Luke 16, teaches that there is spirit recognition beyond death. Paul affirms that down here we know things only partly, but all will be clear and we shall know as God knows now (1 Cor. 13:12). Today we sorrow not as others who have no hope (1 Thess. 4:13), knowing confidently, the best is yet to be."

A final important thing in Heaven is a time of rest. The knowledge of sins forgiven and a sure home in Heaven bring sweet rest to the soul, although oft that soul is tired and weary with the burdens of the day. The rest of Heaven will be glorious. There shall be no sorrow or crying, nothing of those marks that sin has left upon life, even for those who are now devoted to God. There shall be no more pain or sickness, for the new bodies of those who dwell there are fashioned like unto the body of His glory. There will be no hunger or thirst, for the toils and want of earth shall be gone forever; man's selfishness and inability to act for God will be done with and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. There shall be no more tears. I have dried many tears from the faces of my children; there will be no more, for God alone can wipe away all tears. The sorrows of this life that rise up to the ear of God will be forever stilled and stopped, and the scalding tears from anguish, pain and heartache will be forever dried by the nail-scarred hand of the Man of

Sorrows. There shall be no more death for it will be destroyed in the resurrection of life, swallowed up in the victory of the saints. Truly it is the place of happiness holiness and blessing. How wonderful to know the rest from the penalty of sin; to follow on and learn the rest from self; and in the coming day to know the rest from service (Heb. 4:9). God's sabbath rest was disturbed by man when sin came in. God's Canaan rest was hindered by man through unbelief and apostasy; and when all men had failed, God sent His Man, the Rest Giver, who by His dying, has secured rest - rest for God and rest for us. Now God rests in Christ. Blessed Eternal, Endless Rest! It is no wonder we long and labour to see others enter into God's rest, for apart from Him it is regret, ruin and retribution. How dreadful to contemplate the opposite of that region of delight, the abode of the damned! How solemn the question, "Where will you spend Eternity?"

The Christian Home (1961, Vol. 7 No. 11)

From Food for the Flock, 1961, Vol. 7 No. 11.

Among the personal letters that are treasured today by the people of God is 2 John. It is written to a Christian woman, "the elect lady" (verse 1), whose identity is concealed. The message of the book is a divine classic on a first century Christian home. Here is God's answer how to have a happy home.

The Foundation

The heart of the Apostle had been made glad by the report that had come to him concerning this woman and her household. Her home was founded upon the knowledge of the truth and the love of the same. Upon this little home the author invokes the grace, mercy and peace of God (verses -2 [?]). One can imagine that in such a home the parents, or as here, the mother was loved, honoured, obeyed and respected; the family altar was part and parcel of the home; discipline and duty were not forgotten; individual rights were not overlooked, and a right temperature was maintained by warm hearts and cool heads. In a very practical way from the youngest to the eldest they were taught, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it."

The Fundamentals

After his salutation John follows on to the practical manifestation of a Christian. Our relation to God and one another must never be forgotten (verse 1). John, as

a servant of God, was given the right hand of fellowship even as others. True love will exclude those who do not hold the sanctity of the home and the doctrine of the apostles concerning the person and work of Christ. As fellow members of the body of Christ in the Church or in the home, love never faileth. Love is the keystone in the magnificent temple of the Christian home.

Our responsibility to follow Christ is a solemn requisite (verse 4). In the home there are certain obligations to be fulfilled if harmony is to be realized. It is when this truth is slighted that friction and a lack of peace prevail. The more one is found walking in the truth the less of self will be seen or displayed. Oh! that today in Christian homes there were found more devotion to Christ. There is no sweeter fellowship in the world than blood relations dwelling in the bonds of God's eternal love. It is no wonder Jude exhorted "keep yourselves in the love of God." If we did this, the love of Christ would constrain us to follow in all fidelity of heart and soul; walk and witness; suffering and service till traveling days are done.

Our recognition of deception, demands a constant vigilance (verse 10). In John's day there were many who would destroy the foundation truths upon which all true peace and piety depend whether in the heart or in the home. They are referred to as "deceivers" who were so bold as to declare that Jesus Christ had not come in the flesh (verse 7). The apostle had a godly jealousy for such homes as this of the "elect lady." He warns that such error could bring the whole moral structure of the home to ruin. As a man of God he seeks to safeguard the truth as well as the children of the truth. How tragic!

The Songs of the Bible (May 1961)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 7 No. 5, May 1961.

The music of the Middle East and the songs of Europe and Africa are not easily forgotten. Centuries have passed from the time of the timbrel to the tune of the tonga. The song of the Rock is seldom heard in this age of rock and roll. Nevertheless, the Christian has been given the song of songs and by means of singing he can worship the living and true God. The Psalmist reminds us that, “It is good to sing praises unto our God” (Psa. 147:1). Paul reveals that we are to sing, “With grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col. 3:16).

The first recorded song of the Bible as well as the last is associated with Moses. Isaiah records several songs in his great book of 66 chapters (Isa. 5, 12, 25, 26, 27, 35 etc.), Ezekiel records the song of the world (Ezek. 33:32); whereas Solomon reveals there is a song of woe (Ecc. 7:5). The song of the drunkard and the song of the harlot (Ps. 69:12. Isa. 23:15-16), as well as the song of the redeemed and the song of the Beloved (Isa. 5 and Song of Songs) are given to us for our spiritual profit and praise. It is no wonder the Psalmist says, “Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men” (Ps. 107:8, 15, 21, 31).

While it is very true there are some wonderful songs that the world sings, yet none can compare with the song of the soul that has been set free from the power of Satan and the penalty of sin. It matters little how sweet the song, only the heart that has been touched by the grace of God and indwell by the Holy Spirit makes a

melody unto the Lord. It would be impossible to forget the stirring events I witnessed relative to this song of victory in Exodus. In the Fall of 1957 after continual attacks of Egyptian fedayeed (Murder squads) to kill and pillage, plus the Russian infiltration and many years of terror, boycott, and blockade the Israeli army suddenly and efficiently mobilized, and within seven days had taken the whole of the Sinai peninsula in addition to the Gaza strip; from the straits of Eilat to Rafa, El Arish and Kantara, and from Nitzana to the Red Sea in the South. Walking along the streets of Jerusalem it was like Bible times for the song of Moses became the song of the Jewish forces. Of what did they sing? Their victory; their power, and the strength of their New State. How different the song of the saint!

The Song Of Salvation - Exodus 15

The Song of Salvation enshrines a Person. From generation to generation this song has been handed down for its theme is none other than Jesus Christ, the Son of God. No wonder Moses sang, “Who is like unto Thee O Lord among the gods? … glorious in holiness” … (V.11). His character is revealed as holy, powerful and victorious. This song expresses a possession. “The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation.” How it thrills the soul to know that we are the heritage of God, and long before we reach Heaven we may experience the riches and resources that are ours in Christ. Not only have we the Spirit of God, but we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies; the bequest of peace and the bounty of the Book of Books. Would God we could possess our possessions and live in the reality that we walk a path

paved with the promises of God. Surely this would help us to sing the song of the Lord in a wilderness of cults and superficial melodies. The Song of Salvation not only brings before us a Person and reminds of our possession but it also exults in a prospect. In this song Moses speaks with prophetic insight for he saw the people of God already in the land (v. 13-17). His singing is one of assurance since He knew the God who had promised. Today we are often found singing in the minor key, but the day is coming when we shall major in a melody that has no end in Eternity. Even now God is able to give the songs in the night (Job. 35:10), but in that day we shall sing the songs of Zion and our sanctuary will be the house of the Lord forever.

Oh! to dwell upon the Person of Christ, the provision that He has made, and to live in the reality of His possession and prospect. Truly it is enough to fill and thrill the heart and to cause the lips to break forth into a never ending refrain:

“Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood. And hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen” (Rev. 1:5, 6).

The Song Of Redemption - Isaiah 12.

It is important to bear in mind two events in the history of Israel. The first is in relation to the song of Moses in Exodus 15. The second is in relation to the Feast of Tabernacles in Leviticus 23. After the children of Israel were delivered from the thraldom of Egypt, the song of redemption began. Only the redeemed can sing!

The Feast of Tabernacles commemorated the wanderings of the people of God in the wilderness. During this celebration the Israelites dwelt in booths for a week. Along with this feast there developed other symbolical observances. Among these there was a very memorable one. On each day of the Feast of Tabernacles, at a given point in the mountain, to the pool of Siloam in the valley below, and in their golden vases they drew the cool sparkling waters; these they bore up, amidst the blare of trumpets and the clash of cymbals, and poured them upon the altar, while the people chanted, “With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation” (Isa. 12:3). Hence, as they sang in the day of their national liberation from Egypt, so also in their day of national restoration to the land of Emmanuel.

In the closing verses, we have the key for the divine melody in Isaiah 12. It was deliverance from Egypt and it recalled the past as well as anticipated the future day of the nation’s restoration. It is the language of the remnant in the future though addressed to the people of Isaiah’s time. In this prophecy is also a picture of the Gospel. As of old Israel had a song, so the Christian. The song is in two stanzas (1-3, 4-6); it is deep in thought and rich in spirit. The first reason for their song is:

The Wrath of God is Passed: For this cause Israel will sing in her millennial glory. Praise is the distinctive hallmark of the redeemed. It is the goal of creation, the consummation of history, and is the fulfilment of all prophecy, that the “earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Isa. 11:9). What Israel will sing in the future, Christians can sing now. In “that day” Israel will rejoice because of her

reconciliation. Even so the child of God rejoices in the knowledge of the reconciliation effected at Calvary nineteen centuries ago. Reconciliation means that a thing is completely changed or adjusted to something which is a standard, as a watch to the chronometer. It is not that God is changed, but the world is thoroughly changed in its position before the holy judgment of God since Christ has died. Today God is not imputing their sins unto them, but in view of Christ's death, the world is rendered saveable. Thus our language is the same as the Apostle Paul, "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself… For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:19-21). Wrath gives way to rest, and fear to the divine favour of Jehovah who bestows His strength, His song, and His salvation.

The salvation of God is Personal: Here we see that the triune blessing of God is personal. What eternal life was to Paul and John, salvation was to Isaiah. It is one of the "everlasting things" of Isaiah, and in his book he emphasizes the safety and security found in the everlasting God. Other everlasting things are recorded besides salvation (45:17); light (60:19); joy (35:10); strength (26:4); kindness (54:8); covenant (55:3); and judgment (33:14).

So many people fear and are beset with anxious thought concerning their salvation. This is not the experience of the prophet of God. Jehovah was his strength, and song, that is, His Person; whereas the term salvation relates to His provision. Isaiah's threefold chord of glorying will be sung all down the ages until that day when Israel

redeemed, ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven, will sing it in the millennial age.

The Resouces of God are Perennial: God Himself is seen to be the wellspring of salvation. It is a most picturesque scene taken from the atmosphere of eastern life. Often in Cana, Jericho, or Nazareth we have seen the village people around the well. There with their flocks, or earthen pitchers, the people gather, exchange greetings and pass on the news of the day. Just as Israel sang upon their deliverance from Egyptian slavery, so they slaked their thirst on the desert march with water from the rock. In the coming day of Israel's restoration they shall with joy draw refreshment from the well of exhaustless supply. Today the well of God's sufficiency is for all who will stoop and drink. Salvation is a well, not a tank, and so its water is ever fresh, free and full. How necessary therefore to draw, draw, draw. God does not leave man to his own resources; they are like the wells of this earth, that freeze in winter and dry up in summer. Here is a well that is ever gushing up with sparkling clear water, "Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters" (Isa. 55:1).

The prophet follows on in a magnificent strain for all who have drunk from the wells of salvation; praise, call, declare, mention, cry and shout (verses 4, 5). Having tasted of the goodness of God, it is our duty to tell. It is not enough to sing, we must also serve. We should make known what we know; "Let this be known in all the earth" (verse 5, R.V.).

In the first stanza the prophet has something to speak about; in the final stanza he has something to sing about, and also something to shout about.

The Song of the Desert (June 1961)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 7 No. 6, June 1961.

The prophet Isaiah was not only a statesman but a man with a song. In his great book, a library within a library, he has given to us three wonderful songs. In chapter 12, it is the Song of Delight; in chapters 25-27, it is the Song of Deliverance; and here in chapter 35, it is the Song of the Desert. Here the Holy Land is ideally portrayed, and it will be gloriously fulfilled in the Messianic age. There is a wonderful prospect in view for this groaning earth and a bright future for the Hebrew race. We need not wait for that day, however, for all may be fulfilled spiritually in us now through the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Cause of the Song

In chapter 34, it is a scene of desolation, but here one of the regeneration of nature, and the poet Isaiah is at his best in pictorial language. The song alone is sufficient to captivate the heart. In the opening words the glory of the Lord is seen in the blossoming desert (1-2). A great change comes over everything, for all nature will be rejoicing. Blossom time will be superabundant and the gladness of the day will be like the advent of spring. The land of Palestine will become an Eden of beauty, majesty, and fertility. This is brought out by the names Lebanon, Carmel and Sharon. The lovely land of Lebanon recalls to mind the majesty of our God; the name Carmel, along the coastal range of the same name reveals the beauty of our God; whereas the name Sharon, stretching along the blue Mediterranean is suggestive of the fertility and fruitfulness of our God. Think of the desert blossoming

as the rose, the wilderness fertile and fragrant with fountains and flowers. What is the cause of so great a change? Two notes are struck by the prophet: First, the glory of Jehovah; and second, the excellency of God, or His glory and His greatness.

How this chapter reminds us of our own lives marked by the ravages of the desert of sin and the ruin of the wilderness through the Evil One! It is only when Christ reigns that the desert becomes a paradise, and waste and want are met with divine fulness and satisfaction. The glory of Jehovah is relative to His Person, whilst the excellency of our God has to do with His power. Glory is manifested character, and excellency is manifested conduct. The God of creation is the God of conversion. The God of restoration is the God of redemption. Our barren hearts can become by the transforming power of the Gospel, the garden of Eden for the fulfilling of the purpose of God. “We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor. 3:18).

The Challenge of the Song

In verses 3 and 4 the poet speaks to the nation, either the people as a whole or the religious guides of the time. Hands were drooping and knees were tottering, a picture of the decline in the land. As a nation, Israel was hastening towards the captivity that awaited them, following the destruction of the city and the temple, and all they counted holy and rejoiced in. It was a period of weakness, fearfulness, and degeneracy. The drooping hands tell that service for God was at a standstill. Walking for God was almost stopped and fainting on the

part of all was self-evident. Yet in the darkness and with judgment impending for the enemies, the ransomed of the Lord were to experience freedom and fulness of joy. The challenge rings out in the highest note of the song, “Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees… Be strong.” They are verbs of continuous action and are to put heart and courage into the people in a day of national decline.

Think of our day and generation, when many have left their first love and the service of God is so commercialized. The watchword of the Christian should be, “Strengthen ye” the things that remain. We are called to battle and to build, even as Nehemiah. How can we accomplish this important ministry? By establishing saints and encouraging them in the faith once for all delivered to them.

The Comfort and Cheer of the Song

How marvellous to think of that day when the blind shall see, the deaf shall hear, and the lame shall Walk! It is a time when infirmities will pass away to the fulness of health and happiness for all people. What is going to be true in that day can be made real now in the power of the Gospel message received and realized. When Christ becomes Lord of all, blind eyes begin to see, deaf ears begin to hear, lame feet begin to leap in His glad service, and silent tongues begin to pray and sing. The vivid story of the lame man in Acts 3 is being enacted before our eyes. The regenerating power of God the Holy Spirit is able to transform lives.

The mirage of the day will become a reality then. Even though there are problems to face, discouragement is on every hand, and disillusionment abounds, God’s word is

eternal, sure, and never can be broken. Here we observe gushing fountains, streams in the desert, and pools where once was emptiness and drought. It is the highway to life everlasting. In that day the nation will walk in God's way according to God's word (Isa. 30:12). It is the sacred way (8a), the simple way (8b), the safe way (9), the songful way (10), and the satisfying way (v10). The wilderness way with all its perils and problems can become the highway of the King that leads to the eternal home. Only the God of Israel can work such a marvellous change over the land and in human life. He alone is able to deliver us from disabilities, to cure our insensibilities to turn our barrenness into fruitfulness, and to throw a glory over all of life. In that coming morning perfect liberty will be the portion of all from sin and sighs; death and disease will flee away, and love and light and lasting joy forever shall be enjoyed.

Even if we are still marked by sorrow and sickness, infirmity and impotence of life, how blessed to know such can become a means under God for our spiritual welfare! Think of Job and his boils; Joseph and his pit; Jacob and his limp; Paul and his thorn. Crippling comes before the cornation, and holiness before Heaven. Holiness is spiritual health and beauty. The sorrows of life are to draw us unto Him. The sighs of life are to train us for the splendour of that home. It is no wonder the prophet breaks forth into a song when he contemplates his theme: life in the midst of death.

The Song of the Vineyard (July 1961)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 7 No. 7, July 1961.

The Old Testament parables have a voice for the present. In Isaiah 5, we have a public picture of the nation of Israel whereas in Chapter 6, it is a private picture of the prophet Isaiah. Here it is a dirge on the perversion of the people whereas in Chapter 12, it is a song of delight in the prosperity of the nation. Let us notice the Song, the Sketch and the Sequel of the Nation as Isaiah depicted it in his time.

The Song

In the opening verse the prophet commences with a song, but at the end of the chapter there is a wall. The vineyard is an apt figure of the specially privileged nation. The imagery is well known in the Bible (Jer. 2:21; Hosea 10:1, and in the New Testament, John 15). The melody is in the co-hortative voice, “Let me sing to my well-beloved (Jehovah) touching His vineyard” (Israel). It is helpful to remember there are three trees mentioned in the Old Testament relative to the nation of Israel, the olive tree, the fig tree, and the vine. The elect nation is likened here to a vineyard divinely commenced, carefully tended, and jealously protected in the most fertile and productive country in the world.

The Sketch

In the second verse the prophet gives a panorama of Israel’s history from Egypt to the time of Isaiah. Prepared: Israel is seen as the divinely prepared nation through the call and choice and channel of Abraham.

She was an enclosed garden and a fenced field, and separate from all other nations by the sovereignty of the Husbandman (Dent. 7:1-20; Joshua 24:3; Exodus 33:16; and 19, 5, 6). Planted: Not only was the vine cleared and cultivated, but it was the special object of the Husbandman. She was the choicest of vines having been chosen from the foundation of the world. Her branches were to run over the wall and become the healing of the nations of the world. Protected: Moreover, as a nation she was divinely preserved, and is until this day a unique people. God has blessed her exceedingly with the symbol of His Presence and other means of grace throughout her long chequered career. The tower and the wine-press suggest her preservation and protection. (The tower has to do with the external and the wine-press the internal.) As then, so now, the Pharaohs, the kings, the Herods, the Hitters could not, nor ever shall be able to, destroy the apple of God's eye, the people of His pasture. Israel will yet possess her possessions and dwell safely in the Land of God's choice. Productive: The word used here for 'he looked' suggests patience and expectancy on the part of the vine-dresser. Three times we read, 'he looked' and how suggestive is this in the pleading of God by means of prophet, priest and king. Perverted: What happened that the vine did not produce? Israel became perverted and as a vineyard was fruitless and barren. The cause of such a state is clearly told out in the Word of God (Ezekiel 15:2-5). As a nation she refused the voice of God's prophets; she flatly rejected the Messiah of Israel, and David's Greater Son is still a stumbling stone and rock of offence. Three times Jehovah looked with prophetic insight for fruit, and instead of grapes He found nothing but wild grapes. In fact He justly asks, "What could have been done more

to My vineyard, that I have not done in it?" In the following verses of the chapter the fulfilment of the parable is enacted in six woes inflicted through the Assyrians. First, the wild grape of covetousness (8). Second, the wild grape of carousers (11). Third, the wild grape of the challengers of Jehovah (18). Fourth, the wild grape of moral corruption of distinctions (20). Fifth, the wild grape of conceit (21). Sixth, the wild grape of civil criminals (22). What a sad commentary in view of Exodus 19:5-6. How awful the perversion of the purpose of God!

The Sequel

In verse 7, the figure used of the wild grapes is interpreted. Three times God looked for something from the elect nation. He looked for grapes and in return found wild grapes or as the root implies blighted grapes therefore evil-smelling. "He looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry" (V. 7). The prophet makes a play on words and can be best expressed in the words, "He looked for equity and lo, iniquity; He looked for right but behold riot." God looked for judgment and righteousness but found none in the land. God's purpose in relation to His vineyard was perverted. Is there a spiritual lesson to be gleaned from this parable? Does this ancient record have a voice for us today? Yes! God expects something from the lives of His redeemed people. The Church of God is still in the world to carry on His purposes and present the truth of Christ: "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit (John 15:8).

The life of the Christian is to be marked by fruitfulness. The perfection of Christian character is seen in the nine-

fold fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23). The secret of fruitfulness is abiding in Christ. The life that abides in Christ, John teaches us, issues in prayer that is effectual, joy celestial, fruit perpetual and love perennial. Such a life brings forth fruit in season (Psa. 1:1-3). Fruit in season suggests in the time of sorrow faith in God; in the time of weakness strength in God; in the time of looseness of morals and increasing godlessness faith that overcomes. This is the life that has a song of praise, even the fruit of the lips (Heb. 13:15), and is daily operative in the production of fruit that remains by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Something else God is looking for today is faithfulness. How solemn the words, “Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor. 4:2). Many in our generation reveal gift, zeal, leadership, executive ability in the affairs of the Church, but how few show forth the rare virtue of fidelity. “Most men will proclaim their own goodness, but a faithful man who can find?” This is a quality of life that puts first things first. It is the character of those who put God’s business first in the realization that He will take care of their affairs. God desires fidelity of heart and home. Am I truly faithful to God in my private personal life? Am I alive to the opportunity before me in the winning of those for whom Christ died? Am I moved at the conditions in the Church, in the world, among the lost sheep of the house of Israel? How about my home? Is my own garden well watered and cared for? It is the little foxes that spoil the vines, and often it is true of us, “My own vineyard have I not kept.” Our example is Christ who was faithful for God and to man whilst on this earth. Men like Moses who was faithful in all his house; Silvanus, a faithful

brother, and Hannaniah, a ruler in the palace of Nehemia's time, all reveal it is possible to possess this quality of life that is never forgotten in Heaven.

Wonder of wonders God is expecting something more from my life, fellowship. These three things were missing from the life of the nation as a whole. Thank God they were found in men like Daniel, Job and others. God is looking for righteousness of life, and this is a life that is walking in agreement and adjustment to God by the power of the Spirit. This is the life of partnership, communion and fellowship. Surely this is life's richest goal and to this end God gave the Son that we might be in the family and enjoy the Father's favour, care, provision, and paternal partnership. This is our daily experience as we walk in the light (1 John 1:1-5). The blessedness of personal communion with Christ cannot be substituted for life's dearest relations. The more we fellowship with Christ the more we shall know of the bond that knits our hearts in His love. Fellowship of His spirit, of suffering, of sustenance all spring out of our union and communion with Him. Oh! to follow on for God being fruitful in every good work, faithful before God and man, and experiencing that fellowship which manifests itself in knowledge, assurance, and joy in the possession of eternal life.

Prayer (June 1962)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 8 No. 6, June 1962.

In the four Gospels we read of the earthly ministry of the Son of God. Wherever He was, it is recorded that a great throng accompanied Him, listening to the gracious words He spoke and witnessing the kind deeds He wrought. Yet, in His busy life, we see Him constantly drawing aside from the crowds, and even from His disciples, to commune with the Father. Our Lord was very often in a place of solitude.

The Place of Solitude

Early in the morning before the sky was flushed with the eastern sun, the Lord of Glory was found on bended knees alone with God. The perfect Man lived in perfect fellowship and unhindered communion with His Father. In these days of trial and testing, what a divine privilege it is for the child of God to come to the secluded place for prayer! It is here the fainting heart is lifted above earthly cares, and the soul is occupied with the One who hears and answers prayer.

Abraham the friend of God, called out of heathendom for a great and holy purpose, was found at times in the place of solitude. In that place he was able to intercede with God on behalf of a wicked city. He prayed, “Wilt Thou destroy the righteous with the wicked?” “Peradventure,” he cried, “there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt Thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous?” For forty and five; for forty; for thirty; for twenty; and for ten, he prayed on. The man through whom all the nations of the earth were

to be blessed interceded for these few; he stopped in his intercession before God stopped in His granting. Are we standing yet before the Lord? Are we saying prayers instead of praying?

Jacob knew what it was to be left alone with God at Jabbok (Gen. 32:24). His family, servants, and belongings, he had sent on ahead. In an all-night struggle, there wrestled a man with him who prevailed over him and converted the carnal Jacob into a spiritual Jacob.

Moses, a man mighty in word and deed, was another who learned of God in solitude… On the backside of the desert God prepared and filled him as a suitable vessel, and from that seclusion he came forth as the emancipator of God's people from the tyranny of Pharaoh. All God's servants in all ages should know the power and place of prayer in their lives. Whether it be Elijah at Cherith, Paul at Arabia, or John at Patmos, all need to know the secret of spiritual strength. Oh, that the people of God might search their ways, and seek the face of the Lord, and before Him learn the true value of waiting upon the Lord in prayer! It is only as the child of God reaches some spiritual Jabbok, the place of pouring out or emptying, that he can claim the blessing of God. Hosea states that on that night at Jabbok, Jacob wept and made supplication (Hos. 12:4). If our intercession is tearless, we shall not experience the blessing of Jacob. As a prince with God he had power with men, but power with God must precede power with men. It is important that we remember the words of the Lord Jesus, "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint." It is only as we learn to pray that our lives are patterned after the Lord Jesus, and our testimonies witness to Christ in an

effective manner. Prayer not only requires a place of solitude, but, thank God, it results in strength.

The Place of Strength

How often the joy of God's salvation causes the heart to burn! There are other times when it remains cold, and prayer has very little appeal. When we reach such a low state, we need to resort to the Throne of Grace in order to find restoration and strength. How often the chilly atmosphere of the world presses upon us, and the cares of this life crowd out the spirit of intercession! Yet, it is through the medium of prayer that we pass from the region of sight into a realization of the presence of God. This is our stronghold in days of trials and testings. How wonderful that we should be permitted to call upon the Name of the Lord in prayer! How gratifying to kneel in His presence, and through the worth and work of the Lord Jesus, commune with Him! Here lies the believers source of power. It is written, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isa. 40:31). How often we fail and become discouraged because we do not take some certain matter to the Lord in prayer. Precious are the words:

"What a friend we have in Jesus!

All our sins and griefs to bear,

What a privilege to carry

Everything to God in prayer!

Oh, what peace we often forfeit!

Oh, what needless pain we bear,

All because we do not carry

Everything to God in prayer!”

Oh, to turn for help from self and from the things of the world to before us. May we have grace to spend more time in the closed room, look to One who is at the right hand of the Majesty on High, our Burden-Bearer and our Great High Priest! He is able to succour and sustain us in view of the journey that lies alone with God, enjoying communion with the Lord Jesus, for then shall we be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

Abraham—The Separated Life (July 1962)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 8 No. 7, July 1962.

In the history of Abraham discipline through separation is exemplified. God called Abraham from the city of Ur in the Chaldees, situated on the banks of the Euphrates. Archeologists have recently brought to light wonderful discoveries there, and have shown that it was a mighty civilization. From a luxurious life, Abraham, at God's command, left all to become a nomad "dwelling in tents." The call is described in Acts 7:2-3.

Separation from Kin and Country

"The God of Glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, and said unto him, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall show thee."

And in Hebrews 11:8 we read the response of faith:

"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went."

In the call of Abraham we learn of the God-planned life. The life of a Christian begins with the call of God. We are called to real sacrifice even if it involves separation from all that is dear. No doubt, if Abraham had not obeyed the voice of God and left the city of his birth, he would have been like the other unknown dead of the City of Ur. Yet the 'friend of God' lives in glory on the pages of history because of his separation, and God

speaks of Himself as the God of Abraham, the God of the faithful. Such is the path for the child of God; a path of faith and eternal glory.

Though Abraham left his city, he did not completely obey, because he did not leave his kindred or his father's house. At first he does not fully obey; his father Terah and his nephew Lot went with him. It is always difficult to break the ties of nature. So, in the days of our Lord as He spoke to one, "Follow thou Me," the answer was, "Suffer me first to go and bury my father." With Terah Abraham lived for some years on the border of the land to which God had called him. Death finally dissolved the union, and Abraham again rises in the energy of faith to pursue his course. Often the follower of Christ is impeded by natural bonds, and must learn God's will through self-mortification, which is discipline. In war men are called upon to renounce the usual routine of life for a life of rigour, sacrifice, separation, and even death for the cause of liberty. The Christian who will live devotedly for God and the cause of Christ must tread the path of self-denial and separation from the world. This will bring the sneer of the ungodly, but the smile of the Saviour. It will mean discipline to the soul, but will yield rich fellowship with Christ.

Separation from Egypt

Abraham was tested through famine and made a sad departure from the God-appointed path. He acted without consulting God and went down into Egypt. There he became seriously involved in the toils of his own weaving; he was censured by an idolatrous king and sent out of the country. He had to return to the place of the altar and the tent. The Christian life is at a

standstill when out of the will of God. The road to Egypt leads to conformity to the world and the collapse of faith. Yet the way back is to move forward into freedom.

Separation from Lot

In this parting with Lot, Abraham learned further how the path of faith is the path of separation. His nephew, gratifying his ambition, chose the well-watered plains, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. Lot walked the path of sight. Abraham walked by faith and separation unto God, and was rewarded with the blessing of the Lord.

Separation from Ishmael

Abraham was further disciplined in the putting away or separation from Ishmael. When Abraham was in Egypt, he met Hagar and she proved to be a thorn in his side for many years. In Genesis 15 God promised Abraham a son. The promise not being fulfilled immediately, he sought to bring it about through Hagar. Such a course results in contention, strife and sorrow. Abraham even prayed to God, “Oh, that Ishmael might live before Thee.” Yet, because he was not the promised seed, he must banish him. Why? The purpose of God did not lie in Ishmael, but in Isaac, the promised seed. The day Isaac was weaned, Ishmael the son of Hagar mocked. He is seen as the opposer of the heir and son, and as such he must be cast out. This was a great sorrow to Abraham to part with Ishmael. Isaac was to have the promises, and the affections of Abraham must change from Ishmael to Isaac. How slow we are to give Christ His place, and to be able to say, “Not I, but Christ.” It is only as the Christian learns to enthrone Christ as Lord of his life, that the Holy Spirit will perform His work to glorify God.

The Offering of Isaac

The path of discipline is again trodden by Abraham in his separation from Isaac on the altar of Mount Moriah. This was Abraham's final and greatest test. He had given up Ishmael; now God demands his only-begotten son Isaac. Abraham was bidden to slay and offer up the child of promise. He did not fail, nor stagger through unbelief, but was fully confident in the faithfulness of God, "accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure." When one is confident that God is almighty as well as faithful, one can obey any word of His without fear. What faith! What denial! What discipline of speech, of hopes, of plans is exemplified in the illustrious life of Abraham as he walked the path of faith and separation! Truly Abraham is the great pattern of faith, and, being disciplined through separation from his country, his father, his nephew, Ishmael, and Isaac, he passed with honours in the school of God.

Samuel (Nov 1962)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 8 No. 11, Nov 1962.

The God Obedient Life

One of the greatest of Hebrew worthies is Samuel who was linked with Moses, the prophet of prayer (Jer. 15:1). He is the last of the judges and the first of the Prophets. When the priesthood had broken down, the Tabernacle had been deserted and the Ark of God had been captured, he stood in the breach as God's emergency man. It is obvious that God sets forth some person in the Bible to represent every phase of human character, gracious or natural. In Abraham, we seen the pioneer of faith (Rom. 4:20); Moses, faithfulness towards God (Heb. 3:5); Baalam, the sin of covetousness (Jude 2, 11, Peter 2:25); David, wholeheartedness towards God (Acts 13:22 R.V.); Job, patience in trial (James 5:11); and Samuel, the obedience of faith. The meaning of his name is best rendered, "heard of God," but others prefer, "asked of God." The child was a living proof of the glorious fact that God hears and answers prayer. It is believed by many Jewish writers that in his name lies the root of the word, "obey," and if this is so, how suggestive and important the word "to hear." To hear the voice of God in its truest sense is to obey the voice of God. Let us study this man who was loaned to the Lord as long as he lived, and discover that spiritual growth and godliness has as its foundation, obedience.

The Parentage of Samuel

The Book of Samuel opens with a glimpse of the father and mother of Samuel. His father, Elkanah, like Moses

and Aaron, was a Levite, and so a member of the priestly tribe, whilst his mother was a woman of prayer. Though denied the joy of children and taunted by her adversary in the home, Peninnah, she took it all to God in prayer. Hannah knew that actions were weighed by God, and that the Lord of Hosts had His eye on all that was taking place in her home. Assurance was borne home to her heart that she would mother a child, and in the gift of Samuel she determined that his name would be a life-long witness and a constant reminder of the faithfulness of God. What a high and holy purpose is found in the words, “As long as he liveth.” Oh! how much we owe to mothers like Hannah who mould and make men of God. Years ago Lord Shaftesbury said, “Give me a generation of Christian mothers, and I will undertake to change the face of society in twelve months.” The parents of Samuel were on speaking terms with God. A little chap was once asked why he was such a model boy in the Church service: “That is easy,” he said, “My father is on speaking terms with God, and my mother is on speaking terms with me.”

The Environment of Samuel

The days in which Samuel lived were similar to those depicted in the closing chapters of the book of the Judges. Confusion, civil and religious, marked the times of Samuel. In high places as well as holy places reigned corruption and spiritual declension, yet in many simple households the Word of God was precious and His will fulfilled. As a small boy Samuel was exposed to the wicked and vile practices of the sons of Eli. In such a poisonous and dangerous atmosphere his life developed in the service of the Lord. Three chapters tell about his

early education. More is said about Samuel as a boy than any other lad in the Bible. Day after day he saw the holy things of God outraged, and the sacrifices unto the Lord despised and degraded. Yet the prayers of Hannah prevailed, and the protective grace of God was strong in the life of this chosen youth. What encouragement this gives to the soul as we contemplate our own generation and the ravages of sin to which our children are subject in every place under the sun. How graciously God can guide the steps of our little ones years before He reveals Himself to them according to the prayer of faith.

The Call of Samuel

The call of God came to Samuel in the normal routine of life. It was a time when the Word of God was precious, (rare) because of the apostasy and unrighteousness over the land. Being a child he rendered childlike service — sincere, unaffected, frank, transparent and real. It was not until the third occasion when the voice was heard that the aged Eli knew that the call came from God. With what expectation Samuel awaited the call of God! Could he ever forget the double mention of his name “Samuel, Samuel”? The time had come when the temple child would have a revelation from the Lord. The knowledge of the Lord comes through the Word of God being revealed to the heart. In the Hebrew it is rendered in verse 21, “The Lord uncovered the ear,” as one would do in speaking in confidence to a close friend. After this never-to-be-forgotten experience Samuel grew in the things of God, that is, His knowledge, His power, His wisdom, His favour, and in His integrity and influence. In his ministry unto the Lord (2:11); in his growth before the Lord (2:21), in his development before the Lord

(3:19), we note the beauty of an ordered and obedient life before God and man. In his call it is important to remember that Samuel worked under the supervision of an older man, even as Joshua did under Moses, Elisha under Elijah, and as Timothy under Paul. From the night he heard the call of God, his watchword was “to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” (1 Sam. 15:22). Such a life cannot be hid, and from the north to the south, from Dan to Beersheba, it was noised abroad that Samuel was not only established to be a prophet of the Lord, but possessed that indispensable secret of spiritual effectiveness, “the Lord was with him” (1 Sam. 3:19).

Oh, give me Samuel’s ear!

The open ear, O Lord,

Alive and quick to hear

Each whisper of Thy Word;

Like him to answer at Thy call,

And to obey Thee first of all.

The Work of Samuel

As a child Samuel had learned that a man without the presence and power of God in his life is waste and weakness. His experience with Eli had left an imprint on his life so that he longed in his own life to know daily the presence of the Lord. He learned later on that the secret of victory is through prayer (1 Sam. 7:5-10). In the fickleness and faithlessness of the nation he found comfort in prayer. Israel wanted a King, and on account of this great grief to his heart he sought the face of God, and got the answer of peace (1 Sam. 8:5,6). In his long

and useful life among the people, he saw the outgoing of the Theocracy and the incoming of the Monarchy. As you read the chapters, (3:19 to 11:15), his life is characterized as prophet, priest and judge. He successfully brought the nation out from a state of chaos and anarchy to an established government. So powerful was his voice that none of his words fell to the ground. Often I have tried to visualize this man of God in his speech so seasoned with salt; his authority so blended with affection; his influence so inspired by the reality of God's presence, and his life so revered, so challenging and so productive.

The Testimony of Samuel

As we come to the close of this magnetic personality, we find him challenging the people to bring to light any case of dishonest dealing on his part in a life of public service. As a true servant of the Lord Samuel was jealous of the honour of His Name. He reminds the people of "the righteous acts of the Lord" (1 Sam. 12:7). In all the ways of God with His people He is faithful to record judgment and yet remember mercy. During his long and loyal service Samuel had favour with the people, and he was recognized as the channel through which the Word of the Lord came to the nation. In his yearly circuit to Bethel, Gilgal, Mizpeh, and his home in the heights of Ramah, all witnessed to his integrity and influence in the prosecution of his duties. From a child he reviews his life before the nation, and as far as he is concerned, his personal character and right manner of life is nothing except in relation to the grace and goodness of the Lord whom he has sought to serve. Like Paul he considered himself nothing, wanted nothing, and

kept back nothing that was profitable to the people. To forget to pray for the nation Israel, Samuel considered a sin. What a rebuke to many in these days when there is still much anti-Semitism in the world! What folly it is to forget that spiritual safety whether national or individual is in the hands of God (1 Sam. 12:11)! How important to remember, “how great things He hath done for you,” and leave on record the emblem of a blameless life. Samuel’s life is a testimony to the value of right conduct which is absolutely essential in the life of a servant of God. Moses also wore the white flower of a blameless life, and he could testify, “I have not taken one ass from them neither have I hurt one of them” (Num. 16:15). May God help us to see that spiritual growth and influence in the things of God is dependent on our obedience and devotion to the Lord. In view of the unparalleled opportunities of our day, oh! that we might, “fear the Lord, and serve Him in truth with all our hearts,” even as Samuel did in his generation.

Oh, give me Samuel’s heart!

A lowly heart that waits,

Where in Thy house Thou art,

Or watches at Thy gates,

By day and night, a heart that still

Moves at the breathing of Thy will.

Daniel (Mar 1963)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 9 No. 3, Mar 1963.

The God Beloved Man

Of all the characters of the Bible none is perhaps more lovable than the man Daniel. His very name, “God is my judge” reveals the purity of his life and the purpose of his legislation. In the threefold division of the Old Testament he is not listed among the prophets, but is mentioned in the Writings coming between Esther and Ezra. This may be due to the fact that Daniel exercised no oral ministry. On the other hand, because the Writings were largely associated with Jewish feasts, special holidays and momentous events in their national history, Daniel has a unique place among them. His Book is a divine classic concerning the past history of the Nation, their prophetic future and the loyalty and love of one of their own from teen age to old age. Let us consider Daniel historically, prophetically and spiritually.

Historically

The opening verses of the Book give us the truth of God concerning the nation’s capitivity. It was the Lord who gave Jehoachim into the hands of the enemy, not military strategy. The background of Daniel was one of captivity, consecration and continuance in his witness for God until he was nearly a hundred years old. The twelve chapters of the Book of Daniel divide naturally into two halves. The first six chapters are mainly the story of Daniel’s life, first as a boy in the royal Court of Babylon, and then, after a period of training, as a statesman in three world empires. He was no doubt of royal or noble

birth, and of more than average intelligence, well favoured and of the highest entegrity. The biography of these chapters is a tremendous help in showing us how a man in the midst of vice and heathen custom of an oriental court can overcome temptation, and be true to God and live a practical, holy life. The second half of his Book consists mainly of actual prophecies concerning the future of Israel and of the world. From earliest times, Daniel and his Book have come in for many vicious attacks by the emissaries of Satan. How the devil hates the truth of Daniel since it speaks of the latter days, and the overthrow of all evil including himself, and the glorious dawn of a new day for the nation Israel! I have stood among the ruins of Babylon and gazed with wonder at the fulfilment of prophecy: “I will make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water: for I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of Hosts” (Isa. 14:23). The remains of ancient Babylon stand in mute attestation to the truth of the predictions in Isaiah and Jeremiah.

Daniel is mentioned by his fellow-captive Ezekiel, not as a writer, but as a model of righteousness and wisdom (Ezekiel 14:14, 20; 28:3). In the first passage, Ezekiel recognizes Daniel’s righteousness (2 Peter 2:5); Job was the pattern or righteousness (Job 1:1), and Daniel was the man who practised righteousness (Dan. 1:8). Noah overcame the world, Job overcame the devil, and Daniel overcame the flesh. How important to recognize our three foes: the world, the flesh and the devil, and to remember our three friends: the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit. In the second passage in Ezekiel, Daniel’s wisdom is compared to that of the King of Tyre. Not only do we have the record of captivity, the contemporary

Ezekiel, but also the confirmation of our Lord who specifically states that Daniel was a prophet (Matt. 24:15). Surely, in this story we have a divinely inspired record of the work of God in a human life, and the far-reaching purposes of God regarding the Times of the Gentiles, and the glorious future of His people Israel. Tradition says Daniel was buried at Susa, the capital of Elam, entering into rest and reward as the angel promised, “But go thou thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.”

Spiritually

The life of Daniel is most attractive to all who would live godly in Christ Jesus. As a youth he had one presiding purpose, to live for God and be loyal to His Word. We are not told how he came to a knowledge of the Lord, but there is a good possibility it was through the reading of the Book of God. He was a lover of the Scriptures and a student of the writings of men like Jeremiah (Dan. 9:2). Daniel was one of a group of Jewish boys taken captive by the army of Nebuchadnezzar and brought from the city of Jerusalem to the city of Babylon. He was chosen because of his background, natural beauty and intelligence. The policy of Babylon with their prisoners of war was to so indoctrinate them that they would finally repudiate their own language and land. In spite of their brain-washing, Daniel never swerved from his allegiance to God and the truth of His Word. His whole life was marked by separation from all evil and stainless as to the corruption of his day. The motto of his life is summed up in the 8th verse of the first chapter: “But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the

wine which he drank." The test that came to Daniel concerned meat and wine that no doubt had been first of all dedicated to some heathen deity, or because they were unclean to an orthodox Jew. Among these prohibited meats were pork, the flesh of carnivorous animals, certain birds of prey and all fish without scales. Until this date, this prohibition is strictly carried out by Jews in Jerusalem. Well do I recall in Israel being charged 100 per cent duty on a food parcel because it contained a small can of bacon. To the Jew, the prohibition of these meats was a sign of Israel's separation and peculiar relationship to Jehovah. Daniel refused the king's meat because he knew it was unclean, and to eat would be disobedience to the revealed will of God. While others could eat and drink without any qualms of conscience, the believer must ever keep in mind that his body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and his earnest desire ought to be the glory of his God. How blessed today to see men and women adorning the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things instead of following the latest trends and fashions of this godless age! May God keep us from the devilish attractions of this age and the modern attire so unbecoming to femininity and motherliness. Another lesson to be gleaned is that, while Daniel was no fanatic in the matter of food, it is obvious the diet of pulse was better in every way than the rich foods of the Babylonians. Much that is eaten today needs to be tested and scrutinized, for our age is noted for the ability to make a quick dollar on foodstuffs rather than consideration for the physical welfare of the buyer.

Daniel was not only marked by godly piety in his purpose of heart, but also persistance in prayer. Again

and again we find him on his knees in the second, the sixth, the ninth, and tenth chapters. How helpful it has been to our spiritual life to study the ninth chapters of Daniel, Ezra and Nehemiah! Here one breathes the atmosphere of Heaven and the strength derived from such prayers is an incentive to stand and “dare to be a Daniel.” It is no wonder he exerted a powerful influence on his day and generation that extended through three empires and even until this present era.

Prophetically

While it is good to remember Daniel in relation to the past and the present application of the truth taught in his Book, he is pre-eminently God’s prophet. As a saint Daniel foretells the future, and how vividly he sets forth in the second division, chapters 7-12, the course of all future history. How important it is to see in the first section that the prerequisite for the understanding of things future is conditioned on a clean-cut separation from evil, and a burning conviction regarding the truth of God. How thrilling to have opened up the panorama of God concerning the future doom of world empires; the anti Christ and his kingdom; the international insanity of the last days; the judgment of God on apostasy; the calendar of the Jew, and their national conversion; and the last days and the End of Time. To live in the enjoyment and teaching ministry of the Lord’s return is to be wise in the things that matter most. Daniel was posted as to the past, present and future. As to the past, he saw Christ as the Ancient of Days; as to the present, Christ the Stone, as to the future, Christ the Messiah, the Prince (Daniel 2:45; 7:13-14; 9:25-26). To the Jews, Christ was a stumbling stone; to the nations of

the earth, a smiting stone; but to us who believe, He is the Securing Stone. How exceedingly precious to see in the Prophetic Word truth that makes the Lord Jesus increasingly clear and dear to the heart of the Christian. Every prophecy found in the Bible has a twofold purpose of forth-telling and foretelling, of precept and predicion. Not only do we have light on the future, but lessons for our present conduct. Daniel's Book clearly reveals the importance of one's personal relation to God in order to know the mind of God regarding the days to come, that faithfulness in the midst of corrupt and uncongenial circumstances is marked by God and precious to His sight, and also notes that faithfullness and righteousness is the strength of all testimony in a world of unrighteousness and ungodliness. Finally, whether in Daniel's day or our own, those oft-quoted words are still true: "Them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed" (1 Sam. 2:30).

Isaiah (Jan 1964)

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The God-Endowed Man

The name Isaiah means “Yahweh is Salvation” or “Salvation of Yahweh.” Of his personal history we know but little. We are told that he was married (8:3), and had two sons (7:3; 8:1-4). Isaiah says that he and his children were for signs, and this is very suggestive (8:18). Mahershallalhas-baz, means “Speed to the spoil, hurry to the prey,” and represents chapters 1-39; Shear-Jashub means “a remnant shall return” and represents chapters 40-66 and Isaiah, which means “Salvation of the Lord,” is representative of the whole book.

Isaiah has been called the greatest of all prophets. He has been referred to as the king of all the prophets; the Paul of the Old Testament; the evangelist of the school of the prophets, and by common consent is one of the greatest of the prophets in intellectual endowment. He takes an unchallenged place among the statesmen of Israel, and the great writers which humanity has produced.

The scene of his labours was chiefly if not exclusively, Jerusalem. It appears that he was of royal blood because of his immediate access into the royal count. His sphere of ministry touched the king’s court and during his lifetime he was marked by a strong and commanding personality, a prophet of God who wielded tremendous influence for good in the country. Tradition says that he suffered martyrdom in the reign of the infamous king Manasseh.

The- prophet stands midway between Moses and Christ and begins to prophesy 21 years after the division of the united kingdom. His ministry includes the last years of the northern kingdom. That he lived during the eighth century before Christ is confirmed by the chronology of the Kings of Judah, mentioned in the first verse of the book. Again, recent archaelogical discoveries testify to the unity of the book that bears his name.

The outlook of the book is historic, prophetic and Messianic. It is our purpose in this study to consider the times in which the prophet lived and to observe their prophetical and Messianic bearing upon the person and work of the Servant of Jehovah, and the future sovereignty of the Star of Israel.

Isaiah's Mission to Israel

The writing of Isaiah and his burden for the people is needed as never before to be sounded out to all the seed of the Jewish race. In Chapter 5, the prophet describes the national state of Israel in its relation towards God. In Chapter 6, he sets forth a private picture of the nation, as represented in his call, cleansing and commision. The closing verses of this same chapter bring to mind the words of Exodus 3:2, "Behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed." As a nation Israel is indestructible, and although almost extirpated as the context reveals, and history proves, yet God has not forgotten His ancient people, and the stock remains and will yet reproduce, yea, even bud, blossom and flourish.

The Vision of the Prophet (6:1-4)

The call of God came to Isaiah in the year that King Uzziah died. Never could he forget the death of the

Sovereign whom God had smitten. Though Uzziah had been endowed with power, prosperity and success in his rule, he overstepped the boundaries of God in seeking to add to his control the privileges of the priest. Thus in his pride and folly he came under the severe hand of the Lord, and ended his days a leper, completely removed from the people of his kingdom. The holiness of Jehovah is in the mind and heart of Isaiah, and under these circumstances the vision depicted in verses 1-4 is given.

The scenery of the vision is taken from the Temple. God is represented as seated on the throne, above the ark, in the most holy place, where the glory appeared above the Cherubim, surrounded by his attendant ministers. John, the beloved disciple, tells us the Lord upon the Throne was Christ (John 12:41) and the vision is related to His future kingdom, when His glory shall cover the earth. The angelic beings which he saw were six-winged; with two they covered their feet in lowliness; with two they covered their faces in reverence; and with two they flew in glad and obedient service. The holy hymn of worship they rendered was not in concert, but as the demonstrative pronoun suggests “this one” and “that one” crying to each other, “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory.” The intensity and vividness of this vision produced such awe in the soul of the prophet that again and again in his book he refers to the Lord as the Holy One.

His Confession (V. 5)

From being occupied with the Lord of glory the prophet now has a vision himself, “Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips and dwell among a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King,

the Lord of hosts." The majesty and dazzling splendour of the throne reveal the utter corruption of his own heart, and thus, as the Hebrew suggests, Isaiah was struck dumb. His muteness is because of his own defilement and the fact that he dwelt amongst a people of like character and conversation. His threefold confession reveals his inability to sing unto the Lord, to speak on behalf of the Lord, and finally to serve the Lord among such a sinful people.

His Cleansing (Vs. 6-7)

Confession is the doorway that leads to forgiveness,. The prophet is cleansed on the basis of the altar. It ever speaks of the provision of grace revealed in the person and work of Christ. A red-hot coal is taken from off the altar and touched or placed upon his mouth, and his sin is covered. The completeness of his cleansing is brought out by the Hebrew words "to take away" and "to purge." These coals are the burning symbols of the holiness and justice of God, which consumed Christ in His gracious provision for the sinner. Before we can ever be vessels fit for His service, it is imperative that we have this great experience.

His Commission (Vs. 8-13)

The purpose of the vision is now made clear to the prophet and the voice speaks, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" He instantly realizes in the question asked, a call and a commission to himself. He immediately places himself at God's disposal, as the bond-slave of his Lord. No longer is he conscious of his sinner-ship, but is ready for the whitened fields of Israel. Now the Lord discloses his ministry, "Go, tell this

people, hear ye indeed but understand not, see ye indeed but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and convert, and be healed."

What a disappointing assignment! Nevertheless, it is the essence of his message. It is not as though God hardens their hearts, but the prophet views the self-determination of the people in refusing to hear the Word of God, and hence the process of hardening sets in.

This was vividly seen in God's dealing with the King of Egypt. Pharoah hardened his heart ten times against God. Thus God in His Divine Sovereignty hardened Pharoah's heart ten times and at once it is evident that the Egyptian monarch was determined to defy and resist the voice of Jehovah. In the history of the nation of Israel the same process is observed. How true it is that the same sun that melts the snow hardens the clay. The mission of Isaiah is drab to say the least. His message was one of governmental judgment, and the importance of his task is realized in the oft repeated mention of this prophecy in the N.T. The Holy Spirit uses this verse to show why the people were blinded even when Christ was performing many mighty works among them, Matthew 13:14; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:38). Paul uses the same message in directing his ministry to the Gentiles (Acts 28:26-27 and Romans 11:8). To this present hour even in modern Israel with Jewish people from all parts of the globe, they are still marked by judicial blindness, deafness and hardness of heart as far as their national salvation is concerned. It is no wonder the prophet cried out, "How long?" What an insight into

the heart of this dear man of God! The answer to his cry comes in words of terrible severity. The obduracy of Israel will persist down the years, as verses 11 and 12 tell out. However, there is a word of comfort in the fact that a fraction, a tenth, will turn towards the Lord. Israel cut down is never utterly destroyed, but like a tree stump remains, she will sprout again. Through this small remnant, God will work out His promises in the fulfillment of His truth. He alone will cause the stook to revive and reproduce, and in spite of all that has happened to Israel in the past and on to the future, “God hath not cast away His people,” but through his remnant He will be glorified.

Caleb (Mar 1964)

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The God-Consistent Life

The name of Caleb is most interesting since it is the same as man's best friend. Although Mephibosheth referred to himself as a "dead dog," (2 Sam. 9:8), and Abishai called Shimei the same, (2 Sam. 16:9), it is not a name generally given to children in Gentile families. As we look into the pages of Holy Writ we discover that Solomon depicts the dog as dirty, (Prov. 26:11); the Psalmist as destructive, (Ps. 22:16); Isaiah as dumb, (Isa. 56:10); Paul as dangerous, (Phil. 3:2), and Joshua as devoted, (Joshua 14:8). During his long and loyal life for God Caleb was true to his name and until this day is the symbol of wholeheartedness and faithfulness. In this chapter Joshua gives us the record of —

His Character

The heart of Caleb is revealed in his speech to Joshua. As an old man he was right with God, and though he had thirty-eight years in the desert and several years of warfare in the land, nothing had moved him in his unswerving devotion to the Lord. The expression, "wholly following the Lord" is found six times in the Old Testament, and five of them are linked with Caleb. In the life of Caleb there was zealous loyalty to Joshua even as the men who broke through their enemies and, at the risk of their own lives, procured for their Captain a drink of water from the well at Bethlehem, (1 Chron. 11:17, 18). In his speech Caleb spoke out of his heart in sincerity and in truth. Surely this is the only way to

speak. How much display of self and pride of ability is in the public oratory of our generation! How effective the words of an overflowing heart that has been moved by God the Holy Spirit! As Caleb thought upon the events of his life, memory was stirred and the vision of Hebron captivated his whole being. There Abraham had lived in fellowship with his friend; there three of the patriarchs with their wives had been buried; there was the mountain stronghold, fenced and walled, defended by giants, the promised possession. His ardent desire and resolute determination pushed him on until the day he actually dwelt in Hebron. Our desires are but mirrors disclosing our inner selves for good or evil. Caleb could never forget the attitude of the people when he returned from spying out the land of Canaan. Ten of the twelve spies were against advancing into the land. Joshua and Caleb instead of seeing themselves as grasshoppers had their eyes fixed on the grapes and the power of God. By the help of God they felt the land could be invaded and that victory would crown their endeavour. However, this was not the mind of the majority of their brethren, and in their attitude they were unto-operative and unkind. In spite of this Caleb refers to them as “my brethren,” (v. 8). Surely this is another indication of the humility and understanding of this warrior and desert scout. The language of Paul to Timothy comes to mind, “And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient” (2 Tim. 2:24, 25). Today there are many giants along the pathway of faith barring the way to the grapes of Eschol. How essential it is to know the evil monsters of pride, passion, sin, lust, temper, fear, despair, discouragement and doubt against which we are no match in our own strength. It is only through faith in Jesus Christ and following on like Caleb

that these giants of sin and Satan can be conquered. To reckon ourselves as grasshoppers as the ten spies did, is to fail in driving out the children of Anak. Anakim means, “long-necked” and was the name given to the ancient giants of the stronghold of Hebron. They were called Ahiman, Sheshai and Talmai and in these different Hebrew names we have a lesson on, “Who am I?” “What am I?”, and “Where am I?”, indicative of the pride of face, race and grace. To fight the ‘good fight of faith and follow the commands of our Captain, Jesus the Saviour, is the gateway to victory over such foes and the constant attacks of the world, the flesh and the devil. Would God that in our age of fleshly zeal and worldly conformity the desire of our hearts might be as Caleb, wholehearted for God! Let us rise up then and possess our possessions (Obadiah 17), and remember that God records what we do, as well as what we do not (I Kings 22:3).

The Confidence Of Caleb

The life of Caleb was fortified by the promise that God had given him some forty-five years before. His soul was stayed on the Word of God. The Gibralter of his faith was implicit confidence in the unchanging Word of the Lord. A healthy spiritual life will always have an abiding appreciation and a growing appetite for the words of God. Surely it is necessary again and again to test ourselves by this criterion, for if the Lord was sustained by the Scriptures how much more so we as His people. Another feature of Caleb’s life was his assurance in the promises of God. To him they were God’s “yea and amen,” and during his long and difficult years in the desert and among a back-sliding people the language of his soul was, “being fully persuaded that, what He had

promised, He was able also to perform" (Romans 4:21). Caleb also knew a good deal about the faithfulness of God. He could boldly say, "The Lord hath kept me," and his radiant faith and his ambitious spirit abundantly testified to the truth. "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes" (Ps. 118:9). What a witness Caleb was to the truth Peter stated, "Kept by the power of God." Kept by the power of God whilst thousands fell in unbelief in the wilderness. Kept by the power of God alive and active in the midst of a disgruntled people, discouragements, doubts and a people who departed from the living and the true God. Caleb experienced, the goodness of God. Daily he lifted his heart in thanksgiving to his God for provision and protection during the journey through the wilderness. His motto was, "As my strength was then, even so is my strength now" (v 11). The wear and tear of desert life had not dimmed his eye or abated his zeal for God. For years he had nourished his soul on the sure Word of God, His promises, His keeping power, His goodness and thus he had endured. His secret was possessing his soul in patience knowing the truth of, "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward" (Heb. 11:35). Of all the adults in the history of the children of Israel only two entered the promised land, Joshua whose name means, "Jesus," and Caleb whose name means, "dog."

What a lesson for us today that we might take sides with God and be unmoved, undismayed and unyielding in our Christian testimony in this present evil world! Though all the hosts of hell should endeavour to hinder us in our onward march to the Promised Land, may our confidence be so steady and loyal that the confession of

our lips re-echo the words of Luther, “I cannot do otherwise, so help me God.”

Compensation

The faith and courage of Caleb was not forgotten and neither did it go unrecognized or unrewarded. We read, “Joshua blessed him” (v. 13). The blessing of the Captain of the Lord’s host was given to him with all its enjoyment and enrichment, even so for all who follow the Lord Jesus, how richly He rewards! Caleb followed the Lord fully, that is, without keeping anything back. His whole life was out-and-out for God and the honour of His name. As a result of his abiding loyalty, years later with Joshua he entered into the land of God’s promise. What a thrill must have possessed his whole being as he recorded the hand of God and His help down through the years! God has not changed, and it is possible in our generation to experience the blessing of the Lord and the riches of His grace. Today all who follow the Lord dog-like in fellowship with Joshua (Saviour), there is even “much more” (2 Chronicles 25:9 compare with Romans 5:1-11). Caleb was given for an inheritance, “Hebron (v. 13). It was necessary for him to drive out the three sons of Anak who had been such a source of terror and trouble to the hosts of Israel. Nothing stopped Caleb, and he triumphed in obtaining his possession. Hebron means, “Fellowship,” and surely this is suggestive to us as Christians that the pathway of blessing is the pathway of faithfulness and obedience to all that the Lord has commanded in His Word. It is a fellowship of life, love and light as John records. It is sharing things in common. It is harmony in the things of God whether it pertains to the corporate witness of the

Assembly, the conduct in the home or the consistent witness in the world. The lesson for all to learn is that while forgiveness of sins is a gift, fellowship with Christ is a goal. Caleb as an old man esteemed the cost of Hebron. Do we in our day value the preciousness of fellowship and our possessions in the Lord Jesus Christ? Nothing less than Hebron would satisfy Caleb, and nothing short of personal intimate daily fellowship should satisfy us as the people of God. The final thing we read is, “the land had rest from war” (v. 15). Not only did Caleb enjoy the blessing of Joshua, the battle for Hebron, but also the beauty of peace. The word “rest” conveys the thought in the Hebrew of inward peace, spiritual tranquility, and of complete repose. In the life of Caleb it was gained not given. In our lives as Christians it is something that is given (John 14:27); something that is gained at costly effort (Heb. 4:11); and something that is God-like (Matt. 11:29). The prosperity, possession and peace of God are for all who have forsaken the fleshpots of Egypt, and by faith and following have entered into their God-given heritage. To the Jew the sphere of rest was a place, but to the Christian, it is a Person, “in Christ in heavenly places” (Eph. 1:3). The sphere of God’s ancient people was earthly, marked by borders, and at best temporary. The lot of the child of God is heavenly, without boundaries, and for eternity. Surely the life of Caleb is an inspiration for all whether starting out or well on in years, to possess our possessions.” If we would possess we must “trust and obey,” and be marked by implicit faith in the promises of God. There is nothing so much appreciated by our Lord as faithfulness.

David—the God-Conformed Life (Apr 1964)

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In considering the richly gifted son of Jesse, we see him as shepherd, poet, minstrel, soldier, exile and king. The history of David begins in 1 Samuel and ends in 1 Kings, and is characterized by some very bitter and trying experiences before he reached the place of exaltation. Self-control is one of David's chief traits. Such discipline of self is imperative in the cultivation of Christian character. In the story of David's life, from his education to his exaltation, how greatly he exercised self-control in the face of envy, hatred, revenge, degradation from the higher stations of life to the lowest! He came through these hard tests beautifully, in all but one instance. Of that one failure it is written that he repented bitterly. The great shepherd monarch of Israel was a great soldier, and the great sinner became a great saint. He was disciplined of God in order that he might be the prepared vessel as God's King to shepherd His people Israel. How necessary it is to be disciplined if grace confers on us some favoured and high office! The record of David's life is preserved for our instruction and profit.

David's thorough Schooling

David's life may be summed up in the number of hard schools he passed through. The school of nature was David's early companion and teacher. Bethlehem, nestling close to Jerusalem, was his home. The rugged, wild, strong, gaunt moorlands of Judea were his familiar haunts as he watched the flocks. In the midst of such

natural beauty and pastoral picturesqueness, the ‘man after His (God’s) own heart’ was taught by the schoolmaster of his youth that which coloured all his later life. Here he became such a skilled musician that his fame reached the royal palace and he was called to perform on the harp at court. As an athlete, he disciplined himself to sling a stone with unerring aim and accuracy. By experience in the “school of the lion and the bear,” he was taught the lessons of fearlessness and faith in God. He learned what it was to exercise self-control as a shepherd with the sheep in the hills of solitude, and came forth disciplined for the God-appointed duty as sovereign of a nation.

In the school of the royal court he learned the nobility of love and the scourge of envy. After his great triumph over Goliath of Gath, instead of honour came hatred; instead of esteem it brought envy in the heart of King Saul. During his stay in the royal palace, David constantly experienced the pressure of the thorn of jealousy. What were his inward thoughts when the javelin was cast at him with hellish hate, with the intent to pin him to the wall? How keen the pain when the renewed soul finds service done for Christ is unsung and unappreciated! To be hated and yet to refuse to hate is godlike and is the product of the life that is divine.

The School of Rejection

As a fugitive from King Saul’s hatred, David became an alien from the court and an outlaw from society. Now he is to be disciplined in the sorrows of rejection. Though he feared not the lion or the bear or the giant of the Philistines, the enmity of Saul took hold of his heart-strings and forced him to flee as a partridge on the

mountains. Yet, in the day of rejection he allowed no root of bitterness to spring up in the garden of his soul. In patience he waited on the Lord. During this time he could have taken the life of his foe, yet love won the victory, and grace saved King Saul. Such is ever the act of the soul instructed in the ways of God. David sees in all his sorrows the hand of God, and their breathings are enshrined in the Book of Psalms. “I will praise Thee for ever, because Thou hest done it.”

The School of Prosperity and Authority

J. B. Stoney in his Discipline in the School of God has this to say about David: ‘We have now reached the completion of the third course or circle of David’s eventful life, and the close of that wonderful process of preparation which was necessary to qualify him for that high and glorious position for which he was so early destined and anointed; and we enter on another chapter in his history. The period of his rejection is over, and the new and glorious position which he is to occupy is being prepared for him. That course of education which belonged to him as a fugitive and a sufferer, though rightful heir to the throne, closed at Ziklag, the scene to him of bitter sorrow and retribution, but of wondrous deliverance and restoration; and it is there, after having returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, and having sent presents of the spoil of the “enemies of the Lord” to all places where he and his men were wont to resort, that the momentous tidings of the death of him whose throne he was to fill reaches him.”

After an interval of twenty-one years, disciplined David attained his appointed place. Slow and sacrificial had been the steps by which he climbed to the peak, and

deep the exercise of his soul. For seven years he waited in the ‘school of delayed fulfilment of promise,’ but at last his patience and self-control were rewarded. The tide of prosperity sweeps in upon David and he is blessed in all things spiritual and temporal. He established his headquarters at Jerusalem, the capital of the nation. The Ark was restored to Jerusalem, and David in his zeal for God desired to build a temple of worship, but was bidden to defer it (2 Samuel 7).

The School of Chastening

During the time of his success, David sinned in his treatment of Bathsheba and Uriah. His sin was not glossed over, as it might have been in the account of his career. The Epistle to the Romans brings out the truth that, though the standing of David was not changed before God, nevertheless, this did not prevent the smiting of God. Thus, in the life of the believer, though we are declared righteous, God does not withold His discipline. In the case of David his guilt is at last dragged out into the light, and in deep contrition of heart he pours out his confession as found in Psalm 51. For twelve months the shepherd king secreted his sin, sealed his lips, and refused to confess. Psalm 32 tells how he felt. His bones waxed old through his roaring all the day long. Day and night God’s hand was heavy upon him. On account of this sin, David was disciplined in the awful anguish it produced in his soul, and the subsequent attitude of his family, and the multiplied troubles that came upon him.

Job—The God Mastered Life (May 1964)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 10 No. 5, May 1964.

The book of Job occupies a very unique place in the volume of God. It possesses a character entirely its own, and teaches lessons which are not to be learned in any other section of Scripture. Of Job, Thomas Carlyle has said:

‘I call this Book, apart from all theories about it, one of the grandest things ever written with pen… A noble Book, all men’s Book! It is our first, oldest statement of the never-ending problem — man’s destiny, and God’s way with him here in the earth … There is nothing written, I think, in the Bible or out of it, of equal literary merit.’

The opening pages of this remarkable book present the pattern patriarch. He is believed to have lived about the time of Abraham, and was the best man who could be found on the earth. There was none other with such a beautiful character. He was perfect and upright, one that feared God and eschewed evil, and as to possessions and earthly things, they were so abundant that this man was the greatest of the men in the East. The hand of God had hedged him round about on every side, and his path was strewn with the blessings of the Lord. He had all that heart could wish, children and wealth, honour and prestige from all around. His cup of earthly blessing was full. Yet such a mature saint and successful man on earth was chosen of God for an example of suffering and as a pattern of endurance. He

was subjected to divine discipline not on account of personal sin, but rather for the purpose of exemplifying to Satan the truth of God's estimate of His servant Job. God, in His grace, had challenged Satan as to His servant, that there was none like him in all the earth. Satan retorts, imputing to Job a sordid motive for his allegiance to Jehovah. Satan claimed that Job loved God not for what God was in Himself, but because of what God had bestowed upon Job personally.

The Test of Earthly Loss

To prove the falsity of this assertion the Lord allows Satan to attack Job. The great man of the East is thrust into the furnace of affliction, seven times heated for him. Trial after trial comes upon him. In one day all the property of Job was swept away, and all his children died in one dreadful catastrophe. As Job contemplated the wasted fields, the loss of his oxen, asses, sheep, camels; the cold faces of his children and his servants, he bowed his head and cried: 'Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither, the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord' (Job 1:21). Job was no fair weather believer, but faithful and true in his devotion to God. Job acknowledges that God is just as good as He was before, and as much to be praised and loved as ever. In his affliction he is an example of patience and magnified the name of the Lord. By his words and worship he proved his love for God was not founded upon His provisions but His Person.

Test of Bodily Affliction

Again God challenges Satan concerning the fidelity of His servant Job. Satan says, ‘Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth Thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse Thee to Thy face’ (2:4-5). Satan is again allowed to touch Job, this time in his body, and he is smitten with boils from head to feet. How complete is his misery! His suffering is acute. The man of prosperity becomes a man of pain and poverty. Behold! the man of esteem and riches — a priest, a ruler, a patriarch, sitting in dust and ashes.

Test of False Accusation

Job’s wife breaks down completely and falling into the devil’s snare she urges Job to curse God and die. His three friends, Eliphas, Bildad and Zophar, learn of his suffering and come to sympathize. They were miserable comforters and their words were like arrows that sorely wounded. Their logic was based on rationalism and thus attributed the suffering of Job to sin. They misjudged him and accused him of sin and their ministry was that of condemnation. For every chapter they gave Job, he responded with two in return. In these three companions of Job there is represented the various exercises which engage the consciences of Christians when disciplined. Elihu, another comforter of Job, maintained that the suffering of Job was for the purpose of discipline. Though not far from the truth, he acted as a mediator and presented truth from the viewpoint of God. He showed that it was God’s desire to open the understanding of men to truth and right by way of chastening and education.

Lessons Learned

The outcome is that Job arrived at the end desired of God in all the discipline to which He has been subjecting him. Job, now seeing God, formed a true estimate of himself, and repented in dust and ashes. In the valley of affliction Job learned his vileness. Through suffering, he beheld the sovereignty of God. In chastening, he learned of his corruption. In trial, he learned the truth of God's kindness and faithfulness to His own. Moreover, Satan learned that Job did not serve God for what he could get. Job's wife learned that the loss of the material was not the loss of all. The friends of Job learned that suffering is not always the result of sin. Elihu learned that, even though he thought he was right, and all others wrong, the final verdict was in the hands of God. Job now knew that God had allowed him to suffer for His glory, and his own personal good. He came forth from the furnace self-judged, purged, humbled, patience having accomplished her noble work. 'Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy' (James 5:11).

Purpose of the Book of Job

The Book of Job furnishes us with further light on the mystery of suffering and pain. It serves to inform us that chastisement is a test and revealer of character, and is used to discipline and to educate. The Ancients asked: 'How can this man be godly if he suffers?' We Christians say: 'How can this man be godlike if he knows nothing of suffering?' Many of God's children walk in different paths, with broken hearts and bleeding feet. Their diet is the bread of affliction and the water of adversity. They long for the rainbow in the sullen threatening clouds

and wait through sleepless nights for the light that does not come.

The Origin of the Word Bible (May 1964)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 10 No. 5, May 1964.

Just why was the Book that has had the greatest moral influence in the world called the “Bible?” From the Coronation Service we shall ever recall the words, “The most valuable thing that this world affords… Here is wisdom; this is the royal law; these are the lively oracles of God.” In the study of the words of the Bible there is none more interesting than that connected with the Book of God. In the museum of Cairo as well as in the writings of men we have learned that the Bible was written long before printing was invented or paper was discovered. “In Southern Asia, and in Egypt, and in the valley of the Jordan, there grew a plant called papyrus. The outer covering of this plant was called biblus, which was stripped off, put into water, and after a rather long process was changed into parchment. This parchment was tough and flexible and with constant use would last for a hundred years. It was on this parchment the early Prophets wrote the Scriptures.

Then, another difficulty arose. As lasting as this parchment was, it would finally wear out. The parchment was glued together in long strips, and then made into a roll. On these rolls the various Books of the Bible were written. Being read, studied, and handled as they were, these rolls began to wear out. It was then necessary to copy in order to preserve the written Word, and this had to be done by scholars who were experts in language, and who understood the message of the Prophets who wrote it.

Then it was that a new order of scholars arose known as the “scribes.” Their main duty was to copy the written Books exactly as they were written, and being educated especially for this, in the course of time they began to explain to the people the meaning of the various Books of the Bible. The Books of the Old Testament existed in this parchment form for several hundred years, and new copies were constantly being made to replace the older ones about worn out. The scribes were the most learned men of their day.

Let us remember, however, that the scribes never wrote the Bible originally. The Prophets did that as God revealed Himself and His message to them. But after the Prophets were gone, somebody had to look after the parchments, preserve them, and recopy as might be needed. And so that class of men, highly trained to do this, came into existence and were called scribes. These men occupied a high profession and were greatly honoured. God’s Word was intrusted to their care for many hundreds of years.

Then another thing happened, something quite common in the use of language. The word biblus, that is, the parchment’s name on which the words were written, began to be applied to the Sacred Writing itself. Then, since the writings were in rolls of books, the word biblus came to mean book.

Now, the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, the name Bible is of Greek origin. This came in the process of translating the Hebrew into Greek; and through the Latin into English, we have the word Bible, which means “book,” literally speaking.

Today if you were to visit a modern book store in Jerusalem, Israel, and ask for a Bible the word used would be “tanack.” It is made up of three letters, “T,” “N,” and “K.” These three letters stand for the Torah, the first five Books of the Bible; the second letter, N, the Prophets; the last letter, K, or our English C - Coteveem meaning, the Writings. The Hebrew Bible was arranged in three sections (Luke 24:44).

· THE LAW

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

· THE PROPHETS

Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings… Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Twelve.

· THE WRITINGS

Poetical, Psalms, Job, Proverbs; Rolls (used on special feast days), Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther. Non-Prophetical, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles.

I have always thought the Old Testament ended on a tragic note of corruption and condemnation, the very opposite of the Book of Revelation. According to our King James Version this is true, but not according to the Bible of the Jews. The last book of the Hebrew Old Testament is Chronicles as verified by our Lord in mentioning Abel as the first martyr in Genesis, and Barachias the last in the book of Chronicles. In Chronicles the nation is visualized going up to Jerusalem and the very words, “let him go up” (Chronicles 36:23), are suggestive of worship. Thus, as the New Testament ends on the note of triumph so the Old Testament concludes with the divine testimony as to the wisdom

and knowledge of God and His faithfulness concerning the covenant people known as the Jew.

Though the Bible is composed of many books, it is still one Book, “The Book.”

The Word of God is unlike all other books, it is a Holy Book. It is holy as to its source, “God hath spoken in His holiness” (Psalm 60:6). You can search the world and analyze the so-called holy books of religion but only the Bible can be truthfully called the Holy Bible. It is holy in substance; from cover to cover it is marked by spirituality because of the Holy Spirit of God. Do we not read, “The Spirit spake through David” (2 Sam. 23:2)?

It is holy in speech, because holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21). There is no revelation from God in the works of wicked men. Men like Shakespeare and Carlyle, Ruskin, etc., have written wise and wonderful words but none have written about a holy Saviour, a holy calling, a holy name, a holy love and a holy home.

It is holy in sequel for its ultimate aim is to make holy men and women. God’s desire was to make a holy nation but the nation Israel failed. Now in our generation the design of the Holy Spirit is to take out a people for His name and by His Spirit make them sanctified vessels meet for His use.

Paul’s advice to a young man in 2 Timothy 2:15 defines the high cost of serving God in the Sacred Scriptures. It will result in a sturdy Christian character, a daily surrendered life, a sanctified course through this world, and a sure and straight presentation of truth in our message. Such a life is influential, invincible and inspirational and has as its incentive that everything in

our lives be the exact counterpart of the plan defined in the Scriptures.

Oh! that in our generation when there is a famine of hearing the Word of God we might get back to the Book, the basis of all spiritual, national, and individual blessing as revealed in the “Oratorio of Scripture” (Psalm 119).

Moses—the God Motivated Life (June 1964)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 10 No. 6, June 1964.

It has been well said that greatness is usually forged in the fires of affliction. God put Moses through the Desert University of Sinai for forty years. Greatness comes through service. The head of the class is reached in God's School by being servant of all. Holy decisions and high resolves are followed by severe testings. So in the remarkable life of Moses, the man of God. It is summed up by the Spirit in six verses in God's roll of honour (Hebrews 11:2328): "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible. Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest He that destroyed the firstborn should touch them." Moses was mighty (Dent. 34:12), and meek (Numbers 12:3); he was the man who sang the song of victory (Exod. 15:1); the man who saw God face to face; the only man whom God buried (Dent. 34:6); the only man for whose body the devil fought (Jude 9); the only man whose name is associated with the last song, "the song of Moses and …

the Lamb" (Rev. 15:3). Truly a giant of God towering over the sons of men. In such a wonderful personage is seen the discipline of self-renunciation. The faith manifested by his parents in their defiance of the royal decree is later reproduced in their son. The commencement of our course gives colour to the whole; and the earliest tuition received in the divine school gives shape and tone to our characters which after-years cannot obliterate. The. story of Moses is summed up by four special characteristics.

He Refused

His life is characterized by his ability to say no. Though he had been educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was mighty in word and deed, yet he was a master in self-discipline. As son of Pharaoh's daughter, what opportunities for pomp, wealth, fame, splendour and majesty undreamed of in Israel's day! Yet he calculated all carefully and definitely and wholeheartedly refused it all. The magnitude of his own renunciation entitled him to be the leader of God's people. How aptly a great writer states his resolve:

"The impulsive ardour of youth will sometimes lead a young heart to say, 'This people shall be my people, and their God my God.' But there was nothing of that kind here. It was the deliberate resolve of a man who had seen much of life, who knew all that could be urged from every side, and who was come to years. With nothing to gain and all to lose, after thoughtful examination, he descended from the footsteps of the loftiest throne in the world — for a palace there would be a hut, for luxury, hard fare and coarse food; for respect and honour, hatred and contempt; for the treasures of Egypt,

poverty and want; for the society of the learned and the elite, association with the ignorant and depraved. But none of these things moved him."

No leader of God's people suffers less than the people he is called to lead. Human leaders rise to place and position in various ways; but God's man rises only through suffering and the disciplining process of life. One must have a firm hold on self ere he leads others. Moses knew what it was to deny self. So must all who follow Christ. We are to 'cease to do evil,' then 'learn to do well' (Isa. 1:16, 17). We are exhorted to "abhor that which is evil;" then "cleave to that which is good" (Rom. 12:9). God takes note of what we "do" as well as what we "do not." Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt — he chose the very best by faith, in seeing Him who is invisible. This is the path, the self-sacrifice which the disciple or follower of Christ must pursue. This will cost the disciplining of all our powers. Moses made a great choice, and as a result his fame has survived the centuries. His contemporaries have long been forgotten; the glory of Babylon and Assyria, the wealth and wonders of ancient Egypt are passed away, but the influence of Moses is deathless. Why has the memory been so vividly preserved?

He Chose

He heroically chose suffering and affliction with his brethren. Historically, it is one of the first choices of the Bible — to suffer, foreunner of an innumerable host to follow in its train. The Egyptians were aliens, worshippers of false gods. His people were worshippers of the one true God, Jehovah. How much better to be in

poverty and pain with “his brethren” than with the heathen princes and aristocrats in the palace of plenty. Their pomp was ‘for a season,’ whereas God’s pleasures are eternal.

He Esteemed

His choice led to a new course in the purpose of God. Forty years of exile are appointed for him where he was no longer to be a prince but a pupil under the tuition of the Lord. Everyone, from the king on his throne to the maid grinding at the domestic mill, knew what he had done. He kept back nothing, he shunned not to declare his decision. His tongue told it, his face showed it, his actions proved it. His motto was, No neutrality. “If God be God, follow Him; if Baal, follow him.” Forty years as a son of Pharaoh’s daughter, he was taught the wisdom of men. For forty years as a shepherd and a servant of God, he was taught the wisdom of God. In the common round of the desert as a shepherd, Moses moves subject to the will of God. Oh, the lessons learned in the patient waiting for God’s time in the carrying out of His purpose!

He Endured

Moses had the twin graces of patience end perseverance. He endured the refusal of “his brethren;” he endured the coldness of the daughters of Jethro, who left him standing at the well; he endured the opposition of Pharaoh; endured the long years in the seclusion of Midian; he endured the murmuring of Israel in the wilderness; he endured the idolatry of the nation with whom he was associated; throughout the forty years in the ‘waste howling wilderness,’ he endured, the only

way that any one shall ever endure — by seeing Him by faith who cannot be seen with the natural eye.

For forty years he learned to master self as a prince in a royal court. Yet this was not enough, thus the pupil must learn in the school of God's appointment. For forty years he was exiled in the desert of Midian because he had attempted to carry out in his own strength and in his own way, the purpose of God for his life. For forty years he had been tending the flocks and learning how to use the rod, and all that he learned from God in that period, he must use for the people of God. The rod in his hand for protection becomes the rod of power. He learned the lesson of the bosom. Moses had learned what was in his hand; now he learns what he has in his heart. He was taught the surety of the divine 'Thus saith the Lord' in the judgment of God on Egypt, on Miriam, on the sons of Korah, and on the nations round about. Even in death he experienced the heavy hand of discipline because of the unadvised expression of his lips in the most sacred service for God. Thus, through this faithful and fruitful life for God, discipline accomplished her noble work. His secret of inward power and abiding influence is summed up in the motto of his life, 'FAITHFULNESS TO GOD.'

How To Study the Bible (June 1964)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 10 No. 6, June 1964.

The Bible is a revelation that yields riches and royalties far beyond our individual capacities. Whilst all cannot be students of the Word we can be among those who meditate upon the Scriptures. I once heard of a simple Christian who had meditated the Bible through three times.

Progress in the knowledge of God does not come through intellectual attainment but, on the contrary, spiritual adjustment. The Word of God is “living and powerful” (Heb. 4:12), and its very words, “spirit and life” (John 6:63), and “light” (Ps. 119:105), but the prerequisite to revelation is regeneration. The wisdom and knowledge of God is not on the basis of innate wisdom but by the indwelling witness of the Holy Spirit of God. Therefore, much of our progress in spiritual truth and Christian grace will be dependent on heart searching instead of head studying, communion rather than cramming, humility of spirit rather than headiness of soul, and faith rather than facts and figures. Let us look at three simple rules of Bible study.

Guidance

In almost every book of the Divine Library the opening words are the gateway to a systematic survey and comprehensive outline of the Bible. Many who read these lines will never be able to give themselves to the study of the original languages, Hebrew and Greek.

Yet, it is within your power to get a working knowledge of the Bible if you follow basic principles. Find out the precise meaning of the name of the book and in reverence, pray and with a sanctified heart approach the opening words claiming God's promise. "The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple" (Ps. 119:130).

The Bible is the only safe and sure guide by which man can be guided through this changing world. How often we come to a fork in the pilgrim path to Heaven! What should we do? It is wise to ask four questions. (1) Does the Bible give any clear lead as to what should be done? (2) If the circumstances are such the duty is plain and obvious, though maybe unpleasant, it is most unlikely that God will free of this burden for another (and perhaps more pleasant duty). (3) Which way does the Cross lie? That was the way Christ chose. It may mean renouncing something or sharing His reproach. Can we perceive the scent of the Master's feet? (4) Where does the peace of God lie? "Let the peace of God be umpire in your heart." The Psalmist said, "For Thy name's sake lead me, and guide me" (Ps. 31:3). This is ever the design of our heavenly Father. God guides by His Word. There must be an unqualified acceptance of the finality and fullness of the Holy Scriptures. Where the Scriptures are explicit there is no more to be said. If we refrain from following on, the problem is no longer of guidance but of disobedience. We ought to be crystal clear in our confession, "I being in the way, the Lord led me." He had certain specific instructions from his master and a strict adherence to them kept him in the way, and the Lord crowned the mission with success.

Oh! what a message to actually know our steps can be ordered in His word.

Growth

The question is rightly asked, to what purpose is our perusal of the Book of Books? We must have a definite objective. If it is only to acquire certain biblical statistics, our intensions will soon vaporize and vanish. If it is for the glory and honour of God and our spiritual good then we shall have the aid of the Spirit of God as a driving force and power within enabling us to continue when tempted to flag or fail.

Our Christian life starts through the Word, “Being born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Pet. 1:23). This seed gets into the very warp and woof of our being and having been laid hold of by faith the new life springs up. The soil of our hearts must be free from hindrances as James warns (James 1:21), and our spiritual life must take root downward and bear fruit upward. Just as many plants will not grow in various African soils that are acid, so the truth of God cannot flourish in lives made acid by evil thoughts, purposes and actions. Our Christian life is sustained by means of the Word of God. Today we have learned proper vitamins make a balanced diet and bring health, so the Christian must learn that all spiritual sustenance and strength is to be drawn from the life-giving, nourishing, supernatural Word of God. It is essentially for the soul and to be studied for the sake of the soul rather than sermon making. It is the Book that leads us out to God and to our Lord Jesus Christ in all His majesty, power and glory, and as to His fulness, none of us will ever

fathom it here on earth. All our increasing knowledge of Him as we grow in grace and in knowledge is but faith glimpses of Him whose name and person is, "Wonderful." Our Christian life is safe guarded from sin by the Word. "Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee" (Ps. 119:11). In the days of His flesh it was the unfailing sword Christ used against the enemy. He is our example and it is imperative we have the Word of Christ dwelling in us richly in order that the Holy Spirit may use it for every conflict and crisis. Our only safeguard and surest recourse is to the words, "It is written." Our Christian life is satisfied through the Word. Years ago Jeremiah said, "Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart" (Jer. 15:16). God wants us to be a happy people. The truest joy comes in reception, response and reverence for the Bible. Going through this life there are many sorrows and trials exceedingly painful yet the Word of God can give peace without measure and joy unspeakable — "as sorrowful yet always rejoicing." To know we are safe and Christ is our abiding refuge in view of the coming storm of judgment why shouldn't we be a joyful people? Was it not Isaiah who said in his blessed book that we have something to speak about, something to sing about and something to shout about (Isa. 12:1, 5, 6)? Our Christian life can only be successful through the Word. Think of the words of Jehovah to Joshua as he is about to enter the Land, "Thou shalt meditate therein day and night.…for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Joshua 1:8). How vastly different prosperity and success from God's point of view! There are spiritual Christians who are not rich in this world's goods, yet God's promise is true and

we can rest assured that abiding in the centre of God's will every need will be met and every blessing is ours.

Godliness

The Bible is distinguished from all other books because it is both living and life-giving. What other book has such a wonderful, winning, witnessing message as the Book of Books! Surely in the midst of the thousands of verses John 3:16 is most beloved and world wide in its breadth. The Bible is a truly living Book. At the threshold of its opening chapters we are told of the breath of life, and the tree of life; and in its closing chapters we again read of the tree of life, also the river of life and the Lamb's Book of Life. Then, all the way through its message is of life. God's Word even today is. "Choose Life" because of the universal condition of all men, "Dead in trespasses and sins."

The Holy Scriptures are God's "lively oracles" given by inspiration of God. If our spiritual life is to be sustained and strong we must constantly feed on the Word of Life. We must ever read, mark, learn and inwardly digest, for they are life unto those that find them and health to all in a world of disease and death. If our lives are to be effectual in prayer and established in doctrine there must be earnestness of heart. So few Christians seem to be in real earnest. How can we ever be faithful witnesses to the truth, and be able to stand against all the wiles of the devil, and refute the specious arguments of modernism and all those false cults in which the religious world abounds today? We must give ourselves to the meditation of the Scriptures and diligently adopt some method of systematic study for sobriety, godliness and righteousness. Many today read the Word of God at

random, piece-meal in order to pick up some good thoughts for addressing a meeting or give some help in daily life. This leads to a stunted, scrappy and shallow life. Have a plan. A poor plan is better than no plan at all. The study of the Word leads to a depth of spirituality obtained in no other way. It will give richness and fulness to public service and stability to personal Christian experience.

Oh! to hear it (James 1:19); read it (1 Tim. 4:14); study it (2 Tim. 2:15); memorize it (Rev. 1:3); and meditate upon it (Deut. 17:19). It will prove to be the joy and rejoicing of the heart and make us studious, secure, strong and satisfied" (Jer. 15: 16).

The Language of the Bible (Aug-Sept 1964)

From Food for the Flock, Aug-Sept 1964.

The revival of Hebrew which died out of popular use long before the time of Christ is a remarkable phenomena. During the early beginnings of the New Nation Israel there were about one hundred mother tongues, resulting in a lingual chaos in the minature united nations state. Now Hebrew is the official language of the State, a living tongue. The language is logical, pictorial and spiritual.

Logical

Hebrew is one of the most logical languages in the world. Instead of the useful bogey that it is exceedingly difficult, it is on the contrary, easy to understand. In English as well as other tongues many words are constantly used to convey a single idea. In Biblical as well as modern Hebrew, such is not the case. Hebrew lends itself to quality rather than quantity, a minimum of words instead of a maximum, reminding one of the amazing brevity and profundity of the greatest of all Hebrew writings, the Scriptures of Truth. Who else but God could put the message of salvation into a language that would be adaptable to every people under the sun.

Pictorial

As you scan the letters that make up the Hebrew alphabet, you quickly discern that they possess names with recognized meanings. A few will suffice as illustrations —: an ox, a house, a camel, a hand, an eye,

a fish, a serpent, while the last letter of all is Tav — a sacred symbol, or the sign of the Cross. Thus the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet are associated with sacrifice. In all the pages of the Bible by means of these letters, there are conveyed to the mind portraits of men and women, boys and girls, places and events, of lasting interest. It is like the sun which enlightens all lands. It speaks to the heart and conscience of every race with crystal clarity and undimmed brilliance over the centuries.

Spiritual

Perhaps in the rise of modern Hebrew there will be research undertaken in relation to the alphabet. To many the alphabet continues to he a sealed mystery. Yet to the pious Jew, as well as many scholars in Biblical research the alphabet is believed to be God-breathed. It is the work of God, written in Hebrew, written in Greek, by the Spirit of God in the language of humanity. The study of such words as God, Jehovah, Truth, Man, Earth, etc., which appear on the threshold of the Bible are filled with vital, enriching spiritual depths of knowledge. To approach the Book, or the fascinating study of its words there is no wiser counsel than that of the Psalmist, “Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy Law” (Psalms 119:18).

The Study Of Hebrew

The Bible is a revelation that yields riches and royalties far beyond our individual capacities. Whilst all cannot be students of the Word, we can be among those who meditate upon the Scriptures. I once heard of a simple

Christian who had meditated the Bible through three times.

Progress in the knowledge of God does not come through intellectual attainment, but, on the contrary, spiritual adjustment. The Word of God is “living and powerful” (Hebrews 4:12,13.) Its very words are, “spirit and life,” (John 6:63), and “light” (Psalms 119:105), but the prerequisite to revelation is regeneration. Was it not C. H. Spurgeon who said, “Other books can delight the mind, this one only can quiet the conscience?” The wisdom and knowledge of God is not on the basis of innate wisdom but by the indwelling witness of the Holy Spirit of God. Therefore, much of the progress in spiritual truth and Christian grace will be dependent on heart searching instead of head studying, communing rather than cramming, humility of spirit rather than highness of soul, and faith rather than facts and figures.

I often used to wonder what words like Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy meant, and just where they originated. After spending several years in the land of the Bible and studying the language of the land, I learned they were words adopted by the translators of the Hebrew Bible into Greek in the days of Alexander the Great. They simply stated the beginning, the going out, religious exercise, wilderness journeyings and the repeating of the law to the nation Israel.

Going beyond the Old Greek version of the Scriptures I learned the original words of the Hebrew Bible shed new light and beauty on the Sacred Volume. The very opening word of the Bible is, “In the beginning” and the Hebrew word, “Beresheet” emphatically states that which is pre-eminent or foremost in time and thought,

and contains three words symbolized in the Hebrew letters as, “B” — Son; “R” — Mind, and “T” —Cross. Thus the very first word of our Bible contains the revelation of God with every seed thought of the knowledge and wisdom of the Lord.

Long ago it has been pointed out there are twenty-two essential parts to the head of man, the Masterpiece in the miracle of Creation, so there are twenty-two letters to the Hebrew Alphabet bringing to us the revelation of the mind of God. The Bible alone teaches us the true fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom, and it is able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus, (2 Tim. 3:15, 17).

The first book of the Bible is not Genesis, but “Beresheet” which being interpreted is, “In the beginning.” Exodus is rightly rendered, “These are the names,” for after the beginning of everything except God, there is the indication of a people for God emancipated and established as sons on the ground of redemption. The third book of the Bible is Leviticus or, “And He Called,” immediately taking us into the Sanctuary where we learn something of the Holiness of God and our relationship in worship. Numbers simply means, “in the wilderness” and so vividly points out the problems, perils and privileges of all who walk through the desert sands and howling waste wilderness. The fifth book of the Pentateuch, Deuteronomy, like all other books of the Bible has the key right inside the door, “These be the words” (Deut. 1:1). This book emphasizes the truth of God’s Word to a new and rising generation.

The Book of Genesis (Oct 1964)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 10 No. 10, Oct 1964.

Our brother Rainey has a special burden upon his heart for the young in Christ's flock. It is his intention to prepare an outline study of the separate books of the Bible.

There are those at school or college, and others engaged in apprenticeship work, who do not have time for a prolonged intensive Bible course. These monthly studies will prove a help and blessing to all, especially to those with limited time.

Should any feel the need of further help or have some specific problem, they may contact brother Rainey through this office.

Introduction

I have often wondered why so I many young people do not find the Bible fascinating and challenging today. What a blessed book it is—with its stories of remarkable personalities; its typical teaching and comprehensive camera shots; its definite portrayal of the hand of God in human affairs and its authentic record of the beginning of everything but God. Have you ever thought why God selected seven men as a "National Portrait Gallery" in the first Book? Surely in the biographies of Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph we have a consecutive outline of the God-planned life. Or have you ever thought why we no sooner get into the Book than we have the Obituary Chapter and the final page ends with a coffin? The answer to this is the serpent's lie

and how interesting it is to see Satan as a snake; sin as a crouching beast, (4:7), and the Seed of the woman, not the man, the Saviour God promised. Here in this opening Book we learn of God in creation; God in History; God in providence; God in human life and God in redemption… It is a deep deep well of sparkling, stimulating, sacred truth and young people of all races may drink in abundance of the Living Water. Yes! we know and believe, Genesis is Good for You.

Key Word: “Beginning” Key Verse 1.1

The Book of Genesis is in many respects the most important and illustrious chapter in the Book of inspiration. It is called the “Book of Beginnings,” since it deals with the beginning of everything except God, who is eternal. Another title that aptly describes it is, “The Seed Plot of the Bible,” the foundation on which the divine Revelation rests, and on which is reared the structure of all subsequent Revelation.

The name Genesis is of Greek origin and signifies “origin,” while the Hebrew word is rightly interpreted as “beginning.” The title of the Book at once suggests the content and comprehensive nature and message of the Book. It tells out in marvellous detail yet matchless simplicity the origin of all things. The great doctrines of the Word of God are all found in this opening Book, ‘the beginning of the universe, of life, of man, of marriage, of sin, of redemption, of death, of family life, of nations, in fact of everything there is to know. For this reason, it has been the object of malicious hate and the critics and infidels of all ages have bent all their energies to discredit and destroy.

The Author

The writer of the Book was Moses, the Man of God. Though scientists and critics have sought to overthrow this masterpiece of Revelation it still stands as an impregnable Rock, magestic and marvellous in its durability, simplicity and dignity. To believe this Book, it has been stated, all other books are easy. It is written in prose not poetry and no doubt it is the communication of the knowledge of God first to Adam and from Adam to Methusaleh, who told Noah, who told Shem, who told Abraham,—who told Moses.

The Address

The distinctive message of Genesis is the downfall under every condition met by the deliverance of God.

The Analysis

(1). It sets forth Primitive and Patriarchal history covering 2,369 years.

(2). It records ten successive generations.

(3). It presents seven outstanding events:

(1). Creation of the World.

(2). Creation of Man.

(3). The Fall.

(4). The Flood (5). The Pioneer of Faith.

(6) The Migration to Egypt.

(7). The Coming of the Saviour.

(4). It portrays a galaxy of notable men:— Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph.

(5). In Genesis you have no contradiction of Scripture with science for the opening Book of the Bible goes beyond the furthest reaches of science and bridges the three great gaps which science and evolution cannot bridge, Viz, the origin of man.

(6). In ‘Genesis, Bible students sum up the message of the Book with three words revealing three worlds: — Generation, Degeneration, and Regeneration. Here we have the world of nature, of sin and of grace. They tell us what God did, chapters 1 and 2. They inform us what Satan did, chapters 3 to 11. They set forth what the God-man Christ Jesus would do, chapters 12 to 50.

(7) The first five words are “In the beginning God created,” and the closing four words are, “A coffin in Egypt.” The first is a declaration of the power and wisdom of God in creation. The last is a symbol of faith and hope through the Saviour who is the seed of the woman, and for whom the way is prepared in a chosen race descended from Abraham, and to spread ‘the blessings of this faith and hope to all nationals over the world is the story of Genesis.

Outline

1. The Facts of Creation, (i.-ii).
2. The Facts of the Fall, (iii.-v).
3. The Facts of the Flood, (vi.-xi).
4. The Facts of Abraham, (xii.- xxv).
5. The Facts of Isaac, (xxi.- xxx).
6. The Facts of Jacob, (xxv.- to end).
7. The facts of Joseph, (xx: 22-to end).

The Book of Exodus (Nov 1964)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 10 No. 11, Nov 1964.

Our brother Rainey has a special burden upon his heart for the young in Christ's flock. It is his Intention to prepare an outline study of the separate books of the Bible.

There are those at school or college, and others engaged in apprenticeship work, who do not have time for a prolonged intensive Bible course. These monthly studies will prove a help and blessing to all, especially to those with limited time.

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The second book of the Bible is a long book of forty chapters, but the stories are filled with human interest and instruction. The baby in the bulrushes becomes the great Lawgiver. His very name, Moses, means "drawn out," and this is God's design throughout all our lives so that we might become useful and fruitful in a world of need. Exodus is a Greek word meaning "going out," as we would say, "Exit." However, the Hebrew word is, "The Names" as the opening verse tells out. After the foundation of all life in Genesis, we are taught the birth of the nation Israel in the land of Egypt. God is interested in people and His desire is ever towards the objects of His choice. Thus this book that begins in slavery concludes in the sunlight. In spite of the persecution of evil-men, the Pharaohs, and the plagues, there is freedom, fortitude, and fellowship in the service

of God. It is interesting to note how God takes knowledge of our lives. In the family of Amram and Jochebad three children were born and Moses was the youngest. Yet years later Micah records them this way, “I sent before thee, Moses, Aaron and Miriam” (Micah 6:4). Why? To teach us that regardless of our age or how many are in our respective families spiritual success and the honour of God are conditioned on our obedience and making the most of our opportunity…

The Message

The book of Exodus records the liberation of Israel from the cruel bondage of Egypt. Its author and outstanding personality is Moses, the servant of God.

Genesis ended with the picture of Joseph’s coffin in Egypt, and now Exodus continues the national history incident of bearing that coffin back to the land of Joseph’s fathers. In Genesis Israel is a family, here the origin of the Nation. In Genesis the theme is “Election,” whereas in Exodus it is “Emancipation.” The Great events in Exodus are:

· the Training of Moses as Prince, Pupil, and Prophet;

· the Ten Plagues;

· the Passover;

· the Passage through the Red Sea; the Giving of the Law;

· the Ordination of the priesthood; and

· the Construction of the Tabernacle.

Looking at the book from the standpoint of geography three words sum it up: “Egypt, the Red Sea and Sinai,”

and these three suggest three national far reaching events: The Ten Plagues, The Passover, and the Ten Commandments."

The Method Of Study

The study of the book is fascinating and filled with typology, which is typical history, a parable enacted on earth for all to learn from. The Word of God assures us of this. "All these things happened unto them (the Israelites) for ensamples (typically)": and they are written for our admonition (1 Cor. 10:1-11). In the Book of Hebrews we read concerning the tabernacle that it is "a parable for the time now present." (Hebrews 9.9 R.V.)

Exodus should be studied christologically, for it is replete with the Person of Christ as seen in the person of Moses, the passover, and the tabernacle. Exodus should be studied dispensationally, since it sets forth so vividly the contrast between law and grace. Exodus should be studied historically, for it is a most valued biography of the miraculous history of the Hebrews. The Book of Exodus should be studied Religiously, for its information regarding customs, rituals, feasts, and the laws peculiar to Jewish life. Exodus should be studied spiritually, because it presents in a panoramic manner four individual experiences.

As a nation, Israel is seen as Slaves, crushed and crying for deliverance from the thraldom of Pharoah. Next we see Israel as Sons, redeemed and freed, led and fed under the leadership of the nation's most colorful figure, Moses, the man of God. Finally, we see the nation as Servants, tested and trained, equipped and established making known the truth of God by life and legislation. Here we also note the personality of the Devil: his

Dominion (Rom. 5.21), his Defiance (Ex. 5.2), his Devices (Ex. 8 and 10), his Doom (Ex. 14).

Again we have a divine classic on the theme of the book Redemption, the Passover being God's picture of redemption for Israel. Exodus is the book of Redemption or as another has called it, "The Pilgrm's Progress" of the Bible.

Exodus should be studied Prophetically for on its hearth burns brightly the Lamp of Prophecy. In the burning bush, Israel is seen as indestructible and though again and again almost extirpated as Ex. 3:2; Isa. 6:13 reveal, yet God will never forsake His Ancient People. In Isaiah a stock remains which will yet reproduce and flourish, while in Exodus though in the furnace of affliction, Israel will yet be delivered. Exodus should be studied Scripturally, for in comparing Scripture with Scripture one quickly sees the constant allusion and many references to the book of Exodus. Study for an example such chapters as (Ps. 78, 80, 95, 97, 99, 114, 136) in the light of Exodus).

The book commences in the shadows and concludes in the sun-light. It begins by telling us how God came in grace to emancipate an enslaved race. It ends by telling us how God comes down in glory to dwell among and enrich and ennoble a redeemed people.

Outline:

1. The Setting (chapters 1-2).

2. The Story of Deliverance (chapters 3-12).

3. The Sinai Journey (chapters 13-18).n

4. The Stop at Sinai (chapters 19-40).

Where the Angels Sang (Dec 1964)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 10 No. 12, Dec 1964.

One of the most picturesque places in all the world is the little town of Bethlehem nestling in the Judean hills. Today it is part of the Hashemite kingdom of the Jordan, and marked by tragedy both politically and socially. Thousands of refugees are crowded into their tents and hovels as they await the settlement of the old feud between the Jews and the Arabs. The language of the first century is still heard. “In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping and great mourning” (Matthew 2:18). When we think of Bethlehem, (meaning “The house of bread”), certain memories spring to life about a Son, a Saviour and a Sign, “The Babe of Bethlehem.”

A Son

In reading the Old Testament (Genesis 35) we are first introduced to Bethlehem in the days of Jacob. Though he lived some 1800 years before the coming of Christ, the hand of God was on him leading him right to the House of Bread, Ephrath. Coming along from Bethel a halt was made and, just on the outskirts of Bethlehem, Rachel, his beloved wife, gave birth to her last child. As she died, she cried out in pain “Benoni,” which means “Son of my sorrow.” Jacob called the boy, Benjamin, the “son of my right hand,” and built a pillar there which remains to this day. Often I have sat by the way into Bethlehem and thought about this scene. It speaks of the birth of another Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Surely He was the Man of Sorrows, but also the Son of God’s right hand.

“He came as a babe, in the manger was laid,

Christ Jesus the blest Son of God,

He came from on high, that here He might die,

To ransom us by His own blood.”

A Saviour

While we gaze with adoring wonder on the birth of the little baby in a manger, we must never forget that He was of noble descent. For He was one of the family of David and of Abraham. The Wise Men knelt and worshipped Him and the sky shone with a wonderful light from Heaven. The beautiful name, Jesus simply means “Jehovah the Saviour.”

In the Old Testament there are three books that contain the name of Jesus— Joshua, Isaiah and Hosea.

In all these books the Spirit of God has a special purpose in the meaning of the names. Joshua puts the emphasis on His Person, Isaiah on His work, and Hosea on His people. So when Matthew records, “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21), the Holy Spirit unites these three books in testimony to the Christ of God, Immanuel, “God with us.”

Joshua means Saviour, and so the name of Jesus is the same. Isaiah makes much of the work of the Redeemer and the meaning of His name is “Jehovah is salvation.” Thus, as Matthew says, our Lord came to save from sin. Finally, Hosea in another reference to the Saviour and in his book we find Jehovah’s great concern for His people. So the coming of Christ was to save His people from their sins. In one verse of Scripture the Holy Spirit

gathers up the teaching of the three books in the Old Testament bearing the name of Jesus. It is no wonder we sing:

“Man of sorrows!” what a name For the Son of God who came, Ruined sinners to reclaim! Hallelujah! what a Saviour!

A Sign

From the days of David, the man after God’s own heart, Bethlehem was like many other towns quietly hidden away for centuries. Then one day a mysterious Star appeared in the heavens over the place where Jesus was to be born. It led the way for the Wise Men to come to the Babe with their gifts of gold, frank-incense and myrrh. The message of the angel of the Lord was expressed in the word Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. The sign was a Baby and in this lies the mystery of the Incarnation. Truly it is both mysterious and wonderful — the Son of God, the great Creator, the Lord of Glory humbling Himself to become even for a short time, the Son of Man. No one at Rome, the Imperial capital, knew of His arrival, and the event was not announced in the high places of the earth.

“In his birth,

He would no glory borrow,

No majesty from earth.”

Yet He came, a Saviour long desired and long expected. And now as the Messiah of Promise, the Lord Jehovah, God Himself, we announce Him as Heaven’s great gift and earth’s greatest gain. At this Christmas season may the knowledge of His love fill our hearts with adoring worship.

The Book of Leviticus (Dec 1964)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 10 No. 12, Dec 1964.

Our brother Rainey has a special burden upon his heart for the young in Christ's flock. It is his intention to prepare an outline study of the separate books of the Bible.

There are those at school or college, and others engaged in apprenticeship work, who do not have time for a prolonged intensive Bible course. These monthly studies will prove a help and blessing to all, especially to those with limited time.

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Most Christian young people I have met look upon this book as dry and uninteresting. Perhaps the fault is due to teachers who stress the theological terms instead of many practical teen-town topics. For instance in Leviticus we learn how God teaches His people by pictures or types so that they may have fellowship with Him. The "types" were all fulfilled in Christ, the promised Saviour, the Sinless One, who came as the final and perfect sacrifice for the sin of the world. To know a little of this book is to thank God for telling us that He is holy and that sin does matter, because it separates us from God. If we want to be happy and radiant in this world of defilement and death, then we must learn to obey God's commands and consecrate ourselves unto Him in order that we might live holy lives. Today even in modern Israel the statutes and

judgments and laws (26:46) concerning diet, sanitation, family life, social life and holidays are strictly followed, and no doubt this is the reason why the younger generation of Israel is one of the healthiest and most industrious over the world.

Key Word, Holiness, 87 times. Key Verse, 19:2-20:26.

In Genesis man is seen in his ruin, in Exodus in redemption, in Leviticus man is seen in right relationship with God on the basis of sacrifice. Only the soul that is cleansed can commune with God. The outstanding truth of this book is pointed out in the N.T. in the book of Hebrews, “without the shedding of blood there is no remission” (Heb. 9.22).

The essential note of the book is Sacrifice, Sanctification and Separation. The title of the book comes from the translation of the Seventy of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, and pertains to the tribe of Levi. In the Hebrew, the title is “VA-YICH-RAH” i.e., “And He Called,” which is more in keeping with the message of the book, since little is said concerning the tribe of Levi.

It is the guide book of the priests — whereas in Numbers we have the guide book of the Levites, and in Deuteronomy the guide book of the People of God. It is the call of God to the Redeemed — to access, to draw nigh, to worship and communion in His Presence, and to holiness of body and soul.

In Exodus we read of God’s approach to us, but in Leviticus our approach to God. In the one book Christ is the Saviour, and in the other the Sanctifier. In Exodus, our guilt is prominent but in Leviticus our defilement. Exodus reveals God as Love, Leviticus as Light. In the one we are brought into union with Him, and the other

we are brought into communion. Exodus offers pardon but Leviticus calls to purity. In the one book we are delivered from Satan, and in the other we are dedicated to God (W.G.S.).

Throughout the book we see offerings, priests, ceremony, ritual, all speaking of Christ as the Great Centre of everything, as alone the Bearer of our sins, as opening up access to God, as bringing God and us into blessed relationship, as the Great Redeemer, from the past, and all-sufficient for the present, and Securer and Hope of the future.

The book opens majestically — directly (see Num. and Josh.). The Lord spake — said or commanded (56 times), I am Jehovah (21 times), I am Jehovah your God (21 times). The chief personality is Aaron, and the outstanding chapter is the Great Day of Atonement, 16. There are five main offerings: — The Burnt, The Meal, The Peace, The Sin, and The Trespass.

There are seven great Feasts:

· The Sabbath

· Passover

· Pentecost

· Trumpets

· Tabernacle

· Sabbatic

· Jubilee

You read about Sabbatic system—seventh day, seventh week, seventh month, seventh year — and heptades of years.

The key word of the book is holy (87 times), and the next atonement (45 times). Here the problem of how sinful man can approach God is fully answered by oblation and mediation. It insists on holiness of body as well as holiness of soul (19:2).

In Genesis God is Light.

In Exodus God is Love.

In Leviticus God is Spirit, taking the things of Christ and making them a blessed reality.

Dr. Parker says that Leviticus embraces a period of a month — most remarkable book in the Old Testament.

1. The Call Of God (1-10). Access.

Oblation (1 To 6:7) A The Five Great Offerings.

All tell out in matchless beauty the person and work of Christ.

1. Burnt Offering — Consecration of Christ in Life and death Godward (Chapter 1).

2. Meal Offering — consecration of Christ in death. Perfect in life Manward (Chapter 2).

3. Peace Offering — communion. Fellowship with the Father and the saints (Chapter 3).

4. Sin Offering — Continued cleansing - iniquity, sin - Godward (chapter 4, verses 1-12 - Individual Sins and 13 - 21 Congregational sins.

5. Trespass Offering — Cleansing -injury, wrong. Sins — Manward (chapter 5. 14-16).

Mediation B The Law Of The Offerings (6:8 To 7:38).

Order, arrangements etc.

Dedication C The Priests And Purification (8-10).

(a) Call (8:1-5) (b) Cleansing (6). (c) Clothing (7-13).

(d) Consecration (14-30), (e) Food (31-36), (f) Ministry (ch. 9).

(g) Failure (ch. 10).

Hence we see the Priests, consecration, inauguration, and transgression.

2. The Commandment Of God (11-27) Application-To Sanctity{Pb 197}

Dr. A. T. Schofield points out that the words, “health, whole, and holy” are from the same root, and likens man to a three story building. The ground floor is the body, which should be kept healthy. The second floor is the soul, which should be kept whole, or wholesome, the third floor is the spirit which should be kept holy. In chapters 1-10 objective — the work of Christ for us — What He is, does, and is able to do. Now the last section is subjective — practical, what the Spirit is and is able to do in us as priests unto God.

A Physical Life (11-15)

(a) The Law of Food — holy people must have pure food (XI).

(b) The Law of Issues — (XI-XII), pure bodies.

(c) The Law of Leprosy — (XIXIII), pure habits.

(1) Personal (13:1-46, 14:1-32), pure homes.

(2) In a Garment (13:47-59).

(3) In a House (14:35-57).

B NATIONAL LIFE — (16) Great Day Of Atonement.

C Spiritual Life — (17-27).

(a) Worship, (17:1-9), (b) Daily Meals (17:10-16), (c) Socially (18-20), (d) Priestly Relations (21-22), (e) Public Worship (23), (f) Our Entire Life (24-26).

(1) Perversity (24)

(2) Prosperity (25)

(3) Promises and Punishments (26) (g) Vows (27).

D PLEDGES (27).

The Book of Numbers (Jan 1965)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 11 No. 1, Jan 1965.

Key Word, “Service.” Key Verses, (1:2. 3; 10:33-34).

The title of the book immediately suggests the census of the people by count as well as by classification, first at Sinai (11 and then, in Moab (26). The title in Hebrews is (b’midbar) and means, “in the wilderness.” The Greek translation rendered it Numbers from the Latin “Numerii.” The book sets forth chiefly the responsibility of the redeemed to work, to walk, and to war. It is a story of wretched failure on man’s part, and of grace, ever abounding grace, on God’s part. In Genesis man is seen in a garden ruined by the Fall; in Exodus man is in a house, enjoying the four freedoms; in Leviticus man is seen in fellowship, and here in failure. In this latter book are seen the parental providential dealings of God with a disobedient people in the school of discipline.

Numbers is a divine classic concerning the Shepherd Care of Jehovah for His ancient people. What a beautiful and impressive sight! The order of the camp was four-square. (Universality), in the wilderness, with the Tabernacle of the Lord in the midst, all suggestive of the Christian Church in the world with Christ in the midst (Matt. 18:20; John 20:19). Jehovah is seen as Administrator, Protector, Counsellor and Leader. Here the nation is accounted in array and finally in advance. As a people they have been purified and provided with every need for the desert pilgrimage.

The book also tells us about the price of leadership as seen in the lives of Moses, Joshua, and Caleb, the latter

two being the dominant characters, the only two to enter the Promised Land. The chapter on the gainsaying of Korah teaches that rebellion is incomparable in setting forth the apostasy of man and the patience of God. In the wilderness march again and again is manifested the longsuffering of God with a murmuring, wandering, and unthankful people.

Outline

1. Preparation at Sinai (Chapters I to X)

(1) Organization of the Camp (i-iv)

(2) Purification of the People (v. - vi)

(3) Legislation for the Journey (vii - x)

2. Provocation at Kadesh (Chapters X to XVI)

(Ps. 95:10; Heb. 3:8)

Failure (1) Leaning on man rather than God (x; 11-36)

(2) Complaining of God’s way (xi: 1-3)

(3) Lusting — (4) Murmuring (xi: 4-35)

(5) Criticizing of Aaron and Miriam (xii)

(6) Departing of Apostasy (xiii. xiv)

(7) Rebelling of Korah (xvi)

3. Faithfulness of God (1) His Purpose continues (xv)

(2) His Priesthood abides (xvii)

(3) His Provision avails (xix)

(4) His Power is all sufficient (xx)

4. Progressions at Moab (Chapter (xxi - xxxvi)

(1) Continuance and Conquest (xxi)

(2) Conflict (xxii - xxv)

(3) Census (xxvii - xxx)

(4) Counsel (xxvii - xxx)

(5) Charge (xxxi - xxxvi)

The Book Of Deuteronomy (Feb 1965)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 11 No. 2, Feb 1965.

Someone asked me the other day while visiting if there were two ways of reading the Bible. I learned that, while it was so interesting to me, it was to say the least dull to the enquirer. Why should this be? Is there some special way of reading that makes the Book come alive? I really think so. First, I read the Bible and find it delightful, because by means of it I have been made wise unto salvation (2 Tim. 3:15). Second, I understand His plan. Third, the Bible teaches me how to Serve and succour in a world of need. The fifth book of Moses is called in the Hebrew Torah, “These be the words” (Deut. 1:1). They are of the utmost importance since they convey God’s mind to a new generation, and as then, the time spent to study this Book dear young people, will cause you to say, “The Bible to be true? How could I possibly disbelieve it and not delight in it?”

Deuteronomy

Key Word: Obedience. Key Verses (1:2, 3; 5:29).

The word “Deuteronomy” means “The second Law”; “Deutero”, second, and “nomos,” law, which is from the Greek. It is the fifth and last book of Moses containing not new laws, but the Laws given at Sinai 39 years before. There are reviewed, amplified and commented upon. These great messages are retrospective, practical, and prospective. With the exception of Joshua and Caleb all the adults who came out of Egypt, and had received the laws of God at Sinai, fell in the wilderness. Hence it was most imperative that the new generation should

have the Law rehearsed, reviewed and emphasized to them. At the end of their long history of wandering, just one month before crossing over the Jordan river, these addresses were first delivered orally, and then written (1:3; 31:24-26).

As Leviticus is the book with the Priests in view, Numbers the book with the Levites in prominence, this Book of Deuteronomy is catholic or general and contains a divine treatise on obedience to the people of God. Again and again the words “obey” and “remember” are recorded for our admonition. These words at once are a call to remember the past, with a solemn duty for the present, and the key of the future. The word “remember” points back to the wilderness, and the word “obey” points to the land.

The Book of Deuteronomy has been the object of much hate and attack on the part of the Higher Critics. To the Lord Jesus it was a book much beloved, and used by our Lord three times in His temptation by the devil. Like David He had five pebbles when He encountered Goliath, — the Pentateuch, and like David, He brought the enemy down with one, Deuteronomy, and had four to spare.

As Literature it ranks with Genesis, Psalms, Isaiah--eloquent, moving and heart searching in the passionate plea for loyalty to Jehovah. Considered the most spiritual book; it records the first mention of the “children of Belial” (13:13). Here for the first time we meet with hanging on a tree (21:22, 23), and the predicition about a coming Prophet (18:15,19).

The First part of the book is Historical, the second part is Legislative and Biblical, and the third part

Prophetical. Its beauty and thrill can only be discovered in reading it through at one sitting.

1. Historical Looking Back (1:1-4,43)

A Forty-Year Review (1,2,3)

1. Disobedience (v.3); 2. Disbelief (v.22-28); 3, Rebellion (v.26); 4. Murmuring (vs. 27); 5. Fainting (v.28); 6. Presumption (v. 43); 7. Dying in the Wilderness (14).

B Forget Not (Ch. 4)

1. The Goodness of God (v.7); Extent (v.25); Excellency (6:10) - Cultural Land); (8:7 - A Treasure Land); (11:10,12 - A Land of Constant Care).

2. The Patience of God (v. 31).

3. The Faithfulness of God (2:7).

4. The Jealousy of God (4:24).

5. The Mercy God (4:31).

6. The Love of God (4:37).

7. The Indispensability of God (4:39. 7:9; 10:17-21).

2. Biblical Looking Up (4:44 To Chapter 26)

1. Recital of the Law (5:1-21): completeness and finality of the Ten Commandments set forth, note the words, “No More”

2. Exposition of the Law (5:22-11: (a) Its source. (b) Nature. (c) Power. (d) Penalty.

3. Rules or Laws of conduct in Canaan (12-26) Review of moral, civil, and ceremonial laws. Religious Laws. Religious Laws (12:1 - 16, 17). Political Laws

(16:18-22:20) Moral Laws - private and social Life (2126)

3. Prophetical Looking Forward (27-34)

1. A Revelation of God’s Future Purposes regarding Israel:- a. Counsel for the land (27)

b Consequence of obedience and disobedience (28).

c. Covenant of God (29,30).

d Closing events of Moses’ Life (31 - 34).

(1) Charge (31:1-29)

(2) Song (31:30-32:47).

(3) Final events (32:48 to the end).

Summary of the Pentateuch (Mar 1965)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 11 No. 3, Mar 1965.

The Pentateuch is the foundation of the entire Divine Library, the Bible, and to the Jew the most sacred of all Scripture. The historical. geographical, chronological, religious and ethical value of these books is very great. The greatest subjects the human mind can contemplate relate to God’s eternal counsels, His historical manifestations, the approach of man to God, the guidance of God and the self revelation of Love; these are the themes of the first five books of the Bible. Here is the origin of all issues, the beginning of all ends, the seed plot of the whole after harvest.

It has been calculated that there are in the New Testament about ninety quotations from the Pentateuch and upward of one hundred references to it. The five books of Moses tell out the sovereignity, power, holiness, goodness and faithfulness of God. From the standpoint of man, though marked by ruin through sin, there is for him redemption by blood and by power, communion on the ground of atonement, guidance by the will and word of God, and discipline and destination through the faithfulness of God. This magnificent volume sets forth: (1) The pathway of the people of God in all ages. (2) The progressive spiritual unity of God and His people. (3) The presentation of a growing relationship with the Living God. It is no wonder, then, that the final message of the Old Testament is a reminder concerning the value of the Law of Moses (Mal. 4:4). Again, how important to recall the witness of Christ to the unbelieving Jews

regarding Moses, “For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me: for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?” (John 5:46-47).

(1) Seven Men Who Represent Christ.

1. Adam — Christ as Son.

2. Isaac — Christ as Substitute.

3. Joseph — Christ as Saviour.

4. Moses — Christ as Prophet.

5. Aaron — Christ as Priest.

6. Caleb — Christ as Witness.

7. Joshua — Christ as Warrior.

(2) Seven Types of the Death of Christ From Egypt to Canaan

1. The Passover — Christ our Safety.

2. The Red Sea — Christ our Strength.

3. The Smitten Rock — Christ our Supply.

4. The Offerings in Leviticus Christ our Substitute.

5. The Red Heifer — Christ our Sanctifier.

6. The Serpent in the Wilderness —Christ our Secret of Victory.

(3) Seven Steps In The Panorama Of Redemption.

1. Decision at the Gate.

2. Acceptance at the Altar.

3. Cleansing at the Laver.

4. Intercession at the Altar of Incense.

5. Fellowship at the Table.

6. Testimony of the Candlestick.

7. Faith gives way to sight inside the Veil.

(4) Seven Feasts Of The Jews.

1. The Passover — 1st Month, 14th. day: April.

2. The Unleavened Bread — 1st. Month, 14-22nd.

3. The First Fruits — 1st Month, 16th day.

4. Pentecost — 3rd Month, 6th day, our June.

5. Trumpets — 7th Month, 1st day, October.

6. Day of Atonement — 7th Month, 10th day.

7. Feast of Tabernacles 15th-22nd, 7th month, October.

"Feasts Of Jehovah"

1. In the Christian Calendar the Passover is identified with the Death of Christ, "THE CROSS."

2. The Feast of Unleavened Bread, speaks to us of fellowship with Christ, "COMMUNION."

3. The First Fruits speak to us of the resurrection of Christ, "CONQUEST."

4. The Day of Pentecost speaks to us of the advent of the Holy Spirit, "COMFORTER."

5. (The Mystery, the present age of the Church, not revealed in the past is manifested in this lengthened interim).

6. Trumpets speak to us of the return of Christ, “COMING.”

7. Day of Atonement speaks to us of the atonement of Israel, “CLEANSING.”

8. Feast of Tabernacles: the Millenium, “CONSUMMATION.”

The Book of Joshua (Apr 1965)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 11 No. 4, Apr 1965.

Key Word: Possession; Key Verses (1:6; 21:45).

Moses was God's great servant; David was God's great shepherd; Isaiah was God's great statesman, but Joshua was God's great soldier. The author of the Book which bears his name takes an unchallenged place among the great military leaders the world has known. No book is more full of encouragement, wisdom and invigoration for the spiritual soldier. Its counterpart in the New Testament are the Books of Acts and Ephesians. These two books demonstrate the presence, power and possessions of the Christian in the living Lord. The Book of Joshua throbs with the same divine truth and typifies the warfare of the spirit in the conquering of the land. Over and over again it points out the secret of the life that overcomes.

The Book of Joshua teems with action and aggression under the able leadership of Moses' successor. The Land of Promise is to be possessed, the deadly enemies defeated, conditions developed for successful operations, the Jordan crossing, conflicts in the land, division of the land; these all are of vital interest and instruction to the mind of the Christian. It is full of thrilling sights and sounds; cries and challenges; clash of arms and confusion of tongues; the din and desolation of war; the sobs of the vanquished, and the songs of the victors. Throughout each chapter one finds the manifestation of God's Presence and His wonder-working power.

Destructive critics have sought to discredit the Book on the basis of its long and bloody trail in the slaughter of people. On the other hand some link it with the Pentateuch. The Canaanites were notorious idolaters, worshipping the sun god, Baal; for this reason Israel was commissioned to exterminate them (Gen. 15:16). God gave them 400 years of mercy to repent before the land was entered. Few acted as Rahab (2:9-11). As to linking the Book with the Pentateuch, no convincing evidence has been submitted to alter the conservative position, and the truth of the words, “And Joshua wrote these words” (Josh. 24:26).

The Fourfold Message of the Book:

1. The Book is a divine classic on the faithfulness of God (Josh. 23:14).

2. The Book designs the possessing the land. Contrast and compare it with what the Epistle of Ephesians teaches. What this Epistle is to the Church the book of Joshua was to Israel. To enjoy God’s gifts we must appropriate them (1 Cor. 10:11).

3. The Book records the delivering power of God over all enemies through Joshua, and illustrates the deliverance we have through Jesus, the Captain of our Salvation.

4. The Book re-affirms the holiness of God and His hatred of sin. While the indiscriminate slaughter of women and children is repulsive to us, yet we must remember conditions. Read Leviticus — awful immorality — worship of Molech — degrading cult of Ashtoreth — religious life — divine justice unsheathed the sword in Joshua. So today.

Outline:

1. THE CHALLENGE OF THE LAND (1-2)

1. The Preparation of the People (1-2)

(1) The Summons (inner)

(a) The Lord to Joshua (1-9)

(b) Joshua to the People (10-15)

(c) The People to Joshua (16-18)

(2) The Spies (outer)

(a) The Mission of the Spies (1-7)

(b) The Covenant of the Spies (8-21)

(c) The Report of the Spies (22-24)

2. The Passage of the People (3-4)

(a) The Ark Crossing Jordan iii. 1-13 (b) The Memorial in Jordan iv. 1-18 (c) The Encampment over Jordan iv. 19-24 (3) The Purification of the People (5)

(a) New Start (1-10) Consternation of Enemy (b) New Food (11-12) Circumcision (b) New Vision (1.3-15) Cessation of Manna, Captain of the Lord.

II. THE CONQUEST OF THE LAND (6 to 12)

(a) Campaign in the Central Section (6-9) — Jericho and Ai (b) Campaign in the South (10)— Gibeon and Beth-Horon (c) Campaign in the North (11)— Merom (d) Campaign Conquests (12) (1) East of Jordon 1-6 (2) West of Jordon 7-24 Covered seven years seven nations conquered — and also 31 kings.

III. THE CLASSIFICATION OF THE LAND (13-22)

(a) Possession of two and a half tribes (13-21)

(b) Possession of Caleb (14)

(c) Possession of nine and a half tribes (15-19)

(d) The Cities of Refuge (20)

(e) The Cities of the Levites (21)

(f) The Conflict of an altar on the border (22)

IV. THE CHARGE AND CLIMAX OF JOSHUA (23-24)

(a) The First Address — Separation 23 (b) The Second Address — Service 24:1-28 (c) The Adieu — Sepulchres 24:2933

The Book Of Judges (May 1965)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 11 No. 5, May 1965.

The Book of Judges is one of the saddest books in the Bible. It is the history of the judges (R. V. saviours) whom God raised up to rule and deliver an oppressed people. Here Israel's history is set in the shadows and the record tells of Israel's repeated departures from the living God, and the national decay of the people not merely for forty years but over 300 years. It is often called, "The Book of Failure".

Key Word: Declension; Key Verse: (21:25).

The writer of the Book is unknown, although tradition assigns it to Samuel, the Prophet Judge. It is a compilation of the history of thirteen judges: Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah-Barak, Gideon, Abimelech, To-la, Jair, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, Samson. Some include, Eli the Priest-Judge, and Samuel, the Prophet-Judge making 15 in all. The chief of the judges were — Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah and Samson.

The message of the Book is written in the minor key and strikes the dominant notes of rebellion, relapse, retribution, repentance and rest. Another has put it, sin, servitude, supplication and salvation (2:11-19). It shows the perverseness and proness of the human heart to wander from God. While the Book faithfully declares the sad results of apostasy, it also tells out the matchless grace of God in restoration.

There are many things worthy of our special note in the consideration of the Book.

1. The Book unlike others has a double commencement (Chapter 2:69; chapter 1:1-2). Why? God's order, His people are first seen in independence and then in declension.

2. It records one of the greatest battle songs in the world (Ch. 5).

3. It contains the first record in history of a woman, as Leader of a Nation (ch. 4).

4. It reveals one of the oldest parables in the world (Ch. 9).

5. There are seven apostasies —seven servitudes — seven cries to God — seven deliverances.

6. The Book has an historical value linking with Joshua (Jud. 1:1 to 3:6). (1) The history of the judges (3:7 to 16:31.) (2) An Appendix which reveals the awful spiritual condition and more declension of the times (17-21).

7. The Moral value of the Book—man's failure met by the faithfulness of God. (a) "And the children of Israel did evil — Lord"; (b) "And the Lord sold them into the hands —"; (c) "And when the children of Israel cried — Lord raised up a deliverer who delivered them."

Summary:

Sin, Punishment, Deliverance. (Rom 6:23, Gal. 6:71 Ps. 103:8).

Contrast:

Joshua was a Book of victory. Judges is a Book of defeat.

Joshua treats of the heavenlies, but Judges of the earthlies.

Joshua records the conquest of seven nations in seven years. Judges speaks of seven apostasies, seven oppressions, and seven deliverances.

Joshua teaches us faith and courage: Judges, unbelief and discouragement.

Joshua is the Book of progress, Judges the Book of decline.

Joshua thrills with the song of freedom, Judges travails with the sob of bondage.

Joshua abounds with life in the Spirit, Judges acknowledges the life of the flesh.

Outline:

1. REBELLION (4-3:6)

Israel in dependence and defeat (1)

Israel in declension (2-3)

(a) The rebuke of the Angel (2:1-5) (b) The death of Joshua Recalled (2:6-10)

Summary of the period (2:11-23)

Summary of the enemies (3:16)

II. RETRIBUTION AND REVIVAL (3:7-16:31)

Scripture | Servitude | Saviour | Sequel

1st Declension 3:7-11 | Mesopotamia 8 years | Othneil | 40 years peace

2nd Declension 3:12-31 | Moabite, Ammonites, Amalekites 18 years, Shamgar delivers from the Philistines | Ehud | 80 years peace

3rd Declension 4:1-5:31 | Canaanites 20 years | Deborah and Barak | 40 years peace

4th Declension 6:1-8:32 | Midianites 7 years | Gideon | 40 years peace

5th Declension 8:33-10:5 | Usurpation of Abimelech 3 years | Tola and Jair | 45 years

6th Declension 10:6-12:15 | Ammonites | Jepthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon | 31 years peace

7th declension 13-16 | Philistines 40 years | Sampson | 20 years peace

III. REJECTION (17-21).

(1) Religious life of the nation. (17-18). Idolatry (2) Home life of the nation. (10). Immorality (3) Political life of the nation (2021). Anarchy.

Christ in the Law (June-July 1965)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 11 No. 6, June-July 1965.

One of the most soul stirring experiences in Bible study is the discovery of Christ. The burning heart comes to us as Christ is revealed by the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures; not by day dreaming over the Word but in the quiet perusal and sustained meditation of the Word of God. Along the road to Emmaus Cleopas and his wife had a never to be forgotten afternoon that may be our experience as we walk with the Lord in the exposition of His truth.

When the Lord Jesus refers to the Law of Moses, He means without doubt the first five books of the Bible. Many Jews believed there were degrees of inspiration and that the three sections of the Canon of Scripture were to be considered in this light with the Law of Moses, the highest revelation. The reason there were five is because it was the sacred number symbolizing Jehovah. Whether we think of the five books of Moses, the five offerings, the five smooth stones of David, the five names of Jehovah in Isaiah, or the five historical books of the N.T., they all portray the person and work of Christ in majesty and sublimity.

Whilst Genesis tells of the Sovereignty of God in Creation; Exodus the Power of God in redemption; Leviticus, the Holiness of God in sanctification; Numbers, the Goodness and Serverity of God in Provocation, and Deuteronomy, the Faithfulness of God in education, we see all wondrously fulfilled in Christ, “who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1

Cor. 1:30). No matter which of the five books we consider in a general or specific manner they have but one theme, it is Christ.

“Behold the Book whose leaves display

Jesus the Life, the Truth, the Way,

Read it with diligence and prayer,

Search it and thou shalt find Him there.”

The study of these five books is enriching and exhaustless in history, typology, biography, spirituality and prophecy. It is not our intention to set forth a detailed study of the person and work of Christ as found in representative men, objects and events but to summarize some of the teachings from Genesis to Deuteronomy. The opening book of the Bible is called the, “Book of Beginnings” since it deals with the beginning of everything except God, who is eternal. The second book is called “The Names” for it is the link with Joseph in Egypt and the sons of Jacob who migrated to Egypt and paved the way for the birth of the Hebrew nation. The first few words in Exodus, “These are the names” give the true Hebrew title of the book and the plan of God to work out His purpose through the divinely chosen nation. The Book of Leviticus is a divine classic on the subject of the sanctification of God’s people and bears the title, “And the Lord called.” It is the voice of God to the nation from the midst of the Tabernacle with the ultimate objective, holiness in every aspect of life. Following on to the Book of Numbers the Hebrew title gives a crystal clear interpretation of its content with the words, “In the wilderness.” It sets forth the wanderings of the children of Israel in the wilderness and shews them to be a people of a pilgrim

character with privileges and problems the common lot of all who walk by faith. The final book of the five is often called the most spiritual in the Old Testament since our Lord quoted from it in His temptation and presents such a marvellous portrayal of His Personality. It is called in the Hebrew Bible by the title, “These be the words,” and is a glowing testimony to the faithfulness of God in word and deed to His chosen people. “These books are the seed plot of the whole after harvest; here is the origin of all issues, the beginning of all ends.” The historical, geographical, chronological, religious and ethical values of these books is very great and all point to Christ in His inscrutable counsels, His historical manifestations, His guiding activity in the life of man and the supreme revelation of His Love.

Looking back over the contents of these five books we first of all note seven men who represent Christ. Adam, Christ as Son; Isaac, Christ as Substitute; Joseph, Christ as Saviour; Moses, Christ as Prophet; Aaron, as Priest; Caleb, Christ as Witness; and Joshua, Christ as Captain of the host of the Lord. The death of Christ is clearly revealed in the history of the children of Israel from Egypt to Caanan. The Passover, Christ our safety; the Red Sea, Christ our strength; the Smitten Rock, Christ our supply; the Offerings in Leviticus, Christ our substitute; the Red Heifer, Christ our sanctifier; the Serpent in the wilderness, Christ our source of life; the Jordan River, Christ our secret of victory.

In the Tabernacle we have a marvel of God’s wisdom and grace. To think that God should set up a tent in the midst of the wilderness and from it teach the glories of Christ and the gateway to Himself is a further witness to

the inspiration of the Divine Book. There are seven steps in the panorama of redemption: decision at the gate, acceptance at the altar, cleansing at the laver, intercession at the altar of incense, fellowship at the table, testimony of the candlestick and finally faith gives way to sight inside the veil. Surely all this leads us to the feet of Him who is self revealed. Another important thing to remember in the books of the Law is the Seven Feasts of the Jews. The Passover, on the first month, the 14th day; the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the first month, 15-22nd; First Fruits, first month, 16th day; Penetecost, third month, 6th day; Trumpets, 7th month, 1st day; Day of Atonement, 7th month, 10th day; Feast of Tabernacles, 15th-22nd, 7th month. All these Feasts point the way to Christ. In the Christian calendar the Passover is identified with the death of Christ on the cross. The Feast of Unleavened Bread speaks to us of fellowship with Christ, or communion. The First Fruits speaks of the resurrection of Christ and reminds us of conquest. The day of Pentecost speaks of the advent of the Holy Spirit and suggests the comforter. The last three feasts are Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles. The Feast of Trumpets speaks to us of the return of Christ, or His Coming. The Day of Atonement deals with the national atonement of the nation of Israel, or cleansing. The Feast of Tabernacles points us to the Millennium, or the consummation of God’s purposes in relation to the nation Israel.

Ruth (June-July 1965)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 11 No. 6, June-July 1965.

The Book of Ruth derives its name from the chief personality in the narrative, “The Rose of Moab.” It is devoted to the history of a Gentile woman who married a Hebrew named Boaz, their union culminating in the birth of a babe. Ruth is one of five women who appears in the genealogoy of Matthew’s Lord. Three of the five had bad records, Tamar, Rahab and Bathsheba. Two of the five were Gentiles, Rahab and Ruth.

Keyword: Rest; Key Verses (1:9; 3:1).

The setting of the Book is in the time of the Judges. It covers a period of about ten years. The widowed Naomi, faithful Ruth, and noble Boaz stand out in sharp contrast against the black landscape of the days of the Judges. It was a time of gross idolatry, grievous immorality and godless anarchy. In the midst of such evil there were still noble souls who lived in faithfulness before God and witnessed to their generation concerning the God of Israel. Here family life is seen at its best whereas in the book of Judges it is revealed at its worst. Ruth is as a lovely lily in a stagnant pool. Instead of immorality and infidelity, there is purity and faith. Rebellion gives way to rest and the shout of the battlefield is exchanged for the serenity of the home. It is a beautiful pastoral idyll, an oasis in the desert, and the matchless story of a grand friendship between two women.

The purpose of the Book is threefold. (1) It traces both the history of the nation during the reign of the Judges, and the genealogy of David and David’s Greater Son.

From the child born to Boaz and Ruth sprang Jesse, the father of David. Thus the Gentile Ruth becomes a forbearer of the Lord Jesus Christ, who ends all race and class distinctions. Ruth brings the promise of a coming king, David, whose righteous reign would bring strength and stability to the nation that had fallen into the bondage and oppression of the Philistines. Later on as a statesman, warrior, and poet, he utterly vanquished this enemy. Ruth proclaims the advent of His Greater Son, David's Lord, who not only would redeem the nation, but would be the Saviour of the Gentiles; from the family of David, Christ was to be born. The Book tells out the Grace of God in reaching an outcast Moabite, and bringing her into the place of blessing. It teaches the great truth of Redemption for Ruth found rest through a Kinsman Redeemer, Boaz. The Book is worthy of our closest study and has a moral, historical, doctrinal, typical,,dispensational, spiritual, industrial and spiritual value above many. Among the Jews it is linked with the Megilloth or Festal Rolls and usually read at festal seasons in the nation's history.

Outline:

1. The migration to Moab of the Elimelech Family (1:1-5).

2. The Return to Judah of Naomi and Ruth (1:6-22).

3. The Meeting of Boaz and Ruth (2, 3).

4. The Redemption by Boaz of Elimelch's Inheritance (4).

Or

Ruth's Resolve (1)

Ruth’s Redeemer (2)

Ruth’s Rest (3)

Ruth’s Reward (4)

Christ in the Prophets --Luke 24:44 (Aug-Sept 1965)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 11 No. 7, Aug-Sept 1965.

Christ in the Prophets

Luke 24:44

Leslie S. Rainey

The origin of the word prophet is somewhat difficult. In the minds of some like Bishop Westcott the whole of the Old Testament is “one vast prophecy.” To rightly understand the writings we must learn the function of the prophet. It is a word that comes from a weakened form of a very old verb, (naveh) and means, “to bubble,” “to gush forth,” and hence man is seen filled, inspired with ecstacy in the message delivered (Proverbs 18:4). In Arabic it comes from a root meaning “to be prominent,” “to announce.” In Assyrian it is from the word “nabu” to announce, from which the word mercury comes, the interpreter of God’s will. So we see a prophet announces God’s will, he speaks for and from God. He is not necessarily one who predicts, but who proclaims. He is one who shares God’s mind and then bears God’s message.

One of the oldest titles given to the prophet is “seer.” That is one who sees things from the viewpoint of God and then tells to the people of his age what he has seen. In the days before Moses whether Enoch or Abraham the ministry of the prophet was preparatory and predictive. From Moses to Samuel it was didactic, by men who lived in communion with God as emergency

heralds for dealing with current problems. From Samuel onward a new impetus was given to their ministry with the rise of the school of the prophets. They were protesters against the formalism and the idolatry of the times, and much of their ministry was committed to writing and thus perpetuated prophecy in its most developed form. They were voices for God to edify and to encourage. Far beyond the apostasy they always saw the apocalypse — the unveiling of the Lord Jesus Christ. Beyond the ruin wrought by sin they saw in revelation the redemption and restoration of all things. Beyond the destruction which came upon the nation by reason of its evil doing they saw the great deliverance. Beyond the present failure they saw the future fruitfulness. In a word, beyond the chaos they saw Christ.

In the study of the English Bible oftentimes the prophets are referred to as major and minor indicating degrees in prophecy. Such is not the case in the Hebrew Scriptures and the division of the Canon. The prophets are classified as former and latter prophets. The former included Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings. The latter embraced Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Twelve. These men combined the office of preacher, statesman, teacher, herald, reformer, dedicated to the cause of righteousness with insight and foresight in a needy day. Whether we turn to the former or the latter prophets we soon discover that the prophets magnify Christ and promote communion with God. The very first Book, Joshua, nurtures faith in God’s Word and gives to us an insight into the Name of Christ as Saviour. Three books enshrine the name of Jesus; Joshua, Isaiah and Hosea. Whilst Joshua reveals something of the Person of Christ; Isaiah emphasizes His work and Hosea calls attention to

His people. How fitting that Matthew, a noted scribe and man of statistics, should give to us a summary of these three books in his introduction to the Messiah of the Jew; “Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21). Judges is a divine classic on the sin, sorrow and servitude that follows in doing what is considered right in one’s eyes instead of God’s. In the midst of the lawlessness and licentiousness of the nation saviours are raised up of God to bring salvation to the people and security to the land. In the seven saviours presented in the Book there are traces of Christ who alone can bring deliverance from sin and emancipation from the tyranny and thraldom of the devil.

Leaving the sad record of the Book of Judges we are introduced to God’s emergency man, Samuel, and the kings of Judah and Israel. Here we see the rise, growth and glory, failure and fall, and the final restoration of the Kingdom. The tragedy of Eli, the testimony of the prophets, and the typology of the Kings clearly reveal that failure is stamped upon all until Christ reigns as Prophet, Priest and King. These Books are rich in character study and are like a patch work quilt for beauty, skill and design. Each portrayal of life such as Samuel (heard of God), David (beloved), Jonathan (Gift of the Lord), Elijah and Elisha (my God is Jehovah and my God is salvation) all unite to bear witness to Him whose testimony is the spirit of prophecy (Rev. 19:10).

The Book of Isaiah, the Evangelical Prophet is filled with the person and work of Christ. Not only in the name of Isaiah, (Jehovah is salvation) is Christ richly presented but especially in the Messianic section of the Book (chapters 40-66). Each book consists of three sections of

nine chapters. Chapter 53 (with the last three verses of 52), is the middle chapter of the middle book of this great prophetic poem, the heart of the prophetic writings of the Old Testament. And the central verse of this central chapter is the very heart of the evangel of God: “He was wounded for our trangressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.” Nowhere in the Old Testament Scriptures are the sufferings of Christ so vividly delineated as in Isaiah 53.

The prophet Jeremiah (whom God is raising), is strikingly like Christ the Man of Sorrows and of tragic misunderstanding. He was not only a prophet but a priest from birth and his whole life is marked by religious fervor, deep feelings, compassion, loyalty, courage and fidelity to God and man. He wept over his people as Jesus wept over them. His fearless denunciation of sin brought him reproach, pain, prison and the rejection of his brethren. Jeremiah views himself as a lamb or ox brought to the slaughter and in spite of all the suffering that he experienced, as his name suggests he was sustained by God. In the life of Christ nothing could brook the purposes of God and in spite of the opposition, hate and enmity from all quarters He set His face as flint to fulfill the will of God.

The prophet Ezekiel (whom God is strengthening) majestically sets forth Christ as “Son of Man,” the title being used about a hundred times in his Book of forty eight chapters. He was a man abandoned to God and ever at the disposal of his master. As Christ was a sign in His day, so Ezekiel was to his people, and above family, friends and people he set himself to magnify the glory of the Lord. How beautifully his life and labours

foreshadow Christ who said: “I came down from Heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me” (John 6:38).

After considering these three mighty servants of God that clearly tell out something of the grace and glory of our Lord we note the books of the Twelve. Well do I recall the day when I sat with a Master in Israel and one by one we discussed the meaning and ministry of these twelve men. In the name Hosea we have “Jesus or Saviour,” Joel, “God’s desire,” Amos, “burden,” Obadiah, “servant of the Lord,” Jonah, “dove,” Micah, “who is like Jehovah,” Nahum, “He is comforted,” Habakkuk, “Embracing or Clinging,” Zephaniah, “Jehovah is hidden,” Haggai, “My festal or Holiday,” Zechariah, “He whom Jehovah remembers,” and Malachi, “My Messenger.” All reveal something of the person and work of that Prophet of whom Moses spoke (Acts 3:22). While Micah has shown us the lowly birth of Christ; Hosea has hinted at His journey to Egypt and return; Isaiah has made mention of His growing up as a “tender plant,” Jonah has vividly personified His resurrection, and men like Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah and Joel tell out His character. It is left to Zechariah to present Christ as the prophet of coming glory. Here in this book Christ is seen in His ministry, His crucifixion, His smiting by God, His coming again, His glorious appearing, His recognition by Israel, His destruction by the enemy, His reign over the earth, His priestly-kingly rule in the re-built temple, and in the divine centre and circumference—the metropolis of all the earth, Jerusalem. Truly these men of God all unite to present Christ as all in all, and may it lead us as His children to worship the King, God over all blessed forever, Amen.

The First Book Of Samuel (Aug-Sept 1965)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 11 No. 7, Aug-Sept 1965.

KEY WORD: PRAYER; KEY VERSE (12:23)

First Samuel is the best known of the six historical books. It is a Book of transition. It marks the transition of the theocracy established under Moses to the monarchy begun in Saul. It also marks the transition from the national influence of the priest to the prophet. The long period of the Judges, with its unsettled government, here ends with the judgeship of Samuel, and now commences five centuries of monarchy (1095-586 B.C.).

The message of the Book is the power of prayer for all experiences of life whether nationally or individually.

The author of the Book is no doubt Samuel who wrote most of it, and perhaps Nathan or Gad completing it (1 Chron. 29:29).

The Book is rich in character study and like a patch work quilt for skill, beauty and design. Each painting of a life affords a choice insight into spiritual truth for all who will consider it. Think of the touching account of Samuel and his childhood, the story of David and Goliath, men like Eli, Saul, Samuel, and David. Then again lesser characters like Elkanah, Hannah, Phinehas, Jonathon, Nabal, Michal, Abigail, Hophni.

CONTRIBUTION to the Faith once for all delivered to the Saints.

1. The first mention of the Name “Messiah,” found in the prayer of Hannah (2:10).

2. The first use of the title “Lord of Hosts” which denotes the God of Heaven and earth (1:3).

3. The value and preciousness of the Word of God (3:1).

4. The first mention of such names as “Ichabod” (4:21); “Ebenezer” (7:12); and “God save the King” (10: 24).

5. The word “Seer” (9:9) is the name for prophet. He not only had prophetic insight but possessed power to foretell, and forthtell.

6. The first mention of the “School of the Prophets” (10:5) and (19:20). Samuel laid the foundation and fostered the rapid growth of a grand system of national education. At Ramah he trained men to be Israel’s teachers but he did not confine himself to this. Most of the great ornaments of David’s court were his disciples and it is probable that large numbers of wealthy and more promising youth of the kingdom went to his schools simply to learn something of these wonderful arts of reading and writing, which opened so new a world to the youth of a race always distinguished for its intellectual aptitudes. And through them Samuel raised the whole people mentally and morally. Trained men henceforth were never lacking for service both at the court throughout the land.

7. The constant mention of the Holy Spirit is noticeable. — see Judges: Othniel (3:10); Gideon (6:34); Jephthah (11:29); Samuel (14:6; 15:14). In Samuel we also notice (a) Regeneration (10:6, 9). (b) Righteous wrath (11:6). (c) Prudence and power (16:13). (d) Preserver from evil (16:14).

Outline

I The Story of Samuel (1-2).

(a) The Birth of Samuel (1:1-2).

(1) The patience of Hannah (1:8).

(2) The prayer of Hannah (1:9-16).

(3) The present of Hannah (1:2128).

(4) The praise of Hannah (2:1-10).

(b) The call of Samuel (3:1-21).

(c) The environment of Samuel (11.12-36).

(d) The work of Samuel (4:9-15).

(e) The testimony of Samuel (12: 1-25).

II The Story of Saul (13:31).

(a) His rise (13:1-23).

It evokes praise and pain. At the start he seeks the "Seer" and at the end, the "witch" of Endor: pride (v. 1-4), presumption (v. 5-18), perdicament (v. 19-23).

(b) His rebuke 14:1-52).

(a) He despised the priesthood (13. 12).

(b) He despised the Prophetic office (15).

(c) He despised Kingship (15:23).

(c) His rebellion and Ruin (16 to the end).

(a) Saul's rebellion (16 to 18:5).

(b) Self interest (v. 1-7) — note three times the mention of evil spirit (16:14, 23; 18:10, 19:9).

(c) Personal jealousy (18:6-30).

(d) Satanic domination (19 to 28:2).

(e) Complete apostasy (28:3 to the end).

2 Samuel (Oct 1965)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 11 No. 8, Oct 1965.

The second book of Samuel might be called the “Reign of David,” or the “Acts of King David.” It covers the reign of glory over Judah, as well as the twelve tribes. It also covers the period during the 40 years of David’s reign which tells out in clearest tones the shame of a great king. It is filled with most illuminating detail and graphic accounts of conflict and conquest and is written in the best style of classical Hebrew. It was probably written by Nathan or Gad who lived during the days of David.

Key Words: King and Kingdom (2 Sam. 5:1-12). Key Verse: 22:31.

The Message of the Book is first of all that the plans and purposes of God must be fulfilled (2 Sam. 5:12). Secondly, patience is needed in the carrying out of God’s will, and thus David is prepared, trained, through trial and troubles, and finally seated on the throne. Thirdly, that sin, though in the life of a king, is punished even although pardoned. To read 2 Samuel is to learn, “Sin finds men out,” and “the chickens come home to roost.” That such a man would become the man after God’s own heart is an encouragement to all.

The forty years of David’s reign chronicled in this Book are the golden age of Jewish History. The reign of David is characterized by success, sorrow, and supremacy.

1. He unified the nation, and his first official act and purpose was to capture Jerusalem and make it not only the civil but also the religious centre of his great realm, bringing into it the Tabernacle and the Ark of the

Covenant. He accomplished all this by subduing his enemies, obtaining for it the royal capital, and extending his domain from the Red Sea to the river Orontes, and from the Mediteranean to the Euphrates.

2. He restored the sanctity and splendour of the House of David.

3. He systematized public records and important documents by the appointment of scribes and court recorders and historians.

4. He prospered (1 Sam. 10:25; 1 Chron. 29:29) the development of music and poetry (instruments and Psalms).

Contents:

1. The first time in the Bible a ruler is likened to a shepherd (5:2): is literally, “Shepherd My People.”

2. The high and exalted conception of kingship is seen in the use of the title, “Lord’s Anointed” (2 Samuel 1:14).

3. Only once in the Bible is the word “wench” found (17:17).

4. David’s deep desire to build a house for God, while good, not acceptable even though Nathan approved (7:3-17). All must be approved by God.

5. The Parable of the Rich Man and the Poor Man (12), and the Parable of the Banished One (14) are likewise recorded in this Book.

6. It contains an important verse concerning the inspiration of the Bible (23:2).

7. It also contains one of the most perfect elegies in any language, “The Song of the Bow.” It was written over 3000 years ago, and by a young man just thirty.

The Success Of David (1-10).

(1) Reign in Hebron (1-4).

The Decease of Saul (i. 1-16).

The Doxology of David (Cev. 11:27).

The Departure of David (ii, 132).

The Desertion of Abner (iii. 139).

The Death of Ishbosheth (iv. 1-12).

(2) David’s Reign in Jerusalem (5-10)

(a) Celebration of the Ark (vi. 1-23).

(b) Confirmation of the Covenant (vii. 1-29).

(c) Conquering the Nations (viii. 118).

(d) Character of King David (ix. 1-13).

(e) Continuance and Conquest (x. 1-19).

The Sorrow Through Sin Of David (11-18).

The Supremacy Of David (19-24).

Persecution in Family (19-20); Persecution in Nation (21-22).

Scroggie:

1. His Education (1 Sam. 16-31).

2. His Election (2 Sam. 1-10).

3. His Ejection (2 Sam 11-18).

4. His Exaltation (2 Sam 20-24).

These also may be considered as his Testings, Triumphs, Troubles and Testimonies (23). David came to the throne, conquered from the throne, fled from the throne, and was established on the throne. Stages which tell of Preparation, Subjection, Retribution and Restoration.

Here is a story of a great singer, statesman, steward, shepherd, great sinner; the great shepherd became the great soldier.

The Sorrow Of David (11-18).

(a) His Sin (xi).

(b) His Sadness (xii).

(c) His Suffering (xii to the end of 18).

(1) Amnon’s Insolence (1-21).

(2) Absolam’s Ingratitude (22-18).

The Supremacy Of David (19- 24).

(a) David’s Return to the Throne (xvix. 1-40).

(b) David’s Maintenance on the Throne. (xxix. 41. - xxi).

(c) David’s Rejoicing on the Throne (xxii and xxiii) Song (1-51), Servants (1-39).

(d) David’s Presumption on the Throne. (xxiv).

First and Second Kings (Nov 1965)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 11 No. 9, Nov 1965.

Key to Words: The Word of the Lord; Key Verse: (2 Kings 1:17) Devotion - Downfall - Disruption:

The Book of Kings sets forth the two kingdoms: (a) The Two Tribes, (b) The Ten Tribes. It is the history of the kings of Israel and Judah, from David to Ahab and Jehosphaphat, covering a period of about 125 years. This is seen in 1 Kings. The second Book treats of the history of Israel and Judah from Ahab to the captivity, a period of about 300 years.

The author of the Book is unknown. Tradition assigns it to Jeremiah, others to Ezra during the captivity. It is a compilation of records taken from the book of the Acts of Solomon (1 Kings 11:41), the book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel (1 Kings 14:19), and the book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah (1 Kings 14:29).

The Books are best understood by observing the following:

Remember:

In the original Hebrew, 1 and 2 Kings formed one book, as also did 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Chronicles. They were first divided by the LXX Translators, when they translated the Old Testament into Greek. The explanation given is this: Greek requires at least one third more space than Hebrew, therefore the translators were compelled to divide them, either because they were of limited length, or to make the scrolls easy to handle. Dr. Bullunger: “The Book begins with King David

and ends with the King of Babylon; opens with the Temple built and closes with the Temple burnt; begins with the successor of David on the throne of the kingdom, and ends with David's last successor released from the house of his captivity."

Recognition:

It is imperative to recognize the various aspects of the kingdom: (1) The United Kingdom. (2) The Divided Kingdom. (3) The Single Kingdom.

The United Kingdom lasted one hundred and twenty years, having three kings who each reigned for forty years (1095-975): David, Saul and Solomon.

The Divided Kingdom: This embraces the history of the disruption, covering about 250 years. The kingdom divided into two parts which were spoken of as Judah, the Southern Kingdom, with its capitol at Jerusalem; and Israel, the Northern Kingdom with its capitol at Schehem and then at Samaria. This division was predicted and carried out to completion (1 Kings 11:26-40). It was due to the idolatry and disloyalty of the nation, and for this sin both parts of the Kingdom were sent into ultimate captivity; Israel to Assyria (721 B.C.) and Judah to Babylon in 586 B.C.

During this time the two kingdoms were either antagonistic or allied to each other. (a) From Rehoboam to Asa in the south, and from Jeroboam to Omri in the north, a period of 57 years they were antagonistic (975-918) (1 Kings 12-16).

(b) Jehosophat's son then married Ahab's daughter and they were allied for 79 years (1 Kings 16-2 Kings 13).

(c) From Amazia to Hezekiah in the south, and from Joash to Hoshea in the north 118 years, they were again antagonistic (839-721 B.C.; 2 Kings 13-18:12).

In the Southern Kingdom there was but one dynasty, the Davidic, but in the Northern Kingdom there were nine dynasties. In the South 19 Kings, 1 Queen.

In the North, 19 Kings. In the South some kings were good, unstable and bad. In the North all were bad. In the South there were three revivals — reign of Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah and Josiah. In the North there were no revivals. The tribes in the South were taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezer; and the tribes in the North, into Assyrian Captivity by Chalmaneser.

The best Kings of Judah were Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Josiah.

The worst Kings of Judah Ahaz and Manasseh.

Each of the good kings made a serious mistake:

· Asa — allied with Syria against Israel.

· Jehoshaphat — allied with the House of Ahab.

· Hezekiah — friendly to the Babylonian messengers.

· Josiah — His march against Pharaoh Necho of Egypt.

(3) The Single Kingdom: This is a most important period of the Monarchy. After Israel (The Ten Tribes) had gone into Assyrian captivity, the kingdom of Judah continued for 135 years. During this time there were two attempts to turn the people from idolatry, Hezekiah 721 -640 B.C., and Josiah 640 - 586 B.C.

These seemed successful for a while, but repentance was not deep and the kingdom ran on to its doom.

(4) Prophets: The Ministry of the Prophets is most instructive.

Divided Kingdom

(a) Oral Prophets: Elijah and Elisha.

(b) Minor Prophets: Ahijah, Jahaziel, Eliezer, Iddo, Jehu, Micaiah, Shemaiah, Hanani, Azariah.

(c) Written: Joel, Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah.

Single Kingdom

(d) Written: Isaiah, Jermiah, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk.

5 Points To Ponder

I Kings

1. The altar used as a place of safety (1:50; 2:28).

2. The first instance of kneeling at devotions (viii:54) he knelt — Baal worshippers bent their knees. This explains (Judges 7:5, 7). Kneeling sanctified today by our Lord's use (Luke 22:41).

3. The chronology of (6:1) should be 573 years instead of 480 years. Why? The period of 93 years difference is exactly the period covered during the captivities in Judges. Such time is not counted in God's timetable — wasted and of no account.

4. Note the spiritual conception of God (v:5; viii:27). The temple built not as a House for the Lord, but for the Name of the Lord. Pagan temples were built for the actual residence of their gods. Not Solomon's temple.

5. Again in (8:3) only mention of priests carrying the Ark.

6. Jehoshaphat dwelling in thick darkness (8:12) — great comfort.

7. The Divine Mission of Israel in the world (8:43; 8:60).

8. The New standard “as David his father” (3:3; 9:4; 11:4, 33; 14:8, 15; 15:3, 11).

II Kings

1. The title, “Man of God” found here more than other books in the Bible: thirty-six times (36).

2. The Phrases, “Did that which was evil — Lord” occurs 21 times: —(3:2; 8:18; 12:2, 14:24; 15:9, 18, 24, 28; 17:2, 17; 21:2, 6, 15, 16, 20: 23: 32, 24:9, 19).

3. The Phrase, “That which was right — Lord” occurs 8 times: —(3:18; 13:2; 14:3; 15:3, 34; 18:3; 20:3; 22:2).

4. The Phrase, “The Word of the Lord” — and equivalent occurs 24 times: -- (1:17; 4:44; 7:1, 16; 8:19; 9:26, 36: 10:10; 14:25; 15:12; 19:21).

5. The Feelings of the Lord: —Anger: (13:3; 17:18; 23:26; 24:20). Wrath: (22:13, 17; 23:26).

First and Second Chronicles (Dec 1965)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 11 No. 10, Dec 1965.

The Book of Chronicles appears at the end of the Hebrew Bible, being in the third division and means, “Words of Days,” that is, Journals. In the Greek LXX the title is “Omissions,” because they are regarded as supplementing what had already been written. The present title, Chronicles, dates back from the fourth century A.D. and embraces identical passages, omissions, and additions from the other kingdom books of Samuel and Kings.

Key Word: Worship. Key Verses: 1 Chronicles 29:10; 2 Chronicles 20:20; 2 Chronicles 26:5.

1. The Secret of the Book is to find the key. Many who study the Bible agree that in this Book there is little to interest and attract. For this reason it has been the “Book of Kittle” (difficult, of puzzling) Chronicles.

2. The Significance of the Book is learned in remembering the purpose of the books of the Bible differ. For example in 2 Samuel you have the account of David’s sin, where as in 1 Chronicles you have his career under God’s hand with never a mention of sin. J.N.D. says, “In Samuel you have the King of History in responsibility toward God.” In I Chronicles it is the David of Grace in blessing according to the counsel of God. NOTE:

(a) It reveals the unique position of Israel in covenant relation with God and views her history from the divine

viewpoint rather than the human viewpoint: the ecclesiastical position rather than the national position; her moral history rather than her legislative history, life and times of Israel through the eyes of the priest rather than through those of the politician. In this Book the writer never gets out of sight of the towers and pinnacles of the Temple. All that pertains to worship is here; the Temple, and its services, priests, Levites, singers, and hatefulness of idolatry. It could be said, "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up."

(b) The writer is only interested in the Tribe of Judah — he only refers to the history of the Northern Kingdom where it serves his purpose of throwing light on Judah and Jerusalem and the Temple. The reason for this is because through Judah the Royal Tribe was to come.

3. The Sources from which the Book is compiled are clearly seen in the Book. The language savours that of Ezra and Nehemiah and must have been written during the time of the Babylonian Captivity. No fewer than twelve are named: 1 Chron. ix.1; xxix:29; 2 Chr. ix.29; xii:15; xx:34; xxiv:27; xxvi:22; xxxii:32; xxxiii:19).

4. The Scope of the Book is most important. All history is "His-Story" and here you have the course of God's earthly elect from the first Man Adam and David. The Book records the order, nature and birth of Israel and thus exhibits the sovereign grace of God and His purposes in relation to His Chosen People from the beginning. It begins with Adam (1:1), and ends with the decree of Cyprus in 586 B.C. covering a period of 3500 years. Cyprus, King of Persia permitted the captives to return to Jersualem to rebuild the Temple. Such a marvellous sweep of History invests these Books with

peculiar value and spiritual instruction to the student of the Word of God.

5. The Supplement:

1. The Genealogies are given in detail and amplified form to prove that the Messiah is the promised Son of David, Judah, Abraham and Adam.

2. The Names of the People listed are seen to be associated with some unusual experience and convey spiritual truth.

3. The Book breathes an ecclesiastical atmosphere.

(a) The Reigns of David and Solomon recorded with fullness. David because of his preparation for it; and Solomon because of his establishment of it. Six chapters devoted to its erection and glory whereas only three to other affairs.

(b) The Ritual of the Temple far more evident than the wars of the Kings.

(c) The Relationship of Jehovah to His own is also brought out (iv. 9,10; v.20; xi.14; xii.18; xiv.2,11,15; xviii. 13).

(d) The Righteousness of Jehovah in dealing with those who defiled His Temple and the wickedness of earthly sovereigns who led the people away from God’s Temple (v.25,26; vi.15; ix.1; x.13,14; xv.2,13; xxi.19). How this bears out the Blessing of God upon all who seek to put Him first, and the failure of those who despise His law which Christ makes fundamental to all true prosperity.

6. The Subject of the Book

The Sovereign Lord

As to the first — Jehovah is seen on the throne and though oft ignored, disobeyed, yet He acts in grace bestowing blessing upon the just and bringing judgment upon the unjust. As to the second — the secret of the life that pleases God is found in the clauses. “Seek ye the Lord,” “Prayer and Service.”

VII. The Study of the Book. In the Hebrew MSC. the two Books of Chronicles were one and remained so even to the time of Jerome (340 - 420 A.D.)

While this cannot be determined exactly, it is believed that Ezra is a continuation of 2 Chronicles so the internal evidence leads us to conclude that the compilation must be between a limit several years subsequent to the return and the year B.C. 410, or thereabouts.

Passages in Chronicles but not in Kings and Samuel.

1 Chronicles — xii; xxii; xxiiixxvii; xxviii; xxix.

2 Chronicles — xi.5-32; xiii.2-23; xiv.15-22; xxv.5-10; xiv. 8-14; xv.1-15; xvi, 7-10; xvii; xix; xx,1-30; xxi, 2:19 xiv, 15:22; xxv,14:16; xxvi,6-16; xxvii, 5,6; xxx,1-27; xxxi, 2.21; xxxiii.11-13.

Passages found in Samuel or Kings but not in Chronicles

2 Samuel — 1-5; vi.20-23; ix.xi: 2.-xii.25; xiii.-xx. 1-14,15-17; xxii; xxiii.

1 Kings — 1;11.1-9, 26-46; iii.1,16,28; iv; vii.1-12,13-39; viii.56-61; xi.1-13,14- 40.

2 Kings — xii.17,18; xvi.5-18; xviii. 4-8.

Outline:

The Genealogical Tables (i-ix).

1. The Primeval Period — (1.1-23) Adam to Abraham.

2. The Patriarchal Period — (I.- 24:ii.2) Abraham to Jacob.

3. The National Period — (II.3IX4) Posterity of Jacob's Sons.

The Kings of Israel (x-xxix).

1. The Ruin of Saul (x).

2. The Reign of David — (a) His Companions (xi.-xii).

(b) His Course (xiii.-xvii).

(c) His Conflicts (xviii.-xx).

(d) His Chastening (xxi).

(e) His Charge (xxii).

(f) His classification of the People (xxiii.-xxvii).

(1) Levites (xxiii). (2) Priests (xxiv). (3) Singers (4) Porters (xx-vi). (5) Soldiers (xxvii.1-24). (6) Counsellors (xxvii.32-34). (7) Stewards (xxvii.25-31).

3. The Reign of David (xi-xxix.30)

(g) His Conclusion (xxviii.-xxix).

(1) Charge to Officers (xxviii.1-8).

(2) Charge to Solomon (xxviii.9-21)

(3) Charge to People (xxix.1-5).

(4) Concerning Giving (xxix.6-25).

(5) Consummation (xxix.26-30).

4. The Reign of Solomon:xxix.22b25). (II Chron. i-ix).

(a) Commencement — (i.1-13).

(b) Career — (i.14-ix 12).

(c) Close — (ix.13-31).

5. The Reigns of the Kinzgs of Judah (x.-xxxvi.21).

Ezra (Jan 1966)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 12 No. 1, Jan 1966.

Key Word: The Word of the Lord; Key Verse: (7:10).

The Books of Chronicles, Ezra, Esther and Nehemiah, are ecclesiastical history. Until the third century A.D. the books of Ezra and Nehemiah were treated as one book according to the Church Fathers.

Jewish and Christian teaching, as well as the voice of tradition assign Ezra as the author, however, he is spoken of in the third person in various parts of the record. It is a compilation of letters, decrees, genealogy, excerpts and prayers engaged almost exclusively with the institutional religion of Judah. The decrees of Ezra have to do with the Temple, thus moral history. The decrees of Nehemiah have to do with the city of Jerusalem, thus civic history.

The Setting of the Book is most important. Cyrus, became King of Babylon in 536 B.C., and died in 528 B.C. Darius became King in 521 B.C., and reigned 36 years and died in 485 B.C. Artaxerxes (called Longimanus) because one hand was longer than the other, began to reign in 465 B.C. and died in December 425 B.C. or in January 424 B.C.

The Clock of God’s providence may seem at times slow, but it always strikes at the proper minute. Nebuchadnezzar had reigned 45 years, his son Evilmerodach, 23 years and his grandson Belshazzar three years which add up to 70 years. The accession of Cyrus to the throne was in fulfillment of prophecy (Isa. 44:28) — mentioned 150 years before.

The Seventy Years' Captivity foretold by Jeremiah — (Jer. 25:11; 25:12, 29:10) had run its course. Now the One of whom Isaiah spoke as God's Shepherd and God's Anointed (Isa. 44:28; 45:1) was to perform God's pleasure. History is the outworking of God's purposes, over-ruling the action of kings to His Glory. History is the Burning Bush aflame with the Mysterious Presence.

Cyrus in the first year of his reign is stirred up by God to rebuild His House of Jerusalem. Note the first two verses are the same as the last two verses of Chronicles. Cyrus offered the Jews their liberty, and many under the leadership of Zerubbabel availed themselves of the privilege, their record being in Ezra 2. About 50,000 of the most earnest and devout exiles responded to the call to build up their city and re-establish its institutions.

The first thing this noble army of individuals did was to build the Altar (ch. 2), for the atonement of Christ was the foundation of worship as evidenced in the Restoration of the Temple. The work was hindered, but God raised up two men to act as bulwarks for the people, Haggai and Zechariah. Their combined ministries and practical help were inspirational. Twenty years after the return from Babylon the Temple was completed (6:14) 516 B.C.

Between chapters 6, 7, there is a period of about 58 years, 516 B.C. 458 B.C., to which belong the story of Esther. During this period the great battles of Marathon, Thermopylae, and Salamis; also the deaths of Confucius of China, and Buddha of India took place.

The Second Division of the Book (ch. 7-10) had to do with the personal history of Ezra and his trip to Jerusalem with the edict of Xerxes in 458 B.C., and is

noted for reform rather than rebuilding. This was in the seventh year of the reign of Xerxes (Ezra 7:7,8), that is 78 years after the decree of Cyrus set forth in Ezra 1-6. Daniel was still alive in the third year of Cyrus (Dan. 10:1) but the matter of old age prevented him from making the trip from Babylon to Jerusalem.

The life of Ezra dominates the latter portion of the Book and his life and character is a great incentive to faith and work.

(1) His Priestly Origin (Ezra 7:1-5). He was the descendant of Hilkiah, High Priest in the reign of Josiah who found the copy of the law. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14).

(2) His Preparation: As a captive he was not able to exercise priestly rites, so he gave himself to the Word. He was a student of Scripture, a lover of God's Book and gave himself to search it, practise it, and proclaim it (7:10). How he sought the law —even to this day ranked next to Moses in Jewish traditions (Prov. 16:1 RV.).

(3) His Prominence: The Hand of God was upon him — (v.6), and the King supplied with every need even to 22,000. Think of this life soaffecting the king (7:6, 21, 22) (Phil. 4:19).

(4) His Prosperity: God greatly honoured this man of God in teaching (7:25) and in protection (8:21,22). How suggestive this last insight of Ezra, to preach faith in God, and then cater to the ungodly is to make the name of Christ stink in the nostrils of a reasonable man. All through His life He sought to honour the Word. Through him and his reform wonders were wrought in the land in religious, social and civil life. He paved the way for the revival of Bible Study and its fruit is with us to this day though 2,500 years have passed on. Ezra is believed to

have written (Ps. 119), also 1 and 2 Chronicles. (1) He treasured God's Word. (2) He trembled at God's Word. (3) He taught God's Word. (i.1; iii.2; vi.14, 18; vii. 6, 10, 14; ix. 7, x. 3:5). (4) Testimony of God's Word:

Separation from Babylon (1:1)

Separation from Worldly Help (iv.)

Separation from Flesh (viii.)

Separation from Sinful alliances (x.10-11).

The Return From Captivity Under Zerubbabel. (I-IV).

(1) Restoration of the Jews (i).

(2) Registration of the Jews (ii).

(3) Reconstruction of the Temple (4) Interruption of the Work (iv).

(5) Investigation of the Work (v).

(6) Dedication of the Temple (vi).

Time: 20 years

The Return From Captivity Under Ezra. (VII-X).

(1) The Decree of Artaxerxes (vii).

(2) The Deliverance of the Jews (viii).

(3) The Devotion of Ezra (ix).

(4) The Dedication of the People (x).

Time: 1 year

Esther (Feb 1966)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 12 No. 2, Feb 1966.

Key Word: Providence, Key Verse (4:14).

The Background of the Book

The Book of Esther was perhaps written by Mordecai, the power behind the throne during the reign of Xerxes (Abasuerus), 485-464 B.C. Xerxes was the emperor whose Persian hordes fought the heroic Greeks at Thermopylae and Salamis in 480 B.C. It is placed as a Book between the 6th and 7th chapters of the Book of Ezra. The Jews who had returned with Zerubbabel had rebuilt and rededicated the Temple, although the city of Jerusalem was not yet restored as it was later under Nehemiah.

Ezra and Nehemiah give the history of those Israelites who were returned in the mercy of God to the city of Jerusalem. In both Books we see the practical effects of the Word of God and prayer in the lives of those who were stirred up to return to the Land. Esther on the other hand gives to us an account of the Jews who did not return to their land, but chose to get along in the countries whither they had been scattered. In Esther we learn the majority of the Jews did not return. Only 50,000 with Zerubbabel, and about 2,000 with Ezra. The majority found it much more comfortable to settle in Persia and occupy themselves in business, agriculture and politics et cetera. This is the state of the nation as the Book opens.

The Beauty of the Book:

In spite of the nation's unfaithfulness and ungrateful attitude toward God, the whole Book of Esther is remarkable for the unfailing providence of God on behalf of His own people. Though His people were out of fellowship and the place of obedience, God in His infinite tenderness and divine shepherd care works on their behalf. There is no other Book in all the Bible that so beautifully manifests God's hidden hand and loving heart protecting and planning the nation's highest good. "Behind a frowning providence God hides a smiling face." The Book is fascinating for its dramatic and vivid character sketches.

Esther: The low estate of the Persian court as to morals is seen in the incident against which Vashti rebelled, bringing about her removal from the throne. About four years later, Esther, a beautiful Jewish orphan girl was selected to be Queen. Her life is summed up: (a) Modest (ii.-15). (b) Winsome (ii. 9-17). (c) Obedient (ii. 10). (d) Humble (ii. 20). (e) Filial and Tender (ii. 20; iv. 4). (f) Self-Sacrificing (iv. 16). (g) Courageous and Loyal (ii.:22; viii.1; vii. 3,4). Thus she is seen as a woman endued with divine wisdom and guidance in earthly things.

Haman: Sometimes we wonder why Haman was so bitter against the Jews, when it was only Mordecai (little) who refused to bow to him. This is explained when we remember that in the days of Samuel, Saul's work was to wipe out the Amalekites (1 Sam. xv. 2:3). This he failed to do and now we see the result. The royal family of Agag whom Samuel slew (1 Sam. xv. 33), would never forget the insult and injury. Here is Haman a direct descendant. As grand vizier of the court of Xerxes

he is out to destroy the Jews. Mordecai would never honour one whom God has cursed (Gen. xxxvi. 16; Ex. xvii. 14-16). See also 1 Chronicles 1:34-36. He is the first of the Anti-Semites who hate and would exterminate the people of God. Throughout history the prophecy (Gen. 3:15) that there should be enmity between the serpent's seed and the seed of the woman, was being worked out; and this new blow was really directed against the redemptive purposes of God, for in the seed of Abraham and through the house of David the whole world was to be blessed. The doom that came to Haman eventually will be the doom of all the haters of the Jew, even the Anti-Christ, (Dan. 2:7; Rev. 17) who seems to be typified in Haman and his ten sons.

Mordecai: To this day Mordecai stands high in the estimation of the Jews. He was a Benjamite and decendant of Saul, Israel's first great king, and was carried away captive by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon (ii. 6; also 2 Kings xxiv. 14, 15). Babylon fell to the Persians in 538 B. C. When the story of Esther opens we find Mordecai, like Nehemiah before him, holding office in the King's household at Shushan (ii. 11; iii. 2). As a man he was marked by love and compassion since he adopted Esther. His faithfulness is brought out when he refused to bow down to wicked Haman, and at the same time exposed plotters against the king, (Esther ii. 22, 23. Ps. xv.4; Acts v. 29). Though Haman vowed vengence upon this man, Mordecai prevailed upon Esther at the risk of her life, to break the precedent of thecourt, by going into the king's presence unsummoned, to intercede on behalf of her people. During the meantime Mordecai was seen with agony of soul (iv. 1-4,5). God began to work; the king was restless

(vi.1). Who would have thought that the man who refused to bow to an Agagite would be led forth by that very man, and exalted and honoured and ultimately made the prime minister of Persia. All through the Book we see nothing just happens, but even in a heathen reign. “All things —God” (Rom. 8:28). Haman is executed, Mordecai is exalted and the Jews are saved. To this day the Jews observe the Feast of Purim as a national holiday because of the deliverence of God to the Nation in the days of Persian Rule.

The Battle of the Book

The Book is often criticized on account of the absence of the names of God. It has been spoken of:

1. Full of improbabilities or impossibilities.

2. It bears the name of a Woman.

3. Luther the champion of Justification by faith said he wished it did not exist.

4. It is never quoted in the New Testament and seems more like a secular book rather than a Book in the Divine Library.

5. The Jews recognized Esther as part of the Canon of Scripture and regarded it as peculiarly sacred, even evaluating it second to the five Books of Moses. Matthew Henry says: “If the name of God is not here His finger is.”

Dr. A. T. Pierson, called it “The Rose Window” or “The Romance of Providence.” Here dimly but beautifully is reflected the light of redemption through its vivid panes. Someone has said a good title for the Book would be, “God amid the shadows.”

The Talmud says, “The Book of Deuteronomy tells us why the name of God is omitted.” In Deuteronomy 31:18 we learn because of their sin God had hidden His face from Israel. Yet in spite of their sin God was at work in the midst of His people giving affirmation to the truth. “There is nothing too great for His power and nothing too small for His love.”

It has been suggested that the Book may have been an extract from the records of the Persian Court, thus the name of God is omitted. In the Hebrew the incommunicable name for YAHWEH, is found four times in acrostic form, and at critical points in the story (i:20; v.4,13; vii.7). This is a fact of profound importance. Two of the occasions form the name by initial and two by final letters. In two cases the name is spelt backwards and two forwards. This cannot be of chance, and the difficulty of constructing such forms will be apparent to anyone who attempts it. Dr. A. T. Pierson has illustrated the occurrences of the Divine title Lord in the following four couplets:

Due Respect Our Ladies, all

Shall give their husband, great and small (i. 20).

Let Our Royal Dinner bring

While this Jew sits at the gate (v. 13).

IiL tO feaR decreeD I find, Towards me in the monarch’s mind (vii. 7).

Outline:

1. The persecution of the Jews (1-4).

2. The Providence of the God of the Jews (5-10).

or

1. The Feast of Ahasuerus (i.-ii).
2. The Feast of Esther (3. - 7). (Lee).
3. The Feast of Purim (8-10).

Nehemiah (Mar 1966)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 12 No. 3, Mar 1966.

The Book of Nehemiah is a spiritual gem in its lessons for the Christian. It is the last of the historic books of the Old Testament and tells how the repatriated Jews rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem under the able leadership of Nehemiah. The autobiography of Nehemiah is most admirable and though an exile he rose to an eminent position as cup-bearer to the mighty Persian King, Artaxerxes.

Key Word: Prayer; Key Verse: (6:3).

The Personality of this man is that of one of the noblest patriots in Jewish History. Nehemiah was heart broken by the reports that came back from Babylon to Jerusalem telling of the desolation of the city of his fathers. The walls were still unbuilt; the temple and its service neglected; Ezra no longer governor; the people were in great affliction and reproach. The Arabs were encamped close to Jerusalem, Sanballat and his allies were all powerful, and priests and laity alike had gone back to their heathen ways and customs, all the company that had under Zerubbabel and Ezra gone back to Jerusalem. Though comfortably situated in the palace at Shushan Nehemiah’s heart was in the ruined city of Jerusalem. Like Moses he wanted to be with the people of God. His zeal and patriotic spirit made him desire to see for himself, and to act upon the providential leadings of His God. His deep feelings towards His people and their place won for him permission to return to the city of Jerusalem. The Book opens in the reign of Xerxes, and ends in the reign of Darius II. Throughout the Book,

Nehemiah is seen as a man of sterling integrity, intense earnestness, unlimited fidelity, and self denial. He was familiar with the Word and character of God, unswerving in his devotion to God and Israel, untiring, unwavering, uncompromising, a most practical man in godliness and service for God.

Nehemiah was a man of prayer at all times, and under all circumstances. He lived near the mercy seat and constantly sought the face of God for help and wisdom in the prosecution of His work. Note then—i:5-11; ii:4,9; v: 19; vi:9,14; xiii:14, 22,29,31.

He was a man of purpose. He put his shoulder to the wheel and saw the ship of Jewish hope set sail. So thoroughly did Nehemiah imbue his countrymen with his zeal that in the remarkablely short time of 52 days the colossal task of building the walls and gates of Jerusalem was completed. He is a model to study in working for God. Though he met with tremendous opposition the work was pushed towards completion success fully with trowel in one hand and sword in the other.

He not only had trouble without by a growing army of antagonists, but also like the early Church he had trouble with the “loan sharks” or forty thieves within. In the commencing of his task he bowed in prayer and at the end he was chasing enemies from the temple. With courage and faith in God he entered into his task with nobility and solemnity (6:3); all knew he was sent of God. For all the help received he attributed the glory to His God.

Nehemiah: The Model Worker

1. The key note of his life. (xi:3).
2. The secret of his unction (i:5-11).
3. The persistence of his course (ii:5).
4. The humility of his life and labours (i:5;7:5-9).
5. The singleness of eye and fixity of heart (ii:17-18).
6. The devoted love to the people (i:4).
7. The success of his work (xiii).

Outline:

The Construction Of The Walls (I-VII).

1. Preparation ---i-ii
2. Construction ---iii
3. Opposition ---iv-vi:14
4. Completion--- vi:15; vii:3

The Consecration Of The People (VIII.-X).

1. The Scriptures ---viii.
2. The Supplication ---ix
3. The Seal of God --- x.

The Completion Of The Work (XI.XIII).

1. The Census of the People - - -xi.
2. The Dedication of the Wall - -xii.
3. The Purity of the People - - - -xiii.

Wisdom Writings (Apr 1966)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 12 No. 4, Apr 1966.

Four types of minds are recognized in the Bible, which account for four kinds of literature — the priest, the poet, the prophet and the philosopher. The last mentioned gives us the literature known as the Wisdom Writings.

Professor Moulton: “Side by side with prophets defending the theocrasy, and singers taking their inspiration from the temple service, with historians compiling annals of kings, and scribes expounding the law there was a class of wise men, who had habits and forms of literature, perculiar to themselves.” The wise men were observers of life and the wisdom books are the product of their keen minds under the illumination and inspiration of the Spirit of God.

The simplest form of wisdom is the Book of Proverbs; the most elaborate form is the Book of Ecclesiastes; the most profound and philosphical is the Book of Job.

Job deals with the vexations of life. Ecclesiastes deals with the vanity of life.

Proverbs deals with the virtues and vices of life.

The Five Great Problems and Their Solutions

The central part of the Old Testament comprising the wisdom and poetical books, treats of five major problems of all ages; Job, the problem of suffering; Psalms, the problem of prayer; Proverbs, the problem of conduct; Ecclesiastes, the problem of chief good; Song of Songs, the problem of love.

The solution of these problems is found only in Christ. He suffered, He prayed, He behaved perfectly, He revealed God, and He is love.

Job — presents the problem of human suffering and shows what goes on behind the scenes.

Psalms — Disclose the enjoyment of divine communion — also, the great struggle between good and evil, with the final triumph of righteousness and praise universal to God.

Proverbs — Offers a code of ethical conduct — shows how to act in the midst of so much wickedness.

Ecclesiastes — Intimates the quest for supreme satisfaction.

Songs of Songs — Reveals the loyalty of true love.

Job

The book of Job has been called the profoundest poem ever written. Tennyson called it, “The greatest poem whether of ancient or modern literature.” Victor Hugo called it, “The greatest product of the human mind of all ages.” Luther regarded it as “more magnificient and sublime than any other book of Scripture,” Carlyle wrote: “I call that (Job) one of the grandest things ever written with pen.”

Keyword - Trial, Key Verse - 1:9.

Author and Age of Job

The author as well as the age of the Book is unknown. Job was a real person and not the creation of a brilliant mind. The prophet Ezekiel associates him with Noah and Daniel, whereas the writer James in the New Testament

links him with Elijah. There are many opinions varying in date as much as a thousand years. Some take the view Job was contemporary with Abraham, and would place the record between the eleventh and twelfth chapter of Genesis; and others would place him in the captivity or post captivity period. The essential thing of the Book is its message which is dateless, that is, it deals with the race's oldest problem — "why do the godly suffer?"

In the study of the Book we observe the following which seem to point to the patriarchal age of Abraham.

1. The use of Musical Instruments (Job. 21:12).

2. The mention of money (Job. 42; Gen. 33:19).

3. The Name of Jehovah (Job. 12:9) — the common name being "shaddai".

4. Job acts as priest for his sons (1:5).

5. The Book of Job does not refer to Israel, God's nation; nor to Moses, or the Law, nor even to Abraham.

Address of Job

The theme of the Book is, "The Mystery of Suffering." Some speak of "The Problem of Pain." The poem teaches us that suffering is not always penal and retributive, but may be, and sometimes is, disciplinary and educative.

It is a divine treatise of the highest beauty in expression concerning the trial of Job's life and of his implicit trust in God, and the powder of the truth of God in his life. The subject of the Book is not the conversion of a sinner, but the consecration of a saint.

As Romans is the key of the New Testament, so the Book of Job is the key to the Old Testament. Here is seen tested; sinning, suffering, seeking human help in legality, morality, philosophy; needing and receiving a revelation from God; and finally humbled, penitent, believing, restored so that the last estate is better than the first.

The Book of Job Raises And Settles:

1. Controversy between Heaven and Earth.

Satan's sneer, "Doth Job fear God for naught" (Job 1 and 2).

2. Controversy between man and man.

Suffering of Saints (3 and 32)

3. Controversy between God and man.

Will man bow to the discipline of God's Holy Love (38-42).

Actors in Job

1. Jehovah bending over His Servant in love.

2. The Sons of God rejoicing in His work.

3. The lying spirit slandering the brethren.

4. Job the saint in the furnace.

5. The three friends represent well meaning short sighted brethren (1 Cor. 3).

6. Elihu — A better taught minister of comfort views the affliction of Job from an educative standpoint.

7. Job's wife — The voice of natural affection.

Appraisal of Job

1. Poetical and philosophical value — in its discussion of the underlying meaning of life as a whole.

2. Scientific value — in its observation of nature. In one chapter the following are mentioned: Gold, silver, iron, brass, sapphires, onyx, topaz, pearls, crystal, rubies, wind, rain, thunder, lightening, fire, floods, darkness, light, Heaven, earth, rivers, mountains and bread (Job. 28).

3. Prophetical value — how authoritative, even though hoary with age (Job. 19:25).

4. Rhetorical value — in its style of speech.

5. Historical value — in its references to places, people and customs.

6. Spiritual value — in its revelation of God's providential dealing with His own, and of another world and superhuman beings.

7. Practical value — in its teaching on fearing and trusting in God.

8. Biographical value — seven actors on the stage of Scripture. It is marvellous in its delineation of character.

9. Literary value — in its language, style and message.

Outline:

I. The Affliction of Job (1-2)

(a) The Character and Circumstances of Job (1:1-5)

(b) The Challenge of Satan (1:612)

(c) The Conduct of Job (1:13-22)

(d) The Second Challenge (2:1-6)

(e) The Conduct of Job (2:7-10)

(f) The Coming and Conduct of Job's Friends (2:11-13).

II. The Arguments of the Friends of Job (3-37)

(a) First Cycle (4-14) Eliphaz (4-5). — Job (6-7). Bildad (8). — Job (9-10). Zophar (11). — Job. (12-14).

(b) Second Cycle (15:21). Eliphaz (15) — Job. (16-17). Bildand (18) — Job. (19). Zophas (20) — Job. (21).

Third Cycle (22-31). Eliphaz (22). — Job. (23-25). Bildad (25). — Job. (26-27). Zophas (27:11 - 28:28). — Job (29-31).

III. The Address of Elihu (32-37).

(a) Nature of Affliction — (32-35).

(b) Nature of God — (36-37).

IV. The Admonition of the Almighty (38-42).

(a) Revelation of Glory — (38-39).

(b) Revelation of Greatness —(40-42:6).

V. The Appendix or Epilogue (40:7-17).

(a) Jehovah's Wrath and Witness — (42:7-9).

(b) Job's Prayer and Prosperity — (42:10-17).

Christ in the Psalms (May 1966)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 12 No. 5, May 1966.

Scripture reading Hebrews 10:1-18; Luke 24:44

We come now to the Psalms which were classified as “The Tidings” in the third section of the Hebrew Bible. These are in turn divided into three sections called the poetical books of Psalms, Job and Proverbs: the rolls which were read on special feast days, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and Esther; and the non-prophetical books of Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles. Daniel is called a prophet by our Lord, but his book is so placed because of his ministry to heathen and Greek kings. He was God’s witness to earthly kings that the Ancient of Days was yet to rule and reign. Chronicles closes the sacred canon because it deals with the revival of religion and the rekindling of national faith. It ends on a note of worship and points the way to God’s design, the worship of the one True God at the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem.

In the Psalms Christ is presented in a rich and varied manner. Many of them are Messianic, dealing with things pertaining to the place, work, and glory of the Messiah. The Psalms are divided into five books—revealing the feelings of the heart of God. If the five books of the Law interpret the Character of God, the five books of the Psalms illustrate the compassion of God. In the Law we have the greatness of God; in the Prophets we have the glory of God; and in the Psalms, the grace of God. Whilst the Torah (Law of Moses) emphasizes the God of the Hebrews the Psalms reveal the God of the human heart.

The first three Psalms are the key of the book. In Psalm 1, we have the excellency of the Law of God; in Psalm 2, the exaltation of the Messiah, and in Psalm 3, the experience of the believer. In the first Psalm Christ is seen as the Son of Man; in the second Psalm, as the King, and in the third Psalm, as Lord and Saviour. Thus these Psalms set forth Christ as The Man, the Messiah and the Mediator, or as the Law and Prophets tell Him out as Prophet, Priest and King. In the teaching of the other Psalms it is impossible to exhaust the treasures of the five books. Our desire is to confine our attention to the person of Christ and to learn what we can of the meaning of His word, “In the Psalms concerning Me.”

The fact that the book of the Psalms is divided into five sections is not to be thought trivial or of little importance. In Scripture the numerals are used with divine design and precision. To the Jew the number five is sacred and is suggestive of grace or favour. When Joseph desired to shew special favour to his brother Benjamin we read, “And he took and sent messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin’s mess was five times so much as any of theirs” (Gen. 43:34), see also, (Gen. 45:22). The number five is seen many times in the construction of the Tabernacle. It was with five loaves the Lord Jesus fed the hungry multitude. When Christ healed the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda we read, “having five porches.” Surely this is to remind us of the Grace of God to the impotent nation at that time. As Moses gave to the Israelites the five books of the Law revealing the mind of God, so corresponding with these David gave them the five books of the Psalms telling out the heart of God. In the Law you have the figures of Christ; in the prophets, the foreshadowings of Christ,

but in the Psalms, the feelings of Christ, Here the Christian must feel the message for his own soul, and feel it in the presence of God. These messages are as precious to the Jew as to the Christian for they reflect the experience of the man of faith in the world in any dispensation. Let us look for Christ in five ways. First of all as the ideal Man.

Book I (Ps. 1-41) corresponds to Genesis in that it has much to say about man. Man is crowned king of creation (Psalm 8) and under his feet all things have been placed. The original purpose of God for man has not been fulfilled because of sin, yet the divine plan has not been frustrated, for God Himself has become Man, and we behold the Last Adam in death, (Ps. 22), in salvation, (Ps. 23) and in glory (Ps. 24). What a wonderful day awaits not only a groaning humanity but also a groaning earth when all creation shall sing under the rule of Christ (Isa. 11:1-9; Rom. 8:18-23).

Book II (Ps. 42-72) corresponds to Exodus in that it contains the story of the groaning and suffering of God's people followed by the coming of the King, (Ps. 45), and the establishment of the Kingdom, (Ps. 72). How refreshing to see Christ as king, the anointed of God (Ps. 2, 20, 21, 24, 45, 72, etc.), and in spite of the fact that prophets, priests and kings have failed in the government of the Nation of Israel, the day is set and the King is decreed who will reign in righteousness forever and forever, the Lord Jesus Christ. How true the words soon to be fulfilled, "For Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever, Amen" (Matt. 6:13).

Book III (Ps.73-89) corresponds to Leviticus in that it is the book of “Holiness unto the Lord.” Much is said about the sanctuary and worship in these Psalms. We are reminded of the words of another in describing this section of Holy Writ: “The Psalms are a rich jewel cluster. made up of the gold of doctrine; the pearls of comfort, and the gems of prayer.” As the Psalmist considered the timeless questions — “Why are the wicked allowed to get away with things? Why do God’s innocent people have to suffer so much? He almost gives way to despair by outward appearances until he shuts his soul in with God and enters into the sanctuary (Ps. 73:17). Problems and perplexities of life that at times seem to defy solution give way to the prayer of faith, and the man of God visualizes things from the standpoint of God and His purposes. The same God who wrought in years gone by is still on the throne and He will never break His word: “My covenant will I not break, not alter the thing that is gone out of My lips,” (Ps.89:34). What assurance comes as we tarry in the sanctuary and remember the words: “Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).

Book IV (Psalms 90-106), corresponds to Numbers. The opening Psalm was probably written by Moses when he saw the people dying in the wilderness. Other Psalms in this section tell of the sufferings and wanderings of God’s people which will end only when the Lord reigns. Reading through these Psalms of pilgrim people we are reminded of the words of Calvin: “The anatomy of all parts of the soul, for here the Holy Spirit has represented to life all the griefs, sorrows, fears, doubts, hopes, cares, anxieties, in short, all the stormy emotions by which human minds are wont to be agitated.” These

Psalms are the mirror of Christ's soul as He lived and laboured amongst the masses. He entered into the joys and sorrows of life; He manifested wonder and surprise; He was fully aware of anger and love, sympathy and disappointment, and in His life He portrayed: compassion, indignation, self-denial, sincerity, courage, calmness, humility, endurance and goodness. Over the centuries the Psalms have been as balm to the burdened hearts and as the children of Israel in olden times were reminded of their provision at the hands of the Lord, so today the Christian Church is exhorted in Hebrews: "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:1-2).

Book V (Psalms 107-150), corresponds to Deuteronomy, for in these Psalms, as in the fifth book of the Law, the Word of God is magnified. Christianity is a singing religion and surely we should do as Paul admonished: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Co1. 3:16). It is only as we revere, relish and remember the Word of God that we shall grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord. Christ found His delight in the law of the Lord and in His walk, work and words, He absolutely trusted in its truth. How essential it is to follow His example and enter into the truth of "The Blessed Man" (Ps. 1:1-3). Surely the Psalms should have a much larger place in our lives as the children of God. To discover Christ in the Psalms will bring comfort and cheer to the tasks of life, strength for the burdens of the day, courage for the conflict, the binding up of the broken heart, light on life's problems

and hope for the future or, as the Psalmist himself said, “Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever” (Ps. 23:6).

The Psalms (June-July 1966)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 12 No. 6, June-July 1966.

The word Psalms is the Anglicized form of a Greek word meaning a poem set to music, In Hebrew, the title is “Praises, or Book of Praises,” which is the message of the whole hook. They are the divinely inspired book of worship for the nation of Israel, and the hymn book of devotion for the saints of all ages.

Key Word: Worship Key Verse: xxix:ii

Divisions

The whole collection consists, in the Hebrew Bible, of five books, clearly divided, and all ending with a doxology. (Psalms 41, 72, 89, 106 and 150). Like the Sermon on the Mount the books have a historical significance, and begin with a beatitude which majestically rises to a grand finale of praise in the group of songs known as the “Hallelujah Psalms.”

Authorship

There is no definite proof who the editor was. Unlike the other books of the Bible, Psalms was not written by one person. It is the work of more than a dozen writers. Of the 150 Psalms, 100 are, by their titles ascribed to Korah; 12, to the school of Asaph; 2, to Solomon; 1, to Ethan: 2, to Heman; 1, to Moses; and the remainder are anonymous. The Septuagint ascribes three to Isaiah, two to Jeremiah, and the final three to Haggai and Zechariah. It is also probable that Ezra wrote Psalm cxix, and that Hezekiah wrote Psalms cxx - cxxxiv (Isa. xxxvii. 20).

Date

It is impossible to fix the chronology of the Psalms. Though hoary with age they still retain the freshness of eternal youth upon their pages. The majority of the Psalms can be ascribed to the great song period in Israel's history, from David's time to the time of Hezekiah, three hundred years.

The Teaching of the Psalms

1. The Psalter is a marvellous record of the human heart bringing every conceivable human experience into the presence of God whether joy or sorrow, trust or anxiety, hope or despair, and pouring itself out from age to age in communion with God.

2. They set forth the attitude of the soul in the presence of God when contemplating past history, present experience, and prophetic hope.

3. Every Psalm is a direct expression of the soul's consciousness of God.

4. The Law sets forth the figures of Christ and tells what the spiritual life of the nation ought to be. The Prophets present the fore-shadowings of Christ and reveal what religion was not. The Psalms unveil the feelings of Christ and shew what life is in communion with God.

5. The Psalms unfold truth pertaining to the Messiah, the Scriptures, and the experience of the believer. Psalms one to three are the key to the Book. (1) The Exaltation of the Law of God (Psa. 1); (2) the Exaltation of the Messiah (Psa. ii.); (3) the Experience of the Believer, (Psa. iii).

The Types of Psalms

1. Messianic Psalms — 2, 16, 22, 24, 40, 68, 69, 118.

2. National Psalms - 14, 44, 46, 48, 53, 66, 68, 76-79, 87, 108, 122, 124, 126, 129.

3. Historical Psalms - 78, 81, 105 106, 114.

4. Penitential Psalms - 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143.

5. Imprecatory Psalms - 35, 69, 109, 137.

6. Prophetical Psalms - 2, 16, 22, 40, 45, 68, 69, 72, 97, 118, 110.

7. Hallelujah Psalms - 106, 111, 112, 113, 118 - Sung on special occasions, Passover, Feast of Tabernacles, Pentecost, Dedication and New Moons, etc.

8. Pilgrim Psalms - 120, 134.

9. Favorite Psalms - Devotion, 3. Morning, 5. Trouble, 11. Sorrow, 23. etc.

Testimony of the Psalms

Martin Luther called the Psalms, “The Little Bible.”

C. H. Spurgeon called them “The Christian’s Map of Experience.”

Wm. Gladstone said “All the wonders of Greek civilization heaped together are less wonderful than the Book of Psalms,” and Calvin described them as “The Anatomy of all parts of the soul.” There are five kinds of parallelism used in the writing of the Psalms (A. T. Pierson).

Apposite: Two or more parallel sentences having the same or closely related thoughts, corresponding or set in comparison. For example, “Trust in the Lord with all

thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding" (3:5). A wise man "trusts" in Jehovah positively and negatively "trusts not" in self.

Opposite: (Also called Antithetic). These contrast opposite thoughts with sharp antithesis. For example, "The memory of the just is blessed; but the name of the wicked shall rot" (10:7).

Synonymous: Same thought is repeated in this type of parallelism on equivalent terms. For example, "To give subtility to the simple: To the young man, knowledge and discretion" (1:4).

Synthetic: In some Psalms thoughts are built up into a structural form like block upon block, cumulatively and often climacterically; sometimes in successive pairs of parallels. For example, "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother; the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles (vultures) shall eat it." Here two synonomous parallels compose one synthetic (Prov. 30:7-9; 24-28, more complex).

Inverted (or introverted): The true relations are noted by beginning at the extremes and moving toward the centre. For example, Psalm 135:15-18, "The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men's hand. They have mouths, but they speak not; Eyes they have, but they see not; They have ears, but they hear not."

Outline:

Book I (1-41), corresponds to the Book of Genesis.

Book II (42-72), corresponds to the Book of Exodus.

Book III (73-89), corresponds to the Book of Leviticus.

Book IV (90-106), corresponds to the Book of Numbers.

Book V (107-150), corresponds to the Book of Deuteronomy.

Proverbs (Aug-Sept 1966)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 12 No. 7, Aug-Sept 1966.

Keyword - Wisdom; Key Verse-1:7.

The three Old Testament Books, Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes, constitute the “wisdom literature” of the ancient Hebrew people. The word proverb means, “in the place of words,” i.e. one for many. In other words, a short, pithy saying like, “Where there’s a will there’s a way.” In this Book of clear sentences there is found the finest collection of proverbs in the world.

Author:

For the evidence of authorship we turn to the Book itself, where are named, as responsible for the various collections: Solomon (1:1, xxv:1). The Wise (xxii:17), Men of Hezekiah (xxv:1), Agur (xxx:1), and King Lemuel (xxxi:1).

Date:

In the Old Testament Jeremiah makes a distinction between priests, prophets, and a class of men called “the wise,” who are known as preachers of practical religion (Jer. 18:18, 8:8). The collection of Proverbs extends over a long period of time, 300 years (1000-700 B.C.).

Themes:

The best method of study is the topical. Here you have such themes as Wisdom, Sin, Wealth, The Tongue, Humility, Justice, Friendship, Poverty, Idleness, Love, Marriage, Gluttony, and Success commending the

virtues of wisdom and the vices of folly. Again there are pictures of fools, talebearers, generous men and foolish women, unsocial men, and boasters, as well as problems and trying experiences which are universal.

Teaching:

It teaches the application of that wisdom which created all things to the details of life in a world of evil and confusion. It is the Book of “sanctified common sense,” and a practical guide to life and conduct. The key of the Book is (1:7 or 9:10), language that should be engraven on all hearts and emblazoned over the entrance of every school and college in the land. The Book teaches the fear of the Lord, warns against impurity, bad companions, evil doings, denounces indolence and carelessness and commends virtue and liberality, etc.

Outline:

1. The practical Purpose of Proverbs (1:1-6).

2. The Proverbs of Solomon (1:7- 9:18).

3. The Proverbs of Solomon (10:1- 22:16).

4. The Proverbs of the Wise (22:17-24:34).

5. The Proverbs of Solomon selected by men of Hezekiah (25-29).

6. Proverbs of Agur (30).

7. Proverbs of King Lemuel (31).

Ecclesiastes (Oct 1966)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 12 No. 8, Oct 1966.

The Book of Ecclesiastes is a book of much mystery until the key is discovered which unlocks its true meaning. The name, as we have it, is the Latinized form of the Greek, and may be interpreted as, “One who sits and teaches.” It has been called the “Sphinx of Hebrew literature, with its unsolved riddles of history and life.” It has always been a favorite book with Atheists. You may prove almost any of the teachings of skeptical philosophers like Voltaire or Volney by isolating parts of the first eleven chapters of Ecclesiastes from “the conclusion of the whole matter” in the last chapter (1:17, 22:24, III:3, 4, 8, 11, 19, 20; VII: 16, 17: VIII:15).

Key Word: Vanity. Key Verse-2:11.

Author:

The Solomonic authorship is defended by some, and denied by others. Various dates are assigned ranging over 1000 years. There are four reasons for ascribing the Book to Solomon: The Book indirectly so claims (1:11; 1:12). General opinion of Jews and Christians from early days. Solomon’s fitness to write such a book. Lack of agreement as to any other author.

Theme:

The theme of the Book is to show that all earthly pursuits, in themselves, as the chief purpose of life, are insufficient to give real happiness. W. J. Erdman calls it, “The Book of the Natural Man.” The writer becomes representative of the human race in asking the great

question, “Is life worth living?” The answer is given by earth’s wisest and wealthiest king in the language which is the key of the Book, “All is vanity and vexation of spirit.” The quest of the author is, What is the chief good? — Is there any profit? By personal experience, by observation, by human induction, he wills to explore all treasures of the earth and taste of all human springs in his search for lasting happiness. Yet over all must be written his one and only text— “Vanity of Vanities, all is vanity.”

The Key Phrases:

“All is vanity” — 34 times.

“Under the sun” — 29 times.

“Under the Heaven” — 3 times.

“Upon the earth” — 7 times.

“The Search of the Natural Man for the chief good for all men at all times in all places under the sun.” —W. J. Erdman.

“It is the New Testament Commentary on the words of Christ.” (John 4:13) “Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again.”

Topics:

In Proverbs the message found is The Wisdom of the Creator, above the sun, for man’s guidance. In Ecclesiastes it is the Wisdom of the Creature, under the sun, with its goal “Vanity of Vanities.”

Its conclusions are not always dependable; They are the reasonings of a natural man apart from revelation (2:24; 3:19-22; 9:2).

Just as the Book of Proverbs abounds with topics for interesting and illuminating study so this Book of natural reasoning: Labour (1:1-11), Knowledge (1:12-18), Pleasure and Wealth (2:1-9), Life and Labours (3 and 4), Religion (5), Character and Conduct (6 and 7), Early Training (12), etc.

Though the Book is difficult to understand and the name of God is left out, man in his unredeemed state, unrenewed nature is seeking out God along the pathway of rationalism. The existence of God is recognized, but not His redeeming mercy nor man's saving faith — The Book is quoted in the New Testament. (Matt. 5:3 cf. 7:2); (Matt. 5:3, 4.cf v.2); (Matt. 6:7; 5:2); (Luke 12:20 cf. 6:25); (1 Cor. 2:2 with v.6);(John 3:8 cf. 19:5); (2 Cor. 5:10 cf. 5:1); (1 Tim. 3:15:5v1).

Outline

1. The Exercise (1:1-11):

The problem how to be happy and satisfied without God is stated by a threefold cord: Inspiration (2). Interrogation (3). Illustration (4-11).

2. The Experiment (1:12- XII:8):

The procedure followed is human and earthly in such things as Pleasure, Philosophy, Possessions, Religion, Culture, Art, etc., —. All ends in despair and disappointment.

3. The End (12:8-14):

The permanent conclusion for all time is summed. (1) The Preacher's Text V:8. (2) The Preacher's Task V:9-12. (3) The Preacher's Testimony V:13-14.

The Word of God (Nov 1966)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 12 No. 9, Nov 1966.

Psalms 119

The author of the Holy Scriptures like the Creator in Nature reveals His perfection in the use of certain words and phrases in the one hundred and nineteenth Psalm. In this chapter there are 176 verses, divided into twenty-two sections. Each group has eight verses. The root idea of the number eight conveys the thought of more than enough. Since there are twenty-two letters in the Hebrew alphabet we are reminded of the 22 skull bones and surely this is not mere chance but design, skill, order and perfection. God's desire is that we might know His mind and heart. It is for this purpose ten synonyms for the Word of God are employed by the Holy Spirit in the alphabet of divine love. 1. Law; 2. Testimonies; 3. Ways; 4. Precepts; 5. Statutes; 6. Commandments; 7. Judgments; 8. Word; 9. Sayings; 10. Righteousness.

1. Law — Torah is a word greatly revered by the Jew and always used in the singular. The root word is most suggestive meaning to propel or project as an arrow from a bow. An arrow warped in the making is never true in its flight. This was in the mind of the writer in Psalm 19 where we are told the law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul. It signifies direction, destiny and God's decalogue as the rule of life.

2. Testimonies — Eduth, reminds of the witness of the altar in Joshua 22:34 and suggests reiteration, or testimony. The motive of the two and half tribes in

establishing the altar “ED” was not disloyalty, but an external proof of the theocracy of the nation. The outcome of the meeting with the other tribes prevented a civil war, the perpetuity of mutual relationships as tribes, and a practical lesson for Christians of all generations concerning misunderstanding. What a testimony to the truth of Psalm 133!

3. Ways — Derek signifies a footpath, a common path pointing to a given destination and implies a mode of life, a fixed course for the journey of life along which we are to walk in obedience to God’s Word.

4. Precepts — Piqqudim is derived from a root meaning to visit, to inspect, or oversee, to charge, and since it is always used in the plural denotes intensity, purpose of heart, moral earnestness relative to the mandates of the Book of God.

5. Statutes — Chuqqim, comes from a root meaning “graven” or to hew, to cut-in, inscribe, engrave and usually rendered stature or decree. Thus what God has ordained, decreed, prescribed should be permanently engraven on our hearts and brains in order that the Word of God might become flesh, (John 1:14), and His people translated as enduring Epistles, (2 Cor. 3:1-3).

6. Commandments — Mitsvah, is an interesting word meaning to set up, to constitute, and often used as a definite charge backed by authority. To refuse to obey is an act of rebellion. God’s commands are never given without the power to carry them out, therefore all His commandments are His enablings and for our enjoyment.

7. Judgments — Mishpatim, takes us into the law court and means to give a finding which is just, upright and

true, coming from a root meaning to set up right. Judgment therefore denotes the verdict of God. God's findings are final. How often in the Prophets He speaks by means of a vision, then a voice resulting in a verdict, (see Joel chapters 1-3, Vision, Voice and Verdict). His wise and just decisions are not to be questioned, denied or distorted, but to be accepted, loved and followed.

8. Word — Dabar, meaning to set forth in speech. It is the articulation of the will of God in the language of Holy love. To follow His word, His promise, His message is the pathway to purity within, (v.9), and power without (v.11).

9. Sayings — Imrah, means an utterance and is different in meaning from the word found in verses 11, 38, 41, 50, 58, 67, 76, 82, 103, 116, 123, 133, 140, 148, 154, 158, 162, 170, 172, It signifies revelation and illumination as an utterance which conveys the thought of the speaker. How significant this word in view of the title applied to Christ! "The Logos" or the "Word of God." How much we should value the sayings of the Saviour, the very breath of God

10. Righteousness — Tzaddi, is derived from a root meaning "justice" or "right." The inherent meaning is right, true, just and is used for "just balances" in Leviticus 19:36. God's Word is the standard of measurement by which all our actions are weighed or lined.

Thus these ten words taken together by a nation, community or a child of God will result in lasting blessing to the individual and the benediction of heaven to all — regardless of class, color or country.

The Magnificat of Mary (Dec 1966)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 12 No. 10, Dec 1966.

Mary Luke 1:46-55

In the psalms of Mary on the threshold of the New Testament you have worship at its highest level. Whilst Matthew, Mark and John are silent as to songs, Luke gives to us several, The Magnificat of Mary; the Benedictus of Zechariah, and the Nunc Dimittis of Simeon. The language of Mary is couched in the theology and prophecy of the Old Testament. As a woman Mary was at home in the Scriptures of the Jews and her poetic ability is expressed in quotations from the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms. It is called the Magnificat from the opening words in the Vulgate text, “Magnificat anima mea Dominum.” The hymn of praise is in three stanzas (vs. 46-48, 49-50, 51-55).

The Discernment of God First Stanza (Vs. 46-48)

The scriptural knowledge of Mary is seen in every line of her beautiful poem and it is obvious she had studied the prayers and praises of Hannah, (1 Sam. 2:1-10); David, (Psalm 136), and Moses, (Exodus 15), and even Habakkuk, (Hab. 3:18). The name of Mary is revered by Jew, Moslem and Christian. Over the world art has immortalized her on canvas, and architecture has built many cathedrals to her memory.

Six Marys are mentioned in the New Testament. Mary the wife of Cleopas, Mary Magdalene, Mary of Bethany, Mary the mother of Mark, and the unknown Mary of

Romans 16:6. But Mary the mother of Jesus is the greatest of them all. She was the chosen vessel for the incarnation of the Son of God. Her spiritual insight is revealed in the opening note of praise for personal salvation.

Her soul or mind, the self conscious aspect of her personality gives to the Lord His pre-eminent place, whereas her spirit, the God conscious part of her being rejoiced in the momentous news of the Saviour's birth. The present tense, "doth magnify" is in contrast with the aorist, "hath rejoiced." In all her life she sought to give the Lord full sway as a handmaiden of the Lord or one given over to His claims and Lordship. In the words, "my Saviour" Mary recognized her need of a personal Saviour and condemns forever the evil system of Mariolatry.

The Song is one of triumph and records 20 references to the Old Testament. The noun, "low estate" reveals that her family was poor and perhaps ranked least in her father's house, nevertheless she was compassed about with the favor of God. Henceforth, "all generations" were to mark her out as blessed of the God of Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." In the blessings made to Abraham they were personal, national and universal, and so it is in relation to His person and promise at His advent into the world. What spiritual perception and godly piety is manifested in the life of Mary and certainly in her psalm there is no warrant for mariolatry which is idolatry. Today we honor not Mary's name above the name of Christ but rather say, "Blessed be His glorious name forever" (Psa. 72:19).

The Description of God Second Stanza (Vs. 49-50)

Now follows a magnificent portrait of the Living and True God. Already Mary has made mention of the Self-Existent One in the word, “Lord” and the Sovereignty of God in His choice of the virgin. His Saviourship is seen in the use of the word, “Saviour” and His grace in considering her as the channel of the virgin birth.

Three great attributes of God are extolled in this second stanza. (1) His power, (v. 49); (2) His holiness, (v. 49), and (3) His mercy, (v. 50). Mary knew something of the manifestation of God’s power at the Exodus and the deliverance from oppression as in Psalms 126:3. She also knew that even though she might be despised and her innocence questioned she confessed the holiness of God. Finally she knew a good deal about the mercy of God.

Perhaps Mary had often meditated upon the mercy of God in Psalms 103 where it is displayed as tender, (v. 4); plenteous, (v. 8); great, (v. 11) and from everlasting to everlasting, (v. 17). It is unmerited for the mercy of the Lord is something we do not deserve and yet we cannot do without it. It is unique in that only those who are marked by godly fear experience such mercy. It is unending for it is “from generation to generation” and has for its scope the individual as well as the world.

The Declaration of God Third Stanza (Vs. 51-55)

In this concluding stanza we behold the Sovereignty of God and the mighty acts of the Messiah of Israel as completed in the plan and purpose of Christ. There are

seven aorist verbs which tell out completely the work of Christ as achieved. (1) He hath showed strength with His arms; (2) He hath scattered; (3) He hath put down; (4) He hath exalted; (5) He hath filled; (6) He hath sent away; (7) He hath holpen. Each verb is a revelation of what God can do for “with God” nothing shall be impossible.

Think of the revelation of His arm in the days of Moses at the Red Sea; the time of Joshua and the rule of the Judges. Think of how He has overthrown the Pharaohs, Sennacherib, Antiochus Ephiphanes until the time of Mary. During her days it mattered little whether it was Herod or Caesar or modern despots like Hitler, Stalin or Mussolini, or the coming Man of Sin, all will be put down and the Lord Jesus Christ will be God over all.

Here Mary contrasts the proud with the humble; the mighty with the low degree, and the rich with the poor. The word, “proud” is used in a bad sense, “looking down on others” and we are reminded by James who was of the family of Mary that, “God resisteth the proud.” The word “dunastas” signifies potentates and these God will abase and lift up the oppressed. Oh! to remember that God is still on the throne and as Judge He will attend to all things in His own time and way.

The “hungry” are those who are conscious of need and that in particular, “righteousness” (Matt. 5:6) and a life that pleases God. Their soul shall be satisfied for according to our desire so shall our need be met according to the riches and resources of our Lord. The “rich” represent the natural man careless of Heaven’s gifts and grace, devoid of spiritual truth and destitute of spiritual wealth.

The final verb brings out the faithfulness of God in relation to the chosen nation Israel. It means, “He hath laid hold of with a purpose of supporting.” Though the nation would be scattered, they would be succored and saved with an everlasting salvation by their Messiah. Israel as a servant will do the will of God. This is based on His mercy, His oath, (Micah 7:20), and His covenant to Abraham.

What a wonderful God and this mother in Israel knew Him as few do even in this frivolous and superficial age, yet possessing the light of the New Testament. Surely as those redeemed by blood and so graciously related to the Lord Jesus ought not our lives continually re-echo His Praise and in this world seek to be, “to the praise of His glory.”

Song of Solomon (Dec 1966)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 12 No. 10, Dec 1966.

Key Word: Love Key Verse — 8:6

The “Song of Songs” is one of the most beautiful and dramatic stories of true love in the Sacred Oracles. It was the choicest and best of the 1,005 songs composed by Solomon (1 Kings 4:32). In the Hebrew the Song belongs to the third division, the Hagiographa, and is the first of the five Megilloth, or “Rolls,” the others being Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther.

There are many opinions in relation to the Book. Some even question its right to be in the Bible. Others misunderstand the book and lightly regard it because it is never mentioned in the New Testament, The Apocrypha or the writings of the Early Historians such as Josephus.

The theme of the book centres around three chief characters, Solomon, Shulamith, and a shepherd lover. It is the story of a simple country girl, a Shulamite, i.e. (Shunem, 5 miles north of Jezreel) from the vineyards of the north country, who is taken from her home and her lover to be one of the numerous wives of King Solomon in Jerusalem. However, her love cannot be quenched, for by day she sings the praises of her lover, and in the night she dreams of his love that is as strong as death. Finally, after his love has stood every test, she is permitted to return to her shepherd lover in her country home. Thus this little book rebukes polygamy so common in eastern lands, resists the empty pomp and pageantry of the world, and proves the truth of the

words of Paul, “Love never faileth” and illustrates the “Purity and constancy of pure wedded love.”

In relation to the Jew it is a symbol of the union that should exist between Israel and Jehovah. To the Christian it symbolizes the faithfulness of the true Church, the Bride of Christ, to the Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, or the love of an individual soul and the Lord.

1. The Call of Love (1:2-3:5)

2. The Communion of Love (3:6-8:4)

3. The Covenant of Love (8:5- 14)

The Death of Christ (Apr 1967)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 13 No. 4, Apr 1967.

In fifteen God breathed verses (Isa. 52:13-53:12) we are brought face to face with the Servant of the Lord. The primary understanding of the passage is in its relation to the nation of Israel. To fail as the Jews in discerning Christ is to render the utterances unexplainable. The work of redemption is entrusted to the tried and trusted Servant of the Lord who will deal “discreetly and prosperously.” All other servants have feet of clay and leave their work unfinished. It is no wonder the prophet commences with the Hebrew word, “Behold,” in order that we might pause, pray and inwardly digest the “golden passional of the cross.” In verses 4-6, there are ten expressions of grief and suffering: borne, carried, stricken, smitten, afflicted, wounded, bruised, chastisement, stripes, and laid, that unveil the physical, moral, spiritual and judical sufferings of Christ as nowhere else in the Bible.

The first word, “He hath borne,” is rendered, “He carried our sorrows,” and immediately links us with One who was “touched,” the Man of compassion. Someone has said, “God had a Son without sin, but not without sorrow.” As a man He entered into the woes, lamentations and mournings of men and thus He alone can heal the broken heart. The Hebrew word “griefs” means “sickness or disease,” and points out how intimately the Saviour was identified with the sufferings of the multitudes that thronged around Him longing to experience the touch of healing. The thought of His carrying our sicknesses does not take us into the field of

bodily healing. Sickness and sorrow are seen as the fruit of sin, and when Christ healed sickness, it was an earnest or sign of what He would do. If He can heal sickness, which is a by-product of sin, surely He can take care of sin itself. The next verb brings out the fact, “He loaded Himself” with our sorrows. Such is the common lot of man for back of sorrow is sin and this is the most horrible thing in the world, marring all that is beautiful. It is the source of all suffering and sorrow, trial and tragedy, groaning and grief, darkness and death. Christ took our sin, our sufferings, and our death, and it is no wonder the prophet records it as deaths (v. 9), for He tasted death for every man and in every conceivable way at the cross.

“In every pang that rends the heart,

The Man of Sorrows had a part.”

He was “stricken” or “plagued”; God was its source. Jerome said, “Christ was afflicted with leprosy.” Even some rabbis refer to the Messiah as the “Leprous One,” because in verse 8, it actually says in the Hebrew, “For the transgression of My people the plague was upon Him.” This is the same word for the plague of leprosy. He was “smitten” or as the great Hebrew scholars render it, “He was defeated in His cause with God.” The word “afflicted” means to be bowed down, humbled, afflicted with sorrow. They tell out the heart of the Christian doctrine of substitution: the disease and the doctor; the need and the news; the ruin and the remedy; the sin and the salvation. Hallejuiah! What a Saviour!

Following on we come to one of the most vivid verses in all the Bible portraying the sufferings of Christ. The word “wounded” means to be pierced through and has

special reference to being mortally wounded as one slain violently in battle. No stronger expression for excruciating agony leading to death can be found in the Hebrew language (see Zechariah 12:10; Ps. 22:17). The word “bruised” means crushed and refers to His inward and outward sufferings. In other places it is rendered. “break in pieces” (Ps. 72:4) and “broken” or “smitten” (Ps. 143:3). Sin left the bruising marks of hellish hatred on the blessed person of our Saviour, and the scars will never be obliterated unto the ages of the ages. The word for “chastisement” is aptly rendered “punishment” and means discipline acquired by force. Christ endured the corrective disciplinary punishment which rightly belonged to us. There is a chastisement inflicted by love (Prov. 3:11) and also in a punitive sense (Jer. 30:14). What punishment was borne by our Saviour in order to procure our peace! The cross is the key to all situations as well as to all Scripture. The word for “stripes” brings out the thought of welts or contusions raised by scourging. In Exodus 26:3, it is rendered, “to have fellowship with;” “to couple or join.” Christ was joined to our sin in having joined Himself to the punishment due to it, and we are now united to Him through grace, thus partakers of His benefits. He received the weals of our desert, we receive the wealth of His redemption. The last word of the ten, “laid” means to “strike” and in another tense suggests violent collision either in the physical or the moral sense. The Son of God received the stored up wrath of God over the centuries when it fell with relentless fury and merciless indignation upon His holy person. The death of Christ for all inevitably involved the death of all… Surely the examination of these words ought to bow our heads in

worship, and burn in our hearts the message of the Cross (Gal. 6:14).

He Wist Not (Feb 1968)

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For years the phrase linked with the tragic defeat of Samson the strong man has been brought again and again to my mind by the Spirit of God. It is one of the most pathetic verses in all of the Old Testament: “I will go out as at other times before … and he wist not that the Lord was departed from him” (Judges 16:20). What had taken place in the life of this servant of God so that he came crashing down? It was his gradual decline from God that centred about two subtle temptations (of our generation as well as in the past day), separation from sin and sexual laxity.

Samson ought to be ever remembered as a perpetual warning to the Christian that one cannot continually follow a bypath of lust and self-will and not make spiritual shipwreck. Many times he had experienced the grace of God and His delivering power yet he plunged on in self-indulgence and carnal pleasures until the presence and power of the Lord he so sorely needed were removed. How awful for any servant of Christ to experience the same judgment! The enticements of Delilah are with us today and to find our satisfaction in the lap of the world is to tell all and lose all even as Samson. At the moment he thought himself safe his Nazarite sign was cut off and in a flash all his dignity and office were gone at a stroke. Too late Samson awakened to the terrible cost of the power of sin and the pleasure and policy of the ungodly. What remorse of conscience and inner yearnings must have swept over him in his pain and in the cruel hands of the Philistines!

No doubt in the hour of extreme humiliation and utter weakness his prayer came up to God and the vow of rededication was heard. The last picture of this man of contrasts is that in his death he was in touch with God but a defeated deliverer of his people.

Could it be that some who serve follow a similar path like unto Samson? How often we should seek the face of God and actually shake ourselves to learn whether or not God is with us in our service. To engage in Christian service without a sense of His divine presence and power is dangerous and soul-destroying. May God deliver us from mere outward form and create within us a deep desire for truth in the hidden parts and service marked by reverence and godly piety.

Flee, Follow, Fight (Aug-Sept 1968)

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“But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith; lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called” (1 Timothy 6:11, 12).

In these words, “flee,” “follow,” and “fight,” Paul the aged is seeking under God to encourage Timothy the man of God how he ought to conduct himself in the household of God.

Flee

We are not left in any doubt as to the things the Christian is called upon to flee. They are recorded in the earlier verses of this chapter. Paul knew he was speaking to a spiritually-minded man and shows him there are three mighty forces arrayed against him: the world, the flesh and the devil. The first two he is to flee from but in the third he is to stand fast. Surely it is a time to hold fast, stand fast, and run fast. We must be careful to maintain a standard of life worthy of the name of Jesus Christ. The normal order is to fight first, and only when there is no hope of victory, to flee. Spiritually, in order to fight the battles of the Lord we must flee certain things. How very difficult to learn dependence on God and oh! so often in the confidence of the flesh we fall. Our “strength” is to maintain a conscious weakness (2 Cor. 12:10). In every spiritual advance we need to recall, “In all thy ways acknowledge Him,” and the promise is, “He shall direct thy paths” (Prov. 3:6).

The idea expressed in this word is not to dodge the conflict or skulk behind the first ridge as a place of shelter, but rather to escape urgently — to run and keep on running from the danger at hand. How easy it is to become unsettled because of the departure from the faith and the doctrine of demons evident today! To become intoxicated with the pleasures of this world and the various cults, culture, wranglings and lust for things is easy. The spirit of dissaffection and discontent is everywhere, and their evil influence is at work in the Church and in the home and in our evil hearts of unbelief. To know these things and observe their development we must give ourselves to the reading of the Word of God, and by the help of God to turn our backs on them and set our faces as flint to do His will … Perhaps like Joseph we may lose our coat, but retain our characters in this evil age.

Follow

The next word is most emphatic and conveys the idea of persistent following. Never in the Bible are we told to dawdle or follow halfheartedly but wholeheartedly, relentlessly, consistently, as exemplified in the life of Paul when he pursued the early Christians, “I persecuted them” (Acts 26:11). Following suggests the single eye as John points out in John 21:21, and leadership as seen in Hebrews 2:10. Christ is our Captain, our Prince and our Example… He walked the pathway of righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and meekness. These spiritual qualities were found in their fullness and beauty in the life of Christ and oh! to follow even as Caleb. These virtues were also seen in men like Daniel, David, Abraham, John, Job and

Moses. In our day none of these things listed may mean much in the eyes of the world but they are precious in the eyes of the Lord. To pursue them is a life-time occupation, and but for the grace of God none of us will be able to keep up with them … Few maintain an even keel amid the varying tides of life. We need to turn to God in prayer and to keep our eyes fixed upon Christ. We need to avail ourselves of His Strength for our weakness, His wisdom for our folly, His grace for our greed, His love for our lust, His peace for our problems, His joy for our sorrows, His plenty for our poverty, and His drive for our drift.

Fight

The next word carries us into the stern reality of war. Fighting is not good generally speaking, in fact it is usually devilish whether against nations, men or Christ. Here the fight is called by God, “the good fight of faith.” In such a conflict there is no room for the pacifist. Jude in his stirring book of intense and practical godliness uses the term, “contend earnestly” and surely this is the thought employed by Paul. It contains the root idea of agony as translated in Luke 22, “Being in agony He (the Lord Jesus) prayed more earnestly.” We are engaged in a mortal combat and all who are enlisted under the banner of the cross are to hazard their lives for the Lord Jesus Christ and be marked by deadly earnestness in all three things. We are to be entrenched behind the great fundamentals of our faith. We are to put on the whole armour of God, and be armed with the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. We are to dig in and meet the devil head-on in no do it yourself affair… The

battle is the Lord's and we are to get our orders from our Commander-in-Chief.

We must learn as Joshua learned; it is not a question on whose side the man with the drawn sword is, but that he is Captain of the Host of the Lord. He did not come to take sides — He came to take over. We are to be subject to Him and to our Lord in all things … He does not take sides — He takes over and then modernism, materialism, communism, racialism — are not the number one problem but the furtherance of His cause and the extension of His Kingdom here on the earth. How are we to fight the good fight of faith? As we let go the grip on material, we shall grasp with tenacity the mighty fact of Eternal Life. We shall confess Christ in word and life and labours before a hostile world. We shall not yield a foot in the face of the advancing enemy, but resolutely, determinedly and faithfully press the battle to the very gates of hell. It is the fight of faith that overcomes Jericho not carnal weapons and human innovations or worldly machinations.

We are not left in the dark as to this conflict … Faith is the slender charter upon which to live and labour, build and battle for God. Faith looks beyond this present evil world and thus the uplook is good, the outlook is better, and by far the best is the inlook when faith gives way to sight over the hill of this present evil world. Perhaps reader as well as writer knows a good deal of defeat and even at times despair, but oh! how blessed to peruse a chapter like Hebrews 11 and realize anew our Leader has never lost a battle.