Articles by W. Fraser Naismith

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The Olivet Discourse (Part III) (1961, Vol. 7 No. 10)

From Food for the Flock, 1961, Vol. 7 No. 10. Parts of this piece could not be read in the scan.

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prepared for mankind, but for the devil and his angels: but guilty sinners rightly deserve such a doom. The devil and his angels were not tempted like our first parents; they deliberately defied God's authority, selecting their own way which ends in eternal despair. Man was tempted and succumbed; and for those who are unrighteous the destiny is that which was primarily prepared for others - the devil and his angels. Men, however, who despise the truth shall share the everlasting fire in company with those rebellious angelic hosts.

The people on the left hand are judged by a similar process as those on the right hand. They had refused comfort to the outcasts: bread to the hungry; drink to the thirsty; consolation and love to the imprisoned; and clothing to the naked. In all these things they had failed to minister to Christ who is conversant with every impulse of the human soul, and who bestows a blessing on a cup of water given in the name of a disciple.

The concluding verse of this chapter indicates certain facts from which we cannot withdraw. First of all, those on the left hand shall "go away into everlasting punishment." If we link this with verse 41 we can discern in some small degree the ultimate sorrow and suffering that will be the portion of all who leave out of

account the Son of God. "These shall go away." If one can discern or appreciate the character of the Throne-sitter we can understand how the unrighteous will be glad to take their departure from the presence of the righteous Judge. This reminds us of the scene depicted in Revelation 6:15-17 when the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man shall hide themselves from the face of Him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. The eyes of the Throne-sitter are as a flame of fire, and His voice as the sound of many waters; and dread and fear shall grip the lost as they stand exposed before His throne of righteousness and glory.

The righteous go into life eternal. The kingdom is alluded to in verse 34 as that in which the righteous shall share the delights of His millennial reign. The mediator character of the kingdom envisages the redeemed on high controlling under Christ according to Luke 19; and the righteous on earth sharing the delights of the earthly aspect of the kingdom, and inheriting it, as announced in verse 34. It would synchronize with the concluding words of this chapter (Matt. 25) "But the righteous into life eternal," to suggest that when the Millennial Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has been terminated for "He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power" (I Cor. 15:24). The righteous who have shared in the delights of the kingdom rule shall not participate in the rebellion that will take place consequent upon Satan being loosed from his prison house, the bottomless pit, where he has been incarcerated for one thousand years. They will be

loyal to the One who has ruled during such a lengthy period in equity, and shall enter the new earth to which Peter refers in his last letter, in the last chapter.

The process of judging the "quick," or living, is now concluded. He had commenced with the judgment of the fighting forces of the world, and bit by bit they had been exterminated; sometimes by open conflict, at other times, by divine intervention. This has paved the way for the judgment of the living nations, i.e. the civilian population, those who were too young or too aged for military service, and those who were incapacitated. Such shall be judged when the Righteous Judge of all the earth - the Son of Man - shall sit upon the throne of His glory.

The Four Watches of the Night (1961, Vol. 7 No. 11)

From Food for the Flock, 1961, Vol. 7 No. 11. Parts of this piece could not be read in the scan.

Readings: Matthew 14:22-25. Mark 13:30-37. Luke 12:37-38.

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wrought by prayer than this world dreams of. These words are followed by an affirmation, "Ye know not when the time is." The next six words are italicized, they are an interpolation. The New Translation reads, "It is as a man taking a far journey." This reminds us of the language of Luke 19 where the nobleman distributed ten pounds to ten servants and said, "Occupy till I come."

Christ accepts the Roman division of the night into four watches. The Hebrew night was divided into three watches. In Judges 7:19 "Gideon, and the hundred men that were with him, came unto the outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch." There is a middle watch of three but not of four! The divisions of the Roman night were evening, midnight, cockcrowing, and the morning. Each is associated with a divine movement. The first and the last watches have to do specifically with God's earthly people, and are treated so by Matthew in his Gospel.

What constitutes the night? The sun going out of sight. When the Son of God went out of sight, the night settled on this scene. Who saw Him go away? Not the Church, because it required His going away and the descent of

the Holy Spirit before there could be "the Church" which is His Body. It was eleven converted Jews who witnessed His ascension from the Mount of Olives. The Minor Prophets speak expressly about a "remnant," and these will welcome back their Messiah.

In Matthew 14:23 the Lord sent the multitude away after having constrained His disciples to enter into a ship and go to the other side. Then He went up, suggesting His ascent to the Father's throne, "apart to pray," These words indicate the ministry which engages our Lord at the present time. The ministry is twofold. As our Great High Priest He intercedes with God because of our infirmities, and fulfils a preventive ministry. Furthermore, He is our Advocate with the Father because of our sins; this ministry is restorative.

"When the evening was come He was there alone." Evening is the first watch, and in the first watch Christ went away, and has been alone on high during the dark hours of this spiritual night which settled on the world.

"The ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with the waves: for the wind was contrary." There is a time coming called "The Great Tribulation" when the prince of the power of the air will inspire his satellites so that the storm of persecution will burst on the faithful remnant of Israel, and unless those days are shortened no flesh should be saved. Despite all the satanic efforts, God shall bring the remnant to their desired haven (Psa. 107:30).

In Matthew 14:25 we read, "In the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea." The manifestation of Christ as the mighty deliverer of His

people, the remnant, shall allay every fear and bring deliverance to the faithful.

There are two 14th chapters one should not forget, Exodus 14 and Zechariah 14. In the former God divides the sea to make a way of escape from the tyranny of the Pharoah at the commencement of their national life. In the latter God divides the earth to make a way of escape from the Beast and the False Prophet at the close of their national history. There are also two 15th chapters one would do well to remember, Exodus 15 and Revelation 15. In the former, the first song of Scripture appears; in the latter, the last. The former is the Song of Moses; the latter is the song of Moses and of the Lamb. Israel shall sing the same song in the coming day as they sang when they came from the thraldom of Egypt. For proof of this examine the following Scriptures: Hosea 2:14-15, Isaiah 11:15-16, and Isaiah 12:1-2. The first and the last watch have a special bearing on God's earthly people.

Now, let us examine what Luke says about the watches of the night. "If he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants" (Luke 12:38). Luke speaks only of the second and third watches. Luke was a Gentile doctor as may be confirmed by Colossians chapter four. The second watch is "midnight," and that watch passed when the truth of the coming of the Bridegroom was heralded about a century and a half ago. We are at present in the third watch, that is the "cock-crowing;" Peter's the "the Day Star"; and John's, the "Morning Star." All these terms apply to the same event.

Luke presents the universal Gospel. His genealogy goes back to Adam (Luke 3). He is the only narrator who records the story of the Good Samaritan which is an epitome of human history. He alone shows us God in a hurry (Luke 15). If Matthew says, "Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, . . . in the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. 8:11); Luke says, "They shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the Kingdom of God" (Luke 13:29).

Luke differs from the other synoptic writers in recording the scenes at the cross. Matthew and Mark announce the rending of the veil after Christ had dismissed His spirit (Matt. 27:50-51, and Mark 15:37-38). Luke in his Gospel states, "The sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, He gave up the ghost" (Luke 23:45-46). Luke as a Gentile had no representative who went inside the veil so he anticipated Christianity when "the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest" (Heb. 9:8).

The midnight cry was to wake up. The cock-crowing will be to take up. He must come for His own in the third watch if He is going to bring them with Him in the fourth watch. Zechariah 14:5 states, "And the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee." I Thessalonians 4:14 affirms, "Them also which sleep in (through) Jesus will God bring with Him." This means that the saints who had departed this life had not missed the glory of the coming kingdom. When Christ comes to undertake the government of this world, He will bring the saints with Him. In Jude 14 we learn of a very early

prophet, Enoch, who prophesied saying, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, To execute judgment upon all ". If the Lord is coming with His saints in the fourth watch, the time of His manifestation, then He must first come and take them away.

The prophecy of Enoch in Jude like all other prophecies has a past, present and future aspect. The past was when Enoch spoke it; the present, when the deluge came and took all the ungodly away; the future will be when Christ comes in might and majesty: "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Psa. 2:9). The character of the King of Kings when He comes to subjugate every opposing force is indicated in Psalm 45:3-5.

The first watch is the evening watch, those in that watch saw Christ go up into Heaven. The second is the midnight watch in which was heard the cry, "wake up." The third is the cock-crowing and indicates that Christ will come to take up into the Father's house. The fourth is the morning watch and intimates that Christ will come to set up His glorious kingdom and reign in equity.

The Reward of the Kingdom (1961, Vol. 7 No. 12)

From Food for the Flock, 1961, Vol. 7 No. 12. Parts of this piece could not be read in the scan.

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This last person was judged out of his own mouth (v. 22), and he is designated a "wicked servant." Christendom is full of professed Servants of God, but many are like this man, they are spiritual corpses; they shall be judged according to the status they have taken.

The Lord instructs those who stand by to deprive him of the pound and to bestow it on the man with ten pounds. They with unanimity say, "Lord, he hath ten pounds!" The man who was a sham professor was stripped of all in which he trusted and judged thus before his master.

It is important to note that those who have evidenced marked faithfulness receive the "Benjamin's portion." "To him that hath shall be jj[?]" is the answer to the humble, unostentatious servant, from the one who is a pretender, all his duplicity will be removed, and the unvarnished subtlety that lay beneath exposed to the all seeing eye of the righteous judge.

Commensurate with your faithfulness will your reward be. Then be faithful to the One who to-day is out of sight, but who takes cognizance of every impulse. While we enter the Father's House on the basis of the blood of Christ, and in that realm we are all loved with the same love for each child is dear to the Father's heart and enjoys the embrace of the Lover of our souls, we shall

come forth in the Kingdom in positions which we have merited through faithfulness to our absent Lord. To Smyrna the Lord stated, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Paul reminded young Timothy in II Timothy 4:8, "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."

Peter affirms that, 'When the Chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away," and these words are addressed to the godly overseers. There are crowns to be won, and it will give the Lord the utmost pleasure to bestow such upon those who manifested singleness of heart in service for Him while He has been out of sight. This is what the Lord had in mind when addressing Philadelphia in Revelation 3:11 saying, "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." He would have us faithful in this little while, so that He may have the pleasure of bestowing on us the many crowns which He holds out as His recompense for service rendered in this scene where our Lord is rejected and crucified.

One has truly said, "This world is full of willing people; some willing to work and many willing to let them."

"God will not seek thy race,

Nor will He ask thy birth:

Alone He will demand of thee,

What hast thou done on earth?"

Praying for Power (July 1960)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 6 No. 7, July 1960.

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 1:15-23

The epistle to the Ephesians, because of its lofty teaching, has been designated “The Alps of Holy Scripture.” Before any reference is made to redemption or the forgiveness of sins, the Apostle declares that the believer has been blessed “with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (1:3).

The Christian is seen “Far far above this restless world that wars below.”

Certain important references to the “will of God” are made in the opening chapter of this epistle. The first reference makes mention of “the good pleasure of His will” (1:5), and in it God’s will is associated with His purpose in having us as sons with Him the Father. The second reference alludes to “the mystery of His will,” and in this the divine will is connected with the gathering together in one all things in Christ. By the last reference emphasis is laid on “the counsel of His will,” and the great objective of His predestining grace, the inheritance that is ours in Christ, is brought into view.

The Apostle’s thesis in this epistle is so monumental and majestic that it makes the sensual corruption associated with the gorgeous temple of Diana of the Ephesians not only infamous but vile.

There are two prayers by the Apostle Paul recorded in this letter. The first is found in chapter one and the second in chapter three. The former is addressed to the

God of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the latter to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In chapter one and verse four, we are reminded that “He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world.” This election, as it will be noticed, is particularly associated with the name, “God.” The next verse affirms that we are predestinated to sonship, and this act is connected with the name, “Father.”

Faith and love were salient features in the lives of the Ephesian saints, and these qualities the Apostle commends. These particular believers possessed a place in the heart of the Apostle so he invokes a divine blessing upon them.

The Prayer

As by many other prayers recorded throughout the Word of God, by the outline of this one much precious teaching is unfolded.

The first prayer of the epistle, addressed as it is to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, brings into relief the Lord Jesus Christ as the glorified Man, and lays emphasis on the nature of God. The thought of power is also developed, for Christ is given the place of universal headship, “Head over all things.” This corresponds with what He said before He ascended on high, “All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in Earth” (Matt. 28:18). In like manner this prayer gives us a deep apprehension of the standing we have before God. The effect of the prayer would be to cause that, from its elevation, we look down on that vast scene which God has placed under His Son. Experientially, are we in such high altitudes from whence we may look down?

The Petitions

To understand the threefold desire in this prayer, it is necessary to notice the occurences of the word “what.” Paul’s general desire for the saints here is that they might have the spirit of wisdom. The spirit of wisdom is that inward desire to gradually and continuously develop in this rare quality, wisdom. Christ is wisdom personified, “Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.” The spirit of wisdom and revelation was desired that they might have spiritual insight into the three requests of the prayer.

The first occurence of the word “what”: “That ye may know what is the hope of His calling.” We have been called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor. 1:9). This calling is holy in character (2 Tim. 1:9), and high in destiny (Phil. 3:14). The predominant thought in the Christian’s calling is that of grace. Grace enables us to enjoy all that the “hope of His calling” means.

The second occurence of the word “what” is linked with the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. Note the words “riches,” “glory,” and “inheritance.” “Riches” suggest a wealth that cannot be estimated; they are divinely bestowed, but not in material values. “Glory” baffles the mind; it is the doxology of Eternity from whence its rays are diffused to scenes of time. By them we are given a foretaste of our portion for ever and ever. “He is bringing many sons unto glory.”

In the Old Testament Israel was designated God’s inheritance; believers today are called “heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ Jesus.” God inherits what is His and He puts His people in the enjoyment of it. Yea, He

takes the inheritance even in His saints. The thought emphasized in the inheritance is that of glory.

The third occurence of the word “what” introduces us to the “exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe.” The word “exceeding” is the word from which we derive the word “hyperbole” which means exaggeration. There is exaggeration in the fact of His power; it far surpasses anything known to created intelligence. The word “greatness” is found only here in the New Testament. If the word “exceeding” conveys the idea of far-surpassing, it would lay emphasis on the illimitable resources which belong to God.

The word “power” denotes His ability. It is a word from which the word “dynamics” has been derived. The power of God puts into effect all His divine counsels. It is alluded to in the present tense for it is “to usward who believe.” There is no limit to what we might accomplish if we realized the power of God is willing to bestow the power that was manifested at the resurrection of Christ. The glory of the Father was at stake if Christ remained in the tomb beyond the appointed time. On the third, the appointed day He was raised from the dead. The resurrection of Christ is the exclusive act of an omnipotent God. Christ said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (John 2:19). These are not contradictory but complementary statements.

The full manifestation of this power is seen in the resurrection and ascension of Christ to the highest place in the Universe, “Far above all.” The position He now occupies is that of “Head over all things to the Church which is His Body.” Supremacy belongs to the once lowly

Nazarene. “He fills the throne, the throne above, and fills it without wrong.”

A Prayer for Love (Aug 1960)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 6 No. 8, Aug 1960.

The prayer of the Apostle Paul in Ephesians chapter three is addressed to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ may be viewed here as the Son of His love; and we can appreciate the intimate relationship which is ours with the Father, and which is apprehended according to the excellency of Christ's own relationship with Him. Love is the paramount thought in this prayer; and the effect it has on us enables us to look up in appreciation of that love which gilds the eternal glory with its excellency. Are we down looking up?

It is good to remember that there is, nothing more intolerant to love than evil.

In Ephesians two and seven Paul alludes to the "riches of His grace," and contemplating these things we are seen as looking back from Eternity into the highways of Time. In Ephesians 3:16 he refers to the "riches of His glory" and we are viewed looking forward from Time into Eternity.

As there are three "whats" in the prayer of Ephesians one, there are three "thats" in this prayer. The earnestness of the Apostle may be visualised as he bows his knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He addresses himself to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (a relationship which lays emphasis on love), to that One from whom every family in Heaven and Earth is named. Scripture reveals divers families each standing in a near or distant association with the Father from whom they all have their origin. There is Heaven's hierarchy and

the angelic hosts, messengers of His who do His bidding. On earth Israel stood in a particularly near place to Jehovah; as a point of fact, only Israel knew God as "Jehovah." It was not given to every family on earth to know God in that near relationship. God had declared in Amos three and two, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." The Syrophenician woman in Matthew 15 discovered that her claim to a relationship with Christ as "Son of David" was invalid, for at first He heeded her not. Blessing could only come to her when she took her proper place as a Gentile dog, as she confessed in verse 27. Paul divided the peoples of this earth into three companies, viz., Jews, Gentiles, and Church of God (1 Cor. 10:32).

The first "that" appears in verse 16 and has to do with the strengthening of the saint by the Spirit of God. The standard set is a high one, but God never sets low standards. It is "according to the riches of the Father's glory." Here is wealth untold and exhaustless. The next thing to note is the subject discussed, "the inner man;" and there must never be allowance made for the flesh. Paul reminded the Corinthians, "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day (2 Cor. 4:16). The riches of divine glory when applied to the inner man produces strengthening in the power of the Spirit. The great purpose is that we may be "strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power" (Col. 1:11).

The second "that" is in view of Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith. The Lord will never dwell in a divided heart. Should we dare to treat Him as a spy, He will afflict us in His jealousy. Paul desired of the Ephesians that Christ might be a permanent resident in their

hearts so that indisputable lordship might be afforded Him. Every rival lover should be ousted and Christ alone given that place of supremacy in our lives. We have to be rooted and grounded in love. Love is the solid foundation on which we are grounded, but it is also the soil from which we derive our supplies. If we are established thus, then the blasts of temptation can never, move us.

The desire is expressed that we may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of something that is not named directly in the near context, yet can be found in verse 11 where the Apostle alludes to the “eternal purpose.” Paul uses terms of measurement to convey to the mind and heart the idea of immensity and perfection. When things are measured by our limited apprehension, we do not reach far on the road to learning His purpose. We are taken into infinity when reference is made to the heavenly counsels of the Father. Though they are immeasurable yet He permits us to enter into some of the secrets of His great heart, as He did Moses of old. “He made known His ways unto Moses” (Psa. 103:7). His ways are His revelations in keeping with His divine purpose.

The knowledge of the love of Christ is our next consideration. This term is found three times in New Testament Scripture (Eph. 3:19. Rom. 8:35. 2 Cor. 5:14). The context is different on each occasion. The believer knows the love of Christ, for the cross is the indubitable and abiding evidence of it. We have begun to know the love of Christ, and such knowledge will be continuous for it is exhaustless. The finality of His love is never reached: like Himself it abides forever. This love that we

may know is beyond knowing, “It passeth knowledge.” The word “passeth” is the word from which the word “hyperbole” is derived: it surpasseth all knowledge. This word is found in Ephesians three times: in chapters 1:19 in connection with the greatness of His power; in chapter 2:7 it is associated with the riches of His grace; and in chapter 3:19 it is applied to the love of Christ.

The third “that” of this prayer is found in verse 19, “That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.” To be filled unto all the fulness of God is perhaps the preferable rendering. Christ is the fulness of God, whether seen as a Man on earth, or as the glorified Man on high. As to the former we learn from Colossians 1:19 that all fulness was pleased to dwell in Him. In Colossians 2:9 we are informed that “in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” God will be known so far as He is communicable to His creatures — to those formed for His good pleasure. To be filled unto all the fulness of God is to apprehend Christ, who is the fulness of God, and to continue to be enlarged thereby.

This prayer with its three “thats” is progressive in character; while the three “whats” of the first prayer of Ephesians one are absolute.

After the prayer comes the doxology. Paul had brought before the Ephesians the inward strengthening by the Holy Spirit; then Christ as resident in the believer’s heart; and finally, the fulness of God unto which we should be filled. In the doxology he alludes to One who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power which worketh in us. This throws the mind back on chapter 1:19 where we read of “the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who

believe.” When Paul finished that remarkable apologetic in Philippians two, verses five to eleven, he affirmed that “it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (V. 13). The doxology must not be severed from the three “thats” of the prayer. He is able to strengthen us; He is able to dwell in our hearts by faith; He is able to make us know the filling of verse 19. Let us then see to it that there is nothing that would hinder any or all of these being operative. God requires a moral suitability to His well-beloved Son.

The One who fills all things is worthy of all the glory; we gladly give it to Him now, as we shall do forevermore.

“Glory, glory everlasting,

Be to Him who bore the cross.”

The Father’s House (Jan 1961)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 7 No. 1, Jan 1961.

This is the first article in a series on prophetic subjects by brother Naismith. In the will of the Lord these will continue monthly. While each is complete in itself, together they present one continuous study.

The thirteenth chapter of John’s 1 Gospel forms a dark background to bring into relief the bright foreground of chapter fourteen. Christ had indicated, “One of you shall betray Me”; and Judas Iscariot was that treacherous person. Of him it is stated, “he … went immediately out: and it was night.” That was truly a tragic night for him: a night that would never be followed by a sunrise!

Now that the deceiver has gone from the company of the disciples, the Lord is free to unbosom Himself to His own. He allays their fears and pours the balm of His consolation into their troubled and perplexed spirits saying, “Let not your heart be troubled.” This message had been ringing down the ages with freshness and fragrance to many disconsolate souls as it conveyed the sympathy and comfort that tried and tempted believers have needed in their hours of crisis. Though the words were addressed to eleven men, they have proved to be pregnant with meaning to many anxious souls; and they have brought consolation to many troubled breasts. Such words afford an opportunity of “casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you”: and of casting our burdens upon the Lord, to experience the veracity of God’s Word, “He shall sustain thee.”

With fears allayed and hearts encouraged the Lord proceeds to make this observation, “Ye believe in God.” To the superficial reader of divine truth this may seem enigmatical. These eleven men were not only converted men, they were attracted to their Lord, and many wonder why Christ should have made the statement, “Ye believe in God, believe also in Me.” Had they ever seen God? No! For “no man hath seen God at any time” (John. 1:18; John. 4:12; 1 Tim. 6:16). Patriarchs of old said, “I have seen God face to face” — such a revelation was what is commonly called a Christophany: when the Lord took a tangible form to visit His servants to communicate certain facts to them. This might be confirmed by an examination of Micah 5 verse 2, “Whose goings forth have been from of old from everlasting.” His goings forth have been from of old, or from times past, from days of eternity. 1 Timothy 6:16 is often quoted as referring to Christ, but the context will not permit such an interpretation — “it is God in the abstraction of His essence: God in His proper immutability” — J.N.D. Unclothed Deity shall never be gazed upon — “no man hath seen, nor can see”: yet the redeemed of the Lord shall see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Though we by such a vision today are metamorphosed into the same image from glory to glory as by the Lord, the Spirit: it is through a glass darkly, but then face to face that we shall behold Him.

The words, “Believe also in Me” do not raise a doubt as to the faith of the eleven disciples; but such words must be interpreted in light of the context. They believed in God whom they had never seen: so Christ virtually says, “I am going to be the invisible Christ at God’s right hand, and when you do not see Me, believe in Me.”

Invisibility tests us! To confirm this, one should read Exodus 32:1. Moses had been on the mount with God for forty days and forty nights and this prolonged absence irritated the children of Israel on the plains below the mount. They, with unanimity, cried, “Up, make us gods, which will go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.” There are many adages in the English language, and some are contradictions of others. One states, “Absence makes the heart grow fonder.” While another contradicts it thus, “Out of sight out of mind.” The challenge of this portion of the Word is whether of the twain is applicable to us today? Can we truthfully say, “Whom have I in Heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee?” and again, “Whom not having seen, ye love?” Or are we saying, “My Lord delayeth His coming?” One of these attitudes characterizes every saint of God on this earth today.

“In my Father’s House are many mansions” — this word ‘mansions’ is the plural of the singular noun used in verse 23 and translated ‘abode.’ There is a common notion in the minds of some of God’s dear people that in the Father’s House some saints will be granted a palatial mansion, while others will have to be content with a small thatched cottage. Nothing is further from the truth than that. The Father’s House is the abode of love. One said “I shall be content if He grants to me a seat behind the door.” My Father has no seats behind the door: He will have all His children in the nearness of an indisoluble relationship. We shall be in the circle of God’s favour —circle of the Father’s love, where all is rest and rest forever: and all is perfectness above. He

will have us enjoy that nearness that to be a hair-breadth away would seem a tremendous distance. If we have never known nearness, we shall never feel distance: and to enjoy His nearness throughout the pilgrim journey is a delectable foretaste of the joys of the Father's House.

Though the Lord had alluded to "My Father's House" in John 2:16, those who were auditors to His comments that day realized right well that He alluded to the Temple where Jehovah had placed His name and where He dwelt between the cherubim: and spake from off the mercy seat to Moses of old, when the ark was in tents and curtains. The reference here to "My Father's House" could have no possible application to the Temple where the glory of God illuminated the sanctum sanctorum. It should be observed that the Father's House of John 14 is a realm outside this scene altogether; for it necessitated the going away of Christ from this world to prepare a place for His own ere an entrance to that sphere could be ours.

The statement which follows is calculated to bring comfort to the souls of His own: "If it were not so I would have told you." The Lord would assure His followers that He would never dream of carrying them on through the three and a half years of His public ministry and then dropping them at the end.

"I go to prepare a place for you" is a promise which thrills the souls of the saints. At present He is not busily engaged in the preparation of the place for us: His one entering in made the place ready; and presently we shall follow Him there. He is "the forerunner" and as such has entered within the vail.

The Judgement Seat of Christ (Feb 1961)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 7 No. 2, Feb 1961.

Part 2 of a series on Prophetic Subjects

Scripture Readings: 1 Corinthians 3:9-15. 2 Corinthians 5:9-15

Romans 14:9-15. Revelations 22:12

Judgement in Scripture is viewed in two ways, administrative and penal. Whichever view is taken it is always the same person who is the Administrator. John in his Gospel reminds us that “The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son” (John 5:22).

In the city of Glasgow, Scotland, where the writer has lived for almost a quarter of a century, there are two important buildings, one in the Salt-market in which judges examine cases of crime and pass sentence upon guilty persons. The other building is Kelvin Hall where, at certain times of the year, flower shows are held. The judges in this building do not pass sentences upon criminals; rather they examine exhibits which have been entered, and assign awards commensurate with the quality of the exhibits.

The believer, as far as judgment for sin is concerned, will not appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ to have sentence passed upon him. Those who hear Christ’s words and who believe on Him that sent Christ have everlasting life, and they shall not come into condemnation (John 5:24). Paul, by the Spirit of God

affirms, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1). The writer to the Hebrews states. “Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more” (Heb. 10:16-17). The work of Christ upon the cross settled the question of sin as far as the believer is concerned. Not only what the believer has done, but what he is by nature has all been answered for in the death of Christ. The Judgment Seat of Christ is not to determine who is fit or not fit for Heaven, for as the scene takes place in Heaven all present will have already been accepted there. We are assured, “As He (Christ) is, so are we in this world” (1 John 4:17). Yea, we are as changeless as the blessed Christ Himself before the Throne of God.

The Judgment Seat of Christ is the occasion on which the believer shall be manifested before the Lord. This is intensely individual, as may be confirmed by an examination of certain Scriptures. For examples, “Everyman shall receive his own reward” (1 Cor. 3:8). “Every man according as his works shall be” (Rev. 22:12). “Every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Rom 14:10).

The Judgment Seat of Christ is for a twofold purpose. First, that all things which have not been adjusted in this life may be examined and considered from Christ’s viewpoint, that His grace, which has been manifested toward us throughout our pilgrimage, may be magnified. Second, that we may be rewarded in accord with our fidelity to Christ during His absence. All rewards will be expressions of appreciation by the Lord in regard to everything that has been done unostentatiously for Him. His rewards to the overcomers will be His recompense during the coming kingdom.

These divine rewards will be given in various connections.

For Shining

The Lord will reward those who shine for Him in this dark scene. Today we have the opportunity of fulfilling that statement made by Paul to the Philippians, “Among whom ye shine as lights in the world” (Phil. 2:15). The Lord stated in that heptad of parables found in Matthew 13, “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Ver. 43). Paul reminds us, in his masterly dissertation on the resurrection, “For one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead” (1 Cor. 15:41-42). The stars shine above, and the inference is that we shall shine above in the heavenly aspect of the coming kingdom. Paul near the close of his last letter said, “The Lord will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom” (2 Tim. 4:18). May we all shine here in order that we shine brightly in that day.

Suffering

Paul affirms that if we suffer, we shall also reign with Christ. Reigning with Him is consequent to our suffering with Him down here. He assures us also that “the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Rom. 8:18). Paul encourages us by the statement, “Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (1 Cor. 4.17). Note the contrasts in this verse. “Light” in contrast to “weight,” “affliction” in contrast to “glory,” “a moment” in contrast to “Eternity.”

Serving

Only service dominated by love for Christ is worthy of Him. There are many professedly serving Him, but at the Judgment Seat of Christ it will be manifested that they were “wicked servants” as indicated in Luke 19:22. Paul, in his service, was dominated by one great principle, “The love of Christ.” This “constrained” him. The word used by Paul in 1 Corinthians 5:14 is translated elsewhere: “taken” as with a fever, “throng” as the surging of a great crowd, “held” as the binding of a prisoner, “straightened” as with the pressure of a great necessity, “keep thee” as in the seige of a city. When the love of Christ dominates, then what is accomplished in service will be divinely approved in the day of review (Heb. 6:10).

Soul-Winning

Solomon put on record this fact in Proverbs 11:30, “He that winneth souls is wise.” Paul spoke of both the Philippians and the Thessalonians as being his joy and crown. He also alluded to Timothy as “my own child in the faith,” and to Titus as being mine own son after the common faith. Have we sought to win souls for Christ? Some may feel that they do not possess the gift of an evangelist; even so, there is no reason why you should not seek to “speak a word in season to him that is weary.” Perhaps you might win the person to whom you speak for the Lord Jesus. The Apostle said to the saints at Corinth, “We are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus” (2 Cor. 1:14). It would be tragic if we had to quit this scene using the language of the hymn writer:

“Must I go and empty handed:

Must I meet my Saviour so?

Not one soul with which to greet Him;

Must I empty handed go?”

Shepherding

In the story of the Good Samaritan, when he had found the man half dead and had ministered to his need, he put him on his own beast and brought him to the inn. To the inn keeper he said, “Take care of him.” The verb “to take care” is found again only once in the New Testament. Paul in addressing himself to the bishops, the shepherds of the flock, states, “If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?” (1 Tim. 3:5). The Apostle Peter according to John 21 received a threefold commission relative to shepherding the flock: “feed my lambs” (ver. 15), “shepherd my sheep” (ver. 16), “feed my sheep” (ver. 17). Two different Greek words are used in these verses. Years later, having played the role of a shepherd of the sheep, Peter exhorted younger elders, saying, “Feed the flock of God which is among you” (1 Pet. 5:2). He also indicated that, when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, they would receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away (ver. 4). It is necessary for the saints to obey them that have the rule over them, and to submit themselves, for they watch for their souls, as those who must give account. In the Day of Christ, at the investiture of Heaven, the Lord will decorate each believer according to his faithfulness. We not only have the responsibility to answer for our own behaviour, but for the conduct of the flock entrusted to our care.

Those who are called to be elders among the saints should realize that it is no sinecure; there are difficulties, and only His grace and guidance will enable them to surmount these. The Lord takes cognizance of our faithfulness to Him, and to His flock. At His “bema” we shall give an account of our stewardship. May we be able to do it with joy and not with grief.

This is not the only life, but how much depends upon it.

The Marriage of the Lamb (Mar 1961)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 7 No. 3, Mar 1961.

Part 3 of a series on Prophetic Subjects

There are four symbolic women alluded to in the Book of Revelation. The first is given the name Jezebel after the wicked Zidonian wife of Ahab king of Israel (2:20). She represents the papal system of the dark infamous days when true Christians were torn by the rack, and when thousands of the Lord's dear people perished in the fires of persecution. The second is "a woman clothed with the sun" (12:1). She is mentioned in a parenthetical part of the Book of Revelation, and she refers to Israel in governmental authority. The third is the great whore that sits upon many waters (17:1-6). She gives a picture of the conglomeration of religious systems throughout what we know as Christendom, all merged into one mother church. The fourth is the Bride, the Lamb's wife (19:17). There is a time coming when the Bridegroom will take unto Himself the Bride for whom He bled and died; so that, throughout eternal ages she shall dwell with Him in the nearness and dearness of ineffable affection.

The question has been asked, "Who will form the Bride of that nuptial day?" It is not uncommon to discover that some have the impression that Israel will fill that role; but, let us examine the Scriptures that we may discover what God has to say about this matter.

Dispensational Evidence

To Israel many promises have been made; yea, to Abraham the grandfather of Israel. In Genesis 12:2, the divine promise was made, “I will make of thee a great nation;” and in verse seven of that same chapter, God pledges, saying, “Unto thee will I give this land.” This territorial grant divinely bestowed is outlined in chapter 15:18; thus, “Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.” We, therefore, rightly conclude that Israel’s promises are earthly in character.

The Psalmist predicts of Israel, “Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power” (Psa. 110:3). The rebellious nation whose land her enemies have spoiled, in the day of restoration, will be submissive to the dictates of her Messiah. We learn, consequently, that Israel’s prospects are earthly.

Psalm 45:9 asserts to Jehovah, “Upon Thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.” Never is the Church spoken of as a queen; this is a designation applicable only to Israel is a coming day. Israel’s portion is earthly as the context of this Psalm affirms.

In contrast to the earthly, promises, prospect, and portion of Israel, there stands the heavenly hope of those who comprise the Church. Christ said in John 17:24, “Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; … “ The saints of this present dispensation have been promised a heavenly home (John 14:3). They likewise anticipate a heavenly heritage as stated by the Apostle Peter (1 Pet. 1:4).

Doctrinal Evidence

Throughout Old Testament typology, history, poetry, and prophecy, Israel knew only two dispensations, that of the law and that of the kingdom. Israel expected the Messiah to come and to establish His kingdom. Yet, when He did come unto His own things, His own people received Him not (John 1:11).

The teaching of the New Testament is altogether different from that relating to Israel. Paul expounded the "mystery" which is Christ, the Head on high and the Church which forms His Body here on earth. In this Body neither Jew nor Gentile are recognized racially. See Ephesians 2:13-17.

Destiny Evidence

Israel is Jehovah's divorced wife; of her He says, "I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce" (Jer. 3:8). This is confirmed by the pen of Isaiah, "Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away?" (Isa. 50:1). The Minor Prophet Hosea reveals God's attitude to Israel, "Plead with your mother, plead; for she is not My wife, neither am I her husband: let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts" (Hos. 2:2). Despite her unfaithfulness Jehovah has something blessed in store for His earthly people. The remnant of the two tribes shall know the way of escape when "His feet (The feet of Christ) shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives … And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; … and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee" (Zech. 14:4-5). Then the ten tribes shall pass under the rod and be brought into the bond of

the covenant; and God shall purge out the rebels, and them that transgress against Him. See Ezekiel 20:30-38.

The Great Northern Power, Russia and her Satellites, those obsequious followers whose territory is situated around the Baltic Sea, will cast greedy eyes on the restored Commonwealth of Israel “dwelling safely, all of them dwelling without walls and having neither bars nor gates” (Ezek. 38:11-23). The Lord Jesus by Nathaniel was confessed to be the King of Israel (John 1:49). He never will be the King of the Jews again; He will reign over the twelve tribes of Israel, not just the two.

In contrast to the earthly destiny of Israel, the Church for whom Christ died and for whom He labours to cleanse and sanctify with the washing of the water by the word, He will present to Himself without spot or wrinkle or any such thing (Eph. 5:25). Since on earth the Church is designated the Body of which He is the Head, she must enjoy in Time a divine nearness. In Eternity a more conscious dearness will be her experience, for Eve was not only bone of Adam’s bone, but she was also Adam’s wife.

Date Evidence

The purpose of God regarding His earthly people Israel are ripening fast. The nation which was scattered and peeled among the nations of the earth has a bright and glorious future in store. Those who insinuate there is no future for Israel would be well advised to read the prophetical books of the Old Testament together with the Olivet discourse of Matthew 24 and 25 and also the Book of Revelation. Joel, the Prophet, assures us that Jehovah “will restore the years that the locust have eaten …” (Joel 2:25). There is going to be a

reinstatement for Israel after which the feast of tablernacles will again be kept. See Zechariah 14:16-21. There will be a restoration also (Zech. 14:11). In like manner there will be a reunion. The just Jehovah will be in her midst, the King of Israel. In that day Israel will again enjoy:

His personal presence affirmed: “Jehovah thy God, in the midst of thee.”

His place assigned: “In the midst of thee.”

His power attested: “He is mighty.” His prerogative averred: “He will save.”

His pleasure announced: “He will rejoice over thee with joy.”

His portion arranged: “He will rest in His love.”

His praise acclaimed: “He will joy over thee with singing.”

The marriage of the Lamb is prior to the manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ. It takes place in Heaven. Such is the destiny of the saints of this economy. There are those who will be “friends of the Bridegroom (John 3:29). This harmonizes with the invitation which is sent forth, “Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.” The Old Testament saints will be in this category, and John the Baptist will find himself among this illustrious throng.

Paul, in writing to the saints at Corinth (2 Cor. 11:2) reminds them, “I have espoused you one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” The love of a bridegroom for his bride is used by Paul to illustrate the love that Christ manifests toward the Church. That love has not diminished one whit throughout the

changing years. Presently He will present her to Himself a glorious Church, spotless, and without blemish.

A careful reading of Matthew 22:1-14 is interesting in the light of this study. Chapter 21:33-46 in parable depicts 1500 years of retrospective history, from the bringing out of Egypt as a vine God's earthly people and the preparing of them as a vineyard from which He might expect fruit … The messengers sent by God from Heaven were maltreated.

Finally, He sent His Son, and Him they cast out and murdered. Now chapter 22 starts at the cross and covers over 1900 years of prospective outline. The marriage was for His Son, and the invited guests, which were the Jews, despised the invitation; therefore, God sent Titus, the Roman General, who destroyed the murderers and burnt up their city. Henceforth, the overtures are extended to those who were outsiders, enemies, strangers. Today the Holy Spirit is gathering out of all the nations a people for His name.

The marriage of the Lamb will take place after the Judgment Seat of Christ has been established and the saints have been examined as to their fidelity during the absence of their Lord. We read, "His wife hath made herself ready" (Rev. 19:7). Verse eight of Revelation nineteen indicates that the acts that have been approved by the Lord will decorate the Bride of Christ in that day. "To her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

When a thousand years have run their course, the Bride will be seen in pristine and bridal grandeur indicating

that time will not impair the glories which our Lord will bestow on the object of His love.

We affirm that nowhere in Scripture are we authorized to suggest that Israel will be the Bride of the Lamb; she will be the restored wife of Jehovah. A divorced woman can never be a bride in the sense of virginal purity. John’s Gospel chapter two indicates the restoration of Israel to the status she once enjoyed. Jehovah will bring in the joys of the kingdom as He transforms the water of human weakness into the wine of divine joy. All this is seen in the feast of tabernacles which sets forth the millennial reign of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Daniel’s Seventy Weeks (Apr 1961)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 7 No. 4, Apr 1961.

Part 4 of a series on Prophetic Subjects

Sir Edward Denny, that eminent Bible teacher, once observed that Daniel’s seventy weeks formed the the backbone of prophecy. It is feared that some students of prophecy have a skeleton which has suffered curvature of the spine!

The Book of Daniel, which was authenticated by our Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 24:15), is a remarkable prophecy, and deals specifically with the end times. Daniel had addressed God, confessing his sins and those of his people, and while still “speaking in prayer” the man Gabriel came to him to inform him that he had been sent to give Daniel skill and understanding (Dan. 9:21-22). Daniel was designated “a man greatly beloved,” and to him there was an unfolding of divine purpose.

In Daniel 9:24-27, there is presented the outline of God’s intention regarding Daniel’s people. “Seventy weeks (or, seventy sevens) are determined upon thy people, and upon the holy city.” The seventy weeks are divided thus: “From the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks” (vs. 25). The going forth of the commandment was given by Artaxerxes, king of Babylon, as recorded in Nehemiah two. This relates to the building of the wall and the city of Jerusalem in troublous times. A perusal of the Book of

Nehemiah will readily reveal the conditions obtaining when this work was acomplished.

Seven weeks (or 7 x 7s) make a total of 49 years. From the accomplishment of building the walls and the city till the entry of Christ through its gate riding upon an ass and the colt of an ass (Matt. 21:9) was 62 x 7 or 434 years. Adding both together gives a period of 483 years. Daniel, it will be remembered, was informed that 70 weeks or 70 x 7; that is, 490 years were determined upon his people and upon his holy city. There is, therefore, one week or 1 x 7; that is, seven years still to be fulfilled before this prophecy is complete.

When the 69 weeks were fulfilled, Messiah was cut off and had nothing (vs. 26).

It is important to distinguish between the two “princes” alluded to in this passage. The first is Messiah, the Prince; the second, “the prince that shall come, “The people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city (Vs. 26).

It would be wise to remember that there are two essential factors for the end times: first, the Jew must be back in the Land of Emmanuel, this was made possible through the Balfour Declaration; second, the Roman Empire must be restored. It may be that this second factor is beginning to take shape. Each of these communities will have a leader, as can be ascertained from an examination of Revelation chapter 13. There allusion is made to two beasts. The first of these is seen coming up out of the sea. Since the Book of the Revelation is a figurative book we feel justified in using the divinely given symbolism to determine the meaning of this picture. In Revelation 17:15, we read, “The

waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are people, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." Out of the disturbed conditions of the nations, the head of the Revived Roman Empire will arise. Compare Daniel 2:31-49 with Daniel 7. In the former, an outline of Gentile Imperialism is given in the image which Nebuchadnezzar saw. Note the deterioration in the character of the metals, from gold to iron, and even to clay. In the latter passage, the beasts signify the character of the empires.

The second beast of Revelation 13 is seen coming out of the land. This is the anti-Christ of the coming day. It should be noted that the first beast has seven heads and ten horns. The seven heads, it is intimated, are the seven hills upon which Rome stands: Palestine, Nicrinal, Aventine, Coclisan, Virninal, Esqualine, and Janiculen (Rev. 17:9). The ten horns (horns denote power) are the leaders of the ten nations which make up the ten kingdom confederacy of Western Europe (Rev. 17:12). In the image of Daniel two there are ten toes part of iron and part of clay coalesce. The second beast has two horns like a lamb, but speaks like a dragon. The duplicity which characterizes this beast is detected when ever he opens his mouth. Many medical specialists ask their patients, "Let me see your tongue," so whenever this beast shows his tongue there is no difficulty in determining his identity.

These two leaders who are satanically inspired will make a covenant for one week, or seven years. The apostate part of Jewry under the leadership of the anti-Christ will, for political reasons, especially for protection against the threat from the north, make a covenant with the head of the Revived Roman Empire. It is clear from

Revelation 17:8, that the Roman Empire will revive. We learn that “the beast which thou sawest, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdiction” is only a symbol of Rome in its different phases. The Roman Empire existed when Christ was born, “it was,” for under Caesar Augustus a decree was issued that all the world should be taxed (Luke 2:1). That Empire long has ceased to exist; but it will be resuscitated when God’s prophetic clock again begins, and that will be consequent upon the coming of Christ to take out of this world His own.

In the midst of the week; that is, after three and a half years have run their course, the covenant is not broken as suggested by some, but the sacrifice and oblation is commanded to cease; that is, idolatry is introduced and worship to God ended. See Revelation 13:12-18. The covenant which is made is designated “a covenant with death and an agreement with hell” (Isa. 28:15-18).

This covenant with death shall be disannulled, and the agreement with hell shall not stand (Isa. 28:18). The Lord has a “mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a devouring storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand.” The framers of this covenant have thought themselves safe from the overflowing scourge” that would pass through, and, like the ostrich, they would bury their heads in the sand, and say, “It shall not come unto us; for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves” (Isa. 28:15).

During the first half of Daniel’s last week there shall be the opening of the seven sealed book. In the opening of the first four seals, there is the description of the four

horsemen of the Apocalypse. First, there is a bloodless conquest and a phase of peace which is short-lived. This is followed by war, in the train of which comes famine, death, and hell. The fifth seal reveals the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God and for the testimony which they held, crying out for vengeance on those earth dwellers of the Apocalypse. Under the sixth seal there is darkness, the sun refuses to shine, and the stars fall; that is, potentates of time are robbed of their prestige and position before men. Through the breaking of the seventh seal, judgment paves the way for the commencement of the seven trumpet judgments and finally for the vial of judgments.

The latter half of Daniel's seventiethtieth week is that period which is designated "The Great Tribulation." Numerous Scriptures indicate the duration of this time of severe trouble for the people of God's choice, the Jews. In that parenthetical part of Revelation (chap. 12:14) the time is limited to "a time, and times, and half a time." In Daniel 7:25, it is alluded to as "a time, and times, and the dividing of time." In Revelation 11:2, that same period is "forty and two months." See Revelation 13:5. It is a period confined to "a thousand two hundred and threescore days" (Rev. 11:3; 12:6).

This period of tribulation, lasting for three and a half years, and referred to by our Lord in Matthew 24:21, will have no equal in the history of the past, nor shall there ever be anything to touch it in the years of the future. By restricting the days to one thousand two hundred and threescore, the elect will be saved; otherwise, "there should be no flesh save-ed" (Matt. 24:22).

It is our intention to discuss The Great tribulation in the next paper.

The Great Tribulation (May 1961)

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

Part 5 of a series on Prophetic Subjects

The Lord has given to His people a “blessed hope” (Tit. 2:13), a “steadfast hope” (Heb. 6:19), and a “purifying hope” (1 John 3:3). Yet, despite such great and precious promises there are those who ask us to believe that the saints of this present dispensation will pass through the Great Tribulation. “To the law and to the Testimony,” said Isaiah; we shall, therefore, proceed to examine the Scriptures in order to ascertain what God has declared regarding that time of severe testing and trial.

There are six definite and direct references to the Great Tribulation in the Word of God at which we may look. The first is in Jeremiah 30:7, “Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.” Note the words, “The time of Jacob’s trouble.” Who was Jacob? He was the wrestler of Genesis 32 who had his name changed to Israel. Paul distinguishes the peoples of the earth in 1 Corinthians 10:32, saying, “Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God.” We are not Jews or Hebrews, neither are we Gentiles, but we are those who form the Church of God that Christ loved, and for which He gave Himself (Eph. 5:25). Inveterate hate has kindled the flame of persecution throughout this long term of divine grace, and many of God’s dear saints have won the martyr’s crown for fidelity to Christ and His truth. This, however, has nothing to do with the specific “time of Jacob’s trouble.”

That matter relates exclusively to God's earthly people, Israel; exemption must be claimed for those who compose the Body of Christ, His Church.

The second Scripture to which we would make reference is found in Daniel 12:1, "At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." It is worthy of note that Michael has always a special association with God's earthly people. See Daniel 10:13; 10:21. Jude 9, and Revelation 12:7. He is alluded to as the "great prince that standeth for the children of thy people." Who was Daniel? He was a Hebrew captive in Babylon. His people then must have been Hebrews. This fact is of vital importance in the understanding of this divine truth, a truth which must be interpreted in the light of its context. There is going to be a time of trouble such as never was since the history of nations began, and at that time of trouble Daniel's people are going to be delivered. The history of Israel has been very chequered. What has the Church to do with that chequered history, with that particular nation? Surely our only interest is that of seeking to bring the truth to bear upon the members of that nation through the Word of God.

It should be noted that in both Scriptures to which we have referred there is the promise of salvation. Deliverance will come to "the remnant," so often alluded to in the Minor Prophets. The apostate part of the nation will be wiped out by the indignation of Jehovah, when the day of His wrath is manifested; but the remnant will

be saved. To confirm this read carefully Zechariah 14:4 5. Isaiah 1:9. Romans 11:7. and Isaiah 10:20-22.

The third Scripture that we shall examine is Matthew 24. There are many who dispise the dispensational teaching of God's precious Word; some who do so vainly imagine that they get the doctrine of the Church in the Book of the Kings and the Book of the Chronicles. Such remind me of the black man in the dark room looking for a black cat that was not there. A proper understanding of Matthew 24 and 25 is essential if we would know the mind of God regarding Israel, Christendom, and the other nations. The Olivet discourse is the greatest prophecy extant; it was spoken by the greatest Prophet, Christ Himself. The divisions of that prophecy are as follows: From Chapter 24 verse 1 to verse 44 inclusive treats of the coming of Christ as it relates to the Jew. From chapter 24 verse 45 to chapter 25 verse 30, the Lord tells three stories which are given to illustrate the coming of Christ as it relates to Christendom. The remaining portion, chapter 25 verse 31 to verse 46, presents the coming of Christ in relation to the other nations.

The reference in this passage to the Great Tribulation is found in chapter 24 verse 21, "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." Throughout this section it is worthy of note that there are references to those who say, "I am Christ," to false prophets, to those who teach conditional salvation based upon the word, "He that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved." There are references also to "the Gospel of the Kingdom," to "the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet," to "Judea," and to "the

Sabbath day." Such terminology clearly reveals an application not to the Church but to the Jew. The Great Tribulation of verse 21 is synonomous with that alluded to by Jeremiah and Daniel. "No prophecy is of any private interpretation." We adduce that the peoples to whom this period is applicable are those of the stock of Israel.

The fourth reference is found in Mark chapter 13 verse 19 to 24. This is that part of the Olivet discourse which can be interpreted in terms only of God's people Israel. It would be redundant to go over the same ground again in this exposition, for it is clearly alluding to the same period and applies to the same people.

Perhaps it might be noticed that as Christ sat on the Mount of Olives, His disciples asked Him two questions. First, "When shall these things be?" The answer to which is found in Luke 21 and verse 7, where Christ relates these predictions to the destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem in the year A.D. 70, by Titus, the Roman general.

The second question is, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world (age)?" The answer to this is recorded in Matthew chapters 24 to 25.

The fifth reference to the Great Tribulation is found in Revelation 2:10, where Christ says, "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." This assembly, Philadelphia (meaning, brotherly love), had been faithful towards the Lord and His word; consequently, Christ promised that they would be kept from the hour of temptation. He did not say, kept

through the hour of temptation but from the hour of temptation. This hour is not one of sixty minutes, but, rather, a measured period of time, actually three and a half years. How will the Lord keep the saints of this present dispensation from that hour of trial? Is it not simple? Is it not sublime? He will take them into Eternity where joys untold, never to pass away, will dispel all the cares of time! The word of God presents to the saints of this economy a blessed hope, not a haunting nightmare. Christ said, “Let not your heart be troubled” (John 14:1). To those who insinuate that the saints of the present dispensation must pass through the throes of the Great Tribulation, we would say that these words of the Lord are meaningless if such is the portion of the Church.

The last reference at which we shall look is found in Revelation 7:14. After John had watched the angel from the east with the seal of the living God seal the servants of God in their foreheads, one hundred and forty and four thousand; and after the sealing of these twelve thousand from each tribe in Israel, there was seen a great multitude which no man could number of all nations, and kind-reds, and peoples, and tongues. Concerning which John was informed, “These are they which came out of great tribulation (The Great Tribulation), and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (vs. 14). This remnant had been busy carrying the Gospel of the Kingdom throughout the world, and by many their message had been welcomed. Those who had thus accepted the message are seen here, for they refused the mark of the beast and testified of their faith in the true Messiah who would reign.

It is clear that the Great Tribulation refers primarily to God's earthly people; although, through the instrumentality of the messengers of the Gospel of the Kingdom, many from the other nations will be blessed during the millennial reign of Christ. It is also definite that the Church will not pass through the Great Tribulation. She is not looking for that time of Jacob's trouble.

Christ is about to fulfil His promise, "Behold, I come quickly." May we from our hearts reply, "Amen, Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

The King of the North (June 1961)

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

Part 6 of a series on Prophetic Subjects

It is not uncommon to find some prophetic student referring to Russia as “the King of the North.” A careful examination of Scripture will readily reveal that this cannot be so.

The King of the North will be a prime operator in the “battle of that great day of God Almighty” (Rev. 16:14); when east meets west, and when the pride of the west shall be destroyed by the hammer blows of the eastern forces.

In the vision given to John, when the sixth angel sounded his trumpet (Rev. 9:14), the four angels which were bound in the great river Euphrates were loosed. A third part of men were then slain, and the number of the army of horsemen was two hundred millions. When the sixth angel poured out his vial (Rev. 16:12), the waters of the river Euphrates were dried up that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. This force enters Immanuel’s land from the north, and the commander in chief will be the Assyrian, or King of the North. The eastern forces, gathered from the countries of Asia east of Immanuel’s land, will meet the opposing forces of the Beast and the anti-Christ at a “place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon” (Rev. 16:16).

In Isaiah 28:2, we are assured, “The Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters

overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand." The Lord Himself is Chief of the

Headquarters Staff, and "He worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. 1:11). The prophecy of Joel synchronizes with that of Isaiah, and harmonizes with the only prophetic book of the New Testament, the Book of the Revelation. In Joel 2:3, we are told, "The land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them." In this chapter God says, "Jehovah shall utter His voice before His army: for His camp is very great: for He is strong that executeth His word" (vs. 11).

Isaiah affirms, "Behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory:.. And he shall pass through Judah; he shall reach even to the neck: and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of Thy land, O Immanuel" (Isa. 8:7-8). The "mighty and strong one" and the "strong and many" allude to the Assyrian under the designation of the "King of the North."

God calls attention in Isaiah 10:5, saying, "O Assyrian, the rod of Mine anger, and the staff in their hand is Mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of My wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Howbeit, he meaneth not so." It is Jehovah who sends the Assyrian against the apostate portion of Judah together with those with whom they are confederated, the ten kingdom confederacy of Western Europe under the two devil-inspired leaders, the anti-Christ and the Head of the Revived Roman Empire. God declares, "I

will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the King of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks" (vs. 12). Then in verses 24-25, the Lord God of Hosts says, "Be not afraid of the Assyrian: he shall smite thee with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt. For yet a little while, and the indignation shall cease, and Mine anger in their destruction."

The "little horn" of Daniel 8:9, is the King of the North, and his characteristics mentioned here are in harmony with those already examined in Isaiah 10. "It waxed great, even to the host of Heaven" is descriptive of the vaunting pride of the King of the North, the Assyrian.

The battle of the great day of God Almighty having been fought and won by the eastern forces of the King of the North paves the way for these forces to smite Egypt under the King of the South (Dan 11). The southern forces of Egypt are made to lick the dust as the treasures of that land are appropriated by the victorious leader, the King of the North. Just at this juncture, he shall hear ominous tidings in the rear of his army: "Tidings out of the east and north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him" (Dan. 11:44-45).

I suggest that the ominous tidings which he hears from the east and north is the return of the ten tribes to the land of Immanuel. Their return is described in Ezekiel 20. God, addressing the House of Israel states, "I will bring you with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out (Ezek. 20:34). He

proceeds to intimate that He will bring them into the wilderness of the people, and there He will plead with them face to face. The process of elimination is indicated in verses 37-38. They will pass under the rod, as a shepherd would make his sheep, numbering every one: then He will bring them into the bond of the covenant. “This is the covenant that I will make with the House of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people” (Heb. 8:10). God will purge out the rebels, and the transgressors, and such shall not enter into the land of Israel.

As indicated, God is the Chief at Headquarters, and He will make this victorious arm turn about, ostensibly to smite the new force which is arriving from the countries wherein it has been scattered; but it would seem apparent that God’s purposes are being wrought out even in the seeming victory of the eastern forces under the leadership of the Assyrian or King of the North; for He states in Joel 2:20, “I will remove far off from you the northern army, and will drive him into a land barren and desolate, with his face toward the east sea, and his hinder part toward the utmost sea, and his stink shall come up, and his ill savour shall come up, because he hath done great things.” The East Sea geographically is from the point where he swings his army around to deal with the new arrivals in the land of Israel, and would be the Persian Gulf. The Utmost Sea would be the Meditteranean. Somewhere in the Arabian desert, a land barren and desolate, will that great force perish by divine intervention, and not in battle with a physical enemy.

In Isaiah 30:30, we are informed, “The Lord (Jehovah) shall cause His glorious voice to be heard, and shall show the lighting down of His arm.” Now we see the glorious harmony between this prophecy and that of Joel. Here we read, “Through the voice of the Lord shall the Assyrian be beaten down, which smote with a rod” (vs. 31). In Joel we read, “The Lord (Jehovah) also shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake” (Joel 3:16). It is the voice of Jehovah that brings defeat to the Assyrian and his forces, and not any pitched battle.

The final doom of the King of the North may be seen in Isaiah 30:33, “For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.”

Similar language is used in the New Testament to indicate the awful punishment that awaits such godless powers. We read, “The Beast (The head of the Revived Roman Empire) was taken, and with him the false prophet (The anti-Christ) that wrought miracles before him, … These both were cast alive into a lake burning with brimstone” (Rev. 19:20). There will be no need for a trial as far as these two apostate and defiant leaders of the future are concerned. Caught red-handed in their rebellion, they will be cast into the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.

It would seem that a similar doom will be the portion of the Assyrian, the King of the North. From the reading of Isaiah 20:33, we know that the king, probably the King of the North, who said, “By the strength of mine hand I

have done it, and by my wisdom," failed to realize that he was only a rod in Jehovah's hand to chastise an apostate people. His final doom, consequently, appears to be in the lake of fire and brimstone, which the breath of Jehovah will kindle, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:44).

The Olivet Discourse (July 1961)

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

Part 7 of a series on Prophetic Subjects

The “Olivet Discourse” is the greatest prophecy extant; because it was spoken by the greatest prophet. One who is designated, “Greater than the Temple,” “Greater than Solomon,” “Greater than Jonas,” and to whom questions such as the following were addressed: “Art Thou greater than our father Abraham?” “Art thou greater than our father Jacob?” In point of fact, this blessed One is “far above all” (Eph. 1:21).

An Analysis of the prophecy will reveal that it is in three parts. The first section starts with verse 3 of chapter 24 and terminates with verse 44 of the same chapter. The second portion commences with verse 45 of chapter 24 and concludes with verse 30 of chapter 25. The last division begins with verse 31 of chapter 25 and ends with the closing verse of that chapter.

It is important to note that the Church, which is His Body, is not part of this prophetic declaration, but of New Testament revelation.

In Matthew chapters 21 and 22, the Lord revealed through the medium of two parables the outline of human history from the deliverance from Egypt till the present moment. God required fruit from His vineyard (The vineyard is always Israel, and not the harvest-field of the present dispensation — (see Psalm 80:8). For fifteen hundred years God had been sending servants to obtain for Him fruit from His vineyard, but the people refused to give Him any. Finally, He sent His Son, and

“they caught Him; cast Him out of the vineyard; and slew Him.” The parable of the opening of chapter 22 presents almost two millenniums of divine grace; and during this period God has virtually been saying, “I am asking nothing from you: please let Me give you something!” The message of the Gospel and the messengers of the Glad Tidings have been despised and refused. In chapter 23, Christ passes eight “woes” on the scribes and Pharisees, designating them “hypocrites.” In verse 33 He calls them “serpents” and “a generation of vipers.” As of old the divine appeal had been ignored, so today the testimony of the Lord’s servants is rejected. This concludes His appeal to the nation; and thereafter He gives that remarkable prophecy which, if understood aright, will be found to be the key to all prophecy.

The departure from the temple, as indicated in chapter 24:1, reminds us of the comment of the wife of Phinehas (1 Sam. 4:21) when her child was born whom she named “Ichabod,” saying, “The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken.”

The disciples came to the Lord to show Him the buildings of the temple; and there and then, He depicted its downfall. As He sat on the Mount of Olives the disciples came to Him privately and asked two questions. The first related to the destruction of the temple, “When shall these things be?” This is answered by the pen of Luke the beloved physician; and chapter 21 verse 24 should be carefully noted. The second question —”What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the age?” is answered in Matthew 24 and 25.

“The end of the age” is prior to the setting up of the millennial kingdom. The Jewish age had been interrupted by the introduction of this present economy of grace, the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. The seventieth week of Daniel’s prophecy awaits its fulfilment. Israel knew only two dispensations, viz., Law and The Kingdom.

In verses 4 to 44 there are unfolded events which shall overtake the Jew in the days prior to the manifestation of Christ in great glory. The synoptic writers had the appearing of Christ in power before them; while John brought into relief what shall take place to the saints of God prior to the revelation of Christ in glory, He will receive them unto Himself (John 14.3).

Verse 8 of Matthew 24 reveals that the general symptoms alluded to in the previous verses are but the “beginning of sorrows.”

“This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations: and then shall the end come” (v. 14). The Gospel of the kingdom was declared by John the Baptist, and men despised it. The Gospel of the grace of God has been heralded through more than nineteen hundred years—that “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures… He was buried… He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.” Such a message could not have been propagated prior to Calvary: but there were tidings—the Gospel of the kingdom—which announced the fact that the King was coming. When the “maschilim” — preachers of the Gospel of the Kingdom — have concluded their operations then shall the end come.

It is worthy of note that much of the discourse relates to the Jew and could only be appreciated by one who had a Hebraic mind. Allusion is made to the abomination of desolation spoken by Daniel the prophet. Dwellers in Judea are warned to flee to the mountains (v. 16). They should also desire that their flight should not be in winter nor on the Sabbath day: for restrictions in movement were attached to the ritual of keeping the Sabbath. Reference is also made to the coming of the Son of Man. This title depicts Christ in universal authority as He takes the reins of this world's government and rules from shore to shore.

The Great Tribulation has been the means divinely used to judge the fighting forces of the world: first, the apostate part of the nation of the Jews together with the godless confederates from Western Europe, whose leaders shall be taken red-handed in their revolt against God and cast into the Lake of Fire: Rev. 19:20. Then the Eastern forces under the King of North, the Assyrian, are destroyed. The process of elimination shall proceed till all the fighting forces of the world are judged. Then shall appear "the sign of the Son of Man in Heaven" (v. 30). The potentates of time and the princes and peoples shall mourn (vide Zech. 12: 9-14; Rev. 1:7).

It has been suggested that "the sign of the Son of Man" would be the Shekinnah glory which reluctantly left the temple as seen by Ezekiel in chapter 10:4; 10:17; and 11:23 of his prophecy. But is this so? This glory shall return at a future moment to a rebuilt temple and it shall diffuse its rays throughout the house (Ezek. 43:4). The disciples had asked "What shall be the sign of Thy coming?" The answer is now given by the Lord. The sign of the Son of Man brings to mind the observation of the

scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 12: 38-42—" we would see a sign from Thee." The Lord replied: "an evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas." Jonas expresses to us the first characteristic of the Son of Man— for the title was used first by our Lord in connection with His rejection—Luke 9.22. Solomon gives character to the other reference, for Solomon pictures for us the fulness of authority and the glory of a righteous reign. The sign of the Son of Man would be the galaxies of glory which enshroud Him and which He diffuses to a wondering universe as He comes forth, first of all to execute judgment on all who refuse His authority; and thereafter to bring to the one centre of attraction the world's future metropolis —Jerusalem — all His elect: the one hundred and forty-four thousand, together with the numberless hosts from the ranks of the nations who had received the testimony of the messengers (Rev. 7).

The Lord refers to the "fig tree." The fig tree speaks to Israel nationally: the vine of Israel spiritually: and the olive tree of Israel religiously. In John 1:48 Nathaniel is seen "under the fig tree". He was an Israelite in whom there was no guile. He pictures for us the faithful remnant of the coming day who shall find their delight in Jehovah and who willingly accept the Messiah as their King. In Matthew 21 the Lord cursed the fig tree (v. 19). Christ came and found nothing for God in the way of fruit; and no doubt such a condition provoked the Lord to give the parable of the vineyard later in the chapter.

Allusion is next made to the days of Noah and a marked similarity, between his days and those of the future are emphasized. They ate and drank, they married and were

giving in marriage: all legitimate things in their place; but the tragedy was that they left God out of account. Those who despise the Messianic claims will in like manner perish in the judgment of God when Heaven is ablaze with divine artillery (2 Thess. 1:7-8).

Verses 40 - 41 have been interpreted in connection with the Rapture; but such a thought is foreign to the context of this passage. Two are in the field who are accustomed to hard toil, and each proceeding with his duties when one is suddenly cut down in judgment and the other left for the blessings of the millennial reign of Christ. The same is applicable to the women in their duties at the mill; one is taken in judgment and the other left for millennial blessing.

This section concludes with a call to “Watch!” The hour is unknown to anyone; and the coming of the Lord is likened to that of the thief, who, without warning, stealthily creeps into the house and takes the spoil.

This section reveals the effect of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ on God’s earthly people, the Jews. It is also a revelation of the conditions which shall obtain prior to His manifestation as King of Righteousness; subjugating every foe and establishing a kingdom that shall never be moved.

The Olivet Discourse (Part 2) (Aug 1961)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 7 No. 8, Aug 1961.

Scripture Reading Matthew 24:44-51; 25:1-30

The second division of the Olivet discourse commences with chapter 25:30. This portion of the prophecy lays emphasis on the effect of the coming of Christ on that which is designated Christendom. It should be observed that the term “Son of Man” is not found in this section. It appears in the King James Version, but with insufficient MSS. authority, in verse 13 of chapter 25. The term appears in the first division of the prophecy, and as we shall see, appears also in the last. It is absent from this, the second part.

This paragraph has in it three short stories used by the Lord to illustrate what will take place when He comes in manifestation. The first of these presents a ruler with no reward. The servant in this story misjudges the purpose of Christ’s coming. The second reveals the existence of lamps without any lights. The virgins mentioned in this one misjudged the promise of Christ’s coming. The third, the last, indicates a bestowed talent without any trading. The servant here misjudged the person who was to return.

The first of these stories would suggest that there were some who were watching for their Lord’s return; the second, that there were some who were waiting for their Lord; and the third, that there were some working for their Lord.

The scene depicted for us in the first illustration, that found in the closing six verses of chapter 24, is clearly that of Christian profession. The service to which the persons in the story were called was not that of evangelism but rather that of taking care of those in the house. Fidelity and wisdom go hand in hand. In divine sovereignty one person was appointed ruler over the household so that the meals might be provided for the members. To follow out this course would mean that in the day of review there would be an appropriate recompense, the Lord would give him the dignity of being ruler over all his goods.

The evil servant of verse 47 will be judged according to the position he himself took. Christendom is full of empty professors today. In the heptad of parables in Matthew 13, the Lord tells us that the birds which snatched away the good seed are the servants of the devil. In the third parable of that chapter there is presented a monstrosity, the insignificantly small mustard seed becomes a great tree with the birds of the air lodged in its branches. This is a picture of religious mendacity in the present. Lurking in its branches are those who, while professing to be the servants of Christ, deny the faith and undermine the truth of the Word of God.

“Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,” and “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he,” are true statements. This servant said in his heart, “My Lord delayeth his coming.” Today, the teaching regarding the second coming of Christ is a target of special attack. Many are denying it altogether, while others are seeking to postpone it in their minds to a time that best suits them. The Lord will not delay His coming; He said,

“Behold, I come quickly.” The first point of error is godward; it is the thought of delaying the return of the Lord. The second point of error is manward; it is the misbehaviour of one servant ill-treating his fellow-servants. Love should dominate those who profess to serve the Lord Christ. In the illustration, hatred displaced love in the heart of the servant.

The third step in the retrograde is seen in the servant that ate and drank with the drunken. Surely, “Evil communications corrupt good manners.” The writer’s Mother used to say, “Show me your companions, and I will tell you what you are.” To find one’s friendship among ungodly people is the tragedy of a life lived out of touch with the Lord. The second and third acts are attacks against the testimony. The first error is doctrinal; the second, practical; and the third, moral. The decline from truth gains impetus till the ultimate condition is the absence of moral character altogether. To pursue such a course till the Lord comes is to bring down divine judgment, a recompense in keeping with the status adopted and the behaviour evidenced, the place of everlasting remorse.

The second story, that of the ten virgins, is a parable of the Kingdom of Heaven. Note the introductory word, “Then.” The Kingdom of Heaven is the rule of the Heavens over the Earth. The Kingdom is in mystery at the present, but soon will be in might. There were ten virgins, five were wise and five were foolish. Wisdom and folly are the antithesis of one another. Wherein lay the wisdom? How can we judge the folly? In appearance the virgins all looked alike. There were certain factors common to all; they all had lamps. Lamps in Scripture indicate profession. They all professed to bear witness to

the Lord. The foolish, although they had lamps, took no oil in their vessels. What is the use of a lamp if there is no oil to maintain the light? The wise had oil in their vessels; they picture those who have an unction from the Holy One and are indwelt by the Holy Spirit of Promise. Oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. The Thessalonians were looking for God's Son from Heaven, thus indicating that their lamps were burning brightly.

The Church has fallen into a state of torpor, and being asleep has become indifferent to the doctrine of the Lord's return. How necessary that she awake!

Another common factor with these virgins was that while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. Midnight was zero hour!

The Holy Spirit has moved, bringing back to hearts and minds truths which had been lost down through the ages, especially that of the coming of the Lord to take out of this world His own. The midnight cry had its effect, not only on the wise but also on the foolish; they all arose and trimmed their lamps.

What a rude awakening for the foolish virgins to discover that they had nothing to sustain their witnessing. They clamoured for oil; begging some from the wise, and receiving the answer, "Go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves." Many seem to find difficulty in the word "buy" but there is really none. In Isaiah 55:1, we read, "Come ye buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price." The fact is, buying is merely a transaction between two persons, one has the item of which to dispose, the other has need of the item. The meaning here is plain, make sure of a transaction between your

soul and God. Simon Magus wanted to buy the power with his filthy pelf. Peter discerned his spiritual state and gravely warned him (Acts 8:19-24).

Delay is dangerous. Reader, do not delay in making contact with the Lord! Have dealings with the Lord of Glory if you ever wish to be in the glory with the Lord!

A last minute rush to secure the oil was unavailing for in the interim the bridegroom came and those that were ready went in to the marriage. Are you ready? Have you the Spirit of God? Is your light burning, brightly? It is to the marriage that the wise have entered. When God would describe the glories of that scene reserved for those that love Him, He uses the figure of that most wonderful day in the earthly experience of two persons, the day they enter into the joy of matrimony.

The foolish virgins found to their amazement that while they went to get the oil, the bridegroom came, and those that were ready had gone in to the marriage. The sad fact is, they were left outside a closed door. In their consternation they cried from terror-stricken hearts, “Lord, Lord, open unto us. Not all that say Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom, but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in Heaven.” “The door was shut” suggests that no further dealings in grace may be expected by those who stand outside begging an entrance. From behind closed doors there comes the voice of the Lord saying, “I know you not.” This retort from within could only intensify the dismay of those without. Such indeed will be the end of those that obey not the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

In view of the fact that the day when Christ will come is unknown, no amount of speculation will ever bring to

light that hidden counsel of God the Father. “The times and seasons which the Father has put in His own power” are not revealed to anyone. Because of that fact, it is of vital importance “while it is called today” that men should repent and avail themselves of the provision divinely afforded through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus. The Christian must ever remember that watchfulness is an imperative throughout this long dark night. The words of Christ come ringing down the ages with freshness, “What I say unto you, I say unto all, watch.”

The third story is that of the talents. One man had a talent but did not trade with it. This is not the same picture as Christ draws in Luke 19. In this passage the servants all receive different amounts, suggesting the sovereignty of God who distributes severally as He wills. In Luke 19 all receive similar amounts, and that of course lays emphasis on the responsibility of man. In this passage, Matthew 25, one servant receives five talents, another two, and a third, only one. The person with the five traded with them, and so did the one with the two, but the third buried his in the earth.

When the time of review came, the one with the five talents had increased these to ten. His fidelity was duly commended and rewarded. A similar commendation was given to the one who had received two talents. To both of these, the Lord said, “Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” Where He is there we also shall be, and that gives delight to the heart of the Lord.

The third servant declared himself without dividends. By this failure he manifested that he had wrong ideas about his Lord, and in second place that he was afraid of his

Lord. He had despised the opportunity of trading and had deliberately hidden his talent. The ultimate testing of this professed servant will ever be “outer darkness; there shall be gnashing of teeth.” The portion of those that have such a low estimate of the Lord, and who have behaved in such a manner as this servant, will be that of remorse, when the spectre of neglect will haunt their souls forever. Let us search our hearts and discover whether or not we are really servants.

The Olivet Discourse (Part 3) (Sept 1961)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 7 No. 9, Sept 1961.

The third division of the Olivet Discourse commences with verse 31 of Matthew 25 and terminates at the close of that chapter.

The word “When” suggests a specific time. This is not imaginary for that which is divinely revealed as His purpose shall surely be fulfilled. The time is appointed, and the predicted events shall be enacted according to the Word of God.

The title “Son of Man” appears again in this section of the discourse. “Son of Man” is a title of our Lord first used in connection with His rejection, then used in reference to His manifestation in power and glory. Christ, as Son of Man, shall appear on the throne of His glory. At the present He sits in the Father’s throne — (Rev. 3:21); and also on “the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:2). In that day He shall sit upon His own throne. In His humiliation He came unto His own things, and His own people received Him not. On that future day He shall be manifested sitting on His glorious throne. What a pageantry! It will be a scene of holy splendour; Christ in those galaxies of glory seated on His throne and in attendance upon Him there will be a company of angels. Such splendour will bring delight to many hearts, but to others fear and trembling as Christ begins to judge the living nations.

The order in this discourse is unique. The opening section reveals the coming of Christ to His earthly

people. It then proceeds to the three stories told by our Lord as He illustrated His coming in relationship to christendom. Finally, this section shows us the judgment of the living nations at the coming of Christ. Note that before Him are gathered “all nations.” At the Great White Throne it is the dead who are judged and there is not a reference to living people; here the living are judged, and there is no allusion to the dead. Righteousness is the characteristic of this One who sits on His throne. See Psalm 45:6; Isaiah 11:5; Acts 17:31. He is Judge of the living and the dead: for the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.

The Throne-Sitter begins His work of segregation, as a shepherd would divide his sheep from the goats. The sheep represent the righteous, and the goats symbolise the ungodly. In righteousness the process of discrimination proceeds till all the sheep are on His right hand and the goats are on His left hand. When the task is completed, the Lord addresses those on the right hand thus: “Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

(Completed Next Issue)

The Reward of the Kingdom (Dec 1961)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 7 No. 12, Dec 1961.

Joseph: Chapter 37

The careful reader of Holy Scripture must have noticed that the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30) is not the same as that of the pounds in Luke 19. They were not spoken at the same time: they were not spoken at the same place; and they were spoken to convey two distinct lines of teaching. The servants in Matthew 25 received amounts differing; while those in Luke 19 were each given the same. In Matthew 25 the Lord Jesus Christ would lay emphasis on the fact of Divine Sovereignty: gift and capacity are paramount in that portion for He distributes severally as He wills. Each one receives a different amount of talents: one was given five, another received two, and one was granted only one. Luke 19 teaches the truth of human responsibility for each servant was given one pound with which to trade.

The parable of the pounds was prompted by two reasons. In the first place “because He was nigh to Jerusalem.” No Jew would ever think of the Kingdom rule starting with any other centre than Jerusalem, for it would be the metropolis of the world in the coming day. The second reason for uttering this parable was “because they thought that the Kingdom of God would immediately appear.” This is confirmed by the question asked by the disciples in Acts 1:6, “Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?”

The Hebrew mind can appreciate but two dispensations; viz., The Law and the Kingdom. By telling this story the Lord indicated to His followers that there would be a period between the going away of the nobleman and his return after he had received the kingdom. The period, in fact, has extended to well nigh two millenniums.

The word “certain” is the characteristic word of Luke; being a doctor he dare not be uncertain! The “certain nobleman” is undoubtedly the Lord Himself. He has gone into a far country; for there is no moral relationship between this world and Heaven to which Christ has gone. God has said to Him, “Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thy foes Thy footstools” (Psalm 110:1); and again, “Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession” (Psalm 2:8).

He called ten servants and delivered to them ten pounds; that is, each received one pound, as is indicated in verse 16, and verse 18.

His parting commission was, “Occupy till I come.” It is obvious from this statement that Christ is coming again and in the meantime He desires that we should be engaged in service for Him. The word “occupy” is the word for “trade,” found again in verse 15, “trading.” When a person trades he does so in the world. He goes out on a venture. Picture yourself with ten thousand dollars; you would invest these in a business and all your endeavors would be to make the business prosper. That is the idea conveyed in the instruction of the nobleman. This is the day of opportunity; one day it will be patent to all how much energy we have expended in activity for the Lord.

In verse 14 we are informed that “his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this (‘man’ is italicised and is not in the text) to reign over us.” They spoke disparagingly of the nobleman. They also sent a message after him to say they had no desire for him to rule over them. The message was sent in the martyrdom of Stephen (Acts 7). Peter had said, “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things.” They refused to repent, so the Lord will deal with them when He is manifested in power and great glory.

He returns after He has been given the kingdom and calls his servants for examination. The first one brings with him the fruits of his efforts saying, “Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.” It must be admitted that to make ten from one is good business. He had used time and ability to secure for his master this amount. The Lord commended him as a “good servant” and recompensed him by giving him authority over ten cities. Cities are on earth, and the kingdom of God will be as tangible a thing as the kingdom of any earthly monarch. To be made Lord Mayor of ten cities is an achievement through fidelity to the Lord. The Lord will ever reward commensurate with our faithfulness. There is, however, an anticlimax here for it is obvious there are more cities to rule over than competent men to rule over them, when the Lord gives ten cities to the control of one person.

The second person came and said, “Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.” This person was similarly commended and granted authority over five cities.

The third person said, “Lord, behold here is thy pound, which I have laid up in a napkin.” The napkin is the sweat-cloth, and it is patent to all that he never used his sweat-cloth, for he laid his pound up in it. How tragic that one taking the place of a servant should have such a low estimate of the Lord as to lay up his pound in a napkin, and then to reveal his wicked thoughts about his master. The napkin is referred to three times in the Gospels, here, in John 11, and in John 20, and in two instances is associated with a dead body: that of Lazarus in John 11 and that of our Lord Jesus Christ in John 20. I suggest that though this person took the status of a servant he was spiritually dead, as is clearly indicated by his comments regarding his master.

The Lord took him up on his estimate of the master and changing the simile said, “Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury.” The bank is a place for weak people! One can deposit the principal and it gains, through time, interest. The word for “bank” is “trapeza” and is found in 1 Corinthians 10:21 where it is translated “table.” The Lord’s table (trapeza) is the fellowship of the death of Christ. If this man had not the grit to go out on a venture for his Lord he could, at least, have put the pound in the bank and there would have been interest accumulating. To trade one goes out into the world to find souls for Christ, and this is the work of the evangelist, the missionary, the Sunday school teacher, etc. But to lack that enthusiasm then the pound could profitably be lodged in the bank; that is, amongst

the saints of God, then the Lord would get His own with interest.

This last person was judged out of his own mouth (v. 22), and he is designated a “wicked servant.” Christendom is full of professed servants of God, but many are like this man, they are spiritual corpses; they shall be judged according to the status they have taken.

The Lord instructs those who stand by to deprive him of the pound and to bestow it on the man with ten pounds. They with unanimity say, “Lord, he hath ten pounds!” The man who was a sham professor was stripped of all in which he trusted and judged thus before his master.

It is important to note that those who have evidenced marked faithfulness receive the “Benjamin’s portion.” “To him that hath shall be given” is the answer to the humble, unostentatious servant, from the one who is a pretender, all his duplicity will be removed, and the unvarnished subtlety that lay beneath exposed to the all seeing eye of the righteous judge.

Commensurate with your faithfulness will your reward be. Then be faithful to the One who today is out of sight, but who takes cognizance of every impulse.

While we enter the Father’s House on the basis of the blood of Christ, and in that realm we are all loved with the same love for each child is dear to the Father’s heart and enjoys the embrace of the Lover of our souls; we shall come forth in the Kingdom in positions which we have merited through faithfulness to our absent Lord. To Smyrna the Lord stated, “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” Paul reminded young Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:8, “There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous

judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."

Peter affirms that, "When the Chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away," and these words are addressed to the godly overseers. There are crowns to be won, and it will give the Lord the utmost pleasure to bestow such upon those who manifested singleness of heart in service for Him while He has been out of sight.

This is what the Lord had in mind when addressing Philadelphia in Revelation 3:11 saying, "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." He would have us faithful in this little while, so that He may have the pleasure of bestowing on us the many crowns which He holds out as His recompense for service rendered in this scene where our Lord is rejected and crucified.

One has truly said, "This world is full of willing people; some willing to work and many willing to let them."

"God will not seek thy race,

Nor will He ask thy birth:

Alone He will demand of thee,

What hast thou done on earth?"

Russia’s Place in Prophecy (Jan 1962)

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In the scheme of events divinely predicted, it will appear obvious to the careful reader of the prophetic Scriptures that God will deal with the fighting forces of this world first when Judgment, His strange work, begins; and, thereafter, with the civilian population: for the latter see Matthew 25:31-46.

The Western Confederacy, the ten toes of the image seen by Nebuchadnezzar and interpreted by Daniel (Dan. 2), enters into a covenant with apostate Jewry (Dan. 9:26-27). The Southern Confederacy (Ezek. 30:5, and Dan. 11:40) and the Eastern Confederacy (Rev. 9:13-16; 16:12; Dan. 11:44-45; Isa. 10:12; Joel 2:20) are destroyed, some by the opposing forces of their enemies, others by divine intervention. Greece obviously will be dealt with separately, see Joel 3:5-8; Zechariah 9:13. The Beast, in its representative, crucified the Lord Jesus Christ after three times affirming His innocence. Subsequently, the blood of the people was shed in such a volume that millions were involved in that awful slaughter, the worst in history till the events of the last world war were enacted when millions of Jews were cruelly done to death. The slave markets of this world were glutted with human merchandise when Titus the Roman general “destroyed the murderers and burnt up their city” in A.D. 70. The Grecians were the most enthusiastic purchasers of the youth of that day, and the sons of Zion were slaves to them. God has not forgotten this, and He will deal in righteous indignation with Greece in the day to come.

The only remaining fighting force to demand the Judgment of a righteous God is that of Russia in the far northern parts (Ezek. 38 and 39).

This section of the prophecy of Ezekiel must not be divorced from the context of the Prophecy. It is worthy of note that God must cleanse His earthly people prior to the establishing of the kingdom about which prophet and seer have spoken in the distant past. In Ezekiel 36:24-27 God states, “A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you…” This is followed in chapter 37 by the vision of the valley of bones. God interprets this so that there is no speculation. The “dry bones” are the whole house of Israel (V. 11). By the power of God shall the whole nation be established: twelve tribes as one commonwealth in the land; not two as existed when Christ first came into this scene to be refused as “The King of the Jews.” The restoration of Israel is here prefigured as a resurrection. God brings the nation into a condition in which, even to themselves, all hope has vanished (V. 11). Israel shall learn her lesson in abasement, and thereafter will she prove the wonders of divine grace which shall work on her account. New life in the Spirit will be given to Israel, which thus becomes miraculously organized (Vs. 1 to 14). The healing of the breach between Judah and Ephraim will take place; then Israel shall be one commonwealth in the land and David shall be king over the nation. David was the Shepherd King and the Warrior King and in these aspects depicts for us the coming monarch, our Lord Jesus Christ.

The problem is the passage from death to life. This has never been accomplished, and never will, except by the power of God. Man may boast that he has conquered space; but there Is only One Man who has conquered death, even our Lord Jesus Christ. The nation will be born anew by the Word of God, and in this we have the process. Every step is a true creative work of God: “Born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever” (1 Pet. 1:23). The Spirit comes as the influence for the enjoyment of the new life and position; and in this we have the power. Those who were but the scattered relics of the dead are now the hosts of the Lord, “an exceeding great army” (V. 10).

In the Prophecy of Zechariah chapter 14, we learn that the faithful remnant of Judah will be spared through the troublous times of the Great Tribulation. The Lord shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, and a way of escape shall be made for the faithful ones as they are exhorted to “flee to the valley of the mountains” (Vs. 4-5). See also Revelation 12:14.

We are informed that the ten tribes of Israel will be caused to pass under the rod and be brought into the bond of the covenant (Ezek. 20 and 21). Then there will exist one commonwealth in the land of Immanuel, all brought back by divine power and in divine purpose and wisdom.

Conditions

The conditions obtaining at the time Russia comes on the prophetic stage are as follows: the land will be brought back from the sword (Ezek. 38:8). Israel shall dwell safely in unwalled villages having neither bars nor

gates (Ezek. 38:11). The desolate places will be inhabited when the people shall have been gathered out of the nations, and when they have accumulated much material wealth. “My people of Israel dwelleth safely” (Ezek. 38:14). These statements reveal that Israel is back in the land, drawn from many nations to possess their possessions as divinely promised.

The Time

Another factor to be considered in this study is the time when Russia takes action. We are informed that it is “in the latter years” (Ezek. 38:8); moreover, it will be “in the latter days” (Ezek. 38:16). It will be at the close of the Great Tribulation, Jehovah has stated, “Then I will be the God of all the families of Israel” (Jer. 31:1). Israel established in the land of promise will enjoy that tranquility which their God alone can bestow. This will be in contrast to the conditions obtaining at present in that land. The spirit of Ishmael is prevalent there at the moment, and he was the one who mocked Isaac. This feeling has prevailed down the line, Esau and Jacob demonstrate it.

The Enemies

The enemies are detailed for us: they are “God and Magog” (Ezek. 38:2). “The Prince of Rosh, Meshech and ‘rubel.” The final ruler over the peoples of the far northern parts is designated “The Prince of Rosh”: and the two capitals of the empire are suggested in the names “Meshech” (Moscow, the European capital) and “Tubal” (Tobolsk, the Asiatic capital). It is interesting to note that it is only in the last few decades that Russia changed its capital from Saint Petersburg to Moscow.

There is also Persia, Ethiopia, Lybia, Gomer and all his bands and the House of Togarmah of the north quarters, or Uttermost north (J.N.D.). Greed has ever been in the heart of Russia, even in the Czars' time she coveted other people's territory but nobody wanted any of her possessions.

The Purpose

It is good to remember that "He doeth according to His will in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou?" (Dan. 4:35). God affirms in Ezekiel 38:4, "I will turn thee back …" Russia, that pretentious nation which denies the existence of God, shall say, "I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, to take a spoil, and to take a prey." The sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man are emphasized in this chapter. While God says, "I will bring thee against My land" (V. 16); Russia says, "I will go up… to take a spoil, and to take a prey" (Vs. 11-12). In verse 13 Russia expresses her desire to annex by force silver and gold, cattle and goods. God's great objective is revealed in verse 23, "Thus will I magnify Myself, and sanctify Myself: and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am Jehovah." He also assures us that He will make His holy name known in the midst of the people of Israel (ch. 39:25). He also affirms, "When I have… gathered them out of their enemies lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations: then shall they know that I am Jehovah their God" (v. 27).

Divine Intervention

God allows men to go “thus far but no farther.” He states, “When God shall come against the land of Israel… My fury shall come up in My face” (ch. 38:18). “Every man’s sword shall be against his brother” (ch. 38:21). God is not indifferent to His promises, nor will He permit His earthly people to be exterminated; and when Russia would advance with greed in her heart God asserts,” I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws” (Ezek. 38:4); and, again, “I will turn thee back, and will lead thee, and will cause thee to come up from the uttermost north, and will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel. And I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand” (Ezek. 39:2-3 N.T.).

The Final Doom

The proud hosts of the uttermost north, with Russia as the evil genius planning the attack and desiring the product of the nation of Israel now established in the land, and awaiting the appearing of the Son of Man who will establish a regime such as this world has never dreamed of. Christ, Israel’s Messiah shall “fall upon the mountains of Israel” and the ravenous birds and beasts shall devour that great mass of humanity (Ezek. 39:4-5). The ultimate doom of that great host is to perish on the Mountains of Lebanon which skirt the northern part of Immanuel’s land. No human force meets in deadly conflict this great army; it is God who intervenes and destroys it.

When this whole army is routed and the personnel has perished at the hand of God then “they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall kindle fires, and

burn weapons … and they shall make fires with them seven years" (Ezek. 39:9 N.T.). For a period of seven months shall the house of Israel be occupied in burying the dead that they may cleanse the land (Ch. 39:12).

This is the final judgment of the fighting forces of the world. Consequent upon this, the Lord shall be revealed as the Son of Man coming in His glory, and then shall sit upon the throne of His glory (Matt. 25:31). At this juncture the Lord Jesus Christ, as Son of Man, shall judge the living nations, i.e. the civilian population. Their destiny is determined by their attitude to the Messiah the King.

It will be readily observed that the King of the North is not the Russian. First of all the Assyrian, or king of the North, comes on the scene at the beginning of the Great Tribulation; Russia at the close. The forces of the Assyrian come from the east; those of Russia from the north. The Assyrian and his army enter the land of Palestine and leave it waste; the Russian does not enter the land. The Assyrian perishes in the Arabian desert; the Russian on the Mountains of Israel, which are the Mountains of Lebanon. Both, however, are destroyed by divine intervention, and this is the one point of similarity so far as their final destruction is concerned. Both come with the same objective "to take a spoil, and to take a prey." The former succeeds, but Russia fails.

The Millennial Reign of Christ (Feb 1962)

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It is not uncommon to hear professed students of prophecy say, “There is no future for Israel.” If that is so, then we must scrap the benedictions of Israel and Moses, much that the prophetic Psalms contain, and a great part of the prophecies both of the major and minor prophets. But is such a statement true? Let us examine the Word of God, “To the law and to the testimony.”

There are numerous phrases used to describe a period of time that has not yet been experienced by man on this earth, and the Lord Jesus in Matthew 19:28 speaks of “The Regeneration” saying, “Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye shall also sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” Such a scene as is here described has not been enacted, and we positively affirm that the Lord made no mistake when He predicted such an event.

In Acts 3:21 Peter stated in his masterly apologetic that the Lord “shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God had spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.” The word “restitution” means a reconstitution. This period is that to which Christ alluded in Matthew 19:28.

Paul, writing to the saints in Ephesus, stated in chapter 1, verse 21 that Christ had been given the place at God’s

right hand “far above all… and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come.” There is an age to come when Christ shall bear the greatest name, for God has given Him a name which is above every name (Phil. 2:9).

Earlier in that same chapter Paul had referred to “the dispensation of the fulness of times,” when, “He might gather together in one all things in Christ” (V. 10). This “dispensation,” or administration, is not the Eternal State, but this period which we are now considering and which we designate “The Millennium.” The context will reveal that there will be a close proximity between the heavens and the earth at this time. Moreover, in the following verse the inheritance is alluded to, and that will be revealed when Christ comes forth to take the reins of this world’s government and sway the sceptre to the glory of God His Father.

There is one more reference before proceeding with a dissertation on the Millennial reign of Christ, and it is found in Hebrews 2:5, “For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come.” It is God’s divine purpose to make everything and everybody subordinate to His well beloved Son. In the Millennium, when supremacy is His portion and He is sovereign Lord, this will be realised.

There is another thought which may prove helpful and that is the usage of the title “Most High God,” or “Most High.” Such is a millennial title. In Daniel 4:17 Nebuchadnezzar was informed that “The Most High ruleth in the Kingdom of men.” This title is found almost a score of times in the Book of the Psalms, frequently in Daniel’s prophecy, and also in Hosea. If we read the

context of the passages in which this title appears, we shall have no doubts about a Millennium.

The Millennium is the vestibule to the Eternal State. During this period of righteous rule there are two realms in which Christ shall take absolute supremacy: the heavenly and the earthly. On the heavenly side there will be seen the Bride with her Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the people of faith throughout the economies of earth, including the martyred ones of the Book of Revelation, will be there. To this aspect the Apostle Paul looked forward with anticipation. “The Lord will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom.” 1 Corinthians 15:4142 would emphasize the heavenly side of the kingdom, for stars shine above. The earthly side embraces the hundred and forty four thousand from the tribes of Israel together with the innumerable company of Gentiles as described in Revelation 7. The transfiguration of our Lord was a preview of the Millennial Kingdom (Matt. 16:27-28). This period of rule is also emphasized in Matthew 25:31.

Christ in humiliation was designated “King of the Jews;” this title was also given to Him in rejection (Matt. 2:2; 27:37). He will never bear that title again! He will not rule over two tribes (Judah and Benjamin); He shall rule over twelve tribes and be called King of Israel (vide Jno. 1:49). Moreover, when Christ comes the next time He will not come in lowly grace and virtually say “Here I am, will you have Me?” We know that this offer was rejected. The next time He will “break them with a rod of iron” as decreed in Psalm 2:9. His people, the Jews, were unwilling in the day of His rejection, but “Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power” (Psa. 110:3).

The faithful remnant, so often alluded to by the pen of seer and prophet, will have found the way of escape when the “overflowing scourge” passes through the land (Isa. 28:15; see also Zech. 14:5). The ten tribes, Ephraim, or Israel shall pass under the rod and be brought into the bond of the covenant while the rebels shall be purged from among the faithful (Ezek. 20:33-38). Then David shall be king over them (Ezek. 34:23-26; 37:23-28). There need be no difficulty about the title “David,” this is heraldic. David was the shepherd king, but he was also the warrior king. When Christ comes forth “He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet” (1 Cor. 15:25). Christ will also fulfil the type as seen in Solomon who was the peaceful monarch. Christ is spoken of as “King of righteousness” when He fulfils the type which David presents. He is also called “King of Salem,” which is peace, when he fulfils the type which Solomon suggests to us. “David” is also the traditional name — like “Edward” or “George” in the line of succession attached to the British throne. Christ will also manifest Himself as “Priest of the Most High God.” The true Melchisedec will operate according to the order and pattern of Melchisedec. The Melchisedec priesthood is not for the wilderness, it is for the land. It is not a priesthood of intercession but of blessing; loving blessing from God to man and conveying blessing from man to God.

There will be physical transformations during this wonderful benign reign of the One whose right it is; for the diadem and crown shall be removed from the head of the apostate ruler, the wicked prince of Israel, when Jehovah says, “I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and

it shall be no more, until He comes whose right it is; and I will give it Him" (Ezek. 21:25-27).

Nature will be convulsed in that day, for "there shall be abundance of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains" (Psalm 72:16, N.T.). What today is impossible will be manifest in that day. "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb… " (Isa. 11:6). "The lion shall eat straw like the bullock" (Isa. 65:25).

This is a day of combines and huge syndicates, but God favours private enterprize for He states, "They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid" (Micah 4:4). "In that day, saith Jehovah of Hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig tree" (Zech. 3:10).

Righteousness shall reign then as indicated by Isaiah in chapter 32:1, "A king shall reign in righteousness." "With righteousness shall He judge the poor" (Isa. 11:4). "Righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins" (Isa. 11:5). "The sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness" (Psalm 45:6-7). "I lead in the way of righteousness" (Prov. 8:20).

This kingdom which the God of Heaven shall set up "shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people… and it shall stand for ever" (Dan. 2:44).

There will be a rebuilt temple wherein a divinely given ritual shall be re-established, and "The Lord.. shall suddenly come to His temple" (Mal. 3:1). Ezekiel provides the necessary details relevant to the temple

and its worship, and these can be examined in chapters 40 to 48.

Israel in that day will be the head of the nations and not the tail, as indicated by the words of Zechariah in chapter 8 verse 23. Then there shall be no housing shortage as indicated in Isaiah 65:23, “They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble.” “They shall build houses and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them” (Isa. 65:21).

The disrupting elements so prevalent today, war and the rumours of war, shall be unknown then, for “they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Isa. 2:4).

What a remarkable period this will be when the once despised Nazarene shall come forth in power and great glory and wield the sword and sway the sceptre to the glory of God! God has made Him higher than the kings of the earth. Potentates of time shall lick the dust before Him and in righteousness shall He judge and make war. The positional glory of Christ in that day can have no parallel; for supremacy belongs to the Man whom men despised and rejected. Nations and their rulers shall bring their presents unto Him: “Unto Him shall be given of the gold of Sheba…and daily shall He be praised” (Psalm 72:15). Yea, “His name shall endure forever”(Psa. 72:17).

“Crown Him with many crowns

The Lamb upon the throne.”

The Problem of Suffering (July 1962)

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Dr. James Naismith

Studies in First Peter

The Problem of suffering is at once (a) perennial: it has affected all generations of men and raised questions and controversies through the centuries, yet its mysteries are ever new; (b) perplexing: how many have sought and failed to find a solution to it! Philosopher and sage, psalmist and poet have all been baffled by its difficulties; (c) personal: it is not simply a philosophical problem, but at some time affects every one of us, some more than others. It has been truly said that “God had one Son without sin, but He has no sons without sorrow.”

Does the Word of God shed any light on this distressing problem, or afford any comfort to those who suffer? Undoubtedly it does. Suffering is the theme of many passages and of several books of the Bible, and many a sufferer has turned to the Scriptures and derived comfort, cheer, and courage from their pages. One of the books in which suffering is a leading theme is Peter’s First Epistle. Even the casual reader cannot fail to notice the prominent place it occupies in every chapter of this letter. Written in the first century A.D. to believers in Asia Minor who, because of their faith in Christ, were undergoing bitter persecution and still had a fiery trial in prospect, its teachings have been a source of encouragement to afflicted saints in all centuries and continents.

Among His last words to His own on the eve of His suffering, our blessed Lord uttered a word of warning: “In the world ye shall have tribulation” (John 16:33). In varying measure His prediction has been fulfilled in the lives of His faithful followers at all times since. True it is that “all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim. 3:12). In many parts of the world at this present time — in other lands, and even in parts of North America — hostility to the Gospel and to those who present it is fierce and bitter. In these circumstances, the message of First Peter is surely timely, as, indeed, it is at all times for all of us who endeavour to be faithful to our absent Lord in a world that still despises and rejects Him. Moreover, these five chapters afford comfort to all who pass through suffering, whatever its cause or character.

The writer approaches the problem from slightly different angles in each chapter, in order to comfort, warn, encourage, and exhort the readers. While certain aspects of the subject are reiterated in several of the chapters, we can perhaps discern the following main themes:

Comfort in Suffering (Chapter One); Conduct in Suffering (Chapter Two); Confidence in Suffering (Chapter Three); Cheerfulness in Suffering (Chapter Four); Consequences of Suffering (Chapter Five).

Comfort in Suffering (Chapter 1:3-7)

As early as the sixth verse of the Epistle, the Apostle introduces the subject of suffering by stating one of the great Christian paradoxes, “Ye greatly rejoice, though … ye are in heaviness.” This paradox was exemplified by the early disciples who “rejoiced that they were counted

worthy to suffer shame for His name" (Acts 5:41); by Paul and Silas who sang praises in a prison at Philippi; and by the Apostle Paul when he wrote to Philippi from a prison at Rome a letter that vibrates with joy. Peter reiterates it in chapter 3:14 and chapter 4:13-14. Wherefore this joy in sorrow? The "wherein" at the beginning of verse 6 refers back to the previous verses, and these, together with verse 7, provide four sources of comfort for suffering Christians.

The possession which God has provided for us (v. 4): It is probable that many of the readers, as a result of persecution, had experienced the "spoiling of their goods" (Heb. 10:34) and the loss of their property. They, and we, are assured that whatever may happen to their earthly possessions, they have an infinitely more valuable inheritance. In contrast to everything of earth this inheritance cannot be destroyed, it is "incorruptible," unaffected by the ravages of time and of men; be defiled, it is undefiled," no mark can mar it, no stain can taint it, no spot can spoil it; decay, it "fadeth not away"; nor be deprived to us, "reserved, in Heaven," the surest and safest treasury.

The Power by which God preserves us (v. 5): "Kept by the power of God." In the midst of dangers, seen and unseen, physical and spiritual, and despite trials and tribulations, God keeps watch above His own, maintaining a garrison around them (the word "kept" is a military term used of a guard or garrison). Not only is our inheritance kept secure for us (v. 4); we are kept secure for it (v. 5). "Through faith," faith lays hold, not only on God's grace that saves (Eph. 2:8) but also on His power that keeps.

The Prospect which God has placed before us (v. 5): “Unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” Clearly, it is the future aspect of our salvation which is referred to here. The three tenses of salvation are evident in this passage: Past (v. 3), “begotten again,” (v. 9) the salvation of the life from the power of sin; Future (v. 5), the salvation of the body from the presence of sin. What a glorious prospect to provide cheer and comfort in times of trial! Complete deliverance from the pains, problems, and persecutions that now beset us awaits when we are ushered for ever into the presence of our Lord and changed into His likeness! “Hush! be every murmur dumb; it is only till He come!”

The Purpose which God has planned for us (v. 7): God has a design for all of our lives, and trials are part of that design. Of times we may not understand His ways, they are “past finding out” (Rom. 11:33), but we can trust His unerring wisdom and His matchless love, even in the midst of suffering, which He allows for our best good. This suffering has a twofold purpose: It is a PROOF (‘trial’) of our faith. Just as examinations test the diligence and ability of the student, so the sterling quality of our faith is tested and approved by the trials through which we pass.

It is a PROCESS by which the pure gold of our faith is refined, and the dross of our lives consumed in the crucible of suffering and the fire of affliction. The trial of our faith is much more precious than that of gold; the latter, however prized by men, belongs to the category of perishable goods; faith is imperishable. The full results of this process await a future day, “the appearing of Jesus Christ.” Then shall the gold shine forth in all its beauty and lustre and will be found “unto praise and

honour and glory," "unto the praise of His glory" (Eph. 1:14).

"He laid our gold in a burning fire,

Though we fain would have said Him 'Nay,'

And He watched the dross that we hadn't seen

As it melted and passed away;

And the gold grew brighter and still more bright,

But our eyes were so dim with tears,

We saw but the fire, not the Master's hand,

And we questioned with anxious fears.

Can it be that it pleased His loving heart

To cause us a moment's pain?

Ah no! but He saw through the present cross

The bliss of eternal gain."

Ere we leave this passage, two very precious little phrases in verse 6 merit our consideration: The first is, "If need be." Our Father will not allow His child a needless pain. We can be sure that all that He permits in grace is needful and for our eternal profit. The tears, the pains, the losses, the sorrows, and the crosses are all numbered among the "all things" that "work together for good" (Rom. 8:28). The second is, "For a season." Like the "pleasures of sin" (Heb. 11:24), the pangs of suffering are "but for a season." The night may seem dark and long; but the Daystar is about to arise and the Sun of Righteousness shine forth to usher in the eternal day. How brief our present affliction will seem, viewed from the light of eternity, a "season" to Peter, a "moment" to Paul (2 Cor. 4:17).

Prelude to the Eternal State (July 1962)

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

The question may be asked, “What is the eternal State?” It is that timeless, dateless, uncharted, unlimited sphere where God is manifestly “all in all.”

The term, “The fulness of the Gentiles” (Rom. 11:25) will terminate when Christ descends to the air to receive from this world His own.

The term “The times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24) will conclude at the manifestation of Christ in glory.

During the thousand years of the righteous reign of Christ, Satan will be incarcerated in the bottomless pit (Rev. 20:1-3). The imprisonment of the devil makes his power ineffective. During that wonderful reign of our Lord Jesus Christ there will be many people born, many of whom shall yield feigned obedience to Him. When Satan is loosed from his prison house, he will go forth to deceive the peoples that dwell upon the earth, gathering many to his standard. With such an host, recruited from those born during the millennium, Satan will compass the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city (Rev. 20:8). This final plot to rebel against God will prove abortive; for fire will descend from Heaven and devour the whole mass.

Satan will be caught red-handed in his rebellion and will be cast into the Lake of Fire: this, said Christ, is the final doom “prepared for the devil and his angels.” The beast (or head of the revived Roman Empire) and the False

Prophet (The Antichrist)have already been consigned to that flame which is never quenched.

The Great White Throne

Consequent upon this scene being enacted, there is the establishing of the Great White Throne where the unregenerate dead shall stand to hear their final doom pronounced. This is the closing scene in the great drama of man's eventful history on the stage of time about to be enacted ere the curtain falls forever.

Heaven and earth have fled away, and time no longer exists. The throne is called a GREAT throne. Great, because of the august personage who occupies it. "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John 5:22). The Throne-Sitter is none other than the Man who died that men might live. The throne takes its character from the One who sits upon it. It is also designated a White throne. This reveals the character of the Judge. Holy and Righteous is His name. It will afford an opportunity of noting the contrast between black and white; the many lost souls who stand before the Throne for sentence, and the purity of the One who adorns that throne. Never was contrast in black and white like this: never!

Final judgment awaits the sinners who have repudiated every claim of God, and thwarted all the overtures of the Holy Spirit, and who await examination and sentence from the lips of the Judge of all the earth, who shall always do right. The sinners are not there to know whether they are going to be in Heaven or not: the fact that they are there is the proof of their lost estate, and their doom awaits them in the passing of the sentence

by the righteous Judge. They were judged every man according to his works (Rev. 20:13).

Some have suggested that not all who appear at the Great White Throne will be finally doomed for they argue that because it does not say, “All were cast into the lake of fire,” but “Whosoever was not written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire,” the number of the lost is limited. This is begging the question for sin will have its answer in immediate judgment during the Millennium (Isa. 65:20). This means all who appear at the Great White Throne have failed to have part in the first resurrection upon whom the second death hath no power (Rev. 20:6). Had such been Christ’s, they certainly would have been raised and had their portion in the first resurrection: but they will be raised to judgment; and the fact of their presence there is the proof of their doom. They will be “cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death.” Such words should make the sinner tremble and quake, especially in the knowledge of the revelation that there is no escape from such judgment and such a final doom.

Tile Eternal State

The eternal state is the consummation of divine purpose; moreover, it is the summit of holy desire and hope.

There shall be New Heavens introduced as well as a New Earth wherein dwelleth righteousness (2 Peter 3:13). The New Heavens shall be the residence of the redeemed from Abel onward until the close of this present economy of grace, together with the martyred companies of Revelation during the Great Tribulation. They shall all be changed, and having borne the image

of the earthy they shall also bear the image of the heavenly (1 Cor. 15:49).

The New Earth will be peopled by those who entered the millennial earth and refused to rally to the standard of Satan when the great revolt took place. When the mediatorial character of the coming Kingdom has been in operation for one thousand years, the Lord Jesus Christ shall hand it back to God, even the Father, that God may be all in all (1 Cor. 15:24-28).

This is God's everlasting rest. In creation His rest was spoiled through the entrance of sin. Virtually He said, "I will get rest in Canaan." Alas! this was spoiled by unbelief: now He says "I will find rest in Christ." "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God" (Heb. 4:9): this is not only the millennial rest, but the eternal one.

The dissolution of the present Heavens and earth will be accomplished by fire as indicated in 2 Peter 3:10. The New Heavens and the New Earth shall abide forever.

In Revelation 21:1-8 we are given an insight into some of the salient features of that wonderful state. There will be no more sea. This being a symbolic book, we could appreciate the absence of sea, for the sea speaks of RESTLESSNESS. There will be the absence of restlessness in that eternal day. The sea is indicative of DESTRUCTION. This will be an unknown factor when the rays of eternal glory are diffused. Time has been the era of destruction: such has taken place both at the hands of God and of man. There will be nothing of that character then. The sea betokens DISTANCE which separates friends from friends. The dawn of Eternity will

dismiss forever any thought of separation, and distance will be an unknown thing.

We are given a glimpse by faith at the descent of the holy city, the new Jerusalem, from God out of Heaven. The bridal character of the Bride is still as charming as when first she was presented to her heavenly Bridegroom; for she is seen as a bride adorned for her husband (Rev. 21:2).

In verse 3 of Revelation 21 we are informed that, consequent upon the vision of verse 2, the announcement is made, “The tabernacle of God is with men.” It does not say, “The temple,” but “The tabernacle.” The tabernacle was a moveable structure, and suggests that the city will not take up permanent residence in the New Earth, but shall move about according to the divine wisdom.

God shall dwell with them and they shall be His people. This is not applicable to Israel alone, but to all. He will be their God: yea, God will be all in all.

Sorrow, pain, crying and teardrops will be unknown then. These were symptoms of the old creation where sin had been so manifest, but “the former things have passed away”(Rev. 21:4). The One who made all things (Col. 1:16) will make all things new.

The last glimpse we have of Eternity is in verse 8 of Revelation 21. It is tragic when we consider the list of those who shall be cast into the lake of fire; and it commences with the ‘fearful’, i.e. those who are afraid to accept God’s provision. The work of Christ on the cross would have met their every need, but they were afraid to take the step lest their friends should laugh at

them. The remainder of those listed among the lost makes sad reading.

From the midst of such declarations the Lord sends forth a wonderful appeal, saying, “I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.” Such a loving appeal should not be despised. The Lord will give the needed supply which can satisfy the soul forever. Are you thirsty? Accept the divine provision and you will never thirst again.

The Problem of Suffering (Aug 1962)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 8 No. 8, Aug 1962.

Dr. James Naismith

Conduct in Suffering - 1 Peter 2:18-25

In these verses, primarily addressed to domestic servants responsible to different kinds of masters, we can discern instruction on the conduct of Christian servants in any sphere, and indeed of everyone of us in our contacts with the world around. Among our masters and others whom we meet daily, are “the good and gentle,” who are understanding, considerate and reasonable, and may even respect us for the stand we take; others, however, are “froward” — crooked, awkward to deal with, difficult to please and constantly finding fault, opposed to the Gospel and to those who declare and defend it. By exhortation and example, the Apostle emphasizes two main principles by which our lives should be governed, regardless of the circumstances in which we find ourselves:

Exhortation verses 18-20. (1) The Christian’s conduct should be such as will never merit suffering or punishment at the hands of his fellows. So important is it that we should, in a hostile world, maintain a conduct beyond reproach that the Apostle reiterates this teaching in dealing with the problem of suffering in chapters 3 and 4. The Christian should never have to suffer for wrongdoing or be buffeted for his faults, but should be subject to his master with all fear.

(2) The Christian's conduct in the face of unmerited suffering should be characterized by patience and submission. There is no particular credit in patiently enduring suffering which is the result of our own wrongdoing. But if we suffer for doing well and endure without retaliating, threatening, complaining or harbouring grudges, this is "acceptable with God," well-pleasing to Him.

Example verses 21-25. The supreme example of the Saviour perfectly illustrates and enforces the teaching of His servant. Just as the pupil copies or traces over the copperplate writing of his teacher, so we have been left an 'example' —literally an under-writing — to copy in our lives, a perfect pattern to follow. This example demonstrates the two principles already stated. (1) Christ's conduct was irreproachable (v. 22). Blameless in action —"Who did no sin" — and word —"neither was guile found in His mouth." He was hated without a cause (Ps. 69:4). No persecution was ever so intense, no suffering so great as He unjustly endured.

(2) Yet through this suffering, He was a perfect example of patient endurance, of non-retaliatory submission (v. 23). This holy Sufferer returned compassion and love for bitterness and hate. Treated unrighteously by men, He committed Himself in the hour of His affliction "to Him that judgeth righteously," who will always vindicate those who seek to uphold His honour. The empty tomb on earth and the filled throne in Heaven are evidences of God's righteous judgment and an encouragement to those who, like their Saviour, 'commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator' (Ch. 4:19).

Confidence in Suffering - (Chapter 3:10-17)

Persecution tends to induce panic. Fear and foreboding are the natural reactions to suffering imposed or threatened by hostile opposition. The believer, however, should have such triumphant confidence that, far from being ‘afraid of their terror’ and ‘troubled’ by their threats, he can count such suffering a blessing and privilege, and be ‘happy’ in the face of it (v. 14). In the words of another, ‘In nothing terrified by your adversaries … for unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ … to suffer for His sake’ (Phil. 1:28, 29). What is the basis of this confidence?

A Good Conscience (verses 10-13). Well might the believer be alarmed and ashamed if he suffers for evildoing. But if he “do good,” is a “follower of that which is good,” has a “good conscience” and a “good conversation” (behaviour), and so suffers “for well doing,” he can face persecution without alarm and put his false accusers to shame.

God’s Supervision and Care (v. 12). As, of course, the Lord declared to Moses on Mount Horeb, “I have surely seen the affliction of My people … and have heard their cry” (Ex. 3:7), so His eyes and ears are still open to the needs of His own and His protection and deliverance are assured. Whatever insult or injury men may heap upon us, we can trust God, who is over all, to “turn what seems to harm us into everlasting joy.” “Who is he that will harm you?” “If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Rom. 8:31).

Acknowledgment of the Lordship of Christ (v. 15). “Have no fear of them … But in your hearts reverence Christ as Lord” (RSV). The sure antidote to fear is to be found in

the Lord Jesus Christ. The heart of every believer should be a sanctuary where He reigns supreme. If He is undisputed Sovereign of our lives, controlling every thought and action, directing every motive and move, then all fear will be banished. “The Lord is the strength of my life: of whom shall I be afraid? … Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear” (Ps. 27:1, 3), “The Lord is on my side; I will not fear” (Ps. 118:6). “The Lord is my helper and I will not fear what man shall do unto me” (Heb. 13:6). Is He Lord of your life?

Readiness to Defend Our Faith (v. 15). Since persecution arises because of our faith and the hope which it bring us, confidence in the face of such persecution will depend in measure on our knowledge of the faith and our ability to defend it. Are we sufficiently acquainted with the great truths of the Christian faith that we are ready at any time to explain to an enquirer the ground of our hope and basis of our confidence? Alas, too many of us have such a meagre knowledge of the Scriptures that, when asked “a reason of the hope that is in us,” our mouths are closed!

Conviction of the Will of God (v. 17). “If the will of God be so.” The will of God in my life: “nothing more, nothing less, nothing else” —this should be the motto of every believer. On occasions, that will may involve suffering for well-doing, but with what confidence we can face every circumstance and vicissitude of life if we know that we are in the current of His will. “All is right that seems most wrong, if it be His sweet will.”

“Upon God’s will I lay me down

As child upon its mother’s breast;

No silken couch, nor softest bed

Could ever give me such deep rest.

The Problem of Suffering (Sept 1962)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 8 No. 9, Sept 1962.

Dr. James Naismith

Cheerfulness in Suffering - (1 Peter 4:12-19)

It would almost seem as if Peter had drawn his Epistle to a close with the doxology of chapter 4:11, when, foreseeing the still fiercer persecution that was soon to be unleashed upon his readers, he took up his pen again to write words of cheer and encouragement to fortify them against this fiery trial. His words have been used by the Spirit of God to encourage God's people in many other trials and persecutions. What a note of joyfulness pervades: "rejoice," "be glad," "exceeding joy," "glorify God." Even in the fiery furnace of affliction, the Christian can "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (chap. 1:8). This cheerfulness has at least three sources:

Participation in Christ's Sufferings (v. 13a): what an honour it is to be associated with our Blessed Lord in His sufferings — these sufferings that have endeared Him eternally to our every heart! We can never enter into His substitutionary sufferings on our behalf—these were His to bear alone; but it is our inestimable privilege to know "the fellowship of His sufferings" (Phil. 3:10), to "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ" (Col. 1:24), and to "go forth therefore unto Him without the camp bearing His reproach" (Heb. 13:13). He who suffered so much for us calls us to suffer a little with Him. Shall we not rejoice to be a partaker of His sufferings?

Prospect of Christ's Glory (v. 13b): "His glory shall be revealed." What a day of rejoicing that will be! One glimpse of Him then will more than compensate for all the trials of time. Our hearts should be glad with exceeding joy now at the very thought of it. "Oh the joy to see Thee reigning, worshipped, glorified, adored!" How the thrilling prospect of gazing on Him, on all His transcendent glory, should brighten the darkest hour of this "little while!" And not only shall we behold His glory, but, wonder of wonders, we shall be partakers "of the glory that shall be revealed" (chap. 5:1). "We shall appear with Him in glory" (Col. 3:4). Truly, "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18).

Presence of Christ's Spirit (v. 14). Till that day when earth's shadows will forever disappear, we have a Comforter who abides with us in the midst of suffering, "the Spirit of glory and of God." Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, cast into the burning, fiery furnace heated seven times more than it was wont to be heated, because of their faithfulness to God, were not there alone. In the furnace with them was a fourth person "like the Son of God" (Dan. 3:25). He is still the same today. No furnace of affliction is so hot but He will be present with us by His Spirit. On the eve of His suffering, He not only predicted tribulation for His disciples; He also promised a Comforter who would abide with them forever (John 14:16). To share His reproach is a privilege in which to be 'happy' for it is 'an evident token' of the fact that the Spirit who abode upon our blessed Lord now rests upon those who follow Him in His rejection.

Verses 17 to 19 of this chapter present several difficulties, and can lead to misunderstanding if divorced from the context of the previous verses —the context of suffering, reproach and persecution for the name of Christ. Viewed in the light of the context, it becomes clear that the statement that 'judgment must begin at the House of God' neither refers to the Judgment Seat of Christ, nor lends support to the theory of future 'purgatory' — for which there is no scriptural evidence. Peter is still referring to the fiery trial of affliction which purifies the gold of the believer's faith. If this suffering, this disciplinary judgment, is necessary for God's people now — the "House of God," — what an awful prospect is in store for "them that obey not the Gospel of God!" In verse 18, the word "scarcely" means "with difficulty," and the word "saved" embraces all aspects of our salvation, particularly its present aspect of deliverance from trials, and tribulations. But for the power of God which keeps us, we should all be lost. If the righteous then are saved only with difficulty — through much affliction — and only by the preserving power of God, what hope is there for the ungodly and the sinners who leave God out of their lives? Wherefore, since suffering is in God's will for us, we can with confidence commit our souls to His care and keeping, and trust Him to fulfil His purposes for us and guard us till He takes us home (v. 19).

Consequences of Suffering - (1 Peter 5:10)

It is surely appropriate that Peter's final word on suffering in his first Epistle should be concerned with the issues of that suffering in the experience of the sufferer — the results which the "God of all grace," in

His infinite wisdom, and His wondrous grace, has designed for us. Notice the central clause of this verse, “after that ye have suffered a while.” The preceding section of the verse states the eternal results, and the closing section the present results that accrue ‘after’ suffering.

The present Consequences: As we quoted in our study of the first chapter of the Epistle, God has sovereign purposes in allowing suffering — for the refinement of our lives. Here these purposes are elaborated:

(a) “Make you perfect” not, of course, sinless; but fully equipped and qualified for the work to which God has called us. Suffering is part of the training in His school, fitting us for His service.

(b) “Stablish:” make steadfast. How easy it is to be discouraged even in doing the Lord’s work! So many put their hands to the plough and look back! In the school of suffering, we not only acquire fitness for service, but we learn also patience and steadfastness in service.

(c) “Strength:” In the physical realm, suffering weakens: who among us has not experienced the weakening effect of an illness, even a short one? In God’s school, however, suffering is given — to strengthen us —because it leads to greater dependence on God’s strength, which “is made perfect in weakness.”

(d) “Settle:” Suffering makes us ‘unmoveable’ as well as “steadfast” (1 Cor. 15:58). As the tree, in times of storm, plants its roots more deeply in the soil, so, in times of tribulation, we become more firmly “rooted … in Him” (Col. 2:7), more dependent on His resources, more closely drawn to Him to derive all from Him.

The Eternal Consequences: Were we only to reap the fruit of our suffering in time, it would still be worthwhile. Many of the greatest saints have been the greatest sufferers, and their sufferings have made them more saintly. But God's purposes ripen in eternity — and what a harvest awaits the sufferer when he reaches the other side! For the God who has 'called' us to suffering — often unjustified (chap. 2:21), and to a life of blessing to others —often in response to evil and railing (chap. 3:9), has called us also to eternal glory. Eternal glory — the consummation of God's desires and designs for His people; the grand climax of the working of His grace — for He is "the God of all grace;" and the blessed fruit of our little travail here in time! And how little and brief will that travail then seem! Note the contrast, "glory … after that ye have suffered," "eternal … a while" ("a little while," R.V.). "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17).

Was The Temptation of Christ Real? (Part 1) (Apr 1968)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 14 No. 4, Apr 1968.

There are many insinuations made relative to the temptation of our glorious Lord, and two are outstanding. They are

1. If Christ could not sin, then temptation meant nothing to Him.

2. If our Lord had any advantage over us in meeting temptation by reason of His Deity He would not have experienced temptation in such a way as to enable Him to succour us when we are tempted.

With reference to the first observation it seems unnecessary to affirm the impeccability of our Lord, for the Holy Scriptures are replete with such attestations — "He knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5:21).

"In Him is no sin" (1 Jno. 3:5).

"He did no sin" (1 Peter 1:22).

In view of the advent of Jesus Christ in manhood, the heavenly messenger stated, "That holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Holiness characterized Him in birth, and throughout His pathway of obedience in this scene, and this is emphasized in Christ's own challenging statements, viz., "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" (John 8:44), and "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me" (Jno. 14:30). He was that holy sacrifice who "through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God" (Heb. 9:14). This sacrifice alone could meet the requirements of a

holy God, and satisfy the demands of that righteous throne which sin had insulted; thus enabling God in righteousness and true holiness to justify the sinner who believes in Jesus. God's character must abide inviolate, for He never compromises it to accommodate anyone: and the sacrifice which He has accepted must be flawless. The years of the public ministry of our Lord attest His holiness. In resurrection and exaltation He is our Great High Priest, with emphasis on "holiness," for we read, "For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Heb. 7:26). Holiness and sin are the absolute antithesis of each other. The Holy Scriptures carefully safeguard the character of our Lord giving us overwhelming evidence of His holiness. Being satisfied that He is sinless, let us now proceed to examine the two observations at the introduction of this thesis.

The first statement is "If Christ could not sin, then temptation meant nothing to Him." We, who are the children of a fallen parentage, do sin. Why do we sin? It is because we have inherited a sinful nature which is ever prone to do that which is contrary to the mind of God. We have already referred to Scriptures which declare His sinlessness. If He could sin, then He did sin: for sin is the product of an evil nature and practising sin is its characteristic, but we have the Holy Spirit's record that "He did no sin." We sin because we cannot help sinning. Here is One who is holy in birth, in life, in death, in resurrection and ascension to Glory. There were no evil desires fostered in His bosom for He claimed, "I do always those things that please Him (the Father)." The Holy Scriptures establish the impeccability

of our Lord, and satisfied with what God has declared we proceed to examine the first statement.

Did Temptation Mean Nothing to Christ?

Did the temptation mean nothing to our Lord? It is a known fact that the holier a person is the more tremendous temptation appears. To those who live lives which, alas! are indifferent to the claims of Christ, and by no means commend the gospel, then temptation is something to which they readily succumb, for temptation really means nothing to them.

The Person of our Lord Jesus Christ is God and Man in perfect unison. In coming into manhood He brought Godhood and Manhood in one co-mingled essence, manifested without any Adamic or racial constituent whatsoever, so that when men saw Jesus, they saw the Father" (Jno. 14:9). Had He remained in "the form of God" then He could not have been tried and tested at all: the testing came when He became Man: when He accepted the body prepared for Him (Heb. 10:5). While He is Man in absolute perfection there is no constituent in that vast polygonal ensemble of divine glory absent. Soi disant human nature could never provide a suitable body for that Eternal. One, so God did what nature could not do. While bearing in mind that He is a Person with a dual nature — that which is divine, and that which is human — never seek to dissect by separating between His Godhood and His Manhood. Some have gone the length of insinuating, if not blatantly declaring, that Christ was not in the enjoyment of His divine foreknowledgeand power when here on earth, otherwise there would have been no reality about His temptation. Is such an assertion true? Take His power —He is

capable of turning stones into bread, as Satan suggested He should do if He were the Son of God. Turning stones into bread would have been as easy for the Son of God as the raining of bread from Heaven to the host of Israel throughout their wilderness journeyings. The turning stones into bread was a divine capability: it was peculiar to Himself, and could never be accomplished by any fallen son of Adam. Had the requisite power not been inherent in the Lord Jesus Christ where would the temptation have come in? Satan is actively engaged today in an all-out endeavour to get men to deny the Deity of our Lord — His Omnipotence, His Omniscience and His Omnipresence.

Our Lord was tempted in all things in like manner, sin apart (Heb. 4:15) (J. N. D's translation). Let us place all the emphasis possible upon the last two words of this statement, while appreciating the statement as a whole. There is no occasion on record in which the Lord was tempted by sin. He could never be tempted by sin, as we are. If a person is sinless then sin does not have any appeal. When we succumb to temptation it is because we have failed to reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:11). Consequently we are informed that "sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. 6:14).

Was the Temptation of Christ Real? (Part 2) (May 1968)

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The synoptic writers each make mention of the temptation of our Lord, though Mark does not provide the details afforded by Luke and Matthew. There are two significant facts stated in Mark's Gospel, first —"The Spirit driveth Him into the wilderness" (Mark 1:12). The second is found in the following verse "He was with the wild beasts." The first man Adam was among the beasts when he was still in innocence. What a transformation sin wrought! "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Rom. 8:22). The Lord was with the wild beasts without fear: the Creator had around Him some of His creatures and all were subordinate to His good pleasure. He had power over an unbroken colt (Luke 19:30). The perfect Servant of Jehovah was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness, such a statement would prove the fact that He was willing to execute the desires of the One who sent Him into this scene. The wilderness is a place of 'no supply': it is a comfortless scene, yet to this place did the submissive Servant move in keeping with the mind of God, His Father. It was in such a scene as this that Satan commenced his attack on the Lord. If we take the temptation as recorded by Luke, we shall find that the threefold principle defined in 1 John 2:16 is clearly envisaged. John states, by the Holy Spirit, "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

The first temptation relates to the “lust of the flesh”: the second to “the lust of the eyes”; and the third to “the pride of life.” It is important to notice that the Lord when tempted brought God between Himself and the adversary and defeated him on each count. There was no sin in making bread from stone. Did not John Baptist say “God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham” (Luke 3:8). There is nothing sinful in being the possessor of all the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them, for when the seventh angel sounds his trumpet, voices in Heaven declare, “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever” (Rev. 11:15). God had predicted such a time as this in the prophecy of Daniel (Dan. 2:44). There is nothing sinful in committing oneself to a beneficient God!

The question might be asked “Wherein lay the temptation?” The temptation was presented by the devil in a subtle manner in an endeavour to get the Lord to do some things which, under certain conditions, were perfectly lawful, at a wrong time, and in a wrong way. In the first temptation the devil made a bid to induce the Lord to desert the pathway of dependence and obedience, and so to use His own initiative and exercise His own discretion. This is what we might designate “self-assertion,” or “self-expression.” It is worthy of note that the Father had just opened Heaven to testify to His profound delight in Jesus, the Son of God. The Father had taken into His wide compass the secret life lived at Nazareth, and which was divinely approved by the Father, The Father gave witness to the fact that Jesus was the beloved Son of the Father. Satan grasped at this and in a challenging fashion said If thou be the Son of

God then give us the evidence; assert Yourself and manifest Your power: You are hungry, meet Your personal need by converting stones into bread, This was a test along the line of “the lust of the flesh,” but the Lord overcame the devil by the Word of God making a citation from the fifth book of the Bible — Deuteronomy 8 verse 3.

The second temptation was a suggestion from the devil that Christ should ignore divine purpose when God shall give Him the nations for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession (Psalm 2:8): then the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord, and His Christ, as has already been observed from the Prophecy of Daniel and from the Book of Revelation. This would appear to be a testing along the line of self-gratification. The kingdoms of this world and the glory of them was not given as a lesson in geography, but one of history, for kingdoms are not geographical but historical. A review in a moment of time of all the blaze of glory that had been diffused from the mighty potentates of time and their kingdoms had no appeal to One whose desire was ever to do the will of His Father. This temptation was presented with a specific appeal to the “lust of the eyes.” We know that through the medium of divine revelation the sorrows of Gethsemane and the tragedy of Golgotha lay in the pathway of obedience to the Christ of God, and the devil would seek to offer Him what would be legitimately His at a future date. In our study it is wise to remember that Luke records the fact that Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil (Luke 4:1-2). How often do we expose ourselves to

temptation being “drawn away of his own lust, and enticed” (James 1:14). Here is that blessed One — the Lord Jesus Christ — full of the Holy Ghost, and led by the Spirit to endure temptation of a very severe character. One full of the Holy Spirit will meet temptation in whole hearted dependence upon God. How the wisdom of the Lord sparkles in the three citations which He made from the Book of Deuteronomy! He did not quote from Leviticus, for that is the book for the priests, and “if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all” (Heb. 8:4. R.V.). He did not quote from Numbers, for that is the book for the Levites, and “it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah” (Heb. 7:14). In quoting from Deuteronomy He revealed that He was conversant with the contents of the fifth book of the Bible, viz., Deuteronomy, which is the book for the common people. The second quotation Christ made was from Deuteronomy 6:13, and He again defeated the devil.

The final temptation was most seductive, and characterized by marked severity. Already it has been noticed that our Lord defeated the devil by quoting from the Holy Scriptures. In this third temptation the devil makes use of the Word of God to suit his final endeavour to overthrow the Christ of God. The third temptation was more public than the others, and has within its range the thought of self-exaltation. None need have observed Christ turn a stone into bread, none need have had a glimpse at the glory of the world kingdoms or known how Christ came to possess them: while the first two temptations are of a secretive character, this final one is more public. To see the Lord fall from the pinnacle of the temple and be delivered in a miraculous

manner would have a tremendous effect upon the man in the street. The first temptation had a particular application to the body — a meal for One who had hungered over a lengthy period. The second had to do specifically with the soul, for it has to do with man's higher power even to taking control of world empires. The third temptation had to do with the spirit. Man, as man, cannot force God to act contrary to His own divine purpose. Israel complained about the provision provided during their sojourn in the wilderness, saying "Our soul loatheth this light bread." There was a marked disgust on the part of Israel against the divine provision which God designates "angels food" and "the corn of Heaven" (Psalm 78:24-25). They presumed that through their complaints God would accommodate His people by giving them some other type of food: see Numbers 11. This final temptation presented by the devil was in respect of God and the Lord Jesus Christ. To this temptation Christ again answered from the pages of Holy Writ (Deut. 6:16). The tempter in this final testing of the Son of God, brought God and Christ together. Can any creature force the God of the universe to act by a bold attack on God's Son? Nay, verily! Now that the devil has miserably failed in his threefold attack, he beats a hasty retreat crestfallen — "he departed from Him for a season." Would he return? He did in the Garden of Gethsemane, on the cross of Calvary, and at the sepulchre. Christ has finally vanquished that inexorable foe: and only through death did the Mighty Deliverer destroy him that had the power of death.

The wilderness testing confirmed the word of our Lord — "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me" (Jno. 14:30), though these words quoted were

spoken in view of His exodus from this scene and the final attack which the devil would make. We learn, in conclusion, that “angels came and ministered unto Him.” The night of the betrayal of our Lord provided an opportunity for Christ to affirm “Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels?” These heavenly messengers could have been despatched at the bidding of the Lord, but then how would Scripture be fulfilled, and how could ruined humanity have been retrieved from eternal doom? Forty days testing—then the angels! All this reveals the perfection of His manhood. In Gethsemane as the shadow of the cross lay across His pathway, and being in an agony He sweat as it were great drops of blood — an angel strengthened Him.

We would answer the enquiry which forms the title of this article —

The testing was that which Satan used against our first parents successfully — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Satan said to our first maternal parent “It is good for food”: “It is pleasant to the eyes”: “to be desired to make one wise.” Our first parents succumbed to the satanic attack. Similar tactics as were used in Eden’s garden were used against the second Man, the last Adam in the wilderness, and we rejoice He triumphed gloriously. The testing was real in every way, and the Holy One was the mighty Victor. If the testing was only supposed, wherein lay the necessity of angels being despatched to minister to our Lord? Was the Christ of God sinless as He trod the pathway of God’s will here below? We reply — “absolutely sinless”! The Second Man, the Last Adam stands in contrast to

the first man Adam. The Lord learned obedience by the things that He suffered, and this equipped Him for the activities in which He now engages on our behalf at the right hand of God as Great High Priest, and as Advocate with the Father. While the sinless Man sinned not: we aver that the temptation was real as we have sought to prove: and I conclude by restating an opening comment in this paper — “We sin because we cannot help it; He sinned not because He is holy. We sin because we can sin.” Our Lord could not be what He is if He could sin: nor could He accomplish the will of Him that sent Him had He been able to sin.

Christ Incomparable (Dec 1968)

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W. Frazer Naismith

Greater than the Temple in the Greatness of His Glory. —Matthew 12 verse 6

The careful reader of Holy Scripture must have observed that the temple of Jehovah was a structure surpassing most, if not all, other buildings in majesty and glory.

Mr. W. E. Gladstone — more than once Prime Minister of Great Britain — visited that bell-voiced preacher Dr. Chalmers in Edinburgh; and relating his experience with him, summed up everything in these words “Everything about him is massive, monumental and magnificent.” In considering the Person of our glorious Lord Jesus Christ everything about Him is massive, monumental, and magnificent!

The building in which Jehovah took up residence among His people was a massive structure in which the Shekinah Glory rested — a visible token of the presence of God in the midst of His chosen people.

In the opening words of Matthew 24 the disciples of our Lord drew attention to the temple buildings as they scanned them from the slopes of Mt. Olivet. The words from the lips of the Lord in reply to that remark were ominous. He stated, “There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” The temple was a true expression of dignity and glory so far

as the outward appearance was concerned; but it was also the meeting place between God and man.

The context of Matthew 12 indicates that the disciples had been plucking ears of corn on the sabbath day, and this provoked the anger of the Pharisees who forthwith complained to the Lord. The answer which He gave must have staggered the religious zealots. He alluded to the occasion in which David and his followers ate the chew-bread which was an exclusively priestly food. Then He continued to adjust their thinking by reminding them that on the sabbath days the priests profaned the sabbath in the temple activities, and yet they were blameless. To consummate the rebuke to those theologians He affirmed His majesty and glory by stating, “The Son of Man is Lord even of the sabbath day.”

Here is One who was Greater than the Temple in the Greatness of His glory!

The glory of the temple was about to fade both materially and typically, as indicated by the Lord in Matthew 23:38, “Your house is left unto you desolate!” Centuries have passed, and the majesty and glory of that building have long since vanished; but here is One whose glory shall never fade: it shall outshine forever that of the temple. His glory shall know no decline, “It shineth more and more unto meridian” (Proverbs 4:18). Glory was His from Eternity as indicated in the prayer of John 17 verse 5: “The glory which I had with Thee before the world was.” In time His glory was diffused as affirmed in John 1:14, “We beheld His glory …” His glory shall be displayed throughout eternal ages as John 17:24 attests, “That they may behold My glory.” Truly the

contrast is unique, and we are enabled to apprehend and appreciate the significance of His words in Matthew 12:6 “In this place is One greater than the temple.”

The greatest contrast is not in that which is materialistic in character, but in the fact that the temple was where God dwelt in the midst of His people in the economy that has passed and where, in the Holiest of All, the sprinkled blood on the gold of the mercy-seat and before the mercy-seat met the eye of God, enabling Him to cover up the guilt of the nation for twelve months, and to give acceptance to the people. The High Priest on the day of atonement entered the Holiest of All alone, and not without blood which he offered for himself and for the errors of the people. He was the representative of the whole nation. Our Lord Jesus Christ is greater than the temple for He is the meeting place between God and man; and He has entered into the holy place having obtained eternal redemption for us. We are favoured to approach the presence of a holy God as encouraged in Hebrews 10:22, “Let us draw near…” The new and living way has been opened up and as purged worshippers we enter into His presence that we may present the sacrifice of praise continually.

The repetition of the sacrifices of old indicated there was no inherent value in the animal sacrifices presented. Hebrews 10:4 assures us “It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.” Such sacrifices of old were finger-posts down the vista of time to the one sacrifice in which there is value and virtue: for His sacrifice has satisfied every claim of divine justice, and its value may be appreciated by the believing sinner. In Hebrews 10:11 we are reminded that “every priest standeth daily ministering, and

offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but This Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God."

The shadow has been displaced by the substance:

"I need no earthly altar,

I need no earthly priest,

I need no earthly fasting,

I need no earthly feast.

I need no earthly temple,

I need no sabbath day:

As substance of the good things came,

The shadows passed away.

The altar spake of sacrifice

On it the Lamb was slain:

The altar cross of Calvary

Makes other altars vain.

And fasts and feasts are blended

With such stupendous skill:

They now consist in simply this —

The doing of God's will.

The earthly temple passed away—

'Twas built of cold, dead stones:

In place God builds a new abode,

But 'tis of living stones.

The earthly Sabbath passed away,

A shadow at its best.

The substance came in One, Who said,

‘Come unto Me and rest!”

There is a building today which is not visible to the human eye, as indicated by both Paul and Peter. Paul stated in Ephesians 2:20-22 that we are “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone: in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” Peter in his First Epistle chapter 2 verse 5 reminds those to whom he wrote that “Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

We have a superlative Christ! He is incomparable! May the reader be given a fuller apprehension of this blessed One, and a deeper appreciation of Him Who is Greater than the Temple in the Greatness of His glory.