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"Behold, The Man!"

Psalm Twenty-two Part I -- The Forsaken One

"The Prophets . . . prophesied, . . . searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them." - 1 Pet. 1:10, 11, A. R. V.

THE most exact and intimate account of the Passion of our Lord was written a thousand years before it took place. The evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, have recorded, in considerable detail, the testimony of eye-witnesses of His trial and crucifixion; and from these vivid accounts the follower of Jesus may enter as deeply into fellowship with Him in His sufferings as such an one's devotion, his temperament, and his own personal experiences permit. But the account in the Twenty-second Psalm goes far deeper than the records referred to, and permits the earnest student a still more profound compassion in his Lord's extremity of pain. For this account purports to be the personal relation of the terrible ordeal of the cross by the Sufferer Himself.

Its accuracy is substantiated in such details as could be observed by the eye-witnesses, in the evangelists' accounts; and Peter, in the passage from his First Epistle quoted above, definitely attributes the authorship of this with other prophecies of "the sufferings of Christ" to "the Spirit of Christ" -- that is, the Logos.

A Supernatural Message

The supernatural character of the message is also confirmed by the one through whom it came, David, the Psalmist-king of Israel, who declared on his death-bed: "The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, and His word was upon my tongue." The Psalm, therefore, cannot be understood to be merely an idealistic or poetic description in general terms of the foreordained sufferings of the world's Redeemer; it must be regarded as an exact narration of actual experience.

This Psalm contains, without doubt, the most remarkable account of a man's death ever written, because it sets forth His thoughts and sensations up to the moment of expiring, and picks up their

continuity immediately upon His reanimation, or resurrection, which we know was more than a day and a half later.

It is also the greatest possible demonstration of divine prescience, or foreknowledge, extending even to the "thoughts and intents of the heart," of what a man would be thinking about a thousand years in the future, when He was dying and when He was resurrected; revealed by the Father, **through** His Logos or Spokesman, the established channel of "all things" concerning His earthly creation. - 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:12-18.

Foreknowledge-Not Predetermination

However, we are not to reason that because of God's foreknowledge of these details of His Son's suffering, He had predetermined that every pang must be experienced as He had dictated in the prophecy. Rather, the proper view is that the sacrifice of a human victim was necessary to the general program of the ages as planned by the Creator; the carrying out of this program was willingly undertaken by the Son; and that while the details contingent upon His fidelity and zeal in following this course were **foreseen** by the Father, they were entirely **dependent** upon the Son's own volition.

When we consider this psychological dissection of a dying man's agony, and remember His innocence of any transgression, and why and for whom He suffered, our awe increases to the point of horror, only to be relieved by the joyful contrast in the record of the victory beyond the tomb, and in the paean of universal praise with which the Psalm concludes.

The terrible conflict that raged within the consciousness of our Lord and which is so vividly described in this Psalm, can be appreciated only when we consider His characteristics and His former life. He was "the only begotten Son, in the bosom of the Father," "the beginning of the creation of God," "the first-born of every creature." From the moment of that creation as the Logos, personification of the Creator's wisdom, He declares "Then I was by Him, as a master workman; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." "All things were made through Him [the Logos]" writes the Apostle, "and without Him was not anything made that hath been made."-Prov. 8:22-31; Col. 1:15-18.

Life on the Spirit Plane

The serenity, the beauty, and the magnificence of His prehuman existence, may perhaps be inferred from the description of a spirit-being of a lesser order or degree, given us under the figure of the King of Tyre, by the Prophet Ezekiel: "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou wast in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering: . . . the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was in thee : in the day that thou wast created they were prepared. Thou wast the anointed cherub that covereth; and I set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire." The description of a spirit-being in terms of human comprehension involves the brilliance of precious stones, the melodic capabilities of instruments of music. Such beings go up and down among the gigantic sun-stars ("stones of fire") that seed the universe, upon errands for their Creator. Who in this world, where "darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people," whose inhabitants "groan and travail in pain together until now," can fully realize the peace, the splendor, the serenity, the happiness of the Logos in full association and communion with His Father, prior to the commencement of His great experience with sin upon the earth?

"He Emptied Himself"

In carrying out the Father's plan for man's redemption, the Logos had suddenly plunged from the spirit conditions of royal ease and power into intimate association with the degradation, sorrow, and suffering of man's estate. Of this tremendous transformation the Apostle writes: "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped [as did Lucifer], but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross." - Phil. 2:5-8.

It was one thing for Him to view from a vastly superior position, with compassionate pity, the misery and woe of man's estate; but quite another thing to enter upon that estate Himself, to remain "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," and yet to take upon Himself the full experience of the sinner's utmost suffering.

The Logos came to earth determined, with all the strength of a perfect mind and will, upon the carrying out of His Father's plan for man's salvation. Prophetically Hosea had written of Him (Peter tells us, at the dictation of the Logos Himself) : "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance [i.e., turning back] shall be hid from My eyes." So completely committed was He in His own mind, and by the course that He had pursued up to that time, to the full completion of the Father's plan by His own sacrifice, that in His spoken prayer just prior to His going forth to Gethsemane, as recorded by John, He reported to the Father (as though that sacrifice was complete) "I glorified Thee on the earth, having **accomplished** the work which Thou hast given Me to do." Perhaps He thus desired, as it were, to burn His bridges behind Him; to strengthen His own resolution by so committing Himself publicly and irrevocably to His determined course. And yet, so hard, so repugnant was that course, and so fearful the conflict that raged within His bosom, that later in the Garden He prayed: "If **it be** possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Thine be done"; but still later, just after His arrest, He said: "The cup that My Father hath given Me to drink, shall I not drink it?"

A Forsaken Sufferer

In this study of the Twenty-second Psalm we use the critical and annotated translation of the Hebrew original by J. B. Rotherham, a devout and learned Jewish Christian, who spent a long lifetime in the study of the Holy Scriptures -- particularly of the text of the originals. His introduction to this translation is illuminating:

"Descriptive Title -- The Voice of a Forsaken Sufferer-Loudly Lamenting His Lot, Minutely Describing His Pain and Shame, without Reproaching God or Accusing Himself -- is Suddenly Silenced (in Death) ; and then as Suddenly is Heard in a Strain of Triumph, in which Other Voices join, all Celebrating the Praises of Jehovah as Sovereign Lord."

The Jewish theologian customarily seeks to find a fulfilment of the prophecies of this Psalm in the sufferings of his persecuted race. To the contrary, Mr. Rotherham says: "The Mysterious Forsaken Sufferer of this Psalm appears to be **an Individual**; seeing that, in the course of His loud lamentation, He distinctly alludes to His mouth, palate, tongue, gums, heart, bones, and clothing; looks back to His childhood, and forward to His death. His situation is indicated with circumstantial minuteness. He is exposed to public view; for He refers to all who see Him. He is fixed in one spot; for His enemies gather round Him. He has been deprived of His clothing ... and sees His garments distributed to others.... And finally, inasmuch as such as would see Him, both

look for and gaze upon Him, it may be . . . surmised that either He has companions in suffering from whom the onlookers would desire to distinguish Him, or else darkness has gathered, making it difficult to descry Him. He is either absolutely friendless, or His friends are so few and feeble that they are powerless to help Him; hence His repeated cries for Divine pity and succor. . . . Who is this Mysterious Sufferer? . . . It is notorious that Christians see in this Psalm a wonderfully vivid and realistic picture of the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth. . . . All that is necessary is to take the Psalm as it is written, and the story of the crucifixion of Jesus as it is written in the four Gospels to lay them side by side, and then to look first on the one picture and then on the other. Detail by detail, the striking similarity comes into view. . . As Dr. Briggs well says: 'It seems to the Christian that the Psalmist indeed gives a more vivid description of the sufferings of Christ on the cross than the authors of the Gospels.'

Why not, indeed, since Jehovah God Himself, through His Logos, is the author of the account in the Psalm?

The Greatest Trial

The Psalm begins abruptly, with the Savior entering upon His final trial. The despairing cry is in His heart, later to be given expression from the cross:

1 My God, My God! **why** hast Thou failed Me? "Far from My salvation" are the words of My loud lamentation.

The supreme agony of being abandoned by His Father to the merciless hatred of His implacable enemies was no doubt first realized by Jesus when, in Gethsemane, the Roman soldiers and servants of the High Priest laid violent hands upon Him to lead Him away to His death. It was a new and bitter experience. Heretofore He had had the full consciousness of His Father's approval and support, which was essential to His peace of mind and confidence in His own great mission. This He repeatedly declared, saying: "I can of Myself do nothing: as I hear I judge: and My judgment is righteous; because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." "I do nothing of Myself, but as the Father taught Me I speak these things. He that sent **Me is with Me, He hath not left Me alone**, for I do always the things that are pleasing to Him." His divine Protector had repeatedly delivered Him from those who would do Him injury.

Now all was changed. He was "delivered into the hands of sinners"; and although He sought to fortify His resolution by reminding Himself that He still had the power to set aside the whole procedure -- that "even now" He might beseech His Father, who would send twelve legions of angels for His rescue--yet He remembered that He was the High Priest of the "better sacrifices," as well as the sacrificial Victim; and if He drew back, as He said: "How then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? . . . All this is come to pass that the Scriptures of the Prophets might be fulfilled. . . . This is your hour and the power of darkness. . . . Then all the disciples left Him and fled." Then indeed the darkness settled down upon His heart. He felt that He was finally abandoned by God and men.

The Power of Darkness

Mr. Rotherham thus comments: "The mental anguish so strongly indicated is due to the Divine **permission** that He, the Sufferer, should thus fail into the hands of His enemies; and that His God should be so long in coming to His rescue. The Sufferer feels Himself to be forsaken, or, rather, that His God has failed Him. . . . His enemies have got Him into their power. . . Verse 11 suggests a connection between the two; and verses 19 to 21 confirm it. The Divine forsaking consists in leaving Him thus to fall into His enemies' hands. The converse, prayed for, shows this. These verses (11, 19-21) say, in effect: 'Return, come near; and rescue Me from the sword, from the dogs, from the lion, from the wild oxen'; thereby implying that it was God's withdrawing and holding aloof, that delivered Him into the power of these, His enemies. The Divine withdrawing, the Divine holding aloof-this was the Divine **failure**."

That He should thus be delivered up to His enemies was clearly anticipated and foretold by Jesus (Mark 10:33, 34; Luke 18:32); and Luke declares (Acts 2:23) that it was "by the deliberate counsel and foreknowledge of God." Why then should Jesus so despairingly and repeatedly inquire the **reason** for His forsaking, and beseech His Father for rescue? Only in this Psalm can we find a satisfactory answer to this question.

Some have found in the cry, "My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" reason to conclude that God had "turned His face away" from His suffering Son, because He is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look up iniquity" (Hab. 1:13); and since, as the Apostle writes (2 Cor. 5:21), "Him who knew no sin, He made to be sin on our behalf," God was impelled to show His hatred of sin by momentarily turning away His face in disapproval of Jesus on the cross.

It is apparent, however, that Jesus was never a sinner, or evil, or iniquitous, as it is declared of Him that He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." He was never more pleasing to the Father than when He hung upon the cross, the world's Redeemer. There He demonstrated His complete obedience and devotion to the Father's will. For the Father to have deliberately made Him feel His disapproval or detestation, in that awful hour of agony, for a purely legalistic reason, would seem to be cruel, unjust, and unloving. Jesus was paying the extreme penalty for sin, namely, death (Rom. 6:23; Ezek. 18:4, 20); what more of suffering could justly be imposed?

Comparison with a passage in Hebrews sheds some light on this question. "So Christ was once **offered** to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time **without sin** unto salvation." (Heb. 9:28.) Note in this statement the antithesis of being "without sin" in His second advent, is His having been "offered to bear sins" at His first advent. He was a sin-offering in His first advent; He will be without a sin-offering in His second advent. It is entirely proper, therefore, to make this passage read: "Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without a **sin-offering** unto salvation" that is, by restitution, then in order. It is equally proper and in accordance with the context to read in 2 Corinthians 5:21: "Him who knew no sin He made to be a sin-offering on our behalf." In both these passages the Emphatic Diaglott renders the word as "sin-offering" and the translator adds the following quotation from the noted commentator, MacKnight, as a foot-note to the Corinthian passage: "There are many passages in the Old Testament where **amartia**, sin, signifies a sin-offering. Hosea 4:6: 'They [the priests] eat up the sin [sin-offerings] of My people.' In the New Testament, likewise, the word sin has the same signification."

Hence, we conclude that we need find no mystic significance in Jesus' lament, as revealed in the first verse of this Psalm, which would cause us to infer that the Father assumed, even for an

instant, an attitude of abhorrence toward the Son.. Later in the Psalm (verse 24) it is positively declared that the Father did not do so.

However, had Jesus gone calmly and triumphantly through His sufferings and death without any apparent evidence of faltering or weakness, sustained by a mental exaltation that lifted Him above all sense and feeling of pain and weakness, His followers might well have admired and worshiped, but they could never have shared His experiences and ultimate victory. No intent is evident in the record to indicate any such superiority on His part to the normal reactions of a human being. Truly. "we have not a High Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities [or feebleness]." "Surely, He hath borne our pains and carried our sicknesses."

"In patience as in labor thou must be

A follower of Me;

Whose hands and feet, when most I wrought for thee,

Were nailed unto a tree."

(Part II of this article will appear in the forthcoming April issue of this journal.)

Our Inheritance In Christ

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." - Col. 1:12.

WE OFTEN think of Israel's inheritance in Canaan as being typical in a general way of our inheritance in Christ. The glowing description of it given by Moses in Deuteronomy, chapters 8 and 11, suggests the idea that the natural picture might have in interesting detail, correspondencies with the spiritual. A close scrutiny reveals seven parallels, each of which is capable of being identified by a single word commencing with the same initial letter. When a multiplicity of ideas can be thus reduced, it makes the subject more easily understood and remembered.

Here is Moses' pen-picture: "For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil-olive, and honey; A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass." "For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven: A land which the Lord thy God careth for; the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." - Deut. 8:7-9; 11:10-12.

The first idea suggested is that our inheritance is a land of spiritual

Sunshine

While not stated in so many words in the passage, this feature is left to be understood. In connection with an Eastern land, sunshine is taken for granted. The other six parallels are stated in the text.

The source of life and well being to the earth, the sun is a natural symbol of God in His relationship to men. Although only few, comparatively, have as yet realized it, "the Lord God is a Sun." By and by the beneficent rays will pour down upon all when "the Sun of righteousness" arises with healing in His wings.

There was a time when the sun's rays were equably distributed from the equator to the poles, as proven by the traces of tropical plants and animals in the polar regions. Since the flood, some portions of the earth's surface are much more greatly favored than others, according to the degrees of latitude in which they are situated. So is it with the spiritual Sun. Concerning the race in general, they are in darkness and death, like the polar night. Only upon the inheritance of His own people does the Lord now shine. Even amongst them, there are differences according to the spiritual degree of latitude in which they dwell: Greenland's icy mountains and India's coral strand offer a contrast which has a parallel in the spiritual life. The fulness of the blessing is experienced on the equatorial line. There our Lord lived, when He was upon earth, in relation to the Father.

The further from the equator, the more uncertain the weather and the greater difference in the changes in the seasons. In our northern climate there is a vast difference between midsummer and winter, or between a day dull and heavy with clouds and one bright with sunshine. Our natural lot may be cast in a land with very variable weather conditions. It is different with regard to our spiritual lot. The Lord's portion for His people is in a land bathed in perpetual sunshine. We are not living up to our privileges if this is not our experience.

Spiritual sunshine does not consist in the possession of happy feelings, merely, but in the inner-consciousness of God's approval. A headache or a touch of indigestion might upset our happy feelings, - but nothing can interfere with the fact of our knowledge that there is nothing between us and our Father. The Lord Jesus enjoyed constantly the sunshine of the Father's face, for He could say, "I do always those things that please Him." Before his translation, Enoch had this testimony, that he pleased God. Pleasing God brings the spiritual sunshine of His smile.

Unlike Egypt, the land of Canaan was a land of refreshing

Showers

This is our second point, and it is enlarged upon by Moses. "For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills." "Not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs; But the land . . . drinketh water of the rain of heaven."

Egypt is a type of the inheritance of fallen humanity, as Canaan is of the people of God. There is no rainfall in Egypt, and the only source of water supply is the Nile. The contrast between the two countries is very striking, and very aptly describes the difference between the Church's source of refreshment and that of the world. The rain direct from heaven, on the one hand, forms into little streams flowing down the hillsides, or bubbles forth as perennial springs with here and there the water collected into deep pools. On the other hand, just the muddied waters of the one great river, whence supplies could be obtained only with effort, "working with the foot."

Speaking to the Samaritan woman, Jesus said, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again." The world has no source of satisfying pleasure. "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." The Lord was referring to the Holy Spirit here, as in the parallel passage in John 7:37, where it is explained "this spake He of the Holy Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive." Water is thus a symbol of the Holy Spirit as well as of the truth, and it is in the former sense that we take it.

In Isaiah 44:3 we read: "I will, pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring." Again in Isaiah 32:15:

Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest." We have in these two instances the Holy Spirit symbolized by the rain.

All sunshine makes a desert. The sun can be a, terrible foe as well as the earth's best friend. Moisture, as well as heat, is essential to life. Without the Holy Spirit, God's presence, like a consuming fire, would scorch and burn. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" if we are without this means of grace.

Ireland is called the Emerald Isle because its herbage is so beautifully fresh and green, refreshed, as it continually is, by the moisture-laden winds from the Atlantic. It is a sweet and restful sight to those accustomed to seeing in their own country the green foliage of spring so soon turned to brown by the summer sun. Of that better land beyond, we sometimes sing, "There everlasting spring abides, and never-fading flowers." If we were possessing our possessions, the land within would be an "Emerald-Isle," and we could sing, "**Here** everlasting spring abides!"

Moses speaks about rain, brooks, pools, and springs, and in analogous ways God refreshes us by His Spirit. Like the rain from heaven, it comes upon us direct from Himself; a wonderful, mysterious, life-giving power. Like the brook, flowing in a definite channel, the Spirit is imparted through the medium of the Word. Like the deep pool, when two or three meet together in His name and there is a concentration of thought upon some portion of Scripture; or like the spring welling up within the heart in seasons of quiet meditation, there is an infilling of the Spirit during times of fellowship and individual study.

The third feature in Moses' delightful pen-picture, with a spiritual correspondency, is

Scenery

He says, "A land . . . of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills," "a land of hills and valleys." For centuries the children of Israel had dwelt in Egypt, a flat land whose only hills were the man-made pyramids. For the previous forty years, they had been wandering in the wilderness, where the only highlands were composed of gigantic masses of barren rock. The love of beautiful scenery is innate in man's nature, and "hills and valleys" clothed in verdure or adorned with trees are essentials in the loveliest of earth's prospects.

The spiritual parallel to this aspect of the typical inheritance is found in the extensive views of God's dealings with man, afforded by the history and prophecy of the Bible. Hills, being raised up portions of the earth, would, in the framework of the illustration we are using, fittingly represent contact between earth and heaven, or God's dealings with men. The landscape of the unbeliever, like that of Egypt, is flat, dull, and monotonous. Secular history divorced from sacred has nothing to offer but a wearisome reiteration of injustice and oppression, battles and bloodshed.

To the believer, history is "His story." Like the peaks of the Andes and the Rockies, stretching almost from pole to pole, he sees all the landscape of the past dotted over with the hills of God's contacts with men. Furthest away in the distant past, rising in solemn grandeur, is the majestic peak described in the two opening chapters of Genesis. Earth touched heaven in Eden. Following that, we have a series of summits in God's dealings with Abel, Enoch, and Noah. Then comes a group of three notable ones, commencing a continuous chain of highlands, with individual peaks here and there raising their heads. It brings joy of heart to the Christian to look back and see how God dealt with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and after Jacob's death with the whole nation of Israel, with all the illustrious names with which its history abounds. How much poorer our lives would be without the vision afforded by "the cloud of witnesses" of Hebrews 11.

But grandest of all was when heaven was joined to earth in the Lord Jesus. "Emmanuel," God with us, He was called. He fulfilled the dream of Jacob's ladder, uniting God and man. We have in Him a figurative mountain whose top reaches to the throne of God. Commencing with the Lord, our view of "His story" reveals another continuous chain, this time so high that their summits are coated with eternal snow. True to the Lord's promise and prediction, the gates of hell have not prevailed against His Church. Immovable as the hills, it has stood throughout pagan and papal Rome's persecutions, survived the storms of Reformation times, and is with us today. Paul bridges all the distance between his day and ours and indicates the continuous contact of God with men during the long interval between, when he speaks about us "which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord."

The individual peaks of this mighty range are not so well known to us, for, unlike the range of natural Israel, God has not preserved a record for us. We have the Apostles, and the individual members of the early Church whose names are recorded in the New Testament. We know a little about the early fathers and more about Wycliffe, Luther, and all the other well-known faith heroes of the Reformation. In more recent times we have such as John Wesley and C. T. Russell and all the men of God of our own day and generation, and we thank God for the inspiration the view of their lives ever affords us.

But that is not all, for prophecy supplements history. The impenetrable mist blocking the view of the future from the unbeliever, lifts from before the gaze of the child of God, and he sees, now in the very near distance, the slopes of Mount Zion and all the wonderful things associated with it as described in the twelfth chapter of the Book of Hebrews. He sees the mountain of the Lord's house established on the top of the mountains, exalted above the hills, and all nations flowing unto it, together with all the associated blessings described in Isaiah 2. The bright vision does not end even here, for away in the blue distance beyond the Millennium, peak after peak suggest themselves, as in the ages to come God will show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us. - *Contributed*.

Abraham and Lot-- A Contrast

"So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham."-Gal. 3:9.

ABRAHAM, THAT grand character of Old Testament times, has been a never-failing source of inspiration to the true Christian, who sees in this man of faith his own spiritual experiences exemplified. In his call, his journeys, his mistakes, his obedience, it has pleased the Lord to show forth the life of each follower of Christ. Well has Abraham been called the file-leader of a great spiritual host. The study of his life is of great importance to all who have grasped the full significance of the "exceeding great and precious promises" and who are endeavoring to "so run as to obtain." And since divine wisdom has seen fit to record in juxtaposition the experiences of Abraham and his nephew Lot, this study is devoted to the beautiful spiritual lessons obtained from contrasting these two characters, who reveal two types of minds or dispositions which have been markedly manifest in the two great spiritual classes of the Gospel Age. These two classes are shown in type by the priests and Levites, and in the New Testament are referred to as the "little flock" and the "great company."* In 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 we find a more particularized description of both these builders on the true foundation; which, together with other references in Scripture, are sufficient to reveal that two classes of believers grow side by side, of which only one will become the "overcomers."

*Note - For further consideration of the Levites as a type of the great company see W.T., Jan. 15, 1911.

Abram's Call and Separation

"Now the Lord had said to Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." - Gen. 12:1-3.

Thus begins the life of faith. As Abrams (that is, in the walk of faith) we leave the land of Great Babylon, the ground of false and perverted worship and self-exaltation. The spirit of faith awakes in this land of confusion. God speaks, and, as at creation, great results follow. Babels may grow from men's words to one another, saying, "Go to, and let us make." The walk of faith begins not from man: the Word is its author and finisher.

The call was, and is yet, personal. God says. "Get **thee** out, and I will bless thee." And so we read in Isaiah 51:2: "I called him alone, and blessed **him.**" Others may note something of the glory of this manifestation and may witness some of the outward circumstances accompanying the call, as did those who went with Paul to Damascus: but as Paul says, "They heard not the voice of Him that spoke to **me.**" (Acts 22:9.) For the natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit and cannot heed the call of God but continues to abide on the ground of sense; while the spirit of faith goes forth, it knows not where, to finally stand in the strength of the Lord on the ground of promise, a "land of milk and honey."

The call contains both grace and truth; grace, in the promise, "**I will** shew thee a land, **I will** make thee fruitful, **I will** bless thee"; truth, in the separating word, "**Get thee out,**" obedience to which is the proof of faith in the "**I will.**" This promise is the gospel which was preached to Abram. (Gal. 3:8.) This promise concerning future glory and inheritance is based on God's unfailing "I will," for the Scriptures with one voice testify it is the Lord Himself who saves, through faith, the simple and blessed means of salvation. Men are slow to apprehend this truth, and often feelings or works, or something in us is looked for as the ground of future blessing and salvation.

But the call is not only of promise but also to separation. God purposes to separate His saved ones to Himself, so the word of truth comes, commanding sanctification. Men often preach God's "I will" without the accompanying "Get thee out," and the results will always reveal their error. Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, said to the fishermen, "Follow Me" -- here is separation -- "and I will make you fishers of men" -- here is the never failing "I will." So again, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor"-here is separation, for He was "separate"-then follows the promise, "I will give you rest." And so elsewhere, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people; wherefore come out and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you." (Matt. 4:19; 11:28; 2 Cor. 6:17, 18.) But at first, though "the spirit is willing, yet the flesh is weak." Even faith may shrink from all that the separating word claims from it. We are slow to believe that apostate things are to be forsaken and not improved and would fain mend them rather than leave them. So let us note the way the call was obeyed, for it reveals our steps also. The word was: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy **kindred**, and from thy father's **house.**" Abram gat him out from his country, and even from his kindred, but not from his father's house. He obeys, but not wholly, and thus reveals how the spirit of faith in us, while able to leave the more outward things, the natural pleasures and affections, cannot at once leave the more inward things. Nature yet is strong, and so, like Abram of old, the spirit of faith in us endeavors to take with it into the land of promise the "old man," which has never truly known the call of God. Yes, it is written not that Abram took Terah but "Terah took Abram" (Gen. 11:31), thus showing that the grand promises of God at first stir up to activity even the old life in us. But Terah can never pass the Jordan; his pilgrimage wearies him, and he can but reach Haran, and so "he dwells there." "They went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and they came to Haran and dwelt there." And there they are stopped until this "old man" dies. Then Abram starts again, and now nothing stops him, for now "they went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan they came." Stephen specially marks this in Acts 7:2-4. We are slow to learn this lesson, but it must be learned. Even faith cannot take the "old man" into the place of promise. It has often been tried; a new bond draws us heavenward, but the old one as yet has claims on us, and so we start with both, only to settle down short of the promised land. Eventually we are freed; the "old man" is buried out of sight, the meaning of our baptism dawns upon us the call is recollected, and we become once more pilgrims.

Abraham in the Promised Land

Having passed Jordan, the land of promise, the "higher ground" is reached. And here the spirit of faith, as shown in Abram, is introduced to new trials, which stumble some, who, though on the right way through grace, yet find this "higher ground" so unlike that which flesh and blood would have chosen.

True faith has now brought the believer the long journey to the land of Canaan, and now the chief marks are pilgrimage and difficulty and want, yet of communion with God and happy worship. Abram dwells in tents to the end, possessing nothing abiding here save a burial place. He moves from place to place, with "no certain dwellingplace." Others can dwell snugly in some "city of the nations," but the Abrams of God go, not knowing whither. They are what some call changeable, a common charge against the walk of faith. Men can dwell in refuges of their own manufacture. We can tell where to find them even to the end, because they take no forward steps, are never changed. But he who has heard the call of God cannot be trusted with the care of this world's cities. The world has long judged such as madmen, nor is its judgment wholly wrong. A madman is one who sees, or thinks he sees, what others see not. The called of God see what others see not, and they walk accordingly. Their pathway is ever unintelligible to the men of this world. Nevertheless, the Lord knoweth them that are His; He knoweth the path of humiliation that His elect trod, and when He hath tried them, they shall come forth as gold. How beautifully have all these truths been exemplified in the life of our blessed Master, our forerunner!

Abram's Altar and Trials

But Abram has not only a tent, a temporary abiding-place while he waits for that "city which bath foundations," but he now has also an altar, in worship receiving fresh revelations. "The Lord appeared to Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there he builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord." (Gen. 12:7, 8.) In Ur, God had said, "A land which I will shew thee." Now He says, "A land which I will give thee." We now observe also that here "the Lord appeared." Before this He had "called" and "spoken." The Lord now shows Himself, for faith has brought Abram to new trials which need special revelations, and these are not withheld. And thus it has ever been. As has been well said, "Angels' visits are only few and far between, because we so seldom are in the place really to require them."

The special trials of this stage are first "the Canaanite" and then "a grievous famine" in the land. (Gen. 12:6, 10.) Canaan, the son of Ham, may figure the mere outward religiousness which has ever been a trial to the true child of God. This and a period of seeming neglect by the Lord in things necessary, leads to failure in trial. The Canaanite and the famine drive Abram down to Egypt. The faith which led to the ground of promise at first has not strength to be steadfast there. It is ever thus. Peter had faith to step out on the waters but not enough to walk far when there; he had faith to follow Jesus into the High Priest's palace, but he lacked faith while there to witness faithfully. Every act of faith brings us, into greater trials, where greater faith will be needed. Thus it is that many who walk by faith have failures, which those know not who do not attempt so much.

Abram's trial leads him to Egypt, and then Egypt leads him to deny his wife. One wrong step, if not immediately retraced, requires another. A step was taken to avoid trial without asking the Lord's counsel. Then, the Lord and His counsel and care being for the time forgotten, His promise

respecting the seed is forgotten also. And but for the Lord, those affections or principles of spiritual truth figured in Sarah (which the spirit of faith ought to defend and cherish most carefully, for from them must spring the promised fruit) would be defiled by contact with earthly things, the human wisdom or reasonings figured in Egypt.

And thus are we warned that our spiritual nourishment can never be obtained from the wisdom of this world (Egypt), but that if we find ourselves while on holy ground (the place of separation) in a condition of spiritual famine in the sense that we seem to lack, let us abide close to our altar; the Lord is near. The cloud that hides. His sunshine is there to test our faith and obedience, and we dare not leave this ground to lean on any arm of flesh. And having once made the mistake, let us immediately, like Abram, return back to higher ground, "to the place where his tent was at the first." (Gen. 13:3.) Still more trials await. The long-looked-for fruitage must appear; yea, we shall have to climb Moriah and there offer that which is most precious to us, yea, that which God Himself has said would be the very means to accomplish His great promise to us; and yet we shall go forth as did Abram to offer our Isaac in fulness of faith. Victory in small trials will but lead to greater and greater trials, till God shall say, "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me." - Gen. 22:12

All this and more is the experience of every true Abraham of God, though not always is it visible to our understanding, neither is it always necessary that it should be.

Abram and Lot Separated

It is at this stage in Abram's experience, when, having returned again to the place to which God had originally called him (places to us would represent states of mind), he is now brought into direct contrast with his nephew Lot. Hitherto they had walked together. "Abram walks with God," but "Lot walks with Abram." Time and again this is brought to our attention. (Gen. 12:4; 13:1, 5.) Lot represents those who live in religious outward things, striving to please God and also man, and succeeding in doing neither. They take right steps because others take them, and make sacrifices because others do so. They are righteous souls but wholly unable to walk where the men of faith walk, leaving them as soon as they resolutely press on to the best things. Only after Abram returns again to his altar and his dwelling in tents does Lot find occasion for leaving him. "Flocks and herds," various gifts, now become an occasion for manifesting the tastes and thus of separating the inward and spiritual from the righteous outward man. The real cause is that the one seeks heaven, while the other still lingers after the things of this world. One looks ever on the hills of promise; the other has an eye turned toward the plain of Jordan. For we read: "Lot lifted up his eyes, and saw the plain of Jordan, that it was like the land of Egypt." (Gen. 13:10.) In this lay its attractiveness to him. The excuse is found in the "herds" and "flocks," and he at once separates himself and goes **down** Jordan-ward.

How often there have been strifes about flocks! Neither numbers, nor an abundance of gifts can make brethren dwell together in unity. Often gifts may be an occasion for strife, for schism is the growth, not of spiritual poverty but of spiritual wealth. Even so, at Corinth, where "they lacked no gift," there was strife among the herdsmen, the more because the gifts abounded, while they were "yet carnal." (1 Cor. 1:7; 3:1.) Lot did not depart from Abram in Egypt. It is when Egypt is left behind and the men of faith seek resolutely to go up to the higher ground that brethren are thrown together in a way previously unknown. The lack of outward things stirs up the outward men, who will always choose the lower ground where their natural tastes find more that is in accordance with them. The things of time and sense keep their, from discovering what they really are within,

and outward things prevent them from coming to themselves. For it is only when we are stripped of things around that we really learn what spirit dwells within. The one fears to search out the evil within and ever seeks to hide it from self and others; the other is content to learn itself, if it may learn God, preferring to be weak with Him than strong without Him.

Lot's Steps of Decline

Unlike souls sooner or later must separate. No bond or arrangement can long keep men together if there be not one spirit. Few things search us more than collision with our brethren, and though for a while the path of faith becomes more lonely, it draws the true believer ever closer to his God. As outward men drop away from us, the Lord more and more reveals Himself.

Let us note the steps of Lot, which are ever the same in all ages; the gradual degrees of decline have their lesson for the spiritual man who will take heed thereto. First "Lot lifted up his eyes and beheld"; then "he chose"; then "Lot **journeyed** east, the direction he originally came from; next "he dwelled in the cities of the plain then he "pitched his tent **toward** Sodom"; then he "dwelt in Sodom" and finally he "sat in the gate of Sodom," the official position of an elder and judge of the city. (Gen. 13:10-12; 14:12; 19:1, 9.) Here we finally find him trying to serve two masters, God and Mammon; still a righteous man, still endeavoring to be pleasing to the Lord and yet dwelling in the place of his own choice. Well does Lot picture those who though righteous and saved and holding the truth yet never seem to apprehend the inward spirit of it. True believers dwell apart with God, while the Lots, dwelling in Sodom (the world of the senses) strive by efforts to improve it. And as they labor in the fire, they comfort themselves that while the Abrams are useless to the world, they are doing something for it. But Sodom cannot be helped, much less saved, by unchastened, outward men. Lot has yet to learn this; while therefore Abraham is at Mamre, Lot is in the gate of Sodom, calling its sinners "brethren." - Gen. 19:7.

- *Contributed.*

(To be continued)

Baptism

"We are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." - Rom. 6:4.

BAPTISM is a vitally important part of the Christian's belief and experience. - The last word of instruction given by our Lord to His disciples was, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." It was by the authority of the Father, in and through His Son, and in the power of the Holy Spirit that they were commissioned to make and to baptize disciples from among all nations; they did not do this on their own initiative.

Some have understood from this Scripture that the nations as a whole were to be converted and Christianized by the disciples, but other Scriptures show conclusively that our Lord had no such thought. On the contrary, they reveal that this Gospel dispensation was set apart by God, in His plan, for the selecting and perfecting of the promised seed of Abraham, the Christ, Head and body; and that when this is done, the world or age that now is will be terminated in order that the new dispensation under the reign of Christ, Head and body, may bring the blessings to all mankind.

Baptism Inevitable

It is evident that baptism, in some one of its forms, will be the inevitable portion or experience of every one, regardless of whether he be Jew or Gentile, Christian or unbeliever. It is also evident that many will have more than one baptism. Jesus, for example, had at least three baptisms. He was baptized in water by John in the river Jordan; He was baptized of God with the Holy Spirit as He came up out of the water; and then, also, He was baptized into death. It was this latter baptism to which He referred when He said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke 12:50.) Jesus' words here indicate a very hard and trying experience in which it would be necessary for Him to undergo great suffering. His baptism into death was in process for three and a half years; from the time of His consecration, symbolized by water immersion in Jordan, unto His last breath upon the cross, when He said, "It is finished," He was pouring out His soul unto death; He made His soul an offering for sin.

Why Death is Prolonged

At the time Jesus made His consecration at Jordan, He possessed in His perfect humanity the price necessary to redeem Adam and his children from the debt they were paying to meet the requirements of justice. In so far as the ransom price itself was concerned, Jesus might have been spared that three and a half years of lingering death; but had He died at Jordan, there would have been no opportunity for His own development as a New Creature, nor for His perfecting as a merciful High Priest. It was necessary not only for Him to die in order to release mankind from the sentence of death, but also for Him to be perfected and restored to life as a divine being, having full power and authority, that He might also restore mankind to perfection of being, and

thereby place man in a position to receive the gift of eternal life: And so we read that "He was put to death for -our sins, and was raised again for our justification."

In His Steps

You and I, if we are true footstep followers of Jesus, will also experience these three baptisms; but this experience does not begin until after we make a full consecration to do God's will, for it is only after we consecrate ourselves to do God's will that we are in a position to symbolize that consecration by water immersion and start walking in the footsteps of Jesus.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit comes upon us when we are accepted into the body of Christ -- "accepted in the Beloved," "made partakers of Christ" -- for it is only upon coming into the body that this baptism can come upon us. In the Tabernacle picture of the inauguration of the priesthood, the holy anointing oil was all poured upon the head of the high priest and from thence ran down over his body members to his feet; likewise, in the anointing of the antitypical priesthood, the Holy Spirit was given to Jesus without measure, and comes upon us when we are accepted into the body of the Anointed. This is why the Apostle says, "One faith, one Lord, one baptism." While it is true that there were two other manifestations of the anointing or baptism of the Holy Spirit--one at Pentecost showing that believing Jews were accepted in the body, and the other upon Cornelius and his family, showing that believing Gentiles were also accepted -- still these were merely **outward** manifestations of that which each one who comes into the body of Christ experiences, and so do not constitute a separate or a different baptism.

Baptism into His Death

Then there is a third baptism in which we must participate if we are to be followers of Him; and this is the baptism into His death. Paul, in writing to the Romans, chapter 6, verses 3 to 5, says "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the **likeness** of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection."

Sacrificial Death

We were baptized into Christ when we came under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. This is the only way in which we can become a part of His body. The word "Christ" means to anoint, and so when we are anointed of the Holy Spirit, we are Christed, we become a part of the Christ. We do not become a part of Jesus the man, but of the body of the Anointed, the Christ; and, as the Apostle here shows, in being baptized into Christ, as new creatures, we are also, as justified human beings, baptized into His death.

What is meant by "His death"? Did He inherit death from Adam? was His life forfeited because of His own sin? No, He had no sin, but was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. His death, as a human being, was a sacrificial death; a death for the sins of others. In this connection the Apostle says: "For in that He died, He died unto sin once [not because He inherited

Adam's sin, nor for His own sin, but for the sins of others]: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise [as He died, so] reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 6:10, 11.) According to the Diaglott, the original Greek here, both as regards our Lord's death and the death we are counted as dying, is "by the sin." Being justified freely by His grace through Jesus our Lord, we are no longer under the condemnation that is upon mankind because of Adam's sin; and if faithful to our covenant of sacrifice, will not die because we inherit Adam's sin, nor because of willful sins of our own, but as a sacrifice for sin. The Apostle makes this clear further along in this epistle, Romans 12:1, when he says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies [plural] a [singular] living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

Jesus knew what His baptism into death signified; He also knew that His true followers would experience baptism in the same way, unto the same end. This is shown by His words spoken to the two sons of Zebedee upon their request that they might sit, the one on His right and the other on His left in Kingdom glory. Jesus said to them "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able [willing] to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" And when they answered that they were able, Jesus said: "Ye shall indeed drink of My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on My right hand, and on My left, is not Mine to give."

Jesus alone had the price necessary to redeem Adam and his children from out the death sentence, and nothing could be added thereto without upsetting the balance of justice; this He possessed when He offered Himself at Jordan. You and I **have nothing to do with providing the price of redemption**; first, because one perfect human being was all God could accept; and second, because we as apart of Adam's race had nothing to offer; our life and inheritance were forfeited. Jesus alone was the antitype of the Passover lamb which typified this feature of the redemption.

Through faith and the imputation of the merit of Jesus' blood to atone for our sins, we have reckoned unto us all the rights and privileges which will eventually come to mankind, which were lost in Adam. No price Jesus could give as a man would buy anything more for us than this; the price paid by Jesus could never give us a heavenly inheritance, for all that was lost and all that He had with which to buy back that which was lost, was a perfect human life.

God, however, was not so limited; but according to His predetermined plan, centered in Christ Jesus our Lord, has made us an offer of glory, honor, and immortality and a share in the atonement work together with our Lord if we will consecrate ourselves fully to do His will, which, at the present time, means the giving up of all earthly rights and hopes, and sharing with our Lord in sacrificial suffering and baptism into death. These are things which only faith may grasp. **If we cannot have faith to believe that God can accept these bodies as a living, holy sacrifice, acceptable through Christ, then how can we have the faith to believe that we will inherit the heavenly promises?** Manifestly, they must be taken together, for one is dependent upon the other. "If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him." Once having entered into this agreement, or covenant of sacrifice, there is no turning back; even to look back with desire for earthly hopes would indicate unworthiness and a culpable lack of appreciation for those things which God has promised to those who will walk in Jesus' footsteps.

Psalm 82:6-8

In this connection we are reminded of the words of God through the Psalmist where He declares, "I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the Most High. But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes. Arise, O God, judge the earth; for Thou shalt inherit all nations." This evidently refers to the Christ as a class, for it is stated in the plural. Here, then, we have a class whom the Most High designates as gods and acknowledges as children; but they will die, He says, like men. From the standpoint of the world, there will be no difference between their death and that of any other man, but from God's standpoint there is a great difference; they fall, in dying, like one of the princes. This class cannot die because of inherited sin or condemnation as does the rest of mankind, because they have been redeemed from Adamic death by the blood of Christ. They have entered into a covenant of sacrifice, and their faithfulness even unto death on the one hand, or their repudiation of that covenant on the other hand will be the determining factor as to which prince they fall like. There have been just two princes: Prince Adam died for his own sin, and Prince Jesus died for the sins of others. Likewise, those who repudiate their covenant and count the blood wherewith they have been sanctified an unholy thing, will follow in the steps of Adam and die for their own sin but those who remain faithful to their covenant of sacrifice even unto death, as did our Lord, will not die for their own sin, but, it must be, in some sense, for the sins of others; they will die as did Prince Jesus. It is to this class, the Christ, Head and body, that the next verse will apply: "Arise O God [not the Most High, but the Christ], Arise, O God [O Mighty One], judge the earth; for Thou shalt inherit all nations." "Know ye not," says the Apostle, "that the saints shall judge the world?"

Significance of Baptism

The root word for baptism means to whelm or submerge. The Jewish nation had been submerged in the cloud and the Red Sea when they followed Moses out of Egypt, baptized into Moses, who stood for them before God. Many of these who repented at the preaching of John and later at that of our Lord and the disciples, knowing that they had transgressed their covenant, were baptized in water for the remission of their sins. Apparently, in so far as the Bible record shows, such Jews could be transferred from Moses into Christ without any additional outward symbol being required of them, and could receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon their acceptance of Jesus as their Redeemer. At least, we infer this because we find no record of the Apostles and other believing Jews being baptized again. Jesus' baptism at Jordan symbolized His full consecration to do God's will; as was prophesied concerning Him aforetime, "Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God." Jesus seemed to think that, in His case at least, it was necessary for Him to symbolize His consecration by water immersion, for He said to John, who objected, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

All of the baptisms on record up to the time of receiving the Gentile converts, with the exception of that of our Lord, in which water was used as a symbol, are said to have been for repentance and the remission of sins; but with Gentiles, this is not the proper thought, for they had never been in covenant relationship.

In the nineteenth chapter of Acts we read of Paul coming to Ephesus and finding certain Gentile Christians who had not received any of the gifts of the Holy Spirit; they confessed not to know even if there be any Holy Spirit. Upon learning this, Paul inquired as to what baptism they had received, and when they said, "John's baptism," he commanded them to be baptized again into the

name of the Lord Jesus Christ; and when they did this, they received the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In this incident we have portrayed for us the proper procedure for Gentile converts and so are not left in doubt as to what our course of action should be.

Having accepted Jesus as our Savior and having made a full consecration of ourselves to do God's will, even unto death, it behooves us, as obedient children, to symbolize that consecration by water immersion. This is plainly indicated by Jesus in His last word of instruction to His disciples just before He ascended: "Go, preach unto all nations, and baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have taught you."

Baptisms of Holy Spirit and Fire

In the beginning of this article the assertion was made that baptism, in some one or more of its forms, would be the inevitable portion of every one, regardless of whether he was a believer or not. This is not just supposition on our part but is definitely the teaching of the Scriptures. John the Baptist said, as recorded in Luke 3:16-17: "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose; He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire; whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor and will gather the wheat into His garner; but the chaff He will burn with fire unquenchable."

Those of that nation who were found worthy were baptized with the Holy Spirit, and this baptism constituted an earnest of the promised life on the spirit plane. Those who were not found worthy but who did despite to the spirit of grace which was manifested in their midst, were forced to undergo a baptism of fire, a time of trouble which came upon all Israel, and, in the meaning of the word baptism, whelmed or submerged that people and destroyed them as a nation. While this prophecy of John related primarily to the Jews, still we find that these two baptisms did not end with the Jew, for believing Gentiles all down through this Gospel Age have also partaken of the baptism of the Holy Spirit; and likewise, in the end of this age, those who counterpart the unfaithful and unbelieving Jews will be made to pass through the baptism of fire, "a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation."

Through the Prophet Zephaniah God says, "The whole earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy"; and through the Apostle Peter we are told that "the heavens and earth which are now, by the word of God are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." So then, as at the end of the Jewish Age, all to whom the Gospel message was preached were subjected to the baptism either of the Holy Spirit or of fire, so at the end of this age, likewise we find that all to whom the Gospel has been preached will partake of one or the other of these baptisms.

First the Gospel, Then Baptism

During the Jewish and Gospel Ages and before, there have been millions who have lived and died who have not experienced either one of these baptisms. Will they be deprived or, on the other hand, escape? No, God has a like experience in reservation for them also; for Jesus declares in John 5:29, 29 that "the hour cometh in the which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and shall come forth"; and He says they come forth "to a resurrection. Those who have done good in the past are to be restored to life immediately, but the rest will have to experi-

ence their resurrection through the judgments of the Lord. Those judgments, we are told, will take place during the thousand years of Christ's reign; and Isaiah declares that through them the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. We also find that during the world's judgment day, the Gospel will again be preached, for John in Revelation 14:6-7 says: "I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting **Gospel** to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people saying with a loud voice, Fear God and give glory to Him; for the hour [time] of His judgment is come."

Here in the time of judgment, then, as during the Gospel and Jewish Ages, we find that the Gospel message will be preached, and through the Prophet Joel we learn that it will be attended by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, for there God says, "I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh." -- During this age and before, He has bestowed His Spirit only upon His handmaids and servants, but then it will be available for all flesh. No one will be deprived of the blessing of the Holy Spirit if he will give heed to the Gospel message.

As at the end of the Jewish Age and during this Gospel Age, the acceptance of and obedience to the Gospel message determined whether or not the individual would experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit or be whelmed in the ensuing fire of destruction; so during the Millennial Age also, and particularly at its close, we are told that fire will come down from God out of heaven and devour those who at heart refuse to come into full accord with that Gospel message. And so the prophecy of John the Baptist will come true even to the uttermost, for One mightier than he has baptized or will baptize each and every one either with the Holy Spirit or with fire.

Water immersion is designed primarily as a public witness or declaration that the one baptized has made a consecration of his all to the Lord to do His will even unto death. In so far as we are concerned, it means that we have taken the step once for all that submerges our wills into the divine will and purpose. In the case of those baptized by John, it was an outward indication of repentance and remission of sins against their covenant vows. Burial in water signifies death to self and to sin as well as the submergence of our will in the divine will, and the coming up out of the water signifies newness of life.

This symbolism of water is not at all out of harmony with the one generally used in the Scriptures, viz.: divine truth, for God's will concerning us, into which we submerge our wills, is contained or revealed in His Word of Truth. We sometimes speak of it as "the pure water of the Word" in contradistinction to the muddy waters of tradition. Those who yield themselves to the doing of God's will, seeking to know that will through His Word of Truth, experience the "washing of water by the Word." When this experience of being submerged in baptism is finished, these will be raised by the power of God to life on a higher plane of existence; this, as well as the walking in newness of life, is pictured by the baptizer raising the candidate up out of the water. Both the walk in newness of life and the birth into a new life are here shown.

It will be recalled that Jesus said, when speaking to Nicodemus (John 3:3-5), "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God"; and when Nicodemus questioned the possibility of such a thing, Jesus went into the matter still further and said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." This word "born" is just as properly rendered "begotten" and from this standpoint harmonizes with that other Scripture which speaks of those who are walking in newness of life as having been "begotten by the Word of Truth."

It is through the pure water of truth that the Spirit of God takes hold upon us, begetting us to that newness of life which the Apostle calls "a new creature." This, if we are faithful, will eventuate in life on the divine plane. As in nature it requires water and sunshine to quicken into growth the

germ of wheat or whatever grain it may be, so with us, as consecrated believers, it requires the water of truth and the quickening and enlightening power of God's Holy Spirit to quicken us into life as new creatures in Christ; and if we continually try to keep these old wills and bodies in subjection to the will of God, His Spirit and truth will eventually strengthen and establish those new minds to the point where they will be fit to be clothed upon by the nature of God Himself.

Recapitulation

We see, then, that to baptize means to overwhelm, submerge, or immerse in water or with the Holy Spirit or with fire as the case may be. We see that baptism of one kind or another will be the experience of all men, whether Jew or Gentile, believer or unbeliever; no one will be exempt. We see that water baptism is merely a symbol, first, of that consecration which must have taken place in our lives, and second, of the change, the newness of life which we experience from that time on. We have seen that the baptism of the Holy Spirit emanates from God and is bestowed through Christ our Head, and that it comes as an unction or blessing upon those who in their acts of obedience have shown the right condition of heart. In this age this means acceptance into the body of Christ through the begetting of the Spirit; in the next age it will mean the restoring of God's image in the hearts and lives of mankind through the mediatorial work of that great Prophet, Priest, and King. At the present time baptism also means participation with our Lord in His sufferings, His crucifixion, His death. We have seen that the baptism of fire signifies the destruction of those arrangements or persons, as the case may be, that do not conform to God's will and arrangements. We have seen that God's grace is for those who will accept and profit by it. May He help us so to do.

- J. T. Read

Encouraging Letters

Dear Brethren:

I am not much of a letter writer, hence my silence when perhaps I should have said something. Last winter Brother Harvey Friese came this way. I was unable to do much but appreciated the favor very much. I felt that I should have written you at the time but just did not. May it be better late than never; and I take this occasion to tell you that I value the "Herald" very highly. When I first began reading it, somehow it seemed to lack flavor, or color, or however one might wish to put it. At that time I had just dropped the . . . for obvious reasons; and the "Herald," while I felt it to be in harmony with what I understood to be Present Truth, yet seemed too mild. But now after a few years, I am just delighted with it, and just wish there was more of it. Today I would not want it to be different. It's a sweet fountain of truth, and I appreciate it as food from on high.

May the Lord overrule your efforts to serve His people in the coming year, and may you be guided by His wisdom, is my prayer. With much. Christian love, I am,

Your brother in Christ,
J. P. H. -- Ala.

Dear Brethren:

You may be interested to know that religious liberty in Greece is more and more restrained. With the change of the form of government here in the last three years, the Greek Church exercises great influence upon the State. The result is that laws have been enacted almost forbidding the distribution of printed matter dealing on religion. Also, no kind of meeting is allowed without special permit from the Government. The meetings of the adherents of a certain religious organization are forbidden entirely. We are thankful to the Lord that we obtained, for the time being at least, through great effort, a permit to hold meetings here in Athens and a few other cities. Public lectures on religious topics are strictly forbidden. We would not be at all surprised should more open persecution start some of these days. The sale of the Bible printed in modern Greek is not allowed! Too bad, the world is going backwards. I hear that the British and foreign Bible society here is endeavoring to raise this ban. May God keep all of us in the shadow of His might in these gloomy days of ours.

With much love in the Redeemer,
C. J. C. -- Greece.

Dear "Herald" Brethren:

You received a letter from me some time ago from the . . "Class" asking you not to send Brother Boulter here. Now the Class has been divided through that same sectarian intolerant spirit, all the young ones so far staying with the brother who is now advocating that spirit, and all the older ones meeting in the home of an older brother and sister.

We have not organized, but have four good brothers, able to teach and have us use the Scripture more than we ever had in the other class. I am sure you know we were all troubled about it but have become more quiet, and I believe each of us has more faith in the Plan and its Author and the Savior than we ever had.

We have read your last "Herald," and I am sure we can understand the trials that others are going through. Fiery trials to try us they are, but the Lord truly is with those of a "broken and contrite heart." He promises to be with us in every hour of need. "My sheep hear My voice, and another they will not follow." His voice was kind and merciful. If I had it to do over, no brother on the face of the earth could force me to write such a letter as I did to you.

Now this gathering of brethren wants you to send us a brother to give us a discourse when you can, please. I am sure there is no more danger of his hurting us than our misleading him. It may be we can "build one another up in the most holy faith."

Your sister in Christ,

Out of Print

Requests are still unsupplied for copies of Russell-Eaton Debates, "Reprints," "Berean" Comments and Bible, "The Desolations of the Sanctuary." "Revelation" Vol. II, etc. Perhaps you have or know of others who might have copies of some of these that are no longer in use and that might be giving comfort to some of our brethren in these difficult times.

Recently Deceased

Mr. A. Baldacci, Richmond, Va.-(Jan.).
Mrs. C. Boole, Winnipeg, Man.-(Aug.).
Mr. Thomas C. Bryant, St. Louis, Mo.-(Jan.).
Mrs . Grace L. Cummings, New Brunswick, N. J.-(Oct.).
Mr. Martin Foss, Chicago, Ill.-(Jan.).
Mrs. Anna E. Hazel, White Plains, N. Y.-(Feb.).
Mr. Henry C. Kruhm, Baltimore, Md.-(Jan.).
Mr. C. H. Wagner, Dallas, Tex.-(Feb.).
Miss Edna B. Williams, Lincoln, Nebr.-(Jan.).