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Did the Sun and the Moon Stand Still?

"And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed." - Josh. 10:13.

IT SEEMS only yesterday that Clarence Darrow, the eminent agnostic attorney, was posing this question at the Scopes "evolution" trial in Tennessee. Actually a quarter of a century has elapsed since the great Commoner, William Jennings Bryan, asked if he believed it, replied: "I do." The story is recalled in the "Reader's Digest" for March, page 139. There Fulton Oursler, in a preview of Dr. Immanuel Velikovsky's new book, "Worlds in Collision," brings to our attention the view of that scientist "that within historical times the earth did pause in its daily rotation, and that for more than a day the sun remained visible over Joshua and his troops."

Hitherto, those who believe the Bible to be full of myths and fairy tales have taken a keen delight in scornfully pointing to what they considered the absurdity of supposing such a miracle as this to be possible. In their opinion it just couldn't happen. Actually, as Copernicus proved long ago, the sun, in its relation to the earth, always stands still, but for it to appear to do so for a whole day would require a sudden arresting of the revolution of the earth on its axis. Were this to occur, "man, with all his works, would be flung from the surface of the globe, the earth itself would be shattered by the force of its own momentum, the moon would share its fate, and the balance of the solar system would be deranged."

We are not scientists, and therefore not qualified to hold, much less express, an opinion as to the likelihood of Velikovsky's conclusions being eventually verified or proved to be without foundation in fact. Our approach to the solution of the problem lies in another direction.

We who believe in the miracles of the Bible believe also that they are wrought by an almighty God. Surely it is not illogical, but the very reverse, to believe, once we believe in the Almighty, that with *him*, all things are possible. For *God* to impose his will on the whole physical universe must be no more difficult than for him to do so within the atom, the *very* name of which (*atom-indivisible*) has so long been a misnomer. To affirm, on the one hand, that God is Almighty and on the other, to deny his power to do this or that this, to our way of thinking, is the illogical, the absurd, the incredible position to take. There is only one thing which our God cannot do: "He

cannot deny himself" (2 Tim. 2:13); that is to say, he cannot violate the principles of his attributes -- he can never do anything which would be opposed in the slightest degree to his perfect goodness and wisdom.

To those, therefore, who say this miracle is impossible, our reply must be: "With God all things are possible." - Matt. 19:26.

But if some one questions this miracle on the ground that it would be unworthy of God to disturb the solar system for the sole purpose of giving to Israel a victory over her foes, our reply would be different. To such we would say: Are you sure that such a miracle is recorded in these verses? Before we spend too much time discussing the miracle, let us make sure that there is really a miracle affirmed.

It is our confident belief that no miracle is here recorded. However, since this may be surprising, not only to scoffers at the Bible testimony, but also to those who, with us, believe the Bible to be God's revelation to man, it may be well if first we consider the context in which these verses appear; then, secondly, if we secure a satisfactory translation of the verses themselves; and finally, if, in the light of such preliminary study, we endeavor to determine what the meaning of these remarkable verses must be.

THE CONTEXT

The story behind these verses is a most interesting one. Israel, under their great leader, Joshua, was engaged in the conquest of Canaan (or Palestine as it is known today). On crossing the river and entering the valley of Jordan, Joshua's first concern was to seize on the passes which led to the interior. By the conquest of Ai one of these passes was secured. (Joshua 8.) The tribes already in possession of the land promptly took alarm. (Joshua 9:1, 2.) One of these tribes, the Gibeonites, decided to desert the others and make a separate peace with Joshua. They did so by an ingenious stratagem. By coming to Joshua in old clothes and worn out shoes, with moldy bread in well worn sacks on the backs of their asses, they tricked him into believing that they had come "from a far country," as ambassadors, and with the desire to enter into a peace treaty with him. - Joshua 9:3-6.

Joshua and his captains entered into the requested peace treaty, but within a few days learned that the Gibeonites were really amongst their close neighbors. However, while it had been obtained by strategy, the league of peace was honorably maintained by Joshua. (Joshua 9:16-27.) As a matter of fact, there was also an excellent military reason for dealing leniently with the Gibeonites; for they held the head of another pass, that of Beth-horon. By their submission a new road into Canaan was laid open to the Israelites.

This, however, did not at all suit the views of the kings of Southern Canaan. They determined to take vengeance on their former allies, the Gibeonites, and at the same time to close the pass to the Israelites. Five of these kings gathered themselves together and encamped against Gibeon. - Joshua 10:1-5.

The Gibeonites, terrified, sent an urgent summons to Joshua, their new ally, to come and save them. - Joshua 10:6.

Strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, Joshua was not hesitant, but seized the opportunity of engaging these five hostile kings in battle. He made a forced march between Gilgal

and Gibeon in a single night so that he could strike a sudden blow which might break the hostile federation to pieces before it could gather its full strength. - Joshua 10:7-9.

Taken thus, unawares, the five kings with their combined host, were no match for Joshua's mighty men of valor. They broke and fled up the western pass, "the way that *goeth up* to Beth-horon." (Joshua 10:10.) Up the weary, length of this steep, difficult pass, this fleeing host had to toil, chased by Israel their eager foes, suffering great slaughter at their hands, until they reached the top of the pass.

When the pursuing army of Israel reached the summit of the pass, they found before them an impressive scene, extending even to the Mediterranean. But their eyes would not linger long, on this vista. It would be too distant. What would occupy their immediate attention: would be "the rough, steep road, heavy with loose stones," so one traveler describes it, "broken at intervals with sharp upturned edges, and again by smooth 'slippery sheets of rock, which led to Lower Beth-horon, and over which their discomfited enemies were fleeing in wild disorder, amidst the horrors of a tropical storm." For it was as the Amorites turned the crest of the pass, "in the *going down* to Beth-horon," that they met a fierce tempest driving up from the sea; thunder, lightning, and a deluge of hail storming on their broken ranks, the Lord casting down great stones upon them, so that they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword." - Joshua 10:11.

In an attempt to recreate the scene before our minds, an eminent scholar of other days, Dr. Samuel Cox, paints the following word-picture: "It must have been a weird and marvelous spectacle which burst on the panting warriors of Israel as they topped the pass. Behind them lay the hills which hid Gibeon from view, while from high above those hills the sun shone hotly on their backs. Beneath them the steep mountain-path sloped sharply into the valley, all thick with their scattered and disheartened foes; while, before them, black clouds of tempest rolled up from the sea, and the faint crescent moon glimmered through a rift in the clouds over the valley of Ajalon. To Joshua and his captains the scene would be as unwelcome as it was strange. For here were their foes utterly at their mercy, and, if the daylight would but last, sure to be well-nigh exterminated by a terrible slaughter. But here, too, was a tempest driving up the valley from the sea, threatening to blot out the light of the sun, and, by bringing the day to a premature close, to give their foes an opportunity of escape."

At such a juncture as this, the natural thought of Joshua, his wish, perhaps his prayer, would be: "O that the daylight would last, that the darkening tempest might be dispersed, and that we might see our foes until victory be complete!" If this was his wish, his prayer -- and we shall shortly examine the verses and see that they imply no more than this--his prayer would be answered as the storm blew by and the sun shone out through the clouds. In some way his prayer *was* answered; for the Israelites did chase the Amorites down the pass and through the valley, smiting them with a very great slaughter. So furious was the chase that, when tidings reached Joshua that the five hostile kings had hid themselves in a great cave past which the flight swept, he refused to pause in the pursuit, save to roll great rocks against the entrance to the cave. It was not until they had made an end of slaying, when at last the light of this memorable day failed them that, on their return, the weary victors hanged the five kings on five trees of the grove which overshadowed the cave, and buried them in the very cave in which they had taken refuge. - Joshua 10:16-27.

THE SCRIPTURE

So much for the story behind the passage. (Joshua 10:12-15.) Now let us turn to the passage itself. In "The Modern Reader's Bible" Richard G. Moulton presents it in an impressive form. There the

Revised Version is used, without a word being changed or omitted, but it is so arranged as to help to make the sense clear. Notice, especially, that the last half of verse 13 and all of verse 14 is shown as a footnote, at the bottom of the page:

"Then spake Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel; and he said in the sight of Israel,

"Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon;
And thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.
And the sun stood still,
And the moon stayed,
Until the nation had avenged themselves of their enemies*

"And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal."

* "Is not this written in the Book of Jasher? And the sun stayed in the midst of heaven, and hastened not to go down about a whole day. And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel."

THE MEANING OF THE PASSAGE

And now, with the Scripture before us, properly arranged, and its background or context clearly in mind, let us examine it carefully to see if we may learn its meaning.

1. In the first place, the passage seems to be injected into the middle of a story *which would be complete without it*. A story that commenced with the first verse of the chapter is in process of being told and yet this passage, instead of continuing with the narrative, opens at verse 12 with a formal declaration that we are about to hear what Joshua said to the Lord *"in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel."*

Again, the story proper does not end until the closing verses of the chapter, yet the end of the story is forestalled by the final words of our passage (verse 15) which read: *"And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal."*

No careful student can read the whole chapter, and reflectively consider the manner in which our passage is thrust into the middle of it, without reaching the conclusion that he is reading a story which is being told *twice-once*, with fairly complete details, in the main portions of the chapter, and once, but only very briefly, **in**, our passage. He will naturally infer that the sacred historian has paused in the very midst of his narrative, to cite an ancient and well known **document in** which the story of the battle is also told, but told in a more concise, impassioned form.

2. Scholars tell us that the character of this ancient document is that of a poem; that this is quite evident in the original. Even in our English version it seems clear that we should read the passage more as a poem, rather than seeking to attach an exact and scientific meaning to every term employed. For, if in one line the author says "the sun *stood still*, in another he says "it *hasted not to go down*," which is quite a different expression, indicating that the sun did *not* stand still, but *went down slowly*, as though it were reluctant to do so.

3. These two conclusions (1) that it *is poetry* we are reading and (2) that the poetry is *cited from an ancient document* -- are confirmed by the question -- in the last half of verse 13, shown by Moulton as a footnote: "Is not this written in the Book of Jasher?"

According to the scholars, the Book of Jasher was a collection of songs, dating from the most ancient times, but extending at least to the time of David, in which the famous deeds of the great heroes of Hebrew story were recounted *in* glowing verse. David's elegy on Saul and Jonathan, for example, which we find in 2 Sam. 1:17-27 is quoted there from this same Book of Jasher, and quoted in precisely the same informal way in which the song of the battle of Beth-boron is quoted in the Book of Joshua, in our passage. So that we have every reason for concluding both that these verses (Joshua 10:12-15) *are a citation from an earlier work*, and that they give us *a poetical version of the battle which the historian himself is describing, in the other verses of the chapter, in prose.*

4. Well, what have we gained by learning that it is ancient poetry that we are reading, and not ancient history? We gain this much -- that we know *how* to read the passage. We know that we must read it, not as an exact and literal description, but in precisely the same way as we read other Hebrew poetical language. For example, in other passages of Scripture we read of the hills and the mountains skipping, the waters fleeing, the trees of the field clapping their hands, at the presence of the Lord. (Psa. 114; Isa. 55:12.) But no one is foolish enough to suppose that these figures of speech are to be taken literally. No one in his senses understands these passages to teach that the time will *come* when the hills and the mountains will join in a Literal dance, the waters run away on their feet, or that the trees, overwhelmed with joy will put forth their leafy hands and clap them *together* in exultation.

So also, in that other passage from Jasher to which we have referred. There in 2 Sam. 1:23 we read of Saul and Jonathan that

"They were swifter than eagles,
'They were stronger than lions."

However, no one *is* in danger of supposing that it is here being affirmed that Saul and his son could literally outstrip the eagle for speed, or that their physical strength was greater than that of lions. Every one knows that these expressions are to be read as poetry and are not to have imputed to them the exactness and precision of scientific prose.

But we may find a much closer illustration than those mentioned. Let us turn to chapter 4 of the Book of Judges. Here we find a perfectly simple and prosaic account of the great battle in which Barak, with his ten thousand men, discomfited the vast host of Sisera. In the very next chapter we have a second description of the same 'battle, this time couched in poetic language, for this battle is the theme of the ancient poem known as "The Song of Deborah"; *a* poem which many competent critics pronounce the finest battle-song in the, literature of the world. 'In this *historical* account of chapter 4 there is no *mention* of anything miraculous, no mention of any *special* aid to Barak beyond the usual reference to the fact that the Lord was on the side of Israel. But *in* the *poetical* version of chapter 5, Deborah tells us that "the stars in their courses fought against Sisera." Are we then to suppose-has any sane man ever supposed-that the stars shot madly frown their spheres to contend against the foes of Israel? No such miracle as this has ever been imagined. As we have read this noble figure of speech, we have understood Deborah's meaning to be that all the forces of the universe are leagued against the enemies of God, up to the very stars that shine in the sky.

Why then, when once we discover that in this tenth chapter of Joshua *we* have two documents, one a historical account of the battle of Beth-horon, which gives no hint of any supernatural arrest of the sun and the moon, and the other a poetic version of that same battle, which depicts the sun

as standing still on Mt. Gibeon and the moon as staying over the valley of Ajalon -- why are we to take *this* poetic version literally, any more than Deborah's poetic version of the battle of Kishon, and to infer that a stupendous miracle was wrought in order that Joshua's victory over the host of the five kings might be complete? We are not bound to take it so; nay, we are bound *not* to take it so, unless we mean to take all the poetry in the Bible literally, and to imagine the Word of God to be full of grotesque miracles -- the trees clapping their hands, and the hills skipping like lambs, and the stars leaving their orbits to engage in conflict with men.

Just what the actual occurrence was which the poet here quoted by Joshua had in view when he sang of the sun and the moon as coming to the help of Israel, we cannot be too sure. It may be that as he stood on the summit of the Beth-horon pass, and saw the dark tempest driving up the valley from the sea, Joshua prayed that the light of day night not be obscured, *that the tempest might be dispersed*; and to this simple incident, if the prayer were uttered and answered, the poet may have given the figurative expression we find in these verses. Or it may be that he had in view only the astonishing greatness of the victory, and meant to imply that so vast an achievement demanded more than the ordinary length of an ordinary day. Or, just as Deborah, when singing of the stars that fought against Sisera, probably intended to imply that all the forces of nature are arrayed against the enemies of God; so our poet, in singing of the arrest of the sun and moon, may have intended to imply only that all the forces of nature are for the servants and friends of God, that when we do his will the whole universe is on our side.

It is not our responsibility to determine the exact shade of meaning which he had in mind. What we are responsible for is that we rightly conceive -- that at least we do not grossly misconceive -- his main intention. If in the teeth of analogy and common sense, we take his poetry as prose, or if we are not at pains to discover that it *is* a poet who is speaking to us; if by our negligent misconceptions we first saddle the Bible with an absurd miracle and then reject the Bible because of the miracle we have read into it, shall we not, at least in our better moods; have the grace to blush at our childishness?

If they are not negligent students of the Bible, assuredly the interpretation of the passage given foregoing, will not come as new to any who read it. The evidences of its truth lie on its very surface; one has not to dig for them. It is quite evidently *a* view which commended itself to Brother Russell when, writing of his travels in the Holy Land in 1892, he stood in the very valley of Ajalon, and saw Mt. Gibeon to the northeast. As all of our readers may not have access to them, we take pleasure in presenting here three instructive paragraphs from his pen. While written nearly sixty years ago, they are nevertheless quite up to date, and we are glad to submit them as a fitting conclusion to this discussion. We quote:

"We have now reached the valley of Ajalon, and to the northeast is Mt. Gibeon. We recall this as the scene of the notable battle between Israel and the Amorites, in connection with which is the account of the standing still of both sun and moon. Endeavoring to locate the battle, we are impressed with the fact that if the sun were standing over Mt. Gibeon there could be no use for moonlight in the valley of Ajalon, which in that event would be flooded with sunlight. The account given in Joshua does not purport to be recorded by an eye witness, but is rather a note and comment upon a record given in the 'Book of Jasher,' now lost. The facts which form the basis of the matter recorded would seem to us to be explainable in either one of two ways:

"(1) That Joshua addressed the Lord as the Sun, whose strength and help had so signally been revealed for the relief of Israel and for the destruction of their enemies. With this the words agree well: 'Then spake Joshua to *the Lord* . . . and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou Moon, in the valley of Ajalon; that is to say, O Lord, our Sun and strong

Deliverer, continue thy mighty help for us in this battle at Mt. Gibeon, and let thy peaceful blessing (the Moon) be upon thy people *in* the valley of Ajalon; or

"(2) That the sun was setting in the west and its last beams still lighted Mt. Gibeon while the rising moon cast her beams directly through the valley of Ajalon. In this view the desire and request of Joshua would be not with reference to the sun itself, but with reference to the *sun-light*; he desired that utter darkness might not overtake them, in order that the victory be a complete and lasting one. If this be the proper view, then it was the *sun-light* merely that continued without the orb itself being visible. This would not have required a stoppage of the earth upon its axis, for clouds might have been so arranged as to prolong the sunset, as they sometimes do at the present *time*." - R1381 (March 15, 1892). See also R1813 (May 15, 1895). - P. L. Read

"The Hidden Life"

"Your life is hid with Christ in God." - Col. 3:3.

IN OUR further survey of the "hidden life" we must of necessity begin our study with the personality of God himself, for, to all except a privileged minority he is the most completely hidden being in the whole universe. From a most natural point of view, he is hidden from the range of human understanding by the vast distance dividing the finite from the Infinite, the limited from the Limitless. That difference alone would, in itself, be enough to prevent the inquisitive human mind from spanning the gulf and finding out the truth about his nature and his ways. But when we add to this the further barriers consequent upon the universal prevalence of sin in the heart of man, the gulf that separates the absolutely holy from the vile also adds its obscuring and concealing shroud to the "Hiding place."

Paul seems to set out the utmost that may be known of God by unenlightened man in Rom. 1:20, when he said, "The invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity." The world's emergence into being is a testimony to its Creator's prior existence (his divinity or deity); while its long continuance in being is also a tribute to the all-sufficiency of his controlling, "everlasting power." But *a* conception of such power and deity would not in itself be a sure foundation for hope or expectation to build upon. Creation as yet is far from being a paradise; the earthquake and tornado still rive the bosom of the earth, and even the vitalizing beams of the radiant sun can scorch its soil and parch it into desert sands. Nature's watch-tower, within this present reign of sin, is not a very satisfactory "look-out" from which to detect or define the attributes of God.

The question put to Job by his chiding friends is a question still appropriate to ask: "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou 'find out the Almighty unto perfection?" (Job 11:7.) -- to which the answer, most obviously, would be No! There are no means of finding out the Almighty because no basis of comparison abounds. "To whole will ye liken God?" asks Isaiah, "or what likeness will ye compare unto him?" (Isa. 40:17.) Man may turn his latest telescope upon the most distant stars, but it is as though the Eternal dwells beyond even the remotest jewel of the sky. He is the Unsearchable -- "there is no searching of his understanding." (Isa. 40:28.) It is as though an impenetrable curtain of the most absolute kind lies between the finite and the Infinite, and unless the Eternal and Infinite himself left its concealing folds, nothing can be known by man of that which lies beyond.

MYSTIFIED ATHENIANS

Something akin to this profound impossibility seems to have been acknowledged by the otherwise lively Athenian mind, in apostolic times. Amid their many shrines was one devoted to *an* unknown god. Here in "the Eye of Greece" (as Athens was proudly called) was world culture at its best; statuary and architecture of the most exquisite kind vying with literature and eloquence in all its subtle charm to satisfy both eye and ear, and yet mid all this "Glory that was Greece" stood that monument to her colossal ignorance of the Most High God. Evidences of superstition and idolatry were there on every hand in spite of her arts and sciences.

Deeply provoked by what he saw Paul made bold to speak to the Athenian philosophers first in the market place, and then at their request from Mars Hill. "Ye men of Athens," he most courteously began, "in all things I perceive that ye are somewhat superstitious (rather, religiously inclined) for as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship I found also an altar with this inscription: "To An Unknown God." What therefore ye worship in ignorance this set I forth unto *you*."

Paul's address to these men was a most wonderful declaration, inasmuch as it met the heathen philosophies at many points. For instance, the philosopher allowed that there must be a great First Cause, but said that he was so profoundly remote *as* to be beyond human comprehension -- the absolutely "Unknown." Paul countered this by saying that "He is not far from each one of us." *They* said he was too self-centered and self-contained to show consideration for humankind.. Paul said it was his purpose (and to this end he had arranged the ages and habitations of men) that they should seek him, in the hope that they should feel after him and, find' him. *They* said that some other lower grade of god (it projection or emanation several times removed) had made the world, with all that constituted it. Paul said that the God Who made it was the Lord of heaven and earth, and that he needed no temple in the midst of his creation. *They* said he had left men to make their way into life as best they could. Paul said God had appointed a day in which the training and judgment of men in righteousness 'Would be accomplished by One whom he had raised from the dead.

There is much more than that *in Paul's* declaration, but those few, points are cited to show *how* he most courteously and fearlessly accepted the challenge of the Athenian intelligentsia to measure God's revelation against their uncertain speculation. It was a masterly refutation of their case, covering in few words the main outstanding points of their claims. It is well worth more time and attention than can be given in this present survey.

For our immediate purpose we must accept this inscription, upon the Athenian altar at its face value, and consider the Most High *as* an Unknown God to its people. To these cultured philosophizing Greeks, as to the Babylonian and Chaldean priesthood before them, the Most High was truly an unknown being, hidden away from their comprehension by all this plethora of speculation and philosophizing; for as Paul said, "The World by its wisdom knows not God."

It is in the light of this very situation, exemplified in Athens and Corinth, that we must approach the words of Paul to his Colossian brethren. To the Colossian people in general also, God was "The Unknown God." Alongside this conception of God's "unknown-ness" Paul also places the thought of his "invisibility." Jesus is set forth as "the image of the invisible God." Hence as the topmost rung of the ladder of Paul's argument stands the fact of the invisible God.

THE INVISIBLE MADE KNOWN

But Paul then goes on to show that the Invisible, while still remaining invisible, had made himself a "known" God to some people, by placing before them contemplative minds a most glorious

"Image" of himself. He "by whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins," is now the bright "effulgence of his glory," bearing the very image or stamp of the divine nature (Col. 1:14; Heb. 11:3), in whom also were all things created (please note change of tense) , "created through him and for him ... in whom all things consist [are held together as with a band]. And he is [present tense again] the Head of the Body, the Church, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it was the [divine] pleasure that in him should all fulness dwell."

Now in all this lofty train of language Paul is counteracting the gnostic philosophic claims, by indicating that the full content of all those claims has *been* fulfilled (filled to the full) in the person of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He only was the one creative agent of the "Great Bythus" or "Depth" in the ancient times and by him alone all things were made, "in the heavens and on the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers." (All these were descriptive terms used by the speculating philosophers of the vague agencies supposed by them to bridge the gap between the human and the divine.) If such there be, then all were made by him and for him, says Paul, made to await his own exaltation in the "fulness of times;" when he should take his place as Head of the whole household of God (Eph. 1:10), for in him, by the pleasure of God, all the whole fulness of deity should dwell.

Thus Paul counteracts every aspect of these vague philosophic claims by broadly asserting that everything is centered in him who is now the Head of the Body, which is the Church.

But further, interwoven with this lofty strain of thought is another strain of phraseology drawn from another source. It speaks of "redemption, the forgiveness of sins"; of "peace through the blood"; of being "reconciled ... through death of being "holy and without blemish." It tells of One who is "Head of the Body that he might have the pre-eminence." And to all this it adds the thought of an "unseen" God.

THE ILLUMINATING SHADOW

Without doubt it was the "shadow" structure and service of the ancient tabernacle in the wilderness that inter-penetrated the lofty claims made by Paul on behalf of his Lord -- the warp into which the woof of his counter-argument was made to flow! It was there that real redemption had been shadowed forth; it was there that actual forgiveness of sins had been wrought in type; it was there that true peace through shed blood had been established pictorially; there also that things "holy and without blemish" in type were seen! There can be no mistake about that!

What an array of wonderful truths had been hidden away beneath that covering of skins -- and how often apostolic teachers went there for their outline of thought! For our present purpose it is the God "hidden there who is the focus of our thoughts. It is of God, the standard of all holiness and righteousness that our study must proceed, for it is he in whom the Christ is hidden and thus withdrawn from the un-illuminated gaze.

In considering him, we begin with his pre-figured habitation. By every method of comparison available to our understanding that habitat was in every sense the most holy spot in the whole camp of Israel -- *a sanctum sanctorum* -- by means of which all relatively lower grades of holiness were classified. A perfect cube in itself-height, length and breadth being exactly equal-a fitting indication of some perfectly dimensioned state in which every attribute and quality, were in perfect balance and equipoise. Its supporting posts and essential furnishings -- were overlaid with pure gold, to illustrate, in the language of tabernacle comparisons, something or some one

divine. Its very separateness and exclusiveness bespoke the fact that it was set apart to God, and only accessible to man under most specific circumstances.

Suitably positioned for its essential purposes was *a* wooden rectangular receptacle also overlaid with gold, within which reposed the tables of the law. Here was sure token that he who indwelt this holy place claimed as his unchallenged prerogative the right to impose law, to erect his own standard of righteousness and equity, and act as sole adjudicator over every affair in Israel. Law such as this, emanating from such a source must be perfect indeed, needing not to be subjected to the test of trial and error, nor yet requiring later alteration or amendment to remedy defect.

REALITIES THAT WERE MERE. SHADOWS

But in thus defining the perfection of such law, it is most essential to keep it on proper balance with all these other adaptations of greater things -- these patterns of "better" things -- and by that rule, that code of law, written and engraven on stones, was no more the actual body or substance of divine or universal law than that mysterious light between the cherubim was actually the person of God, or than that curtain covered tabernacle was really the heaven of heavens. All these things -- and thus also the very emblems of the law itself -- were but adaptations of great realities set before men in shadow form. The universal law -- God's law absolute -- is based on inflexible undeviating justice, which requires not one mustard seed more than is equitable, but is satisfied with not one less. It exhibits no provisions of mercy or leniency for defaulting. Soon or late every infraction of its terms must be visited with penalties. But heaven, where God's will prevails, and where unsullied perfection reigns, is the one only place where law such as this can operate today.

Here on this fallen earth, nothing more than an adaptation of that superior law can obtain. Here, if one sins, another, by divine option, may bear the penalty. The penalty for the infraction must surely fall, but a substitute may take the blow. Here also, because of abounding ignorance, the imperious "lusts" and "shalls" of the greater law, are toned down to the less imperious "thou shalt not." But even so, law is still to be accounted law, though adapted to a fallen world. It was still to be accounted God's law -- an imposition from above. It was not enacted or defined by consent of Israel, nor were they invited to deliberate upon its terms. Their relationship was to accept and obey the statutes it contained. God reserved for himself alone absolute prerogative to lay down canon law, and to enforce observance thereof.

Thus that little wooden, gold-covered box was placed within that supremely holy place to stand as token of God's imperious law, as emblem of his own unswerving righteousness among men.

But righteousness was not to reign alone and make its full imperious claims untempered by kindlier tokens, for upraised above this law-imposing box, and of one piece with its golden lid were the figures of cherubim,, each with outstretched wings, each with sympathizing face looking inwards and downwards towards the mercy-seat -- the propitiatory -- as though poised expectant and alert for something-to-transpire which would set them free to act in conformity with a satisfied state of law. And above, between the outstretched wings, was poised that mysterious "glow," that self-supported, self-sustaining light; sure token of a presence both immortal and divine. "There will I meet with thee and there will I commune with thee from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony." - Exod. 25:22.

Here was the prefigured abode of the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name alone is holy. (Isa. 57:15.) Here was "the secret place of the Most High, the shadow of the Almighty," secreted away from the gaze of curious men, fit symbol of the hiding place, albeit the dwelling-place of God in the midst of his people Israel.

"IN WHOM ALL FULNESS DWELLS"

Here in this grouping of divinely chosen symbolisms we have the fulness (the pleroma) of the Almighty pictured forth -- might, majesty, authority, omnipotence, omniscience, holiness, pitying love -- the very attributes in their fulness and excellence which all the noblest minds have ever tried to grasp and understand. Here is all, yea, more than all that Gnostic speculators ever deemed as necessary to fill up the "depth" -- the "Bythus," the remote "First Cause" -- the extremest conception of greatness and self-fulness their poor groping minds could ever hope to conceive.

And here, with warm, fervent utterance, Paul claimed before his Colossian brethren (as he had also claimed before Athenian audiences), all this, fulness for his God; not only fulness of creative power, but also a fulness of redeeming love, which, like the expectant cherubim, was waiting, a-wing, for the reconciliation of all things to himself, after having made peace by the blood of Jesus' cross. Perhaps we may well sum up this divine fulness in four outstanding attributes -- justice, wisdom, love, and power around which all other attributes will group themselves, and say that in this we have the Pauline portrait of his God; a portrait of which he was not ashamed either in Colosse, Athens, or Rome..

DOES MODERN THEOLOGY AGREE?

Having now deduced the picture of the Most Holy Place (with its mysterious supernatural light suspended between the cherubim) from these profoundly revealing words of Paul, it is pertinent to ask how the symbolisms of that hidden place (together with its hidden symbolism of an indwelling personality), agree with the general theological conceptions of these modern days. In other words, to whom is the Most High still a hidden God, or to whom does he stand measurably disclosed? Let us note a few considerations arising out of what we have seen.

First, is there any indication therein to show that he who indwell that Most, Holy Place shared his personality, his attributes or uniqueness with any other person-or thing-having relation, or connection with the ancient tabernacle? The answer here surely is No! No member of Israel, nor of the priesthood, not even its specifically chosen and anointed high priest, ever shared in the special prerogatives of that Holy Presence within that most holy place! If then Jesus stands as the higher counterpart to that anointed high priest-and most surely he does -- it ought to be obvious that it is Scripturally impossible for him to be sharer in the divine personality or attributes or uniqueness, and that in consequence all who account him to be the second person in the "trinity" (very God of very God, co-equal with the Father), are by that very teaching prevented from seeing God as he truly is. He who is high priest does not and cannot share, as of right, the eternal prerogatives of his God. To claim that he does, indicates that to such claimant, Almighty God is a hidden God.

Secondly, does the relationship of that Most Holy Place with its august occupant indicate that all outside its curtained walls stand before Heaven on the same terms? In other words, is the fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man depicted thereby? Again the answer is "Obviously not"! The priests had a special place which Israel had not! All were not treated or classified alike.

There is no warranty in Scripture for the thought that God is the Father of all men, everywhere. Even in the coming Age that claim will still be untrue, for it is the prerogative of the Prince of Peace, the Wonderful Counselor to become the Age-lasting Father to men. (Isa. 9:6, 7.) Here again is another (now orthodox) concept that hides the true relationship of God from its advocates' view.

Thirdly, is there anything in this relationship of God to Israel which indicates that God has surrendered his right to rule, and to make law, into the hands of Israel? In other words, is the modern democratic "People's Church" (prevalent amongst advanced Protestants) depicted in the ancient tabernacle? Again the answer must be, No! At no stage of its existence is the Kingdom of God a democracy in any sense of that much-abused word. The modern Laodicean Church has inverted the seat of authority and placed *it* at the base of the pyramid! The "*vox populi*" is not the same thing as the "*Vox Dei*"! Nor is even the voice of the Class (any Bible students Class) necessarily the same thing as the voice (or will) of God! Only if all its members are spirit-led can

this be true, or even possible. The swing of the pendulum from. Papal dominancy to congregational dictatorship leaves one as much as the other in the dark as to the right relationship of God towards this present world. To both extremes God is most surely a hidden God!

Finally, is there anything in the tabernacle arrangement to indicate that God was fastening on man a sense of perpetual subjection to the Mosaic law? In other words, is there anything to show that the Gospel of divine grace in Christ needs to be supplemented by observance of the ten (or other) Mosaic commandments?

All through this Gospel Age church organizers have been copying the constitution of Israel, and have built up a blending of kingship and priesthood (as seen in Israel, at least from David's day) Out of this appropriation of precedents from Israel the Papacy and the Holy Roman Empire grew.

But there are others of a more advanced standing who "say they are Jews" (but ought not) by blending observance of the Mosaic law with a "faith" standing in Christ, and who are thus shown to be confusing "shadow" with "substance"; adaptation with reality; "tabernacle" with "heavenly things"; and "Shekinah" with "God." There is no evidence that the "old" things should interpenetrate the "new," and they who seek thus to do cannot see the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ as he truly is. To the sons of this present Age, the counterpart to the Shekinah Light is not Jehovah, but "our Father, who art in heaven."

God is thus a hidden God, not only to the wider unbelieving world; not only to Israel of today, after the flesh, but also to large sections of the professing Christian Church in more or less degree, exactly in proportion as their own conceptions are substituted for the light of his Word.

Who then may know (within our present limitation) the truth concerning him that dwelleth in the Most Holy Place-the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity? Again the tabernacle picture will be our guide. Only those who have received the anointing of the holy spirit from the Lord will be so blessed, exactly as only those who had received the anointing with holy oil in Israel could see and know those deeper secrets concerning the Holy and Most Holy Place. Only such as with opened eyes have turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God (Acts 26:18) being thus "made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (the light of the Holy Place), can understand and appreciate the hidden things of God, But to the consideration of that favored class we must turn another day!

- *T. Holmes, Eng.*

Reason for Hope

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." - 1 Peter 3:15.

AS WE read the text above, two words seem to stand out. These two words are "hope" and "reason." Hope, the dictionary tells us, means to desire some good, with the expectation of getting it, or at least with a belief that it is obtainable. Then, also, the word "hope" in itself implies that there is dissatisfaction with present conditions or environment.

THE CONDITION OF THE WORLD

It is certainly plain to every one that the condition of the world, society, and also the condition in which man finds himself today, is *not* one which it would be desirable to have continued forever. When men look about them and see the pain and suffering, the misery and starvation of other men, the separation of families all over the earth, is it any wonder that they find good and sufficient reasons for dissatisfaction and unrest? Is it anything to wonder about, that when individuals hate and distrust each other, when nations push each other about, trying to get the most favorable military or trade positions, that those who observe all these things should be perplexed and should have their hearts failing them "for fear of the things coming upon the earth"?

Men in general do not want to see their cherished social organization falling apart, and so they try to tie it together with "peace" treaties. They sew up the holes with patches called agreements, of various kinds, only to have the seams rip wider somewhere else. They are still trying, with their eyes anxiously on the future, to hold the old garment together by any means possible. They are not hopeful, but anxious and worried about the kind of world in which their children and grandchildren must live. One after another these worried ones have died and are dying, with no hope of either bettering conditions in the world, or of gaining any assurance for themselves that it will be any better where they are going after they leave their troubles behind in death.

All men instinctively cling to life, and even when they are dying, they look forward to some sort of an existence, whether they will admit it or not, in the "great unknown" towards which they are going. Philosophers, in past days, and many of the more modern ones, too, have reasoned from this universal desire for life that man must be an immortal being, and these philosophers have been helped along by the old lie first told by Satan to Adam and Eve in Eden, "Thou shalt not surely die." We know that Satan never misses an opportunity to plant his lie wherever and whenever he can find fertile soil for it in the minds of uninformed and worried mankind. The philosophers and others who reason that because there is in man a desire for life, he therefore must have a spark of immortality, could just as logically reason that because men all over the world desire wealth, therefore all men are rich. No, hope in order to be called a hope at all, must be founded on something more solid than mere wishful thinking.

WISHFUL THINKING NO BASIS FOR HOPE

If we look around us, we can see many thousands who pin their faith on a general idea or system of evolution, by which all men will go from a human condition to something higher, morality being the condition of progress. Morality is fine, certainly, but if they would observe the output of the medical schools, and the intake of hospitals and similar institutions, they could see, if they

looked with unbiased eyes, that man is not getting any better, but is in fact getting worse in every way, and that there is no evolution, either mental or physical, actually taking place. Then there are other thousands who hang their expectations on great ritualistic systems, thinking that by much repetition of certain forms, which have been approved by their leaders, they might better their condition, here and hereafter.. There are others with confused and much mistaken ideas of who they are, where they came from, and where they are going.

Do we as Christians have any better ground or foundation for a hope regarding the future? Is it clear in our minds just what our hope is, and do we have convincing reasons for it? Are we ready at all times to give to every one who asks, a reason for the hope that is in us?

In order to explain to another such an intangible thing as a hope, and to make clear the basis upon which it is established in our minds, we must have reasons that will assure our hearers as well as ourselves of the solid foundation of truth on which our explanation is to be based. What, then, is our hope as Christians, and what are the reasons for that hope?

THE CHRISTIAN HOPE

When we look about us and see how selfish men are, without, in many cases, even the knowledge of God, much less the knowledge of his love toward men; when we see human beings born with physical and moral weaknesses due to inherited condemnation on account of the sin of Adam; when we see them in this unarmed and unprotected condition, coming into the world now ruled by Satan and coming under the influence of his evil works; and when we see men finally sink under the load of sin and sorrow and go down into death -- we still have hope. When, not only individuals, but nations and governments totter and fall, and when complete ruin of all the work of centuries by the hands of men appears certain and inevitable -- our hope is still strong.

Our hope is that the curse of sin will be removed, and that the rule of Satan and all his evil doings will at long last come to an end. Our hope is that the governments now under the control of the prince of darkness, will ultimately be brought under the sceptre of the Prince of Peace, and that where evil and sin in all its many forms now holds high carnival and runs wild, there righteousness and peace shall govern. Our hope is that not only our hearts, but *all* hearts shall be made happy and light, that all tears shall be wiped forever from all eyes, and that all rough places shall be made smooth. Our hope is that not only the living of this Age shall see and rejoice at these things, but that all who have ever lived shall see them together, having been set free from death. Our hope is that even the earth itself shall be made perfect; and that thorns, thistles, and poisonous plants, shall be replaced by healthful produce, and life-giving fruits. Finally, our hope is, that to insure the permanence of these wonderful conditions, God will establish a government to rule over his creation, and that this government shall so thoroughly control every element which had previously been evil that men will have no use at all for instruments of death, but shall convert them to useful tools for farming and other peaceful arts. We believe that, even now, the ministers of that perfect government are being educated and disciplined for this important work, and that it is the principal work being accomplished by God in this present period or Age. This special work, we think, is nearly complete, and when it is, the new order and arrangement of world affairs will begin. Then all men will know what is their duty, and not only know it but also be able to perform, it, for all the sidetracks and hindrances will have been removed. With their hereditary taint and their evil surroundings gone, men will be free -- gloriously free -- to do the will of God; and, from their experience with the "exceeding sinfulness of sin," be willing to do it. We believe that the government under which these very desirable conditions will obtain, as we have said, is one which will be headed by such as once were men; but who, through sanctification of God's holy spirit, and through knowledge of, and faith in, the truths of God's Word which that

same spirit has taught them, have come into the power or privilege to become sons of God, or new creatures. These, with their Head, and Lord, Jesus Christ, through whose suffering and sacrificial death all these things have become possible, will **be** the instruments with which God will accomplish all of his glorious plans for the race of men in the ages to come.

We have touched on only some of the high points of our hope as Christians, but it is a very grand and wonderful hope, is it not? As previously mentioned, a hope in order to be called a hope must necessarily be built on a more confidence inspiring basis than just wishing or wishful thinking. Upon what is our hope based? What are the reasons that have woven these high and marvelous hopes into our minds and hearts so that nearly everything we do, is affected by them?

REASONS FOR CHRISTIAN HOPE

There are a number of reasons why the hopes for the future that we have, now occupy such an important place in our thinking and in our lives. The basis of our acceptance of these ideas as reasons for our hope is our belief that the Bible is the Word of God. Some one will ask, "What convinced you that the Bible is true and that it is the only means by which the Father, the Creator of life, has communicated his plans to his chief creation on earth, men? For upon our conviction of this fact rest all of the reasons for our hope for the future.

Certain Jews called prophets, without knowing what was in the future, undertook to tell a long time beforehand, and at God's direction, what was going to happen. If they had wanted to gratify a selfish or ambitious feeling (supposing that they could prophesy at all with such a nature) then their prophecies would have foretold events which they *wished* would come to pass. Actually, much of prophecy is entirely out of harmony with the spirit of the Jew, and is of such a nature that it was summarily rejected by them when it reached the point of fulfillment; and history proves that many of these ancient prophecies were very strikingly fulfilled. We believe that the general character of these men was good, as men-that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the holy spirit." (2 Peter 1:21.) But God, knowing how liable human nature was to distort things to conform to its own understanding, did not permit them to see the significance of their utterances. Daniel, the Prophet, was an example of this; for we read in Daniel 12:8 that, "I heard, but I understood not." The Prophet was referring here to his visions concerning the time of the end which he had been told were to be sealed up, and which the Apostle tells us in 1 Peter 1:12 were not for the edification of those to whom they were given, but were intended for the ministry of Christ's Church at this end of the Age. The fact that Christ would be rejected by the Jews as a nation, which was foretold by Jewish Prophets, many, many years before he was born, we read in Isaiah 53:2, 3. This rejection was despite the indications on every hand that lie was the answer to every question in their hearts as to their coming Messiah. That this prophecy could have come only from God, we find proved in the perfection of detail with which it was carried out in the birth of Jesus "in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king."

Secular history and tradition, not only in Asia, but in many other parts of the civilized world of that day, confirm Christ's existence, and agree that he did fulfill the predictions made hundreds of years before, concerning such a person. Then, too, the many prophecies concerning the Jews, which have been, and are still being fulfilled, only verify further the truth of God's Word, and that it is worthy of all and full acceptance by any reasonable mind. Besides, if additional proof be asked for, there is the remarkable harmony not only of the books of the Old Testament with each other, as types of good things to come, but also the agreement of the books of the New Testament with each other, *and as* antitypes of the Old Testament. Very little of this *is* apparent by just a casual glance at the Bible, or even by a careful reading of the entire set of its books. Instead, only by earnest and prayerful study, and by using such helps *as* marginal references, concordances,

other translations, and works which point the sincere seeker after truth, to the plans which God has blueprinted in his Word, can the searcher find that which he seeks. The Savior's words point out plainly that such thoroughness *must* be used when he says, "Seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you."

Now, if we have gone so far as to accept the Bible as God's Word and as the truth, if we are convinced that "neither is there salvation in any other" than Jesus Christ, then we have gone as far as our human minds can go, and it is here that faith in God's Word begins to take over our minds and hearts. Let us go on now and examine some of the hopes we mentioned, and see if we have reasons for them, reasons firmly established on the sure promises of the Father, by whose power all things were created, including even our faith.

We said that one of our hopes is that the curse of sin *will* be removed from the world. Do we have any promise of God that he *will* accomplish such a wonderful thing? Most thinking people are beginning to realize now that sin and its effects are about all that is the matter with the world. Was not the removal of sin, *and* its terrible results in the lives of men, the main reason why our Savior gave up his glory with the Father and came to earth? What was the message of the angels at his birth? Was it not that *a* Savior was born who should save his people from their sins? Our Lord confirmed this message many times during his teaching of the Gospel. In Mark 10:45 he says, "For the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many." And again in Matt. 18:11: "For the Son of Man came to save that which *was* lost." We all know many more verses which convey the same grand promise.

We said that another of our hopes is that Satan, as well *as* all of the evil he started, *will* one day come to an end. Where do we find God's promise of such a thing? In the prophecy of our risen Lord to John (Rev. 20:10), he says, "... the Devil that deceived them [men] was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone." Can one picture any more complete destruction than this for the Prince of this world, who with the lie told to Adam, started all the train of sin, misery, and sorrow that has been man's burden ever since? Another of our hopes is that the government of earth, now under the control of Satan and his followers, shall be taken from them and turned over to the Prince of Peace, and those who are to be associated with him. Has God said that he intends *to* make such a transfer? We know that Satan is now being permitted to rule, for we read in Ephesians 6:12 that "we wrestle . . . against the rulers of the darkness of this world"; and we read also in Ephesians 2:2 where the Apostle reminds the Church at Ephesus that they, too, had once been under the control of "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Isaiah 9:6 is only one of the promises of the Father to transfer the rulership of the nations: "The government shall be upon his [Christ's] shoulder," and he is to reign as the "Prince of Peace." The transfer of authority shows in Daniel 2:44, "In those days [time *of* the end] shall God set *up* a Kingdom, and it shall stand forever." Also in Isaiah 32:1 the Prophet tells of the Kingdom of Christ and says, "Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment." The princes referred to have been identified by many Scriptures as the footstep followers of the Lord, who are now being trained for positions in the Kingdom, as body members of the Christ.

We are never asked, you will notice, to take only one isolated verse, which may possibly be mistranslated or misinterpreted, as a basis for our hope; but on each of the fundamental points of God's Plan we find, not one, but many Scripture texts, each of which contributes its portion to the rounding out of a glorious, and best of all, a true picture of the Father's arrangements for man.

It is this hope of obtaining perfection of being, in Christ, the wonderful privilege of being made partakers of the divine nature of our risen Lord, which is the highest hope of all. We must,

however, before *we* can come into possession of the fruition of this hope, gladly endure trial and discipline, suffering, and dying daily until we are dead with Christ. One good way of testing or checking up on ourselves to see if this is the *hope* we *have* in us, is by 1 John 3:3: "And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure." "Sanctify the Lord God *in* your hearts," that is, set him apart in *our* hearts, and make him and the example he has provided for us the means of our purity and holiness. Let him be the sacred Presence to whom we shall bring all our cares, and his pattern the one to which we shall make our lives and *our* characters conform. And if we have made our hope and its basis even a little clearer, we shall feel that he has blessed this message.

- Frank R. Heitland.

The Question Box

Question:

In the parable of the sower the seed sown is identified as God's Word, whereas in the parable of the tares the good seed "are the children of the Kingdom." Is there not a difference here, and if so, what is its significance?

Answer:

There is a difference, but no lack of harmony between the two thoughts. They differ only because the matter being discussed is considered from two points of view, namely, (1) the seed at the time it is being sown, and (2) the crop resulting from the sowing.

In the parable of the sower the sowing is at first compared to preaching. Here, of course, the seed, as the means used corresponds to God's Word, as the medium of preaching. The person on whose ear the preaching falls corresponds to the field on which the seed is sown.

However, before long, the *effect* of the sowing is brought into the parable. This effect corresponds with the *effect* of the preaching. On the farm the effect of the sowing is not an effect on the soil itself, which receives the seed, but the very seed which, in the sowing time, was the means of sowing, now becomes the effect of the sowing. From the same grains of seed, which served as the means of sowing, springs also the grain, the production of which is the purpose of the sowing. The field is and remains merely the soil "which keeps the grain concealed, and then, according to its own nature, puts it forth and causes it to develop *as something distinct from itself*. However, when we look at the spiritual counterpart it is at once apparent that the effect of the preaching is *not* something distinct from the person on whose ears the preaching fell, but is an effect on that person himself, and consists, so far as it is realized, in a transformation of his most intimate, personal life. Hence the man, who as the hearer of the Word, corresponds in the first instance to the soil which receives the seed, must later correspond to the grain which results from the sowing. This being true, it follows that the seed, which in the first instance is the Word (Matt. 13:19; Mark 4:14 Luke 8:11) is properly identified also (when viewed as the result or effect of the sowing) with the persons to whom the Word is preached; with the wayside hearer (Matt. 13:19), the stony ground hearer (verses 20, 21), the thorny ground hearer (verse 22), and the good ground hearer, in whom the Word heard is effective as the principle of a new personal life. - Verse 23.

What has been said foregoing applies to the parable of the sower (Matt. 13:3-8, 18-23; Mark 4:4-8, 14-21; Luke 8:5-8, 11-15). In this parable both the seed sown and the crop produced are in evidence.

In the parable of the tares, however, it is the crop, the effect of the sowing, not the sowing itself, which is the point of emphasis. Here, the seed is not at any time made to correspond with "the Word." It is viewed throughout the parable as the crop. This is true also of the bad seed. Not the sowing, but the effect of the sowing, the tares, is in evidence; the kind of grain which the sower had in view when he sowed. (Matt 13:38.) The word "seed" in this sense may be seen in 1 Sam. 8:15: "He will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give it to his officers, and to his servants." That is to say, he will take the tenth of your crops. And again, in Job 39:12: "Wilt thou believe him [the unicorn, or wild ox], that he will faring home thy seed, and gather it into thy barn?" -- the implication, of course, being that you will not. It is in this sense that all the passages of Scripture which relate to human seed are to be understood; for example: the seed of Abraham, as the sands of the seashore and as the stars of heaven for multitude. - Gen. 13:16; Gen. 15.5.

Question:

Please explain this text: "Be ye therefore wise s serpents, and harmless as doves." - Matt: 10:16.

Answer:

As the context shows, these "words were spoken by our Lord to his twelve Apostles and constituted part of his commission to them. The word "apostle" means "one sent forth." Christ himself was *the* Apostle -- the Apostle and High Priest of our profession (Heb. 3:1) -- the one sent forth by God. And these twelve were his apostles -- chosen and sent forth by him. "Behold I send you forth [the "I" is emphasized] as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore wise as serpents,, and harmless as doves."

They themselves, if they continued in his ministry and spirit, could not and would not bite and devour. Their apostolic mission had no wolfish element in it. But they; themselves would be persecuted. As sheep in. the midst of wolves they would be exposed to the malice of many who would be both able and eager to bite and fight and devour. Because of this, "therefore," they were to be, or to become, -- "wise as serpents."

The word translated "wise" in our Authorized Version is translated, "prudent: by Rotherham. In the Diaglott it is "sagacious." It does not refer to intellectual or ethical wisdom, but rather denotes prudence in regard to one's own safety. It refers to the serpent's real or reputed wariness or sagacity *in relation to danger*. Commenting on this passage Matthew Henry has observed: "They were to be not as foxes, whose cunning is to deceive others; but wary as serpents whose policy is only to defend themselves, and to shift for their own safety." "In the cause of Christ," this commentator adds, "we must be wise not to pull trouble upon our own heads."

The word "harmless has the significance of "purity," of being "unmixed," "unadulterated," and hence "without guile." Our Lord's Apostles were to be "sincere." While he wished them to become, in time of need, wary as serpents, he did not wish them to become wily, or insincere.

They were to be genuine throughout, as unwily as doves. Their character was to be as Dr. Morrison puts it, "a beautiful mixture of wariness and guilelessness."

Our Lord's "therefore" must not be "overlooked. It is dependent upon the emphatic "I" of the first clause: "It is I who send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; become ye therefore, as becometh apostles charged with my commission, wary, but qualify that wariness by dovelike guilelessness. The presence of the wolves demands that ye be wary; the fact that ye are my apostles demands that ye be guileless."

We are not apostles, yet nevertheless we represent, in our lesser service, the Lord's cause in the earth today. As such the text applies to each of us. "Be ye, therefore, wary as serpents, guileless as doves."

Faith's Foundation

The Christian faith does not center in a Dogma, or in a Book, but in a Person, and this the cause and pledge of its essential unity. Its one answer to all who, with the Philippian jailer, ask "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" is the answer of Paul and Silas, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." That truth was clearly seen by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, when he began his magnificent sketch of Christian theology with the pregnant words, "God, who fragmentarily and multifariously of old spake to our fathers by the prophets, at the end of these days spake unto us by his Son.

But unity does not exclude diversity -- nay, more, without diversity there can be no true and perfect unity. Where there is no unity, there is distraction, but where there is no diversity there is death. Where the spirits of the prophets are not subject to the prophets -- where every man is conscious only of his own invisible consecration -- where, as in the Church of Corinth every one in his fanatical egotism is anxious to shout down the truths revealed to others, that he may absorb the attention of all by his own "tongue," however barbarous, however dissonant, however unintelligible -- where it is ignored that, amid the diversities of gifts and ministrations there is yet the translucent energy of one and the same spirit -- there is confusion, and railing, and irreligious strife. And where, on the other hand, all lips mechanically repeat the same shibboleth for centuries after its significance has been worn away--where the dullness of a self-styled "orthodoxy" has obliterated the many hues of the wisdom of God -- where inquiry is pressed under the heel of authority where, in fact, there can be no independent inquiry because all conclusions are dictated beforehand by the tyranny of an usurped infallibility -- there is uniformity indeed, but therewith corruption and decay. When it is persecution to alter the perspective of a doctrine, and death to leave the cart-rut of a system -- when they who question the misinterpretations of Scripture which have been pressed into the service of popular errors, must face the anger of startled ignorance -- when there is no life save, the spark which glows in the ashes of the Martyr, or the lamp which flickers in the Reformer's cell -- then the caste which *has* seized the keys of the Kingdom of heaven may boast of unity, but it is the unity produced *by* selfishness in the few, and, serfdom in the many. The unity so secured is but the stagnancy of the unrippled water, the monotony of the barren sands. It is the unity of the dead plain, "where every molehill is a mountain, and every thistle is a forest tree." In this latter condition there is a deadlier peril than in the former. Even discords can be inwrought into the vast sequences of some mighty harmony, but what great music can be achieved with but a single note? Unbroken unanimity may be the boast of a deadening Buddhism, a withered Confucianism, a mechanical Islam; it cannot exist in a free and living Christianity. If it exists at all, it can oily be as a uniformity of indifference and ignorance -- a uniformity of winter and of night. The uniformity of the noonday is only for the infinite. For finite beings, if there be any light at all, there must be the colors of the sunset, land the sevenfold luster of the, rainbow, which is only seen when there is rain as well as sun.

-- "The Early Days of Christianity," by *F. W. Farrar*.

Victory

(Author Unknown)

When I really am contented
That my wish be set aside,
When I cease from selfish longing,
When I triumph *over* pride,
When I'm willing, really willing
To be nothing (as they sing)
But a broken, empty vessel
In the service of the King:
That is victory!

When I calmly take unkindness,
And as meekly bear a, sneer,
When I'm willing to relinquish
All that earth is holding dear,
When the falseness of some dear one
Fails to waken in my heart.
Any bitter, hard resentment
Or to wing an angry dart:
That is victory!

When I cease to long for earth's love,
Am content: to be unknown;
When I smile when friends neglect me,
Happy in His love alone;
When I lose myself in Jesus,
And surroundings cease to be,
With their little jars and discards,
Able to discourage me:
That is victory!

Lord, I cannot hope to triumph
Over every form of sin,
And to live but for Thy glory
While my own will reigns within.
So I bring my will to Thee, Lord,
Rule Thou me in all my ways,
And the glory shall be Thine, Lord,
And the honor, and the praise:
That is victory!

Words of Encouragement

Dear Brethren:

Greetings in our Redeemer's dear Name.

During the latter part of 1949, through a habit I have of dropping in on an adult Bible class and men's club, when we had no meeting on the Sunday afternoon, I had a rather unique experience of being asked to take the evening service at one of our local United Churches, when the regular minister was stricken suddenly ill and unable to take the service.

I explained to the elders who asked me and also to the minister, whom I went to see, all of whom knew me personally and what I believed, that if I was permitted to preach the Gospel as I understood the Bible to teach, I would gladly do all I could in the absence of the minister. The result has been that for the past four months I have served that congregation once and sometimes twice, nearly every week. I have also served other congregations of the same denomination, in an exchange of pulpits, in the surrounding towns of this area. In no case have I ever had an objection raised to anything that I have said nor any complaint of any kind, even when I have gone over the allotted sermon time, but I have had much favorable comment and thanks, even from the regular minister's wife, who has told me she could listen to me all night. Of course I cannot tell of any tangible results from my endeavors, but we have rejoiced in the blessed privileges of telling forth the glad tidings as we understand them; and we hope we have glorified the name of our *dear* Lord and of our gracious Father in heaven, and do truly thank him for his gracious favor. If it be God's good will to permit me further opportunities to serve him in this way, you may be sure that I shall do my best, and that is very poor indeed, to hold forth the Word of Life; and tell of God's wonderful, love, and the imminence of God's Kingdom.

The articles in the "Herald" during the year just passed have often been helpful and very timely, but I do believe that more time and space could be given to subjects particularly strengthening to our faith, in these trying times, we are coming in contact all too frequently with those' whose "first love" and faith seem, to be weakening under the stress of the fiery trials of our day, and it seems to me that we as a people are not doing all we could do to strengthen and Build up that most how faith. Do not misunderstand me, dear brethren; I am not complaining. The Editorial staff no doubt know far better than such as I; but several of the friends have written and spoken to me along these lines, during, the past year especially. It may be the Lord, seeing our need, will guide and direct your efforts during the present year, more along these lines. In any case, may his blessed will be done, for he knows far better than we, the needs of his people.

I am enclosing a money order to cover cost of the renewal of my "Herald" subscription and the rest to be used as you see fit in the Master's service. With warm Christian love to you and all the friends,

Your brother in the Beloved,

- H. J. B. -- N. S.

Recently Deceased

Brother W. S. Bagley, Los Angeles, Cal. - (February).
Sister May Barnett, Gustine, Tex. - (March).
Brother Robert H. Carson, Toronto, Ont. - (March).
Sister Minna Edgar, Glasgow, Scot. - (March).
Brother Byron Hamilton, Dorchester, Mass. - (February).
Sister Frances Holmes, Ithaca, N. Y. - (May).
Sister A. J. Lodge, London, Eng. - (April).
Sister E. E. Lovelace, Cleveland, Ohio - (April).
Sister M. P. McKay, Bracebridge, Ont. - (April).
Sister Emma Ogstad, Tacoma, Wash. - (April).
Brother O. B. Richards, Boston, Mass. - (April).
Brother George Ruark, Baltimore, Md. - (April).
Sister Lucy Rust, Houston, Texas - (April).
Sister Roseanne R. Walters, Washington, D. C. - (April).
Sister Mary Webb, Chicago, Ill. - (April).
Brother Winston Westmoreland, Gustine, Texas - (April).