

# THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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## "Behold the Bridegroom"

"Go ye out to meet him." - Matthew 25:6.

WE ARE living in tremendous days-days such as never have been since the creation of man upon this earth. These are days when men's hearts are failing them for fear as they consider the great advances which *have* been made in scientific knowledge. Man's knowledge has outpaced his moral development, and because he has not learned to control himself, and selfishness reigns supreme in the hearts of the vast majority, there is a fear of what is coming upon the world. The forces of destruction daily grow more powerful and terrible in the earth, and "*might*" is the god which men and nations are worshiping in the sure knowledge, however, that this god of "*might*" will at last prove to be a boomerang which will encompass the complete destruction of our civilization.

And yet, in this darkest hour of the world's history it is our privilege to be living. A comparatively few out of all earth's millions have their eyes fixed upon the Word of God. Their trust and confidence *is* in its Author, and as they look out upon world events, they see the fulfillment of things recorded centuries ago -- they see that all that is happening in the world today are the recorded steps of the Almighty God toward a consummation which will far surpass the Utopian dreams of men of every age and clime.

## WHAT DOES THE LORD'S RETURN MEAN TO YOU?

No real Bible student, no sincere lover of God, can fail to be intensely interested in the epoch-making events of today. *The signpost of God's Word has been pointing toward this very time in which we are now living*, and if our hearts have been praying that age-old prayer: "*Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven,*" then there will be an eagerness and watchfulness on our part which is in striking contrast to the comfortable complacency of so many professing Christians. O brethren, *What does the Lord's return mean to you?* Can we think about it, can we talk about it, and not experience the emotions of those two travelers to Emmaus? *Do not our hearts burn within us?* If not, there *is* something wrong, and our interest in the subject is nothing more than academic. This event is the greatest happening of all time, and if we have fully

appreciated its tremendous import, there will be a zeal, a warmth, a liveliness of spirit which can be likened only to those early days of Church history after the *Pentecostal* outpouring.

### **"THEY KNEW NOT"**

There have been other crises in the history of the world, the first of which was the Flood, in which all but eight persons were destroyed. This brought about the passing away of a "world." Men look back upon this now and realize how- stupendous was the event, yet of those who were immediately affected, our Lord said: "In the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, *and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away.* (Matt. 24:38, 39.) "*They knew not.*" Yes indeed, it always has been so the great majority of living people never seem able to appreciate the real significance of the events which are transpiring during their own lifetime, although they are able to look back on past events and see how the course of the world has been affected by the very happenings which were not understood at the time. It always has been so, and is so even today.

Consider the tremendous event of our Lord's First Advent-an event which has had its effect upon every part of the civilized' world, and beyond. That was the greatest crisis-period up to that time, and as we look back from this far distant time; we know that not only has it affected world history, but that every individual of the human family is vitally concerned in the First Advent of our Lord. Yet how did those who were then living view this great event? The coming of Jesus attracted *very* little attention from the world at large; just the faintest of ripples upon the waters of mankind--hardly noticed at all. And in the land of his birth, of those who should have known and understood its implications, almost all were either indifferent, or poured scorn upon his claims, and this in spite of the fact that all Israel were in expectation of the Messiah. "*He came to his own, and his own received him not.*" There he was, for thirty-three, and a half years in their midst -- *the One of whom all the Prophets had spoken--the One who was to change the world; yet "they knew him, not" -- they "knew not the time of their visitation."* - Luke 19:44.

### **"SO SHALL ALSO THE PRESENCE OF THE SON OF MAN BE"**

And now, the greatest crisis of all time is upon the earth. Many see the troubles which are upon mankind; many realize that this is "a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation" - - that does not need a very keen vision-and their hearts fail them for fear. There are others more highly favored -- the professed people of God -- who discern in these events a fulfillment of many prophecies in God's Word which speak of the final overthrow of Satan's empire preparatory to the establishment of God's Kingdom of righteousness and peace. Fewer still see further than this -- the indications of our Lord's promised return and of the Church's near deliverance and glorification. These see their calling to be associated with the great Messiah in the work of uplifting mankind in a ministry of reconciliation, bringing them gradually to perfection and harmony with God, their Creator.

But, brethren, there is something else happening to which we do well to give heed. Hidden away in this great vortex of events in the earth there is something transpiring which even- many enlightened Christians dismiss from their minds with a shrug as of comparatively small importance, as worthy only of a passing reference, as just an incident in the great panorama of world history. Yet what is now transpiring before our eyes are the first beginnings of the next important stage in the outworking of the Divine Plan of the Ages. Surely the hearts of those who have been so highly favored by God with a clearer understanding of his purposes should *thrill* to see that we are now passing out of one important stage of this wondrous Plan into a New Era

*which is vital and essential BEFORE the world of mankind can receive those blessings of life, health, and peace determined by God from the foundation of the world.*

### **A NEW DEVELOPMENT IN GOD'S PLAN**

There seems to be a parallel between the end of the Jewish Age and the closing- days of this Gospel' Dispensation. Both are periods of transition during which there is a gradual merging into a new development in-God's dealings with mankind, and the great majority of those, during both periods, to whom have been "committed the oracles of God" have found it difficult to grasp the changing situation or to discern clearly all the implications of the times in which they live.

At the close of the Jewish Age the eyes of God's people were fixed intently upon an earthly kingdom, and most of them were blind to the new development which concerned the spiritual aspect of God's Kingdom. Even after the resurrection of our Lord, this earthly kingdom so filled the minds of the disciples that they asked of him: "*Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to, Israel?*" (Acts 1:6.) But the last words of the risen Lord just prior to his ascension indicated that their future work would not be confined to Israel, but would extend beyond "*Jerusalem, and all Judea, into Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*" It was very hard for Peter and the other Apostles to grasp the changing situation. And now, at the end of this Gospel Age, during the days in which we are privileged to live, the eyes of God's people are intently fixed upon the spiritual phase of the Kingdom, to such an extent that many do not clearly appreciate or eagerly grasp the fact that the earthly phase of that Kingdom is about to be inaugurated, and manifested to all the world. May we never forget that ours is a spiritual calling, and that *our* goal is to be associated with Christ in the spirit realm of the Kingdom; but also, let us not minimize the truly great beginnings of a new development in the outworking of God's great Plan.

### **A SPIRITUAL AND AN EARTHLY SEED**

It is well to recall the clear teaching of Scripture that there is much yet to be done *before any blessing can come to the nations of the earth*. There is a "*seed*" to be developed and prepared, and that "*seed*" is not only to be "as the stars of heaven," but also "as the sand which is upon the seashore" (Gen. 22:17); in other words, *there is an earthly seed to be prepared as well as a spiritual, and until then the Gentile nations must remain unblest*. There so often seems to be a tendency to overlook that important fact. "*All Israel*" must first be saved-that is the clear teaching of Peter, the Apostle to "the circumcision," and of Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles. One can not too often be reminded of the summary of Peter's words recorded in Acts 15:14-17. Verse 14 reads: "Simeon hath declared how God at the first *did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.*" There we have recorded God's selection of the Church from among the Gentiles -- a work which has occupied the whole period of this Gospel Age, and is now rapidly drawing to its close.

It is the same work to which Paul refers in his Epistle to the Romans, chapter 11, verses 17 (Rom. 11:17, 24) and 24. There the Apostle speaks of the "natural branches" which were broken off from the root because of unbelief, while the Gentile believers, represented by the "wild olive tree" were grafted in. Paul, however, does not suggest that "the natural branches" have no further part in God's purposes for mankind. No, he says that this cutting away of "the natural branches" was only for a limited *period* -- "*until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.*" "For I would not, brethren," writes the Apostle, "that ye should be ignorant of this mystery [or secret], lest ye be wise in your own conceit; that blindness [or hardness] in part is happened to Israel, until the filling up of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved." (Rom. 11:25, 26.) It was partly in order to

guard the Gentile believer against a spirit of pride and superiority that Paul wrote the 11th chapter of Romans. "Boast not against the branches," he writes. "Be not, highminded, but fear." - Rom. 11:18-20.

These words of the Apostle Paul are in full accord with the sequence of events as recorded by in Acts 15: "After this," that is, after the calling out the Gentiles, "After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up." (Acts 15:1-6.) Then it is, and not till then, that "the residue of men will seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my Name is called, saith the Lord. - Acts 15:17.

## **SIGNS OF THE COMING KINGDOM**

If therefore we believe that "the fulness of the Gentiles" is about complete, and are convinced concerning the signs of our Lord's return, we should be eagerly looking around us and scanning the pages of God's Word in order to see this new development of God's Plan which must synchronize with the closing days of the Church on earth. If it is God's Plan, we cannot, we dare not be indifferent to what is taking place in the earth today. Our eyes should be frequently and eagerly turning to the land of prophecy, the land of Israel. As we do this, there will be an urgent incentive to greater diligence and faithfulness in our Christian walk.

Our Lord himself indicated to his followers some of the signs they should be looking for at the time of his return, preparatory to the establishment of his Kingdom: "And he spake to them a parable; behold the fig tree, and ail the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand." Then he adds those words which should mean so much to us: "Verily I say unto you, This generation [the generation that sees these things come to pass] shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled." - Luke 21:29-32.

Why did Jesus use the illustration of the fig tree? The interpretation is provided in the 24th chapter of Jeremiah's prophecy (Jer. 24), where the Prophet records that the Lord showed him "two baskets of figs." This was after Nebuchadnezzar had carried away the Jews into Babylon. In Jer. 24:8-10 one basket which contained "evil figs" is used to represent the overthrow and captivity of the Jews at the commencement of "the times of the Gentiles," and their subsequent experiences throughout the whole period of Gentile dominion. The "good figs" are used in verses Jer. 24:5-7 to represent their final regathering in their own land, and their conversion:

"Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel; like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good. For I will set mine eyes upon them-for good, and I will bring them again to this land: and I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them up. And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart."

Just as the complete fulfillment of Jer. 24:8-10 extended beyond the Babylonian captivity, so also this prophecy of the "good figs" was not fulfilled at the end of the seventy years captivity. It is not until the Lord's return that the fig tree would show signs of God's returning favor. This prophecy of Jeremiah is one which cannot be spiritualized without doing despite to our reasoning faculties. The people who because of their idolatry and waywardness were to be dispersed -- "a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse" -- are the same people whom God has pledged to re-establish in the land of Israel.

Perhaps some will ask: "What about the other trees of which Jesus spoke in this parable of Luke 21? Why single out the fig tree? The fig tree has a special significance because Jesus singled it out, but as a further "sign" of the Lord's parousia he informs us in parabolic language that the fig tree nation would be shooting forth its leaves at a time when other nations also would give evidence of life in their struggles for independence and national sovereignty.

## A FURTHER SIGNIFICANT SIGN

Was there ever a time as this when peoples who for centuries have been subject to the great powers of earth, have endeavored to throw off the yoke of servitude, and to claim their rights as sovereign and independent nations? The once great British Empire, which for many, many years derived her wealth from the toil and labor and resources of subject peoples, has been forced to bow to this demand for independence and sovereignty by those who were once described as "the 'backward races' and the process continues. India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Burma, Africa -- indeed "all the trees" are "shooting forth." The once great French Empire is disintegrating under the same influences, to which the troubles in Indo-China bear witness; and so also with all the other colonial empires of the world -- and all this at the time when the "fig tree is putting forth her leaves. Linked with all this is the failing hearts of men as with fear and dread they look "after those things which are coming on the earth."

It is at such a time as this that the Lord's disciples should be looking up, and lifting their heads as they see the nearness of their deliverance. Oh, how circumspect we would be if in our hearts there was a conviction that the last days of our pilgrimage had been reached! If we could but count the days to the time of our change, how eagerly we would throw aside many of the trivialities which claim our time and attention. The petty grievances, the arguing about non-essentials and things that do not profit, would give place to that warmth of love and zeal which characterized the earliest days of the Christian Church. Alas, instead of that we see the vast majority living their lives as though "all things continue as they were from the beginning." *What if it were tomorrow!* Would we find it necessary to hurriedly reshape our affairs, to alter our plans, to scrutinize more closely our motives, and to break down the barriers which have separated us from fellow-brethren in Christ? *Do we ardently long for "his appearing"?* Dear reader, may we here pause and answer honestly the question-"How great is my desire to 'meet the Lord' and to see him face to face?"

"As pants the hart for water brooks,  
So pants my soul for Thee;  
O, when shall I behold Thy face,  
When wilt Thou call for me?"

How easy to sing these words, but *are we ready if the call should come?* How blest we are if we can really say "Yes"; if from the heart we can utter those words: "Even so, come Lord Jesus." *That is what the Lord's return is all about! "If I go away, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."* (John 14:3.) *Do those words of Jesus stir your heart?* Would the return of a loved one from afar stir you more? If so, you are not ready for *him-and the time of our deliverance is at hand!* "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away," said Jesus. (Luke 21:33.) How essential, brethren, that we should not only be able to clearly discern the signs which indicate the Lord's return (there are many who are able to do this); if it means anything to us we must also recognize its implications, for they have a direct bearing upon our lives and daily walk. It was Peter who wrote in 2 Peter 3:11: *"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved" - today we can say, Seeing then that all these things are being dissolved, "what sort of persons ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness."* - R. S. V.

## **"WATCH THEREFORE"**

Our Lord indicates that it would be at this very time when there would be, the greatest tendency to become occupied with lesser things, and the need for watchfulness would be more urgent than ever before. *"Take heed to yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a snare."* (Luke 21:34, R. S. V.) There must be a sense of *urgency* and eager, joyful anticipation -- a daily living in the imminence of "his appearing." "The cares of this life" are linked with those more manifest indications of worldliness -- "dissipation and drunkenness," and how they tend to crowd in upon every one of the Lord's people to deaden the awareness of the near approach of "his appearing."

Our Father has designed that all the devoted followers of the Lord throughout the Age, from the earliest days, should live in the keen expectation of the Lord's return and of their deliverance and gathering together to him. *How can we who have been so enlightened concerning the "Parousia" of the Lord do otherwise? Jesus did say, "This generation shall not Pass away, till all be fulfilled"* and we must accept his word! Almost eighty years have passed since 1874 A.D.; almost forty years since 1914! *"Behold the Bridegroom; go ye out to meet him."*

## **THE ONE CERTAIN SIGN**

Shall we consider one of the prophecies, in the Old Testament which are vitally connected with the "fig tree" nation, for this sign of the "fig tree" is one of the near "appearing" of the Lord. There have been many wars during this Gospel Age; there have been many times of trouble, each increasing in severity and encompassing more and more -of the nations of the earth; *but never has there been a budding "fig tree" sign until these latter years*, and Jesus informs us that *this is the one certain sign* that "he is at the doors" and his appearing is at hand! That surely infers that the Church's course on earth is almost run!

It should be noted that Jesus did not say that we were to look for a fig tree full grown and mature. *The first signs of life* were to be the indications that our deliverance is near at hand. Matthew's record says: *"From the fig tree learn its lesson: As soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates."* (Matt. 24:32, 33 - R. S. V.) It is the "watcher" who will see the first faint beginnings of a revived Israel.

## **THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES**

There are many things to transpire before Israel is a nation fully reconciled to God and enjoying the destiny which he has marked out for it. This is graphically portrayed in Ezekiel's vision of the "dry bones" recorded in chapter 37. In the first fourteen verses we read:

"The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, and caused me to pass by them round about: and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O, Lord God, thou knowest. Again he said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: and I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord. So, I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking,

and the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above; *but there was no breath in them*. Then said he unto me, prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, Son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause *you* to come up out of your graves and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place *you* in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord."

### "CAN THESE BONES LIVE?"

Note the sequence of events-"a noise" - "a shaking" or earthquake, and then bone being joined to bone. Then sinews and flesh upon the bones, and all covered with skin. Thus far, in his vision Ezekiel sees a complete organism or entity, *but without life!* "And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: *but there was no breath in them.*" (Eze. 38:8.) In Eze. 38:11 it is recorded: "*These bones are the whole house of Israel.*" What, then, should we expect to see? *What are we seeing today?*

It was during the forty years prior to 1914 that the longings of scattered Jewry, the *Diaspora*, to be united as one nation in the land of their fathers, began to find expression in the aims and aspirations of the Zionist- movement. But the "bones" were so dry and withered, there seemed little hope that the ideals of a few Jewish zealots would ever be realized. "*Can these bones live?*" would seem to express how humanly impossible it was. For nearly 2,000 years that people had been dispersed among all the nations, and while retaining their separate identity, they had grown up and lived their lives in environments and circumstances which varied as widely as the nations among whom they were scattered. How wise and wonderful is our God! This people, designed by God to be his channel of blessing to all the families of the earth, must needs gain their experience by contact with every race and kindred of mankind, ranging from the most "backward races" to the highly civilized. Yet surely the sentiments of many were echoed in the words of Eze. 38:11: "*Dried are our bones, and lost is our hope; we are quite cut off.*" (Leeser.) But in 1914 there was a "shaking" - or earthquake! One rendering of Eze. 38:7 is: "*There was a noise, and behold a commotion, and the bones came together, bone to its bone.*" Yes, in 1917, during this "commotion," when Palestine was freed from Turkish oppression, there began a great regathering of Jews which has never ceased to this day. The "earthquake" *has* not yet subsided; the "noise" and commotion continue, but in it *all*, the words of the Prophet Ezekiel are being fulfilled. Bone joins to bone, as Jews from seventy-four nations of the earth have gathered together until the Jewish population of Israel has swelled from 56,000 in 1914 to nearly two million today!

Yet that was not *all* the Prophet saw in vision. There was a further development-the skeleton took shape. "*And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above.*" (Eze. 38:8.) This is the point of time to which we have reached today! Turning our eyes from the prophecy to the land of Israel, we see not a skeleton, but a nation, for in May, 1948, the "bones" took *shape* and form, and for the first time since the days of Nebuchadnezzar, 2,500 years ago, Israel is a sovereign and independent nation.



## **"BUT THERE WAS NO BREATH IN THEM"**

"But," some may say, "only a few of *all* those hundreds of thousands of returned Jews have faith in the Holy Scriptures, and fewer still have accepted Jesus as the Messiah. They are there in unbelief. Furthermore, the Ancient Worthies and those who will be princes in all the earth' have not been resurrected *to* their position as the leaders of restored Israel." How true that is; how in accord with the words of the prophecy: "*But, there was no breath in them.*" (Eze. 38:8.) Spiritually, Israel is not yet alive! Yet how interesting to note a faint stirring in the hearts of many individuals *in* Israel. The President of Israel -- Isaac Ben-Zvi -- is reported to be "A man of the Book," and when formally taking office he carried with him his family Bible. In the course of his inaugural speech to the Knessett he spoke these words: "We are witnessing today the wondrous process of the joining of *the* tribes of Israel, bone to bone and flesh to flesh, the merging of them into one nation. . . . I pray that the Rock and Redeemer of Israel may prosper our ways, and that in our days Judah may be saved and Israel dwell securely." Shall *not* all the Lord's people respond with an *Amen!*

## **"I WILL MAKE A NEW COVENANT" "AFTER THOSE DAYS"**

What then is the next step in Israel's revival? The prophecy indicates that it is the loosing of the "four winds," which is to bring *life to* the nation. Then it is that God's spirit will be poured out upon the nation, and he will make with them a New Covenant, putting his law "in their inward parts, and writing it in their hearts." Yes, the giving of life to the nation is the next stage in her development, but -- and this is where we are so vitally concerned! -- "They without its shall not be made perfect." (Heb. 11:40.) In other words, the Church must first be glorified; her deliverance must be accomplished; her course on earth completed! Israel waits for the appearance, the manifestation of her Messiah, "and when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." - 1 John 3:2.

Have we lost that sense of urgency which was such a marked feature of the "Truth" movement during the years prior to 1914? "Salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed" (Rom. 13:11, R. S. V.), yet the attitude of expectancy and eager anticipation seems largely to have declined. Surely the knowledge we have received concerning, our Lord's "parousia" should keep us alert and increasingly watchful! It is not sufficient to be able to produce all the reasons why we believe the Lord is present. Does that satisfy the deepest longings of the heart? "I shall be satisfied" -- when? -- "when I awake in thy likeness." That surely must be the sentiment of every true lover of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is what we should be looking for now; it should be the prompting motive of our lives -- the one thing with which we are concerned. "BEHOLD THE BRIDEGROOM!"

How many of the Lord's people have rejoiced in that proclamation, and alas, how many have quarreled about it also. How many have again and again reiterated their conviction that we are now living in the days of our Lord's "parousia," and have joined in the proclamation--"Behold the Bridegroom!" But what has it done for us? What is it doing in us? Can we remain unmoved as we meditate upon it? Does it stir our hearts? Has it brought home to us the fact that "his appearing" cannot be long delayed? Has it made the things -of earth lose their attraction, and caused us to redouble our efforts to put on more of the graces of the spirit and those qualities of heart and mind which the Lord will expect and delight to see in us "when he appeareth"? "BEHOLD THE BRIDEGROOM!" is only part of the proclamation--there is something to be done--"Go YE OUT TO MEET HIM!" That is just as essential as the recognition that the time of our Lord's return has come. All the signs indicate that very soon now "The door will be shut," and the last member of the Bride will have "made herself ready."

"We haste, because that door once shut  
Will never ope again."

- Edwin Allbon, Eng.

## Lessons from the Life of Joseph

*Scripture Reading: Psalm 105:17-23; Genesis chapters 37, 39,50*

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

AFTER THE burial of his father the story of Joseph is almost a blank. Only one incident is given. When Jacob was gone the brothers grew' uneasy. They thought that their father's influence had restrained Joseph from seeking revenge upon them for their sin against him, and they feared now, when this restraint had been taken away, Joseph would visit punishment upon them. The memory of sin dies hard. It had been forty years since this wrong was committed, and for seventeen years the brothers had lived in the sunshine of Joseph's forgiveness, nourished by his love, without a word or an act to suggest aught of resentment; yet here we find the old dread still lingering. Guilt makes cowards of men. Sins against love plant thorns in the heart.

Joseph wept when he heard his brothers' words. It pained him to learn that they doubted his love and forgiveness. When you have been loyal and faithful to a friend, loving him unselfishly, making sacrifices for him, giving of your life's strength and skill to help him, putting honor upon him, it grieves you sorely to have him misunderstand you, suspect your sincerity and doubt your affection. Seventeen years of such generous love as Joseph had shown to his brothers in Egypt ought to have made it forever impossible that they should doubt or suspect his forgiveness. Do we ever treat our friends so? Do we never treat Christ so? Do we never doubt "His forgiveness, or question His love for us whatever our experiences? Let us not grieve that gentle 'heart 'by even the faintest doubt of a love that is infinite in its constancy and tenderness.

Joseph was pained when he heard of the fears and distrust of his brothers, but his patience did not fail. "Fear not," he said to them, "for am I in the place of God? And as for you, ye meant evil against me: But God meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now, therefore, fear ye not: I will nourish you and your little ones." This was his answer to their distrust.

The Apostle Paul prayed that our hearts might be enlarged. (2 Cor. 6:13.) It takes a large, a generous, heart to love on in spite of doubt, suspicion, and unwholesome discontent; but Joseph had a large heart. His generous love never failed. His answer was only a new assurance of affection undisturbed by their treatment; he would nourish them in the days to come as he had done in the past. He would share his honor with them. He would provide for them in the land where they were strangers. He would care for their children. So he comforted them and spoke kindly unto them.

After this incident Joseph lived fifty-four years, but nothing whatever is told us of these years. We can picture a ripe and beautiful old age, full of honors and full of usefulness.

We know that his life continued beautiful to its close. Sometimes old age does not fulfill the prophecy and the promise of the earlier years. Sometimes men who live nobly and richly until they have passed the meridian of their days, lose in the splendor of their character and the sweetness of their spirit as they move toward the sunset. A great many sermons are preached to the young. Youth has its perils, and needs constant warnings. But there is need also of wise words of counsel to those who are growing old. Old age has its perils and its temptations. It is difficult to bear the honors of a good and worthy life as they gather about the head when the years multiply, and not be spoiled by them. It is hard to keep the heart humble, and the life simple and

gentle, when one stands amid the successes, the achievements, the fruits of one's life victories, in the days of a prosperous old age. Some old men grow vain in their self-consciousness. They become garrulous, especially about themselves and their own past.

The ease and freedom from care which come sometimes as the fitting reward of a life of hardship, toil and sacrifice, do not always prove the happiest conditions, nor those in which the character shows at its best. Some men who were splendid in incessant action, when bearing great loads and meeting large responsibilities, and in enduring sore trials, are not nearly so noble when they have been compelled to lay down their burdens, drop their tasks and step out of the crowding, surging ranks into the quiet ways of those whose life work is mainly finished. They chafe in standing still. Their peace is broken in the very days when it should be calmest and sweetest. So in many respects old age puts life to a crucial test.

Then sometimes old age grows unhappy and discontented. We cannot wonder at this. It becomes lonely as one by one its sweet friendships and its close companionships fall off in the resistless desolation that death makes. Feebleness of health, too, comes in oftentimes as an element which adds to the difficulty of living beautifully when one is old.

These are some of the reasons why old age is probably just as severe a testing time of character as youth or midlife. The grace of God, however, is sufficient for the testings and trials of the old as well as of the young. We should set ourself the task of making the whole day of life to its last moments beautiful. The late afternoon should be as lovely with its deep blue and its holy quiet, as the forenoon with its freshness; and the sunset ting as glorious with its splendor of amber and gold as the sunrising with its radiance and brightness. The old, or those growing old, should never feel for a moment that their work, even their best work, is done, when they can no longer march and keep step in the columns with youth and strong manhood. The work of the riper years is just as important as that of the earlier years. Young men for action, old men for counsel. The life that one may live in the quieter time, when the rush and the strife are left behind, may be even more lovely, more Christlike, more helpful than was the life of the more exciting, stirring time that is gone. Life ought to grow more beautiful every day to its close. Let no one think he has finished his task of sweet, true living when he has gotten safely through middle life into the borders of old age. No; we must not slacken our diligence, our earnestness, our fidelity, our prayerfulness, our faith in Christ, until we have come to the gate of eternity. God's plan for our life takes in all.

Age is a time for praying hoping, and for reflecting to others something of the peace and love of the heaven we are nearing, and of the Christ we hope soon to see.

At last the time came for Joseph to die, as this time must come to all. "And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: but God will surely visit you, and bring you up out of this land unto the land which He sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt."

Joseph was not buried at all in Egypt. His body was embalmed there, but not entombed. Egypt had long been his home. It had been the scene of all his honors and triumphs. His wife was an Egyptian; his friends were Egyptians. But he was still a loyal Israelite, and would not lie in an Egyptian grave. He would be buried in an Israelite grave.

But there are other thoughts: In the Epistle to the Hebrews when the faith of Joseph is spoken of, it is remarkable that it is this command concerning his bones that is mentioned. "By faith Joseph,

when his end was nigh, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones." This showed his faith in God's promises concerning his people. His faith was so strong that he refused to be buried at all in Egypt; his burial must wait until his people went up out of Egypt to their own land.

Mark the difference in the dying requests of - Jacob and Joseph. Jacob, too, refused to be buried in Egypt. He had spent seventeen happy years there, but he could not die until he had the pledge that he would be buried beside his kindred. Joseph's request was different. He was not to be buried in Egypt, yet his body was not to be carried to Canaan until his people should go there. He was so confident of their exodus that his-mummy was not to be laid in the grave at all until they went back to the land of promise.

Doubtless Joseph felt that his body left among them unburied, waiting to be carried away to Canaan and buried there, would do more to keep hope alive in their breasts than if it lay at rest yonder in Hebron. Every time they saw it, they would remember why it was unburied, and their thoughts would turn toward their land of promise.

By and by things grew dark in Egypt. The dynasty of the Pharaohs who had been Joseph's friends gave way to a new dynasty who cared not for his memory and who were jealous of the growth of the Israelites. Bitter oppression followed. In those days of gloom, who knows how much the unburied body of Joseph, with its unspoken words of hope, helped to keep the people from despair?

Then one night there was great excitement in Goshen. The hour of departure had come. Here, is the record: "And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you." Then followed forty years of marching and wandering, and during all this time the mummy of Joseph was in the column or in the camp.

At length there was a funeral one day at Shechem, and those bones, in their Egyptian mummy case, were laid to rest by Joshua. Here again is the record: "And the bones of Joseph . . . buried they in Shechem,- in, the parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor." When tourists visit the Holy Land, they are shown at Shechem a place purporting to be the tomb of Joseph. It is but a little way from the pit at Dothan into which his brothers cast him to die.

We may take two lessons from Joseph's, dying words. One is a lesson of faith. "I die, and God will surely visit you." He would die, but the fulfilling of God's purposes would go on. Some one has said, "God buries his workmen, but carries on His work." We each have our little part to fulfill in the divine purposes; then we shall die, but the work will go on. God ever lives, and His plans and purposes halt not.

The other lesson is that we should so live that the memory of our life and its influence, when we are gone, shall inspire those who stay behind. The memory of the just is blessed. Joseph's faith, as expressed in his last words, manifested the future hope. In effect he still declared to them, This is not your home. You are but tarrying here as strangers and pilgrims. By and by you will go on.

Such should ever be the impression that our life makes and that our memory keeps alive in other hearts. We should so live that when we are gone every recollection of us shall make others think of heaven as home. We have not lived at our best if the memory of our life only makes our friends think of us. The true life must ever speak of things spiritual and eternal.

Let us then seek to be so filled with Christ that every influence of our life shall incite men upward, toward God, and onward, toward imperishable things.

## "God Meant It Unto Good"

Genesis 50:20

"God meant it unto good" -- O blest assurance,  
Falling *like* sunshine all across life's way,  
Touching with Heaven's gold earth's darkest storm-clouds,  
Bringing fresh peace and comfort day by day.

'Twas not by chance the hands of faithless brethren  
Sold Joseph captive to a foreign land;  
Nor was it chance which, after years of suffering,  
Brought him before the monarch's throne to stand.

One Eye all-seeing saw the need of thousands  
And planned to meet it through one: lone' soul;  
And through the weary days of prison bondage  
Was working towards the great and glorious goal.

As yet the end was hidden from the captive,  
The iron entered even to his soul;  
His eye *could* scan the present path of sorrow,  
Not yet his gaze might rest upon the whole.

Faith failed not through those long, dark days of waiting,  
His trust in God was recompensed at last,  
The moment came when God led forth His servant  
To succor many, all his sufferings past.

"It was not you but God, that sent me hither,"  
Witnessed triumphant faith in after days;  
"God meant it unto good," no "second causes"  
Mingled their discord with his song of praise.

"God means it *unto* good" *for* thee, beloved,  
The God of Joseph is the same today;  
His love permits afflictions strange and bitter,  
His hand is guiding through the unknown way.

Thy Lord, who sees the end from the beginning,  
Hath purposes for thee of love untold.  
Then place thy hand in His and follow fearless,  
Till thou the riches of His grace behold.

There, when thou standest in the Home of Glory  
And all life's path lies open to thy gaze,  
Thine eyes shall see the Hand which now thou trustest,  
And magnify His love through endless days.

- Freda Hanbury Allen.

## "A Peculiar People, Zealous of Good Works" - Part I

Titus 2:14

IT MAY be well that we give a little consideration to the context of -our subject, for, in it the Apostle is leading to something which he deems essential to the enduring welfare of all whose hope and desire is centered in Christ.

His letter to Titus opens with one of Paul's unexcelled salutations in which he refers to his "hope of eternal life," and after his brief introduction after his usual manner-he goes on to exhort, in a general way, one to whom was entrusted the care of the Church at Crete. The exhortations are along the usual lines, and may be summed up in the words, "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able, *by sound doctrine*, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers." "Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine." "In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned." He speaks of "*adorning the doctrine . . . in all things.*" He speaks of God's grace as this is revealed in Christ Jesus: "The grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared [see margin], teaching us that *denying ungodliness and worldly lusts*, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority." Titus Chapters 1 and 2.

In the words quoted, Paul does not attribute any measure of undue merit to what he terms "works." The Apostles are, careful *to place "first things first,"* and in all their, exhortations we find that the words of Deuteronomy, 10:12 and Matthew 19:16, 17, are the all-potential things required in order to obtain eternal 'life on any plane. Let us recall them. Deuteronomy 10:12: "What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but, to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, and to serve him with all ;thy heart, and with all thy soul: to keep the commandments of the Lord and all his statutes which I command thee this day for thy good."

And while this is referred to as a Mosaic Law, given to Israel, is it not the *all-essential, all-inclusive* law, by which only in the keeping, we have any sure hope of "eternal life"? We have been told again and again, that we are no longer "under the Law." We know that Paul's words of Galatians 3:25, and the first part of Romans 3:20 appear to confirm the claim just referred to. But, to us, Paul *does not -- dare not --* discard the Law as we see it in the Sinaitic commandments. And a greater than Paul puts the seal of God's approval on them, as we read in Matthew

19:16-19. And Paul says, "The law is *good, holy, spiritual,*" etc., and it must be evident to all truth lovers that in following the Master, *the keeping of the Divine Law is entailed.* (See Matthew 5:17-20.) The provision of God's grace through Christ has made it possible that the "righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." "To keep the spirit of the Law should always be our endeavor, but to rely upon keeping-the letter of the Law for salvation, is to repudiate God's provision through Christ and the necessity of his sacrifice. - Rom. 8:1-4.

"A peculiar people"! Peter too speaks of a "peculiar people": "A chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people." And let us note his next words, "that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called- you out of darkness into his marvelous light." *How can we*

*show forth his praises? How can we prove our loyalty and obedience? "Of our own selves we can do nothing." As the old hymn says,*

"Stand up! stand up for Jesus!  
Stand in his strength alone;  
The arm of flesh will fail you,  
Ye dare not trust your own;  
Put on the gospel armor,  
And, watching unto prayer,  
Where duty calls, or danger,  
Be never wanting there."

And so, in the power of the indwelling spirit of Jesus Christ, "by the cooperation, in thought, word, and deed, of his chosen people, they will, as the Apostle says, "grow up into him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ." They will be *more like him in love, in humility, in obedience; more like him in patience, endurance, in zeal, and in all the fruits of the spirit* by which faithfulness is measurable. And thereby this peculiar and chosen people will be made fit to obtain the unspeakable joys and eternity-filled privileges of the life beyond.

Such of us as remain, are "not in darkness" in respect to what the Master meant when he said, "Follow thou me." Let us "so run that we may obtain." The "world" is rapidly nearing the ordained recompense: the great tribulation, and heedlessly-almost defiantly-!moving on toward a new order, a new Age in which evil shall be finally overcome and righteousness prevail. In this new Age, the peculiar people-the chosen people-are to have the inestimable privilege of sharing in the "restoration of all things."

During the process of preparation for this gracious provision, an all-loving and all-wise heavenly Father has *never failed to provide all things essential* to the obtaining of the promised reward. Faith, hope, and love-these three! Do 'we fully realize the import, of the words of John, "Beloved, *now are we the sons of God*"? Let us daily examine ourselves and note the extent to which our lives are more clearly reflecting the image of our Lord. For this, dear ones, is the Divine purpose, as we read in Romans 8:28, 29. The Apostles had no doubts or misgivings about this, and knew, and taught, that with a willing heart, "*all things are possible with God.*" Our path is clearly marked out for us. In the Word of God the course and its hidden dangers are revealed to us. Power and strength is promised whereby our full reward is assured. If we fail, we shall have, as Paul *says*, "no excuse."

"A peculiar people, zealous of good works." How *do* we, you and I, fit into this description of the "household of faith"? *Is* there an appreciable measure of the Christ-filled life to be seen in us? Or are we content to "stand by," "rest on our oars," and "drift with the tide"? Do we realize what is entailed in the word "zealous," in our text? How do we stand in relation to the zeal, purpose, and unceasing, loving desire which- inspired the saints of old?

Brethren, these are questions which daily confront us, and we find that we are often constrained to say with Paul, "The good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." To some, this may seem to be a defeatist attitude. Yes, that is what it *seems* to be. But that 7th chapter of Romans is not -- nor was it intended to be -- a pen picture of one who feels that Christlike attainments are limited in scope because of the workings of the flesh, and thereby acceptable, even though marred by carnal deeds. No, decidedly No! Paul's writings and exhortations do not -imply such a dangerous thought. His words, "being made conformable unto his death," "to be conformed to the image of his Son," to "be filled with all the fulness of God" --

those and similar expressions speak to us, by the Word of Inspiration, of the oneness of purpose made possible by God's grace and spirit, by which the "man" of God *moves ever forward and upward toward the perfect standard of the Christ-filled life.*

Oh, that all professing Christians would live in those self-abnegating, Christ-centered words of Philippians 3:7-14! To *"know Christ,"* to sense the "power of his resurrection," to *rejoice* "in the *fellowship* of his sufferings, *to be made conformable unto his death ...*" *such* is our privilege, our aim, and our hope. There is no place, beloved, in those things for that great bane on Christianity as it abounds in our times-compromise, *deadly compromise* with that which is carnal. Not that this is something new: throughout the Gospel Age it has blighted the history of the Church of the living God. Men and women have, as it were, found the cost, *the price of discipleship*, higher than they were prepared to pay, and, to use the words of Jesus, they were-and still there are-many who are "neither cold nor hot." As we think of the great number of "called out" ones, we remember that many of God's battles have been fought and *won "by the few,"*

*Right now* we are determining our individual place in the Kingdom; our daily experiences, our devotion to the will of God in all things, our setting aside of every carnal encumbrance, and even many things which, in themselves, are neither unlawful nor unseemly-some of our habits, some of our indulgences, some of our practices which are commonly accepted in today's trend of fad or fashion-these are referred to by Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:23. In a few words the Apostle clarifies his argument regarding self-denial, a Christlike attribute. He says, "All things are lawful for me, but *all things are not expedient: . . . all things edify not.*" And again, "I *will not be brought under the power of any.*" *Paul had caught a vision:* he had seen his Lord, he had heard his voice, and *he had obeyed!* As he said: "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision." Paul's losses, no doubt, were considerable, and yet he said, "I count all things but loss [or, as of no real value] for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." He had learned what the poet's words imply:

"But all through life I see a cross  
Where sons of God yield up their breath:  
There is no gain except by loss,  
There is no life-except by death."

In an article such as this, there is no thought of - presenting any new thought or theory, nor is there any pretense of *"attained* standards. But, dear friends, there is an earnest desire for the upbuilding and edification of all who come within its scope, as Paul says, "That the man 'of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." He does not belittle the "works" which mark the depth or the shallowness of the Christian life. *Nor did his Master.* To a world of unbelief, and a world in which the spirit of the evil one prevails, we see that the sands of time are fast receding. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But *put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision* for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof."

It may be asked, What works are referred to by Paul in our text, and also in Ephesians 2:10? Paul and Peter supply the answer to the question. Note verses 8, 9, and 10 in Ephesians 2 (Eph. 2:8-10). In the parable of the vine and its branches we note these words: "*He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: . . .* And *the fruitage of the spirit* is produced only by the efforts made possible and inspired by the *indwelling* Christ. Paul shows in Galatians 2:20 the necessity of the Christ filled, life, for he says, "*Christ liveth in me: . . . I do not frustrate the grace of God: . . .*" And in Colossians 1:10 he shows clearly what is meant by "works" as applied to the



household of faith: "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, *being fruitful in every good work*, and increasing in *the* knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness."

This, then, is to be our aim: to so live that in us the fruits of the spirit may be so nurtured and developed that by the grace of God we too are enabled to say with the Psalmist, "I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living. . . I will pay my vows unto the Lord *Now in the presence of all his people.*"

Privileges and obligations are ever with us. As a people who are, although peculiar, zealous of good works, we can find plenty of scope for service, and in it find a joy and recompense *far beyond all cost*. "Speak the truth in love" - "consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works" -- "*Strengthen ye the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you.*" (Isa. 35.) Soon the day's work will end. And what then?

"Glorious things of thee are spoken,  
Zion, city of our God....

"Built upon this sure foundation,  
Zion shall in glory rise;  
Men shall call thy walls Salvation,  
And thy gates shall be named Praise.  
The redeemed of every nation  
Shall with joy thy glory see,  
And find rest from tribulation,  
Hope and life and peace in thee."

" . . . a peculiar people, zealous of good works." - Titus 2:14.

First: Our calling, its heights and depths of grace, love, and privileges.

Second: The essentials to the attainment of the promised reward.

The Apostle Peter says, "... ye are a chosen generation, a royal, priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your manner of life honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." And Paul, writing to Titus, says: "In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: . . . For the grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and *purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. . . . This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful *to maintain good works*. These things are good and profitable unto men." What are the two Apostles trying to fix in the minds of the brethren? Nothing more or

less than the teaching of the Master. that "Ye bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance," or in other words, "the fruit of -the spirit," as shown in Galatians 5:22, 23 and Ephesians 5:9.

In our Lord's words regarding the vine and its branches this essential matter of fruit bearing is brought very clearly to us. "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." Do not misunderstand us as we speak of the value of works, "good works." Paul had no doubt as to the relativity of works and eternal salvation. Speaking of the Law (he says that "it is holy," "spiritual," and "good") he says, "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in God's sight"; and we do well to remember that though this is true, "*by the law, is the knowledge of sin,*" or in other words, *the standard* by which right and wrong is determined. *Christ kept the law*, and, as a standard by which we are to live, *it has never been abrogated.*-See Psalm 111:7, 8-10; Manna comment for May 20.

We do not need to be told that faith alone is not sufficient for our salvation. James says, "Faith, if it bath not works, is dead. It is only by our works, by the production of the fruit of the spirit, that we *can demonstrate* the faith by which we are judged. And let us never forget that of ourselves we can do nothing, but by the grace of God and the abiding in Christ -- or should we say, Christ abiding in us "*all things are possible,*" and by his spirit, coupled with our full measure of cooperation, we shall gradually but surely become more like our Head. This is-nay, it must be-our objective, our aim, our hope, and our desire.

- *W. Wainwright.*

## **The Question Box**

### **Jeremiah 30:7; Isaiah 52:8**

*Question:*

In the "Herald" for October 1952, page 143, you list 12 events in the sequence you think they are to be expected in connection with the Second Advent of our Lord; the 12 events being taken from.- the visions recorded in the last five chapters of the Book of Revelation. However, Jacob's trouble is not listed. May I ask why such an important event is omitted?

*Answer:*

Jacob's trouble, important event though it is, was evidently not important enough to be *separately* Listed by the Revelator. It occurs, however, in connection with Event No. 4.

The list given in the 1952 "Herald" was, of course, greatly condensed. Each event listed is capable of amplification. In the "Herald" for March 1954, page 44, a little amplification of the first four events was attempted. Event No. 4, in that "Herald," was thus, listed:

"The *final* Armageddon conflict and victory. - Rev. 19: 17, 21. *Note:* While there have been some notable conflicts, the *final* one, and the *ensuing* victory, is, in my judgment, still future."

If I understand the matter correctly, it is in connection with *this* event, that Israel's experience, spoken of by the Prophet as "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7), is to occur. Those who are looking for Jacob's trouble to take place before the Church is gone are looking for the right thing at the wrong time. What is now taking place in the Middle East is merely preparatory. Not only will the Church be glorified, but the Great Company also will have completed its earthly experiences and, while not part of the Bride, will have shared the blessedness of the Marriage Supper (Rev. 19:9), before Jacob's trouble occurs. Jacob will be saved out of his trouble by Christ and his Church, *operating from the other side the veil*, directing the victorious Armageddon conflict.

*Question:*

What is the meaning of the expression: "They shall see eye to eye." - Isaiah 52:8?

*Answer:*

This Scripture is commonly understood to mean that "when the Lord shall bring again Zion," the "watchmen" will be in complete agreement upon all the various doctrines which have divided them throughout the centuries. Believing further that the time for the Lord to bring again Zion has come, many brethren are at a loss to understand why the predicted harmony of viewpoint fails to manifest itself.

It is still true that to him who today reads in the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, the paramount question is that propounded by Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch: "Understandest thou what thou readest?" (Acts 8:30.) Let us seek to understand Isaiah 52:8 *in relation to its context*.

The entire theme of Isaiah is that the present time of corruption and evil is to be purged by Divine judgment from which only a remnant will escape. Afterwards a Golden Age will be ushered in.

The earlier chapters of Isaiah are: concerned with the corruption and evil and the prediction of judgments on both Israel and the nations. Then comes the magnificent prophecy concerning Zion redeemed. You will remember how it opens: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God." - Isa. 40:1.

Many of our readers will recall that this was the verse which Brother Russell chose as his text when invited to address a gathering of some 3,000 Hebrews in New York City, in 1910: "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry- unto, her, that her warfare is accomplished."

The Prophet, however, predicts that when this message is first delivered, it will go unheeded. Jerusalem had been in captivity so long, that her watchmen found it well-nigh impossible to awake. Again and again, Jehovah calls to them to awake. "Hearken to me." (Isa. 51:1); "Attend to me." (Isa. 51:4); "Hearken to me." (Isa. 51:7); "I, even I, am he that comforteth you." (Isa. 51:12) "Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem." (Isa. 51:17); "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion." (52:1.) But to all these entreaties of the Lord, Jerusalem fails to respond. She is sunk in the "Slough of Despond."

At last, however, the weary watchmen do awake, and catching sight of the messenger of the Lord, they join in an awakening chorus:

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good tidings,  
who publishes peace, who brings good tidings of good,  
who publishes salvation,  
who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.'

"Hark, your watchmen lift up their voice,  
together they sing for joy; for eye to eye they see  
the return of the Lord to *Zion*." - Isaiah 52:7, 8, R.S.V.

What is the picture the Prophet presents here? Is it that of watchmen gathered in a group, all intently looking at the same segment of the landscape? If thus employed they would be affording but poor protection to the city. Nay! -- being true watchmen, they will be *deployed* so as to completely encircle the city.

Thus they will be alert to its danger from any quarter. And, *with no gaps in their ranks, and only so*, they will see "eye to eye." That is to say, each will carefully watch that particular segment assigned to him; and where the vision of one watchman ends that of another will begin.

Rotherham observes in an interesting footnote to Isaiah 52:8 that the phrase translated "eye to eye" is, in Numbers 14:14, translated "face to face." Evidently the thought is that of clearness of vision. The watchmen see not dimly but clearly there is nothing to obstruct their view.

And what is it that *together they see, and see clearly*? It is the welcome sight: "The Lord is returning to Zion." On every side, from every quarter, North, South, East, and West, the evidence becomes clearer and clearer that their long captivity is about to end. "Thy God reigneth." God, who had never really relinquished his sovereignty, is about to exercise it in accomplishing their deliverance. No wonder they sing together for joy.

This prediction was partially fulfilled in the experience of Israel when, by the hand of Cyrus, God

delivered them from Babylon. And it is to have a much grander fulfillment in the experience of Israel after Jacob's Trouble. But we are particularly interested in the application of this passage to spiritual Israel. Spiritual Israel has long been in captivity to antitypical Babylon. Now, at last, deliverance is at hand. The watchmen are awakened. As in the case of Israel of old, so now in ours, "Thy God reigneth" is proving to be the message of the hour. This message was a true message in their case, *before* deliverance was actually accomplished. And it is true today in our case *before* the reign begins. At the hand of the antitypical Cyrus, God "is taking a hand in the affairs of the world now as he did not do in times past." (S. S. *Vol II*, 1916 Foreword, page Biii.) *Before* the stone becomes a mountain (*before* Jesus and his Church commence their reign -- see "Herald" for March 1954, page 44) the stone is to accomplish much, as Daniel long ago predicted would be the case. (Dan. 2:44, 45.) And the watchmen see this clearly-eye to eye, as the Prophet Isaiah in our text declares.

- P. L. Read.

## Historical Note on the Trinity

For many years pagans had been familiar with the Trinitarian beliefs of the East, beliefs which found their strongest expression in the complicated theology of Hinduism and Brahmanism. It is in honor of the three chief Brahman deities, Siva, Vishnu, and Brahma, that a very early hymn to the Trinity was composed. Nearly a hundred years before Christ, Kalidasa, one of the greatest of Indian poets, wrote:

"In those three Persons the one *God* was shown Each first *in* place, each last-not one alone; Of Shiva, Vishnu, Brahma, each may *be* First, second, third, among the blessed Three."

'The similarity of those words to the later doctrine of the Trinity as defined in the Athanasian Creed is obvious.

It was in the fourth Century A.D., and nearly five hundred years after Kalidasa wrote his hymn, that the controversy which had been gathering force in the Church came to a head. Upon June 17th, A.D. 325, the Emperor Constantine . opened the Council of Nicea, which was to last for two months, and at which three hundred' and eighteen Bishops, drawn from all over Christendom, including one or two from Britain, sat to debate whether or not the doctrine of the Trinity should be incorporated into the accepted belief of the Christian Church.

Principal opponents in the controversy were Arius and Athanasius, both of Alexandria in Egypt. Arius was an old man, Athanasius a younger man well versed in philosophy and literature, and his ability and energy led the Council to decide in favor of his demand that the doctrine of the Trinity be declared the teaching of the Church. Only two bishops, Thomas of Marmarica and Secundus of Ptolemais, supported Arius. The latter, being thus defeated, was excommunicated and banished, and his books ordered to be burnt. Even so, a considerable portion of Christendom refused at first to accept the doctrine. More especially was this the case in Northern Europe and Britain, for although it was nearly three hundred years after this Council that Augustine landed in Kent to convert the English to Latin Christianity, a British Christian Church having little or nothing to do with Rome had existed from very early times. Several centuries elapsed. before the Trinity was firmly established as a generally accepted Christian doctrine.

-- BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY, Eng.

## A Bible Study

The Hebrew phrases, "*is not*," "*are not*," "*shall not be*" are very expressive, descriptive of the words, "extinction of life," as for instance:

Enoch "was not, for God took him." - Gen. 5:24.

Joseph "*is not*," "is dead," "is torn to pieces." - Gen. 42:13, 32, 36, 38; 44:20, 28.

Moses and Aaron *told . to go to the top of the mountain to die.* - Deut. 3:27; 32:48-52; Num. 20:22-29; Isa. 38:5.

"Yet a little while, and the wicked *shall not be.*" - Psa. 37:10, 35, 36.

David said, "I go hence, and be *no more.*" - Psa. 39:13.

"Let sinners be consumed and be *no more.*" - Psa. 104:35.

"Man . . . is of few days, . . . like a flower, . . . cut down: . . . as a shadow, . . . *continueth not.* . . . dies, . . . gives up the spirit, . . . where is he? . . . lies down, . . . sleeps . . . is called forth." - Job 14:2, 10, 12, 15.

Hezekiah: "When I am among them who have *ceased to be.*" - Isa. 38:11, R.V., margin.

Jeremiah: "My children, they *are not.*" "Rachel weeping for her children; . . . because they *are not*" (Jer. 31:15, A.R.V.) "Our fathers sinned, and *are no more.*" - Lam. 5:7, A.R.V.

Satan: "Thou wast perfect in the day thou wast created, 'till iniquity was found in thee. . . . I will destroy thee,

a' fire . . shall devour thee, . I will bring thee to ashes . . . thou shalt *never be any more.*" - Ezek. 28:15-19. See Heb. 2:14; 1 John 3:8; Psa. 145:20; Isa. 14:19, 20. See *Douay Version* on Rev. 20:10.

"In Ramah . . . great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they *are not.*" - Matt. 2:18.

"Death reigned from Adam to Moses, . . . death passed upon all men, . . . even . - Rom. 5:14, 12.

"Abel . . . Enoch . . . Abraham . . . Moses . . . these *all died.*" - Heb. 11:4-13.

"Death" - Greek *thanatos*-*"extinction of life."* - *Green's Lexicon.*

"Death" - Webster - "cessation of existence, extinction of life."

Enoch, at the age of 365, was "translated," according to Hebrews 11:5. "Translate" from Greek *metithesis* - "To transpose, to change position." (*Green's Lexicon.*) It is rendered "*remove*" in Acts 13:22 (King Saul); Galatians 1:6; also "*translated*" (the Church *now*) in Colossians 1:13; "*put out of*" in Luke 16:4 (the steward); "*turned away*" much people in Acts 19:26; "*carry over*" (Jacob's body) in Acts 7:16; "*can remove*" (mountains) in 1 Corinthians 13:2; (the priesthood) "*being changed*" in Hebrews 7:12.

-- E. K. Snyder.

## **The Choir Invisible**

"Oh, may I join the choir invisible  
Of those immortal dead who live again  
In minds made better by their presence; live  
In pulses stirred to generosity,  
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn  
For miserable aims that end with self,

In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,  
And with their mild persistence urge men's search  
To vaster issues. So to live is heaven:  
To make undying music in the world,  
Breathing a beautiful order that controls  
With growing sway the growing life of man,"

- *Contributed.*

## **Recently Deceased**

Brother J. W. Adams, Inglewood, Calif. - (August).  
Brother J. L. Butler, St. John's, Newfoundland - (July).  
Brother William Cammers, Colby, Wis. - (July).  
Brother William E. Deibert, Richmond, Ind. - (July).  
Sister Jane Barclay Frew, Brooklyn, N. Y. - (August).  
Sister Nellie Ihrig, Blackwell, Okla. - (July).  
Brother James Irving, Des Moines, Iowa - (July).  
Sister Annie Owen, Kirkwood, Mo. - (July).  
Sister Margaret C. Savage, St. Louis, Mo. - (August).  
Sister Mary Alice Taylor, Granite City, Ill. - (July).  
Brother Herman R. Wollin, Lake Mills, Wis. - (August).  
Sister Sarah E. Wolverton, Greenville, Ohio - (May).