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The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard

"But many shall be last that are first; and first that are last." "So the last shall be first, and the first last." - Matt. 19:30; 20:16, Am. R. V.

THIS PARABLE is confessedly one of the most difficult of the New Testament Scriptures. Here are men hired, some at six o'clock in the morning, some at nine o'clock, some at noon; some at three o'clock in the afternoon, some even at five; and yet at six o'clock, when they come to be paid off, they all receive the same wage. Instinctively we feel that that is not fair; we feel that those who had borne the burden and heat of the day should have been better paid than those who entered the vineyard -only in the cool of the evening. As we read this parable we instinctively sympathize, do we not, with those who had borne the heat and burden of the day. It puzzles us as it puzzled them, to know why those who had worked only a single hour in the cool of the evening, should be put on a level with the weary men who had labored through the oppressive heat of the day, and had borne the brunt of the toil. It ought to puzzle us; for next to the quality of love there is nothing in us that is more evidently of God than that deep sense of justice which resents whatever is unfair and inequitable.

Nor is the wrong done to-our sense of justice at all mended, when, to vindicate his conduct, "the goodman of the house" begins to talk of his right to do' what he will with his own, and to declare that it is his will and pleasure to put the last on an equality with, or even before, the first. Indeed, to conceive of God as saying, "May I not do as I will with Mine own?" or "Simply because it pleases Me to do so, I will give unto these last even as unto the first?" -- such a conception of Him is but a new shock to our sense of justice, to our faith in the equity of His rule. Like Abraham of old, we believe that the God of all the earth cannot but do right. We have been taught to conceive of Him as actuated by love, not by caprice; as rewarding our service according to a law divinely just, and not according to the uncertain impulses of an arbitrary self-will; and we are at a loss to know how to attribute such conduct, or defense of His conduct, to the God whom we believe to be absolutely just and full of grace.

There are some people, doubtless, who are not perplexed by the householder's conduct, and his defense of it. Those who find a key to the inequalities of life and providence, in what they are

pleased; to call "Divine Sovereignty," those who believe that of His own will God has elected a few to be saved and doomed the great majority of our race to be eternally tormented, and who believe that He is as truly glorified in the damnation of the many as in the salvation of the few--such, of course, find no difficulty in this parable. A penny more or less means nothing to them. But **we** who believe that God loves all men, and that Christ died for all men, and not merely for the few--we cannot hear this naked assertion of the Divine Sovereignty without perplexity and amazement. We believe not only in God's sovereign power, but in the fact that that power never has nor can be exercised except in accordance with justice and love. To hear **Him** say, "I shall do as I will with Mine own" or "I shall bestow the rewards of My grace as I please," cuts our deepest convictions against the grain. "**He** cannot be less just than we are," we say, "He must be far more just; and therefore there must be a meaning in the words which we have not yet fathomed, a meaning which, when once we find' it, will be seen to be in harmony with our loftiest conceptions of His character." We fully believe that there is such a meaning, and it will be our endeavor in this article so to bring it out as to solve the difficulties which this parable presents.

Two Erroneous Solutions

Two very ingenious, but, to our understanding, erroneous, solutions of these difficulties are worth a moment's attention. The main difficulty of the parable is, of course, the apparent injustice of giving all the laborers the same wage. And to escape this difficulty some of our ablest expositors have assumed, that either those who were first called grew slack and careless, or the last called displayed so extraordinary a diligence that in one hour they did as much as those who had been in the vineyard all day; just, for example, as St. Paul, though the last called of the Apostles, labored more abundantly than they all.

To this interpretation, however, there is one fatal objection. If all the laborers had done an equal stroke of 'work, how is it that the lord of the vineyard fails to urge so obvious and so complete a vindication of his conduct? Evidently what 'he does say is said in an endeavor to justify himself. When, therefore, his justice was called in question, why did not "the goodman of the house" meet his impugners with the unanswerable reply "Although you were first in the vineyard you have done no more work than those who came last; and as these have done as much as you, it is but fair that they should receive as much." Instead of taking this tone, however, he falls back on his contract with them, and on his power to do as he liked with his own. His very defense implies that the last called had not done as much as the first called, although he chose to give them as much.

Another ingenious interpretation turns on the various kinds and values of the Roman denarius, translated in our Authorized Version, "penny. There were the brass, the silver, and the gold denarius; the double, the treble, the fourfold. -- And the solution is offered that just as in the Kingdom there will be one reward, namely eternal life, and yet this one reward be capable of enjoyment on various planes of being -- the Divine plane, a lower spirit plane, the human plane -- so in the parable each received a denarius, a penny, but the pennies were of different kinds and values.

But the objection fatal to the previous interpretation is also fatal to this. True and beautiful as the thought is in itself, we have no hint of it in the parable. We have hints that point in an opposite direction. If the wage, though nominally the same were really different, why did not "the goodman" bid the complaining laborers look at their penny, mark that theirs was a gold penny, while that of those taken on at midday was a silver penny, and that of those called late in the afternoon Was but a brass penny? With so complete and unanswerable a defense at his command it is simply inconceivable that he should have fallen back on his contract, and his right to do what he would with his own.

We must admit, then, that there was at least an apparent injustice in his dealings. We must admit that those who were really first were put on a level with the last, and that those who were really last were put on a level with the first. We must admit that those who had done most work received no higher wage than those who had done least. In fine, we must admit the inequality of treatment, and learn, if we can, how it is to be explained and justified.

The Rich Young Man Whom Jesus Loved

To understand this parable it must be studied, like all Scripture, with reference to its context. And to do this in the present instance it is necessary to go back to the previous chapter. There we find the circumstances which moved our Lord to utter this parable. Commencing with verse 16 of chapter 19 we read the story of the rich young man whom Jesus loved. A young ruler-rich, learned, and of dignified position, yet modest, humble, sincere, had come to Jesus with every gesture of courtesy and deference, to ask Him how he-might win eternal life. Despite the temptation of luxury, he is pure; despite the temptations of wealth: and reputation he is humble, modest, dissatisfied with his present attainments, eagerly stretching forth to things before. The Lord Jesus bade him, if he would enter life, keep the commandments. This demand the ruler was able to say that he had met. He had kept the commandments.

And Jesus, looking on him, and seeing, we suppose, that on the whole he had been as good as his word, loved him. But the young ruler, emboldened by the grace and love of Christ, reveals the secret ambition of his heart. Mark how pure and lofty that ambition is. He is not content with mere life, even though it be life eternal; he longs to be perfect, perfect in all his relations with God and man. Not content with mere salvation he asks counsel of perfection. And our Lord gives him what he asks. So high and pure an ambition as his can be attained only at the cost of utter self-sacrifice. "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor." It was a difficult demand to make on a young, wealthy, learned man; and all the more difficult because it was sudden and unexpected. For, in all probability, the ruler anticipated nothing more than that he should receive a new and more austere rule of life; that he would be urged to a profounder study of the Law, or a more rigid attendance on the duties of religion. To Bear that he must voluntarily become poor and homeless, that he must part with all he prized and loved, to follow One who had not where to lay His head, must have taken him by surprise. For the moment, the test is too severe. Amiable, modest, with a heart set on the eternal realities, the young man, cursed with great possessions, cannot, all at once, give them up. In his surprise and consternation he finds himself unable to meet the rigorous demand. He goes away sorrowful.

The Master's Gracious Spirit

But if he was sorrowful as he went away, can we suppose that Jesus, who loved him, was not sorrowful to see him go? -- that He did not yearn over him, and pity him, and long to bring him back? We may be sure that He did. For, see, the young ruler, smitten with shame and grief, has no excuse to offer for himself; but Jesus begins to make excuse for him. Turning to His disciples He tells them, lest they should judge the ruler harshly, how hard it is for rich men to enter the Kingdom. It is easier for a loaded camel to push through the Needle-gate, than for a man burdened with wealth to enter the Kingdom of heaven.

Now if Peter and his brethren had been in sympathy with their Master, if they had shared His loving, gracious spirit, what would they have done on., hearing Him speak so tenderly of the young man who had just gone away? Would they not-above and before all would not ardent, impulsive Peter, have run after him, and told him how sorry the Good Master was to lose him, and have-' besought him to come back? But instead of manifesting the Master's spirit of love and tenderness, they are thinking only of themselves. "We have left all, and followed Thee;" cries Peter, "what, then, shall we have." And no words could have more conclusively shown his lack of sympathy with his Master. It is easy to conceive how this boast and question must have jarred on the heart of Christ. He was full of pity for the young man who had won His love, and who loved Him, though as yet he could not leave all for Him. And to see that Peter, instead of sharing His

pity, instead of being moved with regret for a man who had had so heavy a trial to meet, was pluming himself on, his superior virtue; to hear him exalting himself over the modest, refined, meditative ruler, who had just gone away sorrowful, with scalding tears of shame at his own weakness -- this, we may be sure was hard for Christ to bear. Christ was mourning that a man of a disposition so lovable, with a heart bent toward the loftiest aims should miss the high mark of perfection; and Peter breaks in on His tender, wistful, reverie with: "Never mind him, Lord; **He** won't come. But **we**, we have left all to follow Thee." We like to think that Peter's words here were not entirely selfish; that in his rough, blundering way, he meant to console Jesus, and to remind him that, if some went away from Him, others were ready to cleave to Him; but his very attempt at consolation must have been a new wound to Christ. For He loved Peter as well as the young ruler, and would be grieved at his boastfulness, and selfishness. Yet with what infinite grace He responds to his selfish demand. There is an infinite grace, but also, we think, a little weariness and conscious patience in the words: "No man hath left all for My sake and the Gospel's but shall receive an hundred-fold, now in this life, and in the world to come life everlasting." But it would not be for Peter's highest good that his selfishness, his lack of sympathy with his Master, his want of pity of the young ruler, should escape without rebuke. And so our Lord follows up His gracious promise with a warning and a parable "No man hath left all for My sake and the Gospel's but shall receive an hundred-fold now, and by and by life everlasting, but many first shall be last, and last first." There is the warning appended to His gracious promise. And then to make the matter plain our Lord proceeds to relate the parable of the laborers in the vineyard: "But many first shall be last and last first, for the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that was a householder, who went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard." Then comes the story of some laborers who, though called into the vineyard at the eleventh hour of the day received an equal wage with those who had been called at the first hour. What did the warning mean but this -- that though Peter and the other disciples had been the first to respond to Christ's call, others might yet be called who would rank before them; that though they were the first they might become the last, and were in danger of becoming the last so long as they could boast of their superior fidelity or show a selfish and unloving spirit?

Many First Shall be Last

In this warning and parable it was as though our Lord had said to Peter: "You and your brethren have indeed left all to follow Me. Have no fear of your reward. You shall receive it to the uttermost farthing. You were amongst the first to enter the vineyard, and you work in it as well as you know how. You have done much and well. You are bearing the burden and heat of the day, and when evening comes, you shall in no wise lose your reward. You shall have a full day's wage. But while you labor in My Father's vineyard and employ your time and talents in His service and Mine, are you thinking only of reward? only of how much you may get by serving Me? Well, you shall have even more than you hope. But there are many not called yet who will come to Me by and by. These may show a nobler spirit. They may serve from love, and not merely because it is part of the contract. And these last-will it not be just that they should be put on a level with you, or even be preferred before you, if you retain your mercenary and servile disposition?"

That this warning, that many first shall be last and last first, is the key with which to unlock the teaching of this parable is, we think, abundantly clear from the fact that after relating the parable, our Lord repeats the warning: "So" says He, "the last shall be first and the first last." We may be sure that in these two sentences, or rather in this one sentence with which the parable both opens and closes, we have its key, or our Lord Jesus would neither have laid it so conveniently to our hands, nor so emphatically called it to our attention.

The Rich Young Man Whom Jesus Loved

Now that we have this parable in proper relationship to its context, let us see how it may be applied. We shall experience difficulty in trying to make each little feature count, but its main lesson should not be difficult to apply.

Out of many possible applications which the parable may have there are three which especially appeal to us as having merit. In the first place, there is one possible, and even likely, application of this warning and parable which cannot fail to be very welcome to us all. We are thinking now of the young man whom Jesus loved. **We** love him, too, do we not? A rich man, yet not spoiled by his wealth; a zealot for the law, and yet bent on learning more than the law could teach; a young man, and yet modest and teachable. We do not think it strange that he found it hard to give up "great possessions" all at once, and to become a penniless, homeless, wanderer, even that he might become perfect. It irks and grieves us to think that **he** should have gone away from Christ. We cannot easily persuade ourselves that he never came 'back. Nor need we try, for in our Lord's rebuke to Peter, "But there are last who shall yet be first," we have at least a hint that he who went sorrowfully away came joyfully back. For, surely, he was one of the last who became one of the first in Christ's regard; or why, as he went away, should Christ begin to speak of late-comers, who would 'be as dear as those who came early, and to tell a story of certain laborers, who, though they entered the vineyard at the evening hour, took as high a wage as those who came in the early morning hours? To us it seems that our Lord Jesus, yearning with love and pity for the sorrowful young ruler, was comforting Himself with the thought that he **would** come back by and by. **That** seems to us the reason why He harps and lingers on the thought so long. First, as the ruler departs, He says, "Well, well, there are last who will yet be first." Then He tells the story of the laborers in the vineyard. And again when He has told it, He reverts to the thought with which He had started: "**So** shall the last be first, and the first last." Let us cherish a good hope for that young man. There is much reason to believe that he did become a follower of the Master.

(To be concluded in the next issue)

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Israel Today

"I will bless them that bless thee." - Genesis 12:3

Jerusalem, June 24, 1959

Here in Israel there is a great deal of admiration for the people of Holland, as well as the Scandinavians, who aided the Jews so valiantly during the regime of Hitler and especially during the Second World War, when often at great personal risk they provided shelter for thousands of Jacob's posterity who had to flee the advancing Nazis. Since the establishment of the State of Israel eleven years ago, the relationship between the new Jewish nation and Holland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland has grown even stronger. A news dispatch received from the Netherlands a few weeks ago points up the bond that exists between the peoples of Holland and Israel. It has been revealed that half of the Israel Bond purchases in the Netherlands during the last quarter of 1958 and the first quarter of 1959 were made by Gentiles. If this same ratio were to apply in all the countries of the world where Israel Bonds are sold, the Jewish State today would be in a most flourishing condition.

This remarkable level of participation was the result of a special Israel Tenth Anniversary Campaign called "We Participate," which was conducted among non-Jews. A committee of distinguished Christians organized meetings throughout Holland in which the Government and local authorities' representatives, clergymen, and other communal leaders participated. The Netherlands press and radio manifested a good deal of interest in the bond drive, which raised the equivalent of a half million dollars. One of the leading supporters of the project, Rabbi J. S. Soetendorp, minister of the Liberal Jewish Community of Amsterdam, attributed a good part of the campaign's success to the fact that *the reborn Jewish state seems to the devoutly Christian people of Holland to be materializing the prophetic message concerning the Holy Land.*

What we have just related concerning the Dutch is but one of the ways in which this nation is cooperating with the State of Israel, and God has and no doubt will continue to richly bless them for their support. Besides the fine trade relations that exist between these two nations, Holland also extends its friendship and help through taking on projects here requiring technical know-how which the Dutch possess. It has just been announced by the Government in Jerusalem that it has decided to order the projected shipyard for Haifa port from a Dutch firm. This shipyard will in the first stage build vessels up to 7000-tons capacity and will provide for all the repairs of the Israel fleet. It is estimated that it will employ 2500 workers and thus be the largest single employer in the country.

Such necessary ventures are made possible by Israel Bond purchases, which money is used for the development of the nation's industrial and agricultural output.

THE DESERT TO BLOSSOM

Another large scheme is the commencement of the laying of 108-inch pipes in the national irrigation network. The first five of these nine-foot-diameter, reinforced concrete pipes for this country-wide irrigation system designed to channel water from the River Jordan in the north to the arid Negev in the south, were lowered into place through fields and orchards just north of Kfar Saba several weeks ago. This pipeline is to run for many miles and terminate south of Beersheba. To give some idea of what a large undertaking it is, we mention the fact that each section of pipe weighs 30 tons and is placed in position by means of a 130-ton crane. Some 200

cubic meters of soil have to be scooped out to construct a bed for each of the 16V2-foot lengths of pipe. The assembly rate per day is from ten to twenty pipe sections, depending on the nature of the terrain. It will take many months for the project to be completed, but then Israel will be able to intensively cultivate thousands of acres of arid land that at present lie in a barren condition.

A FRUITFUL LAND

In spite of the drought, locust plagues, and general adverse weather conditions that have prevailed in Israel for some months, the country produced a fairly good crop of citrus fruit, enabling them to export about ten million cases. This was made possible by very heavy irrigation at great expense. The Israel oranges, grapefruit, and lemons rate with the finest in the world. The fruit of Israel is now being exported to over twenty countries, bringing to mind the passage in Isaiah 27:6: "He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud and fill the face of the world with fruit."

Something that amazes most people who visit Israel is the fact that there are 4500 acres of bananas growing here, which provide amply for the home market, and in good seasons at least 2000 tons, or about seven per cent of the yield, are exported, an amount that could be substantially increased, the experts say.

THE HUNT FOR BLACK GOLD

Israel is prospecting just as much as any country in the search for oil. There is one producing oil-field here, located at Heletz near Ashkelon, which at present supplies nine per cent of the country's total crude oil requirements, or 120,000 tons annually. Drillings in various parts of the land have brought forth natural gas and indications of oil. But Israel is not sitting idly by and wishfully expecting good luck. As soon as the Sinai Campaign terminated, which permitted free access to the Port of Elath on the Red Sea, Israel immediately laid down an eight-inch oil pipeline running from Elath northward to Beersheba and from Beersheba a 16-inch pipeline was laid all the way to the Mediterranean and then up the Coast to Haifa, where Israel has a large refinery.

Now a group of foreign investors headed by Baron Edmond de Rothschild is investing \$15,000,000 in laying down a new 16-inch pipeline between Elath and Beersheba which will be able to transport four and a half million tons of oil annually from Elath to Haifa and run the Israel refineries at capacity.

It is presumed that the oil will come to Elath from Iran in large tankers, and then be piped northward. After the Sinai Campaign, when the Egyptian blockade of the Gulf of Elath was broken, the foreign oil companies that had holdings in Israel for many years pulled out. This proved to be a blessing in disguise. Mr. Levi Eshkol, Israel's Minister of Finance, said: "It would seem that our enemies who thought they would thereby cause considerable damage to Israel were responsible for transferring to our ownership property of great financial and perhaps also political value." Israel acquired the installations of the Shell Oil Company, as well as the refineries and the storage and unloading facilities of the Iraq Petroleum Company. As things stand now Israel is not dependent upon the Suez Canal for her supply of crude oil. Economic circles in Israel hope that the completion and effective operation of the 16-inch pipeline will prove to Western oil interests the feasibility of a 32-inch line from Elath to the Mediterranean, which could carry about 25,000,000 tons of oil annually, by-passing the Suez Canal and assuring European nations of an uninterrupted supply.

SELF-SUFFICIENCY ATTAINABLE SOON

According to Eshkol, Israel's two million population could become self supporting by exporting an additional \$80,000,000 worth of goods yearly. This is an amazing statement in view of the fact that Israel is but eleven years old, but from the developments we have seen here during the last ten months we believe that this will happen sooner than expected. As Mr. Eshkol stated, it requires an effort surely, but it is not impossible. He said also that the State could expect to support an increased population of 85,000 persons a *year* in the next four or five years.

The gross national product of Israel increased by twelve per cent during the 1958-1959 fiscal year, it is learned from the Minister of Labor report. The increase is credited equally to higher productivity-four per cent more for each breadwinner-the introduction of new equipment, and a larger labor force. It is also noted that "the adjustment of immigrants from backward countries to modern technical methods was 'miraculous.' Productivity at the Nesher Cement plant in Ramle and at the Alliance and General Tire plants, at the Yuval Gad pipe plant, and in many other industries, is comparable to that in highly developed countries." Significant advances in agriculture and building are cited, especially in Upper Tiberias where a housing project scheduled to take eight months was finished in four.

How can Israel compete with large nations as far as industrial export is concerned? By concentrating on quality products, such as wearing apparel, where ingenuity and styling sell the goods. For instance, the Abraham Gutfreund firm of Tel Aviv exported a total of \$510,000 worth of raincoats and mackintoshes in the first three months of 1959, double the amount for the same period of last year. The firm's target is \$2,000,000 worth of exports this year, mostly to the U. S. and Canada.

EXPLOITING THE NATURAL RESOURCES

The Dead Sea and huge craters in the Negev contain inestimable amounts of minerals and ores. One of the biggest projects being undertaken by Israel is the setting up of a ten-plant chemical combine to extract and process minerals. Very shortly an aluminum sulphate plant will be constructed. Aluminum sulphate is used by the paper, masonite, and dyeing industries, as well as for water softening. At present \$60,000 worth of aluminum sulphate is imported annually.

The raw material for the new product will be flint clay of which large deposits exist at Maktesh Ramon in the Negev. The aluminum sulphate plant being built here will have an annual output of 3000 tons, enough to meet the domestic needs and leave a surplus for export. This new plant will be just one of a series designed to provide industrial chemicals for the home market and for export, thus earning valuable foreign currency.

These items dealing with the physical developments taking place in the Land of Promise give some idea of the blessing of the Eternal that is growing day by day. In ancient time the Lord assured his people Israel that if they were faithful he would bless them in basket and in store (Deut. 28:5) and now that his face of favor is turning again to his ancient chosen people these material blessings are being revived.

AS A BRITISH WRITER SEES IT

Mr. Godfrey Winn, the "highest-paid journalist in Great Britain," whose articles reach 12,000,000 readers through the *Daily Express* and another 10,000,000 via women's magazines, told *The Jerusalem Post* recently that he would do "everything I can for the rest of my life to show what problems Israel is facing and how it is overcoming them."

The journalist was here on a two-weeks visit as a guest of the Government. He said he had come over with a certain amount of prejudice, fearing to be "overwhelmed by propaganda," but had been "left very much to make his own conclusions." He found himself impressed by the lack of class consciousness in Israel—"people who do their job well feeling they are all equally a part of Israel."

During an hour-long meeting in Jerusalem with Prime Minister Ben-Gurion -- who "has a good and kind face" -- Mr. Winn suggested that children in this country were perhaps "over-cared for." "In one *kibbutz* I visited, the children got better food than the adults." The Prime Minister answered, said Mr. Winn, that Israel's children nevertheless developed toughness and resiliency. "And let me say," added the much traveled Mr. Winn, "I've never seen more beautiful children than here."

Upon leaving the country, that which writer Winn promised to picture to his readers in Great Britain, in his series of articles on the Jewish State, was the "life and warmth of Israel." He said, "In England everybody talks about the atom bomb and will there be a war. Here, although enemies abound on every side, there is too much involvement with life for vague fears."

*(Foregoing is the tenth report from the Land of Promise, from
Brother Casimir Lanowick, Editor of Jews in the News. - Ed. Com.)*

The Last Warning Bell

"When ye shall see all these things, know that He is near, even at the doors." - Matt. 24:33 margin.

ACCORDING to the testimony of Daniel and John, the end of the Gospel Age is near, although no one can *say* positively just how near... . We have been witnessing many significant events in the condition of Palestine, etc., events which plainly indicate that the time is near at hand when Israel's land will be theirs again.* The Moslems in 1917 lost altogether their control there, and the time seems not far distant when "the nations of Europe, it may be merely by mutual distrust and political jealousy, or it may be by higher motives, shall conspire to reinstate the Jews in the land of their forefathers; *then* the last warning bell will have rung; then the last of the unfulfilled predictions of Scripture as to events prior to the great crisis, will have received its accomplishment." Then the manifestation to Israel of the Second Advent will take place. Then the reign of Christ with his risen and glorified saints as king over all the earth will be close at hand. Then the mystery of God will be finished, and the *apokalupsis* of Christ be immediate; the rapture or change of the Church having taken place before.

* These words were written in 1921.

When the 2520 years of Gentile *lease* of power ran its course in 1914, many of the Lord's people were sorely tried, because their long-cherished hope of deliverance did not come, and their expectations failed. Others, perhaps the more numerous class, have lost faith altogether in chronological prophecy. Very similar may have been the condition of ancient Israel during the closing of the four hundred years of their affliction. They may have thought that the proper time to begin to reckon was much earlier than it was, and thus met with disappointment. Note the following:

"Had Israel in Egypt, or Moses in Midian, endeavored to discover beforehand *the precise year* in which the 400 years of affliction and bondage predicted by God to Abram was to befall his seed, would terminate, they would have been sorely puzzled to select a commencing epoch. Was it to be dated from the call of Abram, or from the day the promise was given? or from the birth of Isaac, the promised seed? or from the descent into Egypt? or from the commencement of the cruel treatment of the children of Israel by the Egyptians, when there arose a king who knew not Joseph? There was a wide choice of possible commencing epochs, and it was easy to select a wrong one! The event proved that none of these was the real starting point; . . . but from the time when Isaac was five years old; and to this day it is a matter of conjecture what the event was which marked that year, though there is little doubt that it was the casting out of the bondwoman and her son, on the occasion of the mocking of the heir of promise by the natural seed. This mocking, or 'persecuting' (Gal. 4:29) is the first *affliction of Abraham's seed* of which we have any record, and its result demonstrated that it was in Isaac the seed was to be called. The 430 years would thus start from the grant of the land to Abram's seed, and the 400 from the act showing *which* of the two seeds of Abram was to possess it. The important allegorical meaning attributed to this casting-out of Ishmael, confirms the impression that it was the starting point; but the fact cannot be proved, and all we know is that the Exodus (which took place on the self same day that the 430 years ran out - Exod. 12:40) was 405 years after the birth of Isaac, so that the 400 years dated from Isaac's fifth year. How could Israel in Egypt possibly have guessed that? Their prophetic students (if they had any) would most likely base their calculations on the supposition that the period started from the year the prediction was given-twenty or twenty-two years before the true point. And when the 400 years from that epoch expired, skeptics and objectors may have

derided them, and they themselves may have had their faith in the Divine prediction and their long-cherished hope of deliverance sorely tried by the fact that the expectation failed! But God is not man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent; hath he said, and shall he not do it? When the appointed period ended, the promised deliverance came. Little as Pharaoh and all Egypt feared their degraded bondslaves, or the God they professed to serve; little as either tyrant or captives foresaw any impending crisis of judgment and deliverance, suddenly and unexpectedly it came. In the short space of a few weeks, or months, Egypt was covered with confusion and horror and death....

"A longer bondage is now drawing to a close, and a greater Exodus awaits both the natural and the spiritual seeds of Abraham; its date is similarly fixed in the purpose of God and similarly defined by chronologic prophecy, and though some students may mistake its exact era, and be discouraged by an apparent failure of their hope, and though the world may exult, and the mockers say, Where is the promise of his coming [*parousia*]? yet the vision is for an appointed time, at the end it shall speak and not lie or be found false; therefore we will wait for it, *for it will surely come, it will not tarry.*"--*H. G. Guinness*

THE LONG JOURNEY LIES BEHIND

The writer just quoted has given a most striking illustration of the position that students of chronological prophecy occupy today. He says:

"We are in the position of travelers, approaching a large and to them unknown city, at the end of a long railway journey. They are aware of the distance to be traversed, of the stations to be passed on the way, and of the time required for the transit. The milestones have long shown them that they are rapidly nearing their goal; the time the journey was to occupy has elapsed, and they have observed that the station just passed was the last but one.... It is a mere question of minutes and miles; if one platform is not the right one, the next one may be; at any rate, the long journey lies behind, the desired goal is all but reached. It is easy to be patient, and not difficult to bear a momentary disappointment, because the main result is certain, and the end in any case close at hand."

- *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, Vol. II, p. 629-634.*

"Whatsoever He Saith Unto You, Do It"

John 2:5

THESE were the words of our Lord's mother to the servants, at the marriage in Cana, about the time of the beginning of our Lord's ministry-our Lord, his mother and his disciples being guests at the wedding. There was a shortage of wine, it will be remembered, and Mary evidently expected our Lord to exercise his power in some manner: although just why she should expect this is not evident, because we are distinctly informed that the miracle of turning water into wine was the beginning of Jesus' miracles. (John 2:11.) And, by the way, this distinct statement by the Apostle John, gives emphatic contradiction to the apocryphal legends which accredit to our Lord various miracles, etc., previous to this time.

How suitable are Mary's words to all of the Lord's people: "Whatsoever he saith unto *you*, do it!" How important that all should learn the lesson that it is not merely the hearing of the Gospel which brings blessing to the heart; but obedience to the glad tidings! Of course, it is necessary that we should believe the Master before we could be ready to obey him; yet the expression, "Whatsoever he shall say unto *you*, *do it!*" includes a faith in the Lord on the part of all those who are obedient. The Christian cannot do better than adopt these words as one of the mottoes of his life -- Whatsoever my Lord saith unto me, I will do it.

We are not to hear and to obey every voice, but, as our Lord himself said, "My sheep hear my voice.... and they follow me." (John 10:27.) There are many voices in the world (1 Cor. 14:11), some calling in one direction and some in another. The world calls us, the flesh calls us, the Adversary calls us, and the Master calls us. The Christian may readily enough discern the voices of the world and the flesh, and should be on his guard against their seductive influence. But he may have more difficulty in discerning between the voice of the Adversary and the voice of the Good Shepherd; because, the Adversary's method is to simulate, or counterfeit, the voice of the Shepherd. His usual methods of deception are through false teachings backed by human organizations; the whole being made to appear as a message of light through messengers of light. (See 2 Cor. 11:13, 14.) Christians need to be specially on guard on this point; many are hearing and adopting the voice of the Pope, others the voices of Presbyteries, Conferences and Councils, which hinder them from hearing and obeying the voice of the Shepherd. They have need to remember that the proper course is to "take heed that ye refuse not him which speaketh from heaven"-*"Whatsoever he shall say unto you, do it."*

Hearken to his words! "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you." (John 14:34.) "If ye love me, keep my commandments." "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." (John 14:21.) "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life, shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it. He that receiveth you, receiveth me, and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me." (Matt. 10:37-40.) He speaks again and says, "Blessed are the meek, the merciful, the humble-minded, the peacemakers, the pure in heart and those hungering and thirsting for righteousness and enduring persecution for righteousness' sake" "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven." He saith to us again-"Ye are the salt of the earth and the light of

the world"; "let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." -Matt. 5.

From heaven, he continued to speak to us through the Apostles to the same effect: "Present your bodies living sacrifices to God, holy, acceptable, your reasonable service." (Rom. 12:1.)

"Love as brethren; be pitiful, be courteous." (1 Pet. 3:8.) "Laying aside every weight, run with patience the race set before you, looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of your faith." "Laying aside all malice, and all guile and hypocrisies, and envies and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby." And "giving all diligence, add to your faith fortitude; and to fortitude knowledge; and to knowledge moderation; and to moderation patience, God-likeness, brotherly-kindness, love." - 1 Pet. 2:1; 2 Pet. 1:5.

We have heard his words. They impress us as being the very essence of wisdom and righteousness. We know that he is faithful who has promised that if we *do these things* we shall never fall, but be granted an abundant entrance into his everlasting Kingdom. We have taken the first step of belief; we have taken the second step of response, and have agreed to do these things; the important question with each one of us, therefore, must be -- Am I obedient to him from heaven who speaketh? Am I doing whatsoever he says? To whatever extent any shall find shortcomings on the line of obedience to the Shepherd's voice, to the extent of ability let him beware and arouse himself, promptly, energetically to do these things; for the Father also saith, "This is my beloved Son: hear him!" - Luke 9:35.

Returning to the narrative: We note our Lord's command to the servants to "fill the water-pots with water." Remembering the statement of the Prophet, corroborated by our Lord's own words, "Without a parable spake he not unto them," we are inclined to surmise that this, his first miracle, contains some spiritual lesson for us. Endeavoring to draw such a lesson from this miracle, in harmony with the general testimony of the Word, we reason thus: The waterpots symbolize the Lord's people; their number, six, might indicate that it refers to the Lord's people in the present time of evil, because the number six is a symbol for imperfection and evil condition, as seven is the symbol for completeness and perfection. Thus six days of the week are set apart for labor, while the seventh is set apart for rest and refreshment: Likewise the six thousand years of the world's history are permitted by the Lord to be evil, through man's disobedience and fall; while in the seventh thousand God proposes to bring in his Millennial Kingdom-his reign of everlasting righteousness.

The water with which the water-pots were commanded to be filled, is in Scripture the symbol for the truth, the "water of life"; not merely the Word of Truth, but the Word accompanied by and infused with the spirit of the truth-it is with this that the Master commands that we shall be filled. In the symbolic miracle the servants obeyed; not doubtfully or slothfully did they fill them half full, but, as it is recorded, "They filled them up to the brim." So it should be with us; having heard the Master's word, "Be ye filled with the spirit," we should draw abundantly from the fountain of grace and truth, nor cease until we are filled with the spirit "to the brim"-completely. And if we so do the Master's commands, what may we expect as a result? We may expect, as illustrated in the symbolic miracle, that the water will ultimately be changed into wine -- the symbol for unalloyed pleasure, heavenly joys.

In the symbol the miracle of *change* from water into wine came only to those vessels which were filled to the brim with water; so, likewise, the Lord has promised a still greater change to his faithful followers who receive the treasure of divine truth, and its spirit into their "earthen vessels," and who are filled with it. They shall be "changed" in a moment, in the twinkling of an

eye, under the sounding of the seventh trumpet; they shall be changed from the human nature to the divine nature; from earthly conditions to heavenly conditions: this greater miracle, yet to be accomplished by our Lord, was well symbolized in the change of the water into wine-the joys of the Kingdom, the joys of the new nature. The Lord's consecrated people are symbolized not only by the water-pots and by the servants who fill them, but also they are symbolized by the bride at the marriage, just as the bridegroom is also the one who commands that the vessels be filled with the water. The governor of the symbolic feast who pronounced the new wine to be of the very finest quality, aptly symbolizes the heavenly Father who is the great Governor of the great feast associated with the union of the heavenly Bridegroom with his Bride, and the excellence of the wine represents fitly the joys of the Lord with which we shall be filled at our "change." Already we share to some extent in the blessings of this union; already we know something of the joys of our Lord; already we taste not only of the cup of his sufferings, but also "have tasted that the Lord is gracious." Already we partake of the wine on the lees, and the fat things full of marrow (Isa. 25:6); but our present joys are but foretastes of the coming realities-the best of the wine comes at the end of the feast, when our heavenly Bridegroom shall have changed us to his own image and likeness that we may share his glory.

Oh, how important that we remember the words, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it!" 'Tis but a little time since we heard his voice directing us how our dearth of joy and happiness might be overcome, and how, instead of impurities and filth of the flesh, we might be filled with the truth, its spirit and its *joy*, and subsequently have the whole instantly "changed" to the perfection of joy-into the divine nature. How are we heeding the Master's words? To what extent have we gotten filled with the truth and its spirit? He will give ample opportunity to each of us to be filled, and if any, therefore, is only partly filled, it will be because of a lack of the proper spirit of obedience. Our vessels may not all be of the same size; as with those in the symbol which apparently varied in size, holding from two or three firkins apiece, so our capacities, opportunities, etc., may vary; but, to fulfill the Master's requirement, each must be filled full -- no more, nor less -- if we would experience the desired "change."

While this lesson evidently applies merely to the hearing of the Lord's voice by the Church, during this Gospel Age, the principle holds good also for the Millennial Age. Now the vast majority of the world do not hear the Lord's message of grace, and, consequently, are not responsible; but by and by all the deaf ears shall be unstopped, and all the sin and prejudice blinded eyes shall be opened; and the Lord shall be recognized as the great Teacher, and all shall hear his voice. This is set forth by the Apostle Peter (Acts 3:22, 23); after picturing the great Prophet (Teacher), Christ the Head and the Church his Body, whom God is raising up during this Gospel Age, and fitting for the great work of the Millennial Age, he declares, "Him shall ye hear [obey] in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass that every soul which will not hear [obey] that Prophet, shall be *destroyed* from among the people" -- in the Second Death.

If the responsibility of those who will hear during the Millennial Age is thus prefigured, and declared, so as to leave no doubt that "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" shall be visited upon all who shall then refuse to obey, what shall we say would be the result of a refusal now to obey on the part of those who hear the Master's voice during the Gospel Age? We will not say positively that there is no hope for such; but we see little room for hope for such as, hearing the voice and recognizing it, make no effort to obey it. On the contrary, we hear the Apostle saying, "If we sin willfully after we have *received a knowledge* of the truth" (heard the Lord's voice), after we have tasted of the good Word of God and been made partakers of the holy spirit, and (experienced in our justification) the powers of the Age to come, there remaineth no longer a share for us in the great sacrifice for sin; but only a fearful looking for of judgment and

fiery indignation which would devour us as adversaries who had despised the mercy and grace of God. - Heb. 4:6,6:4-5; Heb. 10:26-31.

Hearken to the Apostle's words again, "See that ye refuse not him from heaven who speaketh." (Heb. 12:25.) "We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." . . . "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation." (Heb. 2:1, 2.) So far as we may judge, the hearing of the Word of the Lord in every case brings with it responsibilities; and becomes "a savor of life unto life or of death unto death." We do not say that those who are partially negligent—who fail to fill their "earthen vessels" *to the brim* with the truth and its spirit—will be esteemed to have despised the words of the great Teacher; on the contrary, the fact that they are seeking at all to be filled with the truth and its spirit is an evidence that they have respect to the Lord's Word, and do not reject nor refuse "him that speaketh from heaven." But their failure to give diligence to be filled with the truth and its spirit will mean their loss of the great prize, the fulness of joy in the "change." These are they who neglecting to use their opportunities zealously, neglecting to be filled full with the spirit of the truth, are correspondingly partially filled with the spirit of the world, and not accounted "overcomers" of the world. These are they who will "come up out of great tribulation," washing their robes in the blood of the Lamb. (Rev. 7:9, 13-15.) Losing the great prize because of a deficiency of zeal, these will, nevertheless, get a great blessing because they did not refuse "him from heaven that speaketh."

We must remember, however, that the hearing of the natural ear is not the only hearing to which the Scriptures refer. Hence, the expression, "He that bath an ear let him hear"; and again, "Ears have they, but they hear not"; and again, our Lord's words respecting the multitudes, "To them that are without, these things are spoken in parables, that hearing they might hear, and not understand." Our responsibility is not, therefore, marked by the opportunities of the outward ear. Many have heard with the outward ear who have never heard in the responsible sense of the Scriptures, in the sense that all eventually must hear—in the sense of understanding, appreciating the message. The responsibility as to how we hear, and how we reject, is upon those who have an understanding of the Lord's grace. "Blessed are your ears for they hear, and your eyes for they see." But the blessing can come only to such as "refuse not him from heaven that speaketh." Let us all, therefore, who have heard the Master's voice, strive to remember his Word, as we have considered it foregoing: and let each of us seek to live as nearly as possible according to that Word. "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."

- *C. T. Russell*. Reprints, p. R3163.

Whither Are We Traveling?

"As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us." - Psa. 103:12

EAST IS East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet." So sang Kipling, referring of course to *peoples*, and apparently quite unaware of the Divine Purpose "to unite all in him [Christ], things in heaven and things on earth." (Eph. 1:10.) Then the solidarity of the human family will be restored as at the beginning and East and West will be joined together in an indissoluble brotherhood.

But there is a sense, though not the one in Kipling's mind, in which East and West will never meet. Scripturally, these terms stand for trends diametrically opposite and which when followed lead farther and farther away, the one from the other. Nothing establishes the faith of God's people in the Word he has given (apart from the personal experience of its power) than the meticulous use of its language as dictated by his holy spirit, which exhibits a harmony and fitness of expression through successive writers down the centuries to the very end of the Divine Revelation.

TRAVELING EASTWARD

At the very commencement of Man's Story (which in reality is but a very small portion of God's Story) called by us History, emphasis is placed upon the *East*. We read in Genesis 2:8: "The Lord God planted a garden in Eden, *in the east*; and there he put the man whom he had formed." From this we learn that Eden comprised a district of which the eastern section formed the famous garden, implying that the remainder of Eden lay to the westward of it. Later on, after the Fall, when our first parents were driven from the Garden, we read in Genesis 3:24: "He [God] drove out the man; and at the *east* of the Garden of Eden he placed a cherubim and a flaming sword which turned every way to guard the way to the Tree of Life." Hence Adam and Eve were not driven out of the Garden *westward* into the other section of Eden, but *eastward* out of Eden altogether into the Unknown and Unprepared, and debarred by the cherubim stationed on the east side of the Garden from ever returning to their original home.

When Cain, following the murder of his brother Abel, was driven away as a fugitive and wanderer on the earth (Gen. 4:12) his direction was still *eastward*. - Gen. 4:16.

After the Flood, when men again began to multiply on the face of the earth and the imagination of his heart was evil from his youth (Gen. 8:21), but whilst still united in language and aims, they "migrated to the *east* to the plain of Shinar" (Gen. 11:2); whence they were subsequently scattered abroad and confounded in language in connection with the building of the Tower of Babel.

EASTWARD-AWAY FROM GOD

In all these instances the careful student will note that travel eastward was the external accompaniment of growing departure from God. Recognition of this invests the narrative with added significance.

In the gradual development and unfolding of the Divine Purpose Abraham was called to separation (holiness) from Ur of the Chaldeans—a separation first from the idolatry of Ur (Josh.

24:14) then from the majority of his kinsfolk when he left Haran (Gen. 12:1-4); and finally, from his nephew Lot who had accompanied him into Canaan and shared some of his experiences with him. But Lot had no share in God's promises to Abraham, and in due time circumstances overruled by God brought about the necessary final separation of Abraham unto God alone. And when this time came and Abraham unselfishly gave his nephew the choice of direction, Lot chose all the plain of Jordan, as we read (Gen. 13:11-13): "Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east . . . and dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." Thus Lot journeyed east-into a sinful environment, and it was not long before he is found actually residing in Sodom itself, apparently accepting a position as a judge of the city, "sitting in the gate." - Gen. 19:1.

Later on, after the birth of Isaac, when Abraham had other sons grown up who might conceivably endanger Isaac's birthright, we read: "To the sons of his concubines Abraham gave gifts, and while he was still living he sent them away from his son Isaac, *eastward* to the *east* country." (Gen. 25:6.) Thus these other children of Abraham had to betake themselves *eastward*, away from *any* share in the special Divine privileges reserved for Isaac and his seed, in conformity with the Divine dictum, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." - Gen. 21:12.

THE EAST AND CALAMITY

The record of Genesis, then, is of a consistent movement of the race *eastward* as Man departs more and more from the revealed will of God and his ways. By implication, therefore, we would expect that any return to God would be Scripturally depicted as progression *westward*. Before examining this aspect, however, let us note the extension of the usage of "east" as indicative of something evil or calamitous in its nature. For instance, we read in Psalm 48:7: "By the *east* wind thou didst shatter the ships of Tarshish." When Jonah was displeased that God should repent of his threatened destruction of Nineveh when its king and people repented of their evil course, the Prophet, out of harmony with God, went and sat to the *east* of the city. And when his sheltering gourd or plant withered as the result of being attacked by a worm, we read that "when the sun rose God appointed a sultry *east* wind and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah so that he was faint." (Jonah 4:5-8.) Hosea 12:1 and Hos. 13:15 are other interesting references.

But perhaps the most striking illustration is recorded in Exodus 10:12-19, in connection with the plague of locusts upon the land of Egypt. When, in obedience to the Lord's command, Moses stretched out his rod over the land, we read: "The Lord brought an *east wind* upon the land all that day and all that night; and when it was morning *the east wind brought the locusts* . . . very grievous they were; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such." So disastrous was the ruin left in their wake that Pharaoh quickly repented and besought Moses for their removal. We then read: "He went out from Pharaoh and intreated the Lord. And the Lord turned a mighty strong *west* wind which took away the locusts and cast them into the Red Sea; there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt."

RETURN WESTWARD TO GOD

It has been suggested above that just as eastward represents departure from God, so westward bespeaks a drawing nigh unto him. Thus Abraham's separation unto God from Ur was in the direction of the *west*. The same lesson is clearly depicted Scripturally in connection with the Tabernacle of the Wilderness and Solomon's Temple. Both of these structures were oriented so that their gateways were on the *east* side, necessitating entrance from that quarter. Progress through the Court into the Holy and thence into the Most Holy or Inner Sanctuary, where the

Divine Presence was symbolized in the Shekinah Light between the cherubim, was therefore *westward*. When, in the days of Ezekiel the Prophet, gross idolatry on the part of Israel had invaded the very Temple of God itself and the symbol of his Presence could no longer abide there, the Glory of God was seen to withdraw *eastward* by stages until finally it was seen to rest on the Mount of Olives to the *east* of the city. (Ezek. 9:3; 10:18, 19; 11:22, 23.) One such manifestation of idolatry in the Temple area is recorded in chapter 8, twenty-five men being seen with their backs to the Temple worshipping the sun towards the *east*.

THE WITNESS OF THE GREAT PYRAMID

The same lesson is depicted also in the Great Pyramid of Egypt -- one of the many striking parallels which stamp this mighty and enduring structure as "The Bible in Stone." The passage system of the pyramid runs from north to south but, as is well known, not through the central axis of the structure but to one side thereof, viz. the *east* side. Thus is shown the "side-stepping" into sin of Adam and the race in him. The degree or measurement of this "one-sidedness" in the pyramid is known as "The Displacement Factor," whether as applied to and illustrating the displacement from original righteousness into sin on the one hand, or the reverse process, both in regard to those who in the present Age are in Christ justified from sin and accounted righteous, and also as respects those who in God's due time are restored to actual human perfection. For instance, in the King's Chamber (now so called) which is the goal of the upper passage system, and which runs at right angles to the passages, progress down the length of the chamber is *westward* toward the central axis of the building which is eventually reached when the Displacement Factor, eastward has been cancelled out. This point is just in front of the Open Coffin, symbol of the Open Tomb and Risen Lord, the only basis and hope of New Life, as "testified to through out the New Testament. See for instance 1 Corinthians 15; 1 Peter 1:3, 4.

WESTWARD SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL

It is of interest to note that historically the spread of the Gospel, the Good News of Salvation, has been mainly *westward*. This direction was determined quite early in the history of the Church as recorded in Acts 16:6-10. Paul had traveled *westward* from Antioch in his first two missionary journeys, returning to his base on the first occasion and attempting to do likewise in the course of the second. However on this latter occasion he was prevented from thus turning back, first via the left, and then via the right; instead, he was led by the spirit straight on to the sea coast at Troas in what is now known as Asia Minor and opposite the continent of Europe. There the vision of the man of Macedonia appealing to him for help across the water led Paul away from Asia *westward* into Europe. Thence his own spirit-inspired visions of further conquests for the Gospel led him on to Greece, to Rome, and even in desire, if not in actuality, to Spain. (Rom. 15:24.) Within the span of his lifetime the message had reached the confines of the Roman Empire, the world then known. (Col. 1:6.) In God's due time the message was to cross the Atlantic Ocean and blossom afresh in the Americas still farther to the West. It., the light of the Divine Purpose how thrilling is the record of the voyage of Columbus which paved the way for these further developments. "Westward, ever westward" was his urging cry, despite the murmurs and threatened mutiny of his crew and largely unmindful of the higher destiny of new nations he was being used to shape.

THE STATIONARY EAST

Meantime throughout the centuries the swarming millions of the East remained in heathen darkness "without God and without hope in the world" until about the beginning of last century, when modern evangelical missionary enterprise on an organized scale may be said to have had its

inception following the labors of such individuals as Carey of India, Morrison of China, and others. Only then was the westward cycle finally completed with the influx into the East of Missionaries from America in association with those from the older countries of Europe. An appreciation of the Divine Plan in calling out "a people for his Name" throughout those centuries of the past, with a view to the ultimate blessing of the rest, including past generations of ignorant heathen now asleep in death, satisfactorily explains their seeming neglect on the part of the Creator and Ruler of the Universe. On the other hand, what significance is seen to attach to seemingly worldly events in the light of Divine overruling, such as the voyage of Columbus, the opening of Japanese ports to trade after centuries of isolation, and many others! This also explains why it was in God's *due time* that Christ died for the ungodly, even though the crying need of salvation had been apparent for 4000 years, since the Fall. Both Time and Direction are important elements in the Divine Plan!

In view of the Scriptural significance in the usage of the terms "East" and "West" what assurance underlies the inspired utterance of the Psalmist: "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us." - Psa. 103:12.

THE NORTH

The "East" and the "West" have been dealt with at some length as these depict the course of sin and salvation, the main themes of the Divine Word. But what of the "North" and "South" aspects? Are these drawn to our attention in any marked way with any indication of their Biblical significance?

Perhaps the most striking text in this connection is Psalm 75:6, 7: "Promotion cometh neither from the east nor from the west nor from the south. But God is the judge." Three points of the compass are mentioned negatively in contrast with God as the direction from which promotion comes, a plain indication that he is identified in a special way with the *north*. Various other Scriptures confirm this, and this in turn invests still other Scriptures with added significance. Science corroborates it. In the northern section of the sky observers had long noticed what appeared to be a large empty space devoid of stars. However by the aid of modern powerful telescopes it has been established that this seeming void is in reality a thick cloud obscuring the stars in this quarter of the heavens. In Psalm 97:2 we read of God that "clouds and thick darkness are round about him," and in Psalm 18:11: "He made darkness his secret place, his pavilion round about him dark waters." In both the Tabernacle of the Wilderness and the Temple of Solomon, the Shekinah Light of God's Presence was veiled at their dedication by a thick cloud; while always before the High Priest entered the Most Holy on the annual Day of Atonement "not without blood," a cloud of incense had to precede him and cover the mercy-seat. May it not be that in this northern sector of the sky, veiled from human eyes and scientific probes by thick cloud, lies the seat of Divine Government of the Universe?

Failure to recognize the North as linked with God in Scriptural usage robs many passages of their full significance. When Lucifer as recorded in Isaiah 14:12-14 expresses his ambition to exalt his throne "above the stars of God" he says: "I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far *north*, I will make myself like the Most High."

Likewise when Divine judgment was impending upon Judah in the days of Jeremiah, the Prophet in vision saw this as coming from the north. (Jer. 1:13-15.) A similar visitation in the future is foreshadowed in the prophecy of Joel, chapter 2, referred to as "the northern army."

THE SOUTH

Conversely, the south, insofar as it is referred to in Scripture in any sense other than literal, would seem to represent a condition unblessed by the presence of God. Abraham had entered the Promised Land in faith but shortly afterwards a famine afflicted the land. He journeyed *southward* and ended up in Egypt (Gen. 12:9, 10) where, as a result of deception towards Pharaoh in regard to Sarah, he got into trouble and left Egypt under a cloud. However, his troubles arising from his sojourn in Egypt were not ended, as he brought out with him an Egyptian slave girl named Hagar who became a fountain head of trouble for the Seed of Abraham headed up in Isaac.

In the subsequent history of this seed, their lack of faith frequently resulted in their looking southward to Egypt for help instead of in the opposite direction for Divine assistance. In the time of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, after the murder of the governor whom he had appointed, the remnant of Judah not carried into captivity to Babylon fled into Egypt to escape the wrath of Nebuchadnezzar, in spite of the Prophet Jeremiah's assurance that if they remained in the land God would preserve them but that if they persisted in their own willful course and went south into Egypt, they would be utterly exterminated. In consequence the foretold disaster overtook them.

However those obedient to God are assured that "all things work together for good to those who love God, the called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28), no matter from which direction seemingly they come. Hence, in Canticles 4:16 we read: "Awake, O *north* wind; and come, thou *south*; blow upon my garden that the spices thereof may flow out." Frequently the spices flow more freely in adversity than in prosperity, but in any case the trusting soul can echo the invitation under all circumstances, "Let my Beloved come into his garden and eat his pleasant fruits" rejoicing in the fruit of the spirit manifested by such.

In the meantime such faithful believers also rejoice in every new realization of the perfection of God's Word as continually being revealed and their inward prayer is:

"Still new beauties may we see,
And still increasing light!"

- *Contributed*

The Words for Love in the Bible

*"The Father loveth (phileo) the Son."
"The greatest of these is love (agape)."
- John 5:20; 1 Corinthians 13:13.*

IN HIS celebrated hymn in the praise of love (1 Cor. 13) St. Paul dwells upon the pre-eminence of that quality, placing it above even such Christian graces as faith and hope. Having in mind that the Bible lessons on love were originally written in ancient languages (Hebrew and Greek), it seemed to the present writer an interesting and proper field of inquiry to ask, To what extent do our Bible translations succeed in expressing correctly and adequately that which the spirit caused to be written on this great theme of love? In this article an attempt will be made to answer that question (for the interested and patient reader), and since this is of the nature of a word study in the original languages, needless to say, the help of the best authorities has been sought throughout.

We are impressed by the truth of Job's exclamation (Job 6:25): "How forcible are right words!" But the student of languages has learned of their imperfections and how difficult it often is in translating thought from one language to another to find "right words" to express precisely the thought it is desired to convey. Those engaged in translating the Scriptures into primitive languages for the use of missionaries realize this truth better than do others. Sometimes the difficulty is the lack of synonyms to denote different shades of meaning, and in that case one word is made to serve for them all.

IN THE HEBREW

This is notably true of the common Hebrew word meaning to love (*ahav*). To express various other ideas the Hebrew language has a large stock of synonyms; for example, there are eight words for an axe, nine are rendered wine, eighteen are rendered fear, twenty five are rendered deliver, etc. (Girdlestone), just to mention a few. In view of this wealth of synonyms it seems a remarkable thing that the one Hebrew *word ahav* serves to represent love of any kind, religious or secular, from the love of God to sensual love. The same word denotes the love of Jehovah for Israel and Isaac's love of savory meat (Deut. 23:5; Gen. 27:4), the "wonderful" love of Jonathan to David and the impure love of the licentious. (2 Sam. 1:26; Ezek. 16:37). The student need not expect, then, to find in the Old Testament kinds of love finely discriminated by the use of synonyms, for as we have seen, the one general word serves for every kind. It will be found that the correlative word for hating is also used in more than one sense. Its meaning in one passage is explained by its use in another. The statement of Deuteronomy 21:15: "If a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated," is difficult until explained by Genesis 29:30, 31. The statement of verse 31 that "Leah was hated" is explained in the preceding verse to mean that Jacob "loved Rachel more than Leah." (Compare the similar New Testament use of "hate" in Luke 14:26.) The precise meaning of the word "love" in the Old Testament must be determined from the context at each occurrence. This is true in the English version as well as in the Hebrew original, both languages being here deficient in discriminative synonyms (on "love" and "charity" see below).

IN THE GREEK

Considered as a language, the ancient Hebrew though poor in some respects was rich in others, which made it "the most suitable of all to give to mankind the elementary religious truths and facts of divine revelation." (Briggs.) When the due time came for the fuller revelation of the divine character and purpose through the Son (John 1:18), of which revelation love was the central theme (John 3:16), it was by no accident that a more highly developed language than Hebrew became the vehicle of the Gospel, to carry its sublime truths to the peoples of the earth. That language of the New Testament was, of course, Greek-yet not secular Greek, the classical Greek of Plato and Demosthenes -- but "Hellenistic Greek," that is, secular Greek which had been conditioned by being profoundly influenced by the *Septuagint* -- the Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures made by Jews in Alexandria in the centuries just preceding the Christian era. "The *Septuagint* had gone far toward producing a Greek vocabulary to express the deepest things of the religion of Israel. And this vocabulary was profoundly influential in the New Testament. Moreover, the originality of the New Testament writers should not be ignored. They had come under the influence of new convictions of a transforming kind, and those new convictions had their effect in the sphere of language. Common words had to be given new and loftier meanings, and common men were lifted to a higher realm by a new and glorious experience." - Dr. J. G. Machen.

Among the Greek words that came to the writers of the New Testament through the *Septuagint* was *agape*, a noun meaning "love"; the corresponding verb (*agapao*), however, had been used by classical writers, though not in the New Testament sense of the word. It had been used frequently in the *Septuagint* to render the Hebrew word *ahav*. In classical Greek there were three common words meaning to love: *agapao*, *phileo*, and *erao*. The last of these meant sensual love and does not occur in the New Testament, the inspired writers evidently shunning that word and using another (*epithumeo*) instead. *Agapao* and *phileo* occur often in the Greek Testament, and since they both are usually translated "love," it is necessary to consult the authorities to learn the precise meaning of these words. Their definition as given by Dr. M. R. Vincent in his scholarly and helpful work "*Word Studies in the New Testament*" (Vol. 2, page 135) is based on the best lexicons: "*Agapao* indicates a reasoning, discriminating attachment, founded in the conviction that its object is worthy of esteem, or entitled to it on account of benefits bestowed. *Phileo* represents a warmer, more instinctive sentiment, more closely allied to feeling, and implying more passion." Accordingly, the Greeks used *phileo* as the love of family and of friends, but *agapao* as love based on esteem. Most authorities derive *agapao* from *agamai*, a verb meaning to admire.

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The classical distinction between the two words appears to be preserved for the most part in the Greek Testament. For example, the love of Jesus for Lazarus is expressed by the warm *phileo*, while for his love for the sisters Mary and Martha, the more reserved *agapao* is used. (John 11:3, 5, 36.) It is true that in many passages the two words appear to be used interchangeably. (Cf. Matt. 23:6 and Luke 11:43; John 13:23 and John 20:2; John 3:35 and John 5:20; John 14:23 and John 16:27.) "And yet there is often a difference between them, well worthy to have been noted and reproduced, if this had lain within the compass of our language." (*Trench.*) The Latin language has in its vocabulary two words which seem to express exactly the difference in significance between *agapao* and *phileo*, and so we find the Vulgate rendering the former word by *diligo* and the latter by *amo*. (See John 21:15-17.) The English version made at Rheims from the Vulgate makes no attempt to discriminate the two Latin words in the passage just cited, but renders both by "love."

We note that some of the more literal of modern (English) versions do attempt to bring out the difference in meaning of *agapao* and *phileo* when both occur in the same context. A comparison of five such versions in their translation of John 21:15-17 shows that while they all agree in rendering *agapao* by "love," each of them gives a different translation of *phileo*. *The American Standard Version* uses "love" for both Greek words, but in a footnote informs the reader that in these verses that word translates two different Greek words, but fails to state what those words are, and whether or not they differ in meaning. Of the other four versions three render *phileo* by words denoting an emotion similar to, but less intense than love: "be fond of" (*Rotherham*); "affectionately love" (*Diaglott*); "have affection for" (*New World*). *Young's Literal Translation*, however, renders *phileo* by the words "dearly love" (a stronger expression than "love"), with which the *Diaglott* interlinear agrees. This comparison illustrates well the problem of discriminating *agapao* and *phileo* in an English version, for while fondness and affection are terms too weak to adequately render a Greek word which means *love*, to translate *phileo* by "dearly love" is to give the wrong impression that *phileo* is a stronger word than *agapao* in the New Testament.

CHARITY

The translators of the *King James Version* saw fit to render the noun *agape* by "charity" in nearly thirty occurrences of that Greek word. It is well known that those scholars were strongly influenced by the Latin Vulgate in their choice of words. The Vulgate uses two words, *dilectio* and *caritas* (mostly the latter), to render the word *agape*, and since in the Middle Ages, *caritas* had come into the English language in the form "charity," and because in their time charity had the same significance as *agape* (*i.e.*, love), the translators of the *Common Version* used that word along with the Anglo-Saxon "love." Since the year 1611 the English language has undergone many changes, and the venerable version of that year has required much revision. For one thing, the meaning of charity has become restricted to tolerance and benevolence, making that word no longer suitable as a rendering of *agape*, and it has been replaced by the proper word love.

THE ELEVATION OF AGAPE

The prominent place of *agape* in the New Testament as the distinctive word for holy and divine love is better understood if we recall the previous history of that word both in its noun and verb forms. The noun does not appear to have been used in classical Greek but it does occur (about 15 times) in the *Septuagint*, though not with the same force which it has in the New Testament. The verb form (*agapao*) is, however, common in classical Greek and in the *Septuagint*. In the former it was considered a weaker word for love than *phileo*, and sometimes it meant only to be content with something (*Liddell and Scott*); at other times the two words seemed to be used interchangeably. In the *Septuagint* *agapao* had no distinc

tive significance but all the characteristics of the English "love." It remained for the New Testament to elevate *agapao* and its cognates, and make them its expressions for that highest type of love which the Apostle describes and eulogizes in 1 Corinthians 13. In the "Sermon on the Mount" our Lord stated the new law which was to govern his followers (the "New Creation"); it was the law of universal love—far transcending that standard by which even the publicans and sinners loved those who loved them. (Matt. 5:43-48; Luke 6:32-36.) To express such a love, a word was needed. Under the guidance of the spirit, the New Testament writers chose *agapao*, a word with which they were already familiar from its use in the *Septuagint*, and they gave it an elevated meaning which it did not have either in classical Greek or in that ancient version.

Accordingly, we find *agapao* and *agape* used in the New Testament of: (1) the love of God to the Son, to his followers, and to the world of mankind, (2) the love of our Lord to the Father, to his footstep followers, and the love which prompted his sacrifice in behalf of men, (3) the love of believers for fellow-Christians (in a few instances this is expressed by a compound of *phileo-Philadelphia*), and (4) the love which Christians must have for their enemies. (Matt. 5:44.) Love of enemies was not commanded in the law, and it appeared to be contrary to Jewish tradition, yet the germ of this doctrine is found in Exodus 23:4 and Proverbs 25:21.

DUTY-LOVE

Since the term "duty-love" has sometimes been used in attempting to discriminate *phileo* and *agapao*, perhaps we should consider briefly the use of that term in relation to the two Greek words. Fortunately, the true relation of these words is not difficult for the student to determine, if he has ascertained from the authorities the generally accepted meanings of *agapao* and *phileo* (based on pre-Biblical, but more especially New Testament usage), and then makes a little use of his Greek concordance. Let us bear in mind what was brought out earlier in this article: *phileo* denotes a love which is natural, spontaneous, involuntary -- as of a mother for her child; *agapao* signifies a love based on esteem -- one drawn forth by the goodness of another, as the love with which we love the Lord, having "tasted that he is gracious." "Whom not having seen ye love {*agapao*)." (1 Pet. 1:8.) It is evident that only the latter kind of love can be commanded or enjoined as a duty. Accordingly, we find that whenever a command to love is given in the New Testament, it is *agapao* and not *phileo* that is used. "Beloved, if God so loved us, we *ought* also to love {*agapao*l one another." (1 John 4:11. Compare Matt. 22:37, 39; Luke 6:27; John 15:17; Eph. 5:25, etc.) Abbott-Smith's *Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* (page 3) refers to this generally accepted distinction between *agapao* and *phileo* and adds: "If this distinction holds, *agapao* is fitly used in the New Testament of Christian love to God and man, the spiritual affection which follows the direction of the will, and which, therefore, unlike that feeling which is instinctive and unreasoned, can be commanded as a duty."

By such words as love, charity, disinterested love, Christian love, men have sought to describe *Agape*, but how can such words be adequate to express that which is the very essence of the Divine character, "the greatest" of all Christian graces, "a heavenly flame, kindled by God's redeeming love, the crowning gift of the Spirit, the surest test of Christian character, the fulfilling of the law, the bond of perfectness!"

"Of love divine, so wonderful,
The half was never told."

- *W. A. Eliason*

Recently Deceased

Bro. J. Anderson, Corpus Christi, Tex.- (July)
Sr. Wilma Garland, Marinette, Wis.- (July)
Bro. Charles H. Gayer, Pittsburgh, Pa.- (July)
Bro. H. S. Hart,. Los Angeles, Cal.- (May)
Sr. R. J. Jeffery, Seattle, Wash.- (June)
Bro. George Lancaster, Beloit, Wis.- (May)
Sr. J. Lizewski, Worcester, Mass.- (June)
Bro. David Nairn, Santa Cruz, Cal.- (June)
Sr. Marie Nash, Dayton, Ohio- (June)
Sr. Dorothea Naughton, Vancouver, B.C.- (June)
Bro. F. Schaufelberger, Ulster Pk., N.Y.- (July)
Sr. F. Schaufelberger, Ulster Pk., N.Y.- (Aug.)
Bro. Joseph Wisneski, Kenosha, Wis.- (July)