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A New Year of the Lord's Planning

*"Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life,
or by death." - Philippians 1:20.*

DOUBTLESS, for some, the new year will be an entrance into the joys "prepared for them that love him"; possibly for all of us, as different brethren have inferred from various reasonings. It will without doubt give all true disciples opportunities for growth in grace, opportunities of learning whether we have been hearing him, or have been listening to the theories of men; and perhaps of having more sympathy for the speculators and less with the speculations; of putting off the ways of the flesh, "bringing every thought into captivity to Christ," and learning to "wait on the Lord" -- because at last we have learned to appreciate the "righteousness and sanctity of the truth." (Eph. 4:24, Cambridge Bible.) If the Lord should bless us with somewhat more of this world's bounties than some of our neighbors, the privilege of "doing good unto all men as we have opportunity" will doubtless clearly prove that "it is more blessed to give than to receive," more blessed to learn the love that "doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own."

There will be occasions for speaking the truth as the Lord's witnesses. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles [Gk.: logia] of God." Jesus, with his perfect brain and his millenniums of dwelling with the Father, did not venture to speak anything except those things, that the Father gave him to speak as his logos, his mouthpiece. There will be services to perform, but "if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth," whether it be in laying down his life for his brethren, or in doing good to all men, or in "providing for our own," those God's providence has put under our care. If we will place ourselves unreservedly under divine guidance, we will not be laid open to the doing of foolish things, or sensible things in a foolish way. He who said, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of heaven and his righteousness, and all these [necessary earthly] things will be added unto you' regardless of how near you may get to a "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation," will most certainly make it possible for us to provide for our own, in his way. Just "lift up your heads" when you see that "these things are coming to pass," being confident that he who placed certain ones under our care, did so because of his interest in them, and that our being taken away will not lessen his interest in them. On this subject see the excellent advice given regarding "Our Children in the Time of Trouble," Reprints, page R1963; Z, April 15, 1896. A consciousness that we are "ministering . . . of the ability which God

giveth" will guard us against the error of slothfulness in any feature of the business the Lord has committed to our care. Instead, we will "do with our might what our hands find to do" -- the tasks God has assigned for our hands. Only thus can Christ be magnified in our bodies; only thus can we present our bodies living sacrifices, acceptable to him; only thus can our dying daily be pleasing to him; and only thus can we face with confidence the privilege offered us of magnifying Christ in this body "by death."

For one who honestly has this desire, it is a pleasurable task to "bring every thought into captivity to Christ, casting down imaginations and every [other] high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God," "whom to know is life everlasting." "Demolishing reasonings" is the translation the Emphatic Diaglott gives, a translation very acceptable to flesh dead enough to prefer the "mind of Christ" to its own. Christ will be magnified in our bodies this year if we live not only the first verse of Romans 12, but also verse 2 (Rom. 12:2), presenting our bodies living sacrifices, and being transformed by the renewing of our minds -- the one as important as the other.

No sacrifice will be acceptable if carried out under the direction of an un-transformed mind. To mind the things of the flesh is death; for in our flesh "dwelleth no good thing"; minding the things of the spirit, the mind of Christ -- always out of harmony with human reasoning -- is life. As an advance payment, there is "peace and righteousness and joy in the holy spirit." With this "peace of God ruling in our hearts" there will be no room for "anxious thought for the morrow," but full confidence in our Great Provider and his precious promises.

Graciously our heavenly Father has left with each individual much of the deciding about details of his life. Thus some will lay away great stores for the future; and some will live day by day, trusting the Lord for the morrow; and all will make some mistakes -- those with the great store finding that their love for their neighbors has grown so barge that the stores are too small; and the one who lives day by day discovering that he should have taken thought for the morrow, though not "anxious thought." Some will be trusting him in times of great stress; others "moment by moment."

We should be dynamos, continuously appropriating the power that is waiting for us to lay hold on it that we may be "strengthened with all might according to his glorious power"; not just storage batteries coming at long intervals for his filling.

Note that it is not, "I shall magnify Christ"; but "Christ shall be magnified." The flesh says, "Let me do the planning of my life and I will magnify Christ," little realizing how greatly every such life must disgrace him. Let this year instead be for us a living for others, "always the bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body."

"In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength."

- P. E. Thomson.

How Great Thou Art!

"Thou crownest the year of thy goodness." - Psalm 65:11 margin.

THE latter portion of this Psalm depicts, in glowing language, the glorious future, in terms of earth's plenteous yield, following the disruption of the old order and the introduction of a new, strong and righteous government. (Psalm 65:5-7). From this standpoint we are granted, in the words quoted above, a glimpse of the final goal, when, after the work of uplift for Israel and the world in general are both brought to fruition, following the "year" of God's goodness, this year is "crowned," God setting his seal, as it were, upon his handiwork, and pronouncing the consummation "very good," even as it was at man's creation. The Apostle Paul declares, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." (1 Cor. 2:9). Paul here adjusts the ancient prophecy, and applies it to the Church, but in the context of Isa. 64:4, the application is more particularly to Israel, and by extension to the world of mankind in due time. The *prophet* conditioned these blessings not to those who love God, as did the *Apostle*, but to those who wait for him, reminding us of the words of Rom. 8:19-22, in which he depicts the whole creation groaning and travailing in pain together until now, *waiting* for the manifestation of the sons of God. This will inaugurate a new chapter in the history of mankind. And only when the creation itself has been delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God, will the final "crowning" of God's goodness in redemption be consummated. Under present conditions our imagination falters in its endeavor to picture these future glories of the ages to come. God's purpose is always progressive, not from morning to evening, but from the evening shadows to the morning's sunlit glory. Then the former things of darkness and of death will have been swallowed up in life, and be forever forgotten.

THE NEW YEAR

What is true in the ultimate, is equally true in regard to the children of God now. We have the assurance that to "those who love God all things work together for good, even to those who are the called according to his purpose." (Rom. 8:28.) Hence, whatever our outward circumstances may have been during the year which has just closed, to the Christian it has been another year of his goodness, another year during which the experiences of life have been working out under divine supervision an eternal weight of glory. Eventually the "crowning" day will set its seal upon our earthly course, and every cloud under which we may have labored will, in that day, be transfigured with heavenly radiance. So, as another New Year opens up before us, may both the past and the future be viewed by us from the standpoint of spiritual, and not material, loss or gain, and the lessons of the one and our resolutions for the other be evaluated and framed accordingly.

We enter upon the New Year with the accumulated lessons of the past to guide us, and with yet another twelve months' experience of the Lord's goodness to fortify us in faith and quicken us in hope for the year ahead. Whilst in the world, fear is increasing, we face the unknown tomorrow in quietness and confidence, assured that the living and loving God is on the throne and that he, not any earthly potentate or disturber of the peace, has the last word in world affairs, and is active in these days, especially when these impinge upon the interests of his saints. The whole universe is his charge, but saints are his peculiar care! We know so much more of the universe and the powers latent therein today than past generations did, that our concept of the God of the universe has been correspondingly enlarged and our reverence for him deepened accordingly. The words of the Psalmist have for us today an immeasurably greater significance, "The heavens declare the

glory of God; the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. " - Ps. 19:1, 2.

DIVINE BALANCE IN PROVIDENCE

One characteristic of the heavens, showing the impress of the Creator, is that of the sphere or circle, the symbol of eternity, having neither beginning nor end, and manifest throughout the galaxies of the universe. So also *time* runs in *cycles* as God's glorious purpose, for the redemption of the human race unfolds slowly (as it seems to us) towards its consummation. Each New Year marks a small cycle added to the past and correspondingly reducing the future! Thus we yearly approach "that one far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves," of which the poet sings.

Another evidence of the extent of the Creator's power in his universe is the perfect balancing of forces, whereby the immutability of law is established and maintained. What divine wisdom is herein manifested! He "hangeeth the earth upon nothing." (Job 26:7.) What upholds the planet on which we live as it swings through space at no less than three different motions and speeds? Nothing but the interplay of opposite forces, one a propellant force speeding the earth through space, and in a straight line, were it not for a repellent force exactly balancing, to bend the earth to its orbit around the sun. Thus we are preserved from whizzing away into space from the sun to be frozen, on the one hand, or drawn into the vortex of the sun to be burnt up, on the other.

A similar balance exists throughout nature, not necessarily simultaneously, but in alternation, as of the seasons, day and night, sunshine and storm, etc. All these changes play their part in propagating and preserving life upon this planet. Let the cold, for instance become excessive, as in the Arctic regions, and life becomes almost non-existent; where heat is excessive, as at the equator at low levels, human life becomes less robust. In fact, in many directions, the margins within which human life at its best is possible, are small, and rule out the possibility of life having developed fortuitously.

DIVINE BALANCE IN OUR LIVES

The same principle runs throughout the spiritual life, and recognition of this fact will save us many a heartache. When the storms of life overtake us, as they surely will at some time or other, so far from this being an evidence that our heavenly Father has forgotten or is displeased with us, the case is just the opposite. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." (Heb. 12:6.) This is just the divine balancing in our lives, without which we would surely sicken and die spiritually. God will not allow this to happen, and blends joy and sorrow, abundance and want, etc., for the necessary development of the "new man in Christ Jesus" to maturity. This was the experience of the Apostle Paul and at least on two occasions he has recorded it for our benefit. Writing to the Corinthians he refers to "the abundance of the revelations" vouchsafed to him as the Apostle to the Gentiles, but then adds that "lest he should be exalted" by these, there was given to him "a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, to buffet" him. (2 Cor. 12:7.) The one balanced and counteracted the other! Again, writing to the Philippians, he declares that in the course of his life he "had learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Phil. 4:11-13.)

"God's hand that saves,
though kind, seems rough,
His methods sometimes rude;
Frail shrinking nature cries
'Enough,'
Yet proves the Lord is good."

The story is told of a farmer whose crop had been ruined when the river which bounded his property overflowed after a violent storm which wrought great havoc. Going out later to survey the damage, he saw something glinting brightly in the river bank. Closer inspection revealed a nugget of gold washed clean by the flood, and this in turn led to the discovery of a vein of gold on his property hitherto hidden from view and worth many times the value of the ruined crop. And there may come a time in our life, when a storm may be necessary to wash away the accretion of earthliness, hiding from expression and usefulness, the hidden gold of the new nature. The noted geologist Hugh Macmillan wrote out of his own experience

"Amidst my list of blessings infinite
Stands this the foremost,
that my heart has bled;
For all I bless Thee, --
most for the severe."

Let us, then, have *faith* to see God's hand in all life's experiences and learn to thank him for the showers as well as for the sunshine, even *before* we are able to see their beneficent effects.

GOD'S LOVE OVERFLOWS IN REDEMPTION

When we survey God's plan for man's redemption, we do not find such careful balancing of forces as noted above. So far from the divine principle being now "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a life for a life," in accord with strict justice as exemplified in the Mosaic Law, the keynote of this present Dispensation of Grace is not one of balanced forces, but is "How much more!" Rom. 5:12-21, is a remarkable statement of this. The balance is set forth in Rom. 5:18, 19. - One man's disobedience and its consequences, offset by the obedience of One. Yet, in the outworking of this, our glorious God takes occasion to display the riches of his grace, "Not as the offence so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, *much more* the grace of God, and the gift by grace which is by one man Jesus Christ abounds unto many. And *not* as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by *one* to condemnation, but the free gift is of *many* offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; *much more* they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5:15-17.) And again: "Moreover the law entered that sin might abound. But where sin abounds grace does *much more* abound." (Rom. 5:20.) Compare also Rom. 5:9.

Again, in Heb. 9:14, after referring to the ineffective sacrifices under the law, the inspired writer proceeds to say: "*How much more* shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." We recall also an Old Testament reminder of the overflowing bounty of God. When Amaziah, king of Judah, who had hired 100,000 men of Ephraim to go with him to battle, was admonished by a man of God to discharge these, God not being with them, the king expostulated, pointing out that it had cost him a hundred talents to hire them. Mark the answer of the man of God. "The Lord is able to give thee *much more* than this!" - 2 Chron. 25:9.

When Peter reminded his Lord of the sacrifices he and his fellowdisciples had made in order to follow Jesus, the Master's reply assured Peter and the others that God would recompense them, not niggardly balancing the account, but rewarding them a hundredfold. Such is our God whom we serve!

A GREATER GOD

"As wider skies broke on his view God greatened in his growing mind. Each year he dreamed his God anew And left his older God behind. He saw the boundless scheme dilate In star and blossom, sky and clod, And as the universe grew great He dreamed for it a greater God!"

- A. A. Hart, Australia.

The Wages of Sin

"In Adam all die. " - 1 Cor. 15:22.

THE Holy Scriptures claim to be the repository of positive truth, divinely inspired. To accept their testimony is to enter a direct road to knowledge independent of rational thought; one requiring, moreover, the rigid exclusion of human philosophies and speculations, for

*"God is his own interpreter
And he will make it plain."*

The necessity for this course becomes obvious from the opening page of the Bible, for its account of man's creation is diametrically opposed to the popularly accepted Evolution theory. There can be no compromise. We who accept the Bible as God's inspired Word must follow the principle expressed by St. Paul: "Let God be true though every man be false." (Rom. 3:4, R.S.V.) We reject, further, the modern well-meaning effort to reconcile the Bible and evolutionary Biology, by an allegorizing of the Edenic story. No writer of true history would mix plain matter of fact with allegory in the same continued narrative, without some intimation of a transition from one to the other. If the man Adam be accounted allegorical, so must be the woman Eve; and so the garden, the trees, the rivers, the animals, etc. Continuing up the scale of creation, we must allegorize the earth and the heaven-thus reaching an obviously absurd conclusion. This attempted interpretation solves no problem, and we are brought back to the inescapable choice-man is either a fortuitous development from lowly protoplasm, or originally a perfect and direct creation of Divine fiat.

God says: "I have made the earth and created man upon it. " - Isa. 45:12.

The Genesis account specifically states -- " In the image of God created he him." And this thought of man's original perfection of being, is borne out by the context, which declares that God looked upon his creature with approval, seeing him to be "very good." It is borne out also by the general testimony of Scripture respecting God as a Master workman -- "His work is *perfect*." (Deut. 32: 4.) It is borne out by the statement of the Psalmist, "Thou madest him [man, Adam] a little lower than the angels thou crownedst him with glory and with honor [his moral likeness to his Creator]; thou didst set him over the works of thy hands," -- the beasts of the field, the fish of the sea, and the fowl of heaven" and didst make him ruler over them all " -- giving to man the dominion of the earth, with its lower orders of creation, in the likeness of God's dominion over

heavenly things. (Psa. 8:6, 7.) It is borne out again by the statement of the Wise Man, that God made man *upright*, but he sought out many inventions and *defiled himself*. - Eccl. 7:29.

Furthermore, Adam is termed a "son of God" (Luke 3:38); an expression Scripturally restricted to angelic beings, to Jesus, and to his footstep followers, justified through faith and led of God's spirit.

Additionally, the historicalness of the account of Adam and Eve is attested to by Jesus, who quoted from Genesis 1:27 and Gen. 2:24 in these words: "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh?" - Matt. 19:4, 5.

Finally, there are the multitudinous references from Genesis to Revelation to the pivotal truth of all Scripture -- the *redemptive* sacrifice of Christ--a doctrine positively confirming Adam's original perfection and subsequent "fall."

We conclude therefore, that the record concerning the first man and woman is neither allegory nor fable, but a literal, historical fact set forth and emphasized through figures of speech to intensify its truthful realities.

THE DIVINE COMMAND

Following the account of Adam's creation, the narrative continues:

"And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.... And the Lord God commanded the man saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." - Gen. 2:8, 9, 15-17.

We note the simple facts: the provisions of a loving Creator for his noble creature's welfare in trees of life-bearing fruit suitable to the perpetuation of human life; the forbiddance (probably temporary only) of but one tree; and the extremeness of the penalty. Before the perfect man is now set a test of obedience.

We are to think of Adam as perfect in the sense of being mentally and morally fashioned after the likeness of the Creator--well poised, well balanced--not prone to sin "as the sparks fly upward," as he subsequently became, and as the children now are. We are not, however, to think of him as perfect in knowledge or in character. Knowledge must be acquired, but he was fully equipped with all the mental and moral apparatus for a rapid acquirement of knowledge. As for character, in an intelligent being it is a fixity of the will; and such a fixity can come only with knowledge. In other words, the perfect Adam was ready to acquire perfect knowledge, and had a perfect Creator, able and willing to give him the requisite instruction; and as this right instruction would be received, and this perfect knowledge be attained, character (good or bad) would be established -- either in favor of the principles of righteousness already established by God, or in opposition to the will of God, in unrighteousness.

We are not to think of Adam's condition and trial as an experiment on God's part, the result of which would be doubtful; but, on the contrary, we are to remember that the results were fully

known to the Almighty before the trial began, and that he saw the end of his work from the beginning (Acts 15:18), else he would never have undertaken it. Divine foreknowledge is conceded by a large proportion of professing Christians who, nevertheless, are sadly confused by certain false theories which imply that the Almighty's foreknowledge was to the effect that the vast majority of the posterity of Adam would spend an eternity in most horrible suffering, and that God prepared the arrangement for their suffering in advance of their creation. This view is untenable amongst those who combine any measure of knowledge of God's character with any measure of reasoning ability. The Scriptures show conclusively that God had a much more just, reasonable and loving plan than that -that he foresaw beneficent results before creating our first parents.

There are two methods of giving and receiving instruction. One through precept and example; the other through experience. Man was not the first of the intelligent creatures-previously God had created many higher orders-angels, cherubim, principalities, and powers. (Romans 8:38; Eph. 3:10, etc.) These had all been instructed by good *precepts*; they had not had instruction through *example*, except on the side of good example: they had no illustration of evil and its pernicious consequences. That they antedated man is revealed in the remarkable words addressed to Job: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundation of the earth? . . . When the *morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?*" (Job 38:4-7.) These celestial spectators beheld with wonder and praise the operation of divine wisdom and power in the work of the creative "days." But the angelic host did not know that upon this planet was to unfold a mighty drama which would reveal for all eternity two other wonderful attributes of God -- justice and love. For the divine purpose was to bring into being a new order of creature -- humanity -- whose instruction, it was fore-arranged, should be along the lines of *experience*, which would add to the instruction of God's angelic creatures by way of giving them an example of sin and its consequences, and of the divine attitude toward sin and toward sinners. The permission of evil-its eventual removal and the means used thereto -- constitutes the great theme of the Bible.*

*See our free booklet, "Why Does God Permit Evil?"

When God's wonderful Plan of the Ages is understood, everything in nature and in experience bears testimony to the overruling of his providence. The heavens declare his glory and the earth showeth his handiwork -- all speak of an intelligent designer, wisely adapting means to good and benevolent ends, and ministering to the necessities of his intelligent creatures. Every leaf and every sunbeam bears to the thoughtful a loving message of divine care. And every inharmony of nature, when viewed in the light of God's plan, is seen to be but a part of that great process whereby God is preparing for the perfect order of things which shall continue forever, when sin and its entailments shall have been banished under the successful reign of Christ; and even the long permitted wrath of man and Satan will eventually be to God's praise.

Therefore, in considering Adam's trial, we first observe that since God is good, all his providences must be with a view to wise and benevolent ends, either near or remote; and secondly, that since he made man in his own image -- morally free -- and with the alternatives of good and evil before him, it would be contrary to his purpose, thus manifested, to so hedge him about with his providences as to interfere with his moral free-agency, which is the crowning glory of humanity, and the right exercise of which gives to virtue all its worth.

DISOBEDIENCE AND ITS PENALTY

"Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. "-Gen. 3:1-6.

The characters in this high tragedy are all worthy the grandeur of the occasion. They are Jehovah; a fallen rebel of the spiritual universe; and man, an earthly image of God. The test-act of the occasion, too however men of low conceptions have sneered at it--was equal to the character of the parties in grandeur and dignity. It was indeed the simple taste of fruit; but that tasting an act of deliberate disobedience to Him whose law is perfect.

It is with no cloudy vagueness that the personal existence of the spirit of evil is revealed in Holy Scripture. In history, prophecy, and in parable is the Tempter brought before us, and every quality, every action, every attribute which can indicate personality, is referred to him in language which cannot be explained away. The records of the old dispensation and the writings of the new, alike depict him as preeminent in power among the angels who lost their first estate (Jude 6), and as ever compassing the destruction of men. As God is called "the holy one," so Satan is called "the evil one." He is the oldest sinner (1 John 3:8); the greatest sinner (Eph. 6:12); and the father of sin. (John 8:44.) In 2 Cor. 11:3, St. Paul gives us a plain, historic version of the beguiling of Eve; and in Rev. 12:9, we read of the great dragon, "that old serpent, the devil and Satan." We, then, are neither wise nor prudent to talk of allegories, or rhetorical personification, or in bolder unbelief to doubt or deny the existence and the power of the chief of fallen spirits. It were far wiser to recognize our foe, and to seek the strength with which to contend with him.

The fact of original sin presents nothing strange, nothing obscure; it consists essentially in disobedience to the will of God, which will is the moral law for man. This disobedience, the sin of Adam, is an act committed everywhere and every day, arising from the same causes, marked by the same characters, and attended by the same consequences as Holy Scripture assigns to it. It is the way of man -- from God to self and independence. There is first the subtle questioning of God's love; the suggestion that his commandment is merely arbitrary, imposed by power. Love being doubted, truth is next assailed and God is treated as a liar. God's love and truth being denied, the next step is to take his place openly. God has quite lost his character in the heart of man, and self now seeks to be "as God." Thus is spiritual perception destroyed when God is doubted.

St. Paul declares that "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." (1 Tim. 2:14.) Mother Eve's involvement in transgression was wholly apart from her husband's knowledge or complicity; and he, when he learned of her course, was so full of sympathy and so full of love for her, that his affection quite overcame his proper sense of duty toward God. Concluding that his wife's disobedience had forfeited her life, and that the result to him would mean everlasting loss of her companionship, he deliberately chose to be with his companion in sin rather than to be separated from her: therefore he ate knowingly, to share her penalty -- he suicided. He chose the creature, more than the Creator, who is blessed forevermore.

"Unto Adam the Lord God said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, *till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*" - Gen. 3 17-19.

Here in direct and forceful simplicity the penalty for disobedience to God is stated to be a return to the previous condition of non-existence. In the words of Paul: "The wages of sin is death." And again: "By one man's disobedience sin entered into the world, and death by [as a result of] sin: and so death passed upon all men, in that all are sinners [inheritors of their father Adam's blemishes]." - Rom. 6:23; 5:12, 19.

How strange it seems that this simple Genesis narrative, which contains not a word respecting eternal torment, should be made the basis of all the fears which have tormented millions of Christian believers respecting a future of unutterable woe entailed upon Father Adam, and through him upon his race. How simple the statement of the Lord respecting what the penalty would be -- *death*; margin, "dying thou shalt die." How fully this is in agreement with the experiences which have been upon the race for now six thousand years -- dying they have died to the number of something like twenty thousand millions. We would not make light of the original sin; we would have it appear in its full force as a deliberate, willful disobedience of the divine command; and yet we assert with all confidence that no reasonable mind can find anything in this language indicating eternal torment as being the wages of sin. How could any reasonable mind admit that if eternal torment had been threatened it would have been *a just* penalty for the crime mentioned -- disobedience in the eating of forbidden fruit?

If to some it may at first appear that death is not a severe sentence, not a manifestation of divine wrath, not a curse, let them reflect further. Let them note how all of the dying processes are only parts of death, and that as insane asylums mark those who become mentally dead before they are physically dead; and as hospitals mark those who become physically decrepit before they are mentally decrepit; and as prisons mark those who become morally dead or decrepit before they are physically dead; so all of the experiences of our race, "groaning and travailing in pain together," mark "death working in us." All sicknesses, pains, and sorrows are parts of the dying process *in* the human family. The "curse" or sentence of death has resulted in blighted hopes and loves and ambitions, and is rapidly placing the entire race in the great prison house of death-the grave. Surely, the true penalty of sin was a heavy one, though we must admit it was a just one. Surely, it involved all of the race of Adam in the most natural manner, because all of his children are partakers of his sentence; because sharers in his weaknesses, his imperfection, resulting from his transgression of the divine law. How unutterably tragic the lot of the human race if this present life were their only and final portion. Thank God for the golden promise of the Holy Scriptures -- a glorious restitution age under the reign of Messiah -- a promise summed up in the Apostle's words in 1 Cor. 15:21, 22

"For since by man death,
By man also the resurrection of the dead.
For as in Adam all die,
Even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

- *W. J. Siekman.*

Grace Unveiled

"The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." - John 1:17.

IN A recent Bible study the question arose as to the meaning of the word "truth" in this text. It was pointed out that whereas "truth" is often contrasted with "falsehood," such could not be the intention here, as the law is holy, just, and good. - Rom. 7:12.

That John is drawing a contrast between the code on Sinai and the gospel which came by our Lord Jesus seems clear. But the "law" was itself "truth." Moreover, in types and symbols, it was not less certainly "grace." Evidently then, the contrast must lie not between "falsehood" and "truth," but between "symbol" and "reality." Indeed, Moffatt actually employs the word "reality" instead of "truth" in his translation: "Grace and reality are ours through Jesus Christ. " So also in verse 14: "We have seen his glory ... full of grace and reality."

However, a still finer shade of meaning becomes apparent when we learn that the Apostle is really employing a figure of speech rarely, if ever, used in English, although its meaning may be verified in Webster and in other English dictionaries. It is known as "hendiadys" (from the Greek *hen dies dyoin* signifying one by means of two.) It is the expression of *one* idea by the use of *two* nouns joined by the conjunction "and," one of which, generally the latter, is to be understood as an adjective qualifying the other.

Instances of the use of this figure of speech may be seen in a number of Scriptures. For example, in Acts 1:25 when Peter, addressing the brethren on the occasion of their choice of Matthias to serve in the place of Judas, speaks of "ministry and apostleship," he means "apostolic ministry."

Again, in Acts 14:13 when Luke tells us that the priest of Jupiter, intending to offer sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas brought "oxen and garlands," he means "garlanded oxen"; that is, oxen made ready for sacrifice, having on the wreaths which were always put on such occasions round their heads.

Paul's "hope and resurrection of the dead" (Acts 23:6) means "the resurrection hope of the dead" or, which is the same thing, "the hope of the resurrection of the dead."

The expression: "through his philosophy and vain deceit" (Col. 2: 8) means "through his vain, deceitful philosophy," for the Apostle does not for one moment admit that the dangerous views against which he is warning the brethren have anything of true philosophy in them.

"The power and coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:16) means " the powerful coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ." Here is an instance in which the first noun (instead of the second) becomes the adjective-a doubly emphatic form.

* Greek, parousia, presence.

Returning now to our text, James Neil, an able scholar of other days, suggests (as opposed to symbol) the adjective "unveiled," making the phrase read: "grace unveiled."** And surely it is a true representation of the matter that whereas grace came in symbols and types by Moses, real grace or *grace unveiled* came to us through Jesus Christ.

A comparable figure of speech in which *three* nouns are employed (instead of *one* noun qualified by *two* adjectives) is that of hendiatis. It may be seen in the well-known words of Jesus: "I am the way, the truth, and the life." (John 14:6.) Here Jesus is not speaking about his being "the truth," or "the life," but is replying to the question put by Thomas: "How can we know *the way*?" Under the figure of speech termed hendiatis, the last two nouns are to be understood as adjectives qualifying the first noun. Thus understood, the phrase reads: "I am the true and living way." To make this meaning unmistakable our Lord immediately adds: "No man cometh unto the Father but by me."

**Note his fine use of these words in the poem below.

- P. L. Read.

The Bridal Song

"Thy name is as ointment poured forth." - Song of Solomon 1:3.

"Therefore do the virgins love thee." - Song of Solomon 1:3.

Sweet the costly fragrance pour'd
O'er the guest at royal board;
Sweet the sacred oil, I trow,
Shed o'er kingly, priestly brow;
Thine hath bade Thy very name
Perfume's choicest breath proclaim.
More than myrrh and cassia's scent

All Thy garb hath odour lent;
For the Spirit's might hath shed
Joy unmeasured o'er Thy head.
Grace in shadows fades away,
Fades in light of noon-tide day;
Grace unveil'd, no tongue can tell,
'Noints Thee Christ, Emmanuel!

Nor 'tis only I that love,
I alone this passion prove;
All below, the pure, the mild,
On Thy face serene have smil'd;
Round the Lamb, the virgin throng,
Seal'd to sing redemption's song;
Thee, the pure in heart and true
Love as they alone can do.

- James Neil, Scot.

World Shaking Events

A meditation in Psalm 46.

THERE is a growing conviction in the minds of thoughtful people that the days in which we live are marked by an atmosphere of finality. For some time we have been living in a new era -- one distinct, not only from pre-1914, but from pre-1938 days; an era which might well be called the atomic era.

In his remarkable forecast of the conditions which would obtain at the close of the Gospel Age, our Lord Jesus predicted that there would be "upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." (Luke 21:25, 26.) And surely there has never been a time when conditions resembled his forecast more accurately than today.

Christians in these days, however, need not be in darkness as to the meaning of the past fifty or sixty eventful years, but, through a knowledge of The Divine Plan, and a daily renewal of their consecration vows, are permitted to occupy an enlightened, privileged position. Such was the Psalmist's calm confidence, as, under inspiration of God's holy spirit, he penned the forty-sixth psalm. Though written, in all probability, to celebrate the deliverance of Jerusalem from the invasion planned by Sennacherib in the days of Hezekiah (Isaiah 37) there is little doubt that it has a prophetic significance -- meeting its larger fulfillment in our day. On this psalm, Luther based his famous hymn, "A mighty fortress is our God." Let us study it carefully and prayerfully, that the reassurance the Lord intends us to obtain therefrom may be ours.

Scholars have pointed out that it consists of three strophes, the conclusion of each being marked by the *Selah*, and that of the last two by the refrain.

STROPHE No. 1

*God is our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble.
Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed,
And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;
Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled,
Though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.*

In his *Studies in the Psalms*, the spirit of Psalm 46 is summed up by *Rotherham* as being "that of stouthearted trust in God. God is nearer than any enemy, and more powerful to relieve from danger than the enemy to inflict it. The images employed in the psalm are bold, being formed by depicting such convulsions of nature as are seldom or never witnessed, yet are easily conceived. The terrible *roar* of the *land* in an earthquake, when the *moun.tains* are seen *staggering into the midst of the sea*, and the resentful sea is witnessed dashing its mighty waves on the *mountains* that overhang the shore: such is the scene which the poet's art presents as a figure of disturbed nations."

Another writer of note, *J. J. Stewart Perowne*, commenting on its *primary* application, submits the following interesting and instructive paragraph:

This and the two following Psalms are hymns of triumph, composed on the occasion of some great deliverance. I am inclined to think that they all celebrate the same event, the sudden and

miraculous destruction of the army of Sennacherib under the walls of Jerusalem. That proud host had swept the land. City after city had fallen into the power of the conqueror. The career of Sennacherib and his captains had been one uninterrupted success. The capital itself alone held out, and even there the enfeebled garrison seemed little likely to make a successful resistance. The swollen river had, in the language of the prophet, overflowed all his channels, and risen even to the neck. It was at this crisis that deliverance came. When there were no succours to be expected, when neither king nor army could help the city, God helped her. He, the Lord of Hosts, was in the midst of her, keeping watch over her walls and defending her towers. His Angel went forth at dead of night and smote the host of the Assyrians, and when men awoke in the morning, there reigned in that vast camp the silence and the stillness of death. Such a deliverance must have filled the whole nation with wonder and joy. The old days of Moses and David would seem to have returned. The hopes of Prophets, so great and so glowing, yet so often apparently defeated, seemed now nearer to their accomplishment. The times were at hand when Jerusalem should be indeed the joy of the whole earth, when all nations should acknowledge Jehovah as their King. Her towers, her palaces, the temple of her God, stood in all their beauty, saved by a miracle from the spoiler's hand. God had made Himself known there as a sure refuge, and henceforth His Name would be acknowledged in the earth.

As we come to study the psalm ourselves, it is easy to see that much of its language is figurative. In Bible symbology the word "earth" denotes an "order of society." The psalmist sees such an order of society "removed," (or "changed," RSV). Evidently the scene which the inspired poet seeks to convey to our minds is that of an earthquake, (though the "*land*" should "*roar*" - *Rotherham*) as the result of which, a great change takes place in the form of society. The present heavens and earth are envisioned as being replaced by a new heavens and earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. (Isa. 65:17; 2 Pet. 3:13.) Moreover the new earth, according to Hab. 2:14, is to be filled with the knowledge of God.

Again, the word "mountains" represents kingdoms. In Isa. 2:2 the prophet informs us

"It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills," evidently a reference to the time when Christ shall reign. (See also Micah 4:1.) Again, as illustrating the use of figurative language to describe *the changes now taking place in every strata of society, throughout the world*, note the words of Isaiah in 40:4:

"Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low."

This great leveling process, thus predicted by Isaiah, is the very theme portrayed in our psalm.

STROPHE No. 2

*There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God,
The holy places of the tabernacles of the Most High.
God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved:
God shall help her, and that right early.
The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved:
He uttered his voice, the earth melted.
The Lord of hosts is with us;
The God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.*

In the first strophe, the fact that these catastrophes of nature are intended as symbols is not specifically stated. The psalmist doubtless assumes that his readers will understand such an elementary matter. But in the second strophe he applies these natural catastrophes. (Psa. 46:6.) He shows them to be symbols of nations. And his point may easily be that, if we are able to trust in God, who is able to control the mighty forces of nature, should we not also be able to trust in him, as he deals with the mighty forces of kings and peoples? He is just as able to control them. They may, and doubtless do, seem powerful enough to us, but to him they are but as "the small dust of the balance . . . all nations before him are as nothing." - Isa. 40:15-17. Remembering this, we shall be able to repose in him, and be at peace in our hearts.

However, before reaching Psa. 45:6, the psalmist has a word of peace to speak to the Lord's true followers in Psa. 46:4 and Psa. 46:5. His first word concerns a river—the river of truth and grace, the streams of which bring rest, peace, comfort. To those who, by faith and consecration, have entered into covenant relationship with God, and have been given the spirit of sonship—to such is granted the peace of God, which passeth understanding. (Phil. 4:7.) In the Millennial Age, at the threshold of which we stand today, these streams will flow out as a river. Meantime, as rivulets they refresh and stimulate all those who are walking in the narrow way.

Such refreshment of spirit comes to us particularly in connection with increased understanding of our Father's word -- and conscious determination, by his grace, to bring our lives ever more completely into line with his will for us. Thus, understanding his plans, and watching them mature, even granted the privilege of being co-laborers with him in some small measure, we find ourselves realizing the "help" promised in verse 5; which help we confidently expect to have continued to us, until our resurrection change, "*right early*," or, as *Rotherham* translates: "*at the approach of the morning*."

The word "tabernacles," in Psa. 46:4, is in the plural, which is puzzling, until one learns that it is an instance where the figure of speech known as the *plural of majesty* is employed. This plural, whenever it occurs, simply means that "great" or "much" or some similar adjective is to be understood as added to the noun. In this case, not two or more tabernacles, but one very great tabernacle is the thought; not great in size, but in glory or importance.

In our study of *Tabernacle Shadows*, we have learned, not only that God dwelleth between the cherubims (Isa. 37:16; Psa. 80:1), but that during our time here we are to live in a condition represented by the "holy" of the tabernacle. There it is that we find ourselves enjoying the light which comes from the golden candlestick; being nourished by the bread of presence; and worshipping daily at the golden altar. Here is the source of our strength, the source of our growth and development as new creatures in Christ Jesus; and so long as we continue in the holy we are immune to the fears of the world. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High [i.e., in the holy, in the condition of consecration], shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." (Psa. 91:1.)

The further word of Psa. 46:5, that "God is in the midst of her," is surely one that brings a sense of strength and security. It suggests, too, the true basis of Christian unity. As with the nation of Israel under Moses, Jehovah was in the center of each encampment, directing its affairs and resolving differences, so, only in a much higher and grander sense, is he the center of affairs in connection with spiritual Israel, leading them onward to final victory. The thought that our Father directs the experiences of us each, and that nothing occurs in our lives without his knowledge and permission -- and without him being alongside to help -- is very precious to us; surely one which proves most heartening to us, as we recall it from time to time during the days of our pilgrimage.

Moreover, the psalmist's additional assurance in this verse (Psa. 46:5) ought not to be allowed to pass unnoticed. He says that, because God is in the midst of her -- the Church -- "she shall not be moved." Other kingdoms great and small shall be, but not her. We, the church, are on our way to receive "a kingdom which *cannot be moved*." (Heb. 12:28.) Early in the morning of the Millennial Day we have been helped and strengthened by our Father, guided through the complexities of this life, shown his plan, and preserved from the snares and pitfalls of the Adversary. And soon the journey will have ended! How delighted are we at the prospect! -- not alone because it will bring our own deliverance, but also because the opportunity will be extended to all mankind to be set free from the thralldom of sin and death. Surely this kingdom for which we have so long prayed: "Thy Kingdom Come," is the "desire of all nations" spoken of by Haggai (Hag. 2:7), although the nations do not now realize it.

In Psa. 46:6 the psalmist reminds us that, whereas the nations have roared, and the kingdoms have staggered, nevertheless, when *God* speaks, his voice is bound to be heard and obeyed. Louder than the roar of nations is the voice of God. At the sound of *his* voice, the earth (the order of society) melts. The words of the psalmist here find an echo in 2 Pet. 3:10:

"The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

But Peter does not stop there. He has an encouraging word a little further on, in Psa. 46:13 "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. "

STROPHE No. 3

*Come, behold the works of the Lord,
What desolations he hath made in the earth.
He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth;
He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder;
He burneth the chariot in the fire.
Be still, and know that I am God:
I will be exalted among the nations;
I will be exalted in the earth.
The Lord of hosts is with us;
The God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.*

Are Wars to Cease? -- One of our free booklets bears this title. In it the position is developed, from the scriptures, that wars *will cease*. Psalm 46:9 of our psalm declares that they are to cease. They will cease, because God will make them cease. They will cease, when God has permitted such desolation and horrors that those who wage wars will be compelled to stay the carnage. Just

how and when he will put an end to war, we are not wise enough to say. It surely must be very soon, or the entire race of mankind will be destroyed. When he *does* say "Cease," he will do so in such manner that all *will know* that the one speaking is God, and that he must be obeyed. Then will he be *exalted among the nations*.

Something of these sentiments must have been in the mind of the poet (Lord Byron) when he penned those famous lines on "The Destruction of Sennacherib," reprinted below.

The psalmist concludes with the familiar benediction: "The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah." Here, once again, we are reminded of the infinite power whereby God can subdue the entire universe unto himself; reminded also of the fatherly love revealed in his word. Knowing that both his power and love are ever combined on our behalf, our hearts may well respond in those noble lines of Luther

"A mighty fortress is our God, A bulwark never failing; Our helper he amid the flood Of mortal ills prevailing."

- *A. L. Muir.*

The Destruction of Sennacherib

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold ;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen
Like the leaves of the forest when autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and forever grew still!

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail;
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

Life's Empty Victories

The following article was written, just prior to his death, by a regular contributor to a secular newspaper, namely, "The Minneapolis Tribune," December 19, 1932. When it was written, its stated purpose was to assist his readers in formulating their 1933 New Year resolutions. We thought enough of it at the time to publish it in the "Herald" (Feb. 1933) and have reprinted it once or twice since. But at no time in the past have its lessons seemed more appropriate than today; so, once again, we commend this article to the thoughtful consideration of our readers. Ed. Com.

AS A MAN grows older, yet has not reached extreme old age, when, presumably, all his past is mellowed and softened in the pleasant, tranquil light of sunset and both mistakes and right acts are equally overspread by the thought that nothing has mattered much, since the whole thing will be soon over; when he arrives at the stage in life's journey where he reviews the past, not alone for the gentle pleasure of reminiscence, but also to seek guidance for his remaining future, and while he still imagines that it is possible for him to mold his character into the secret ideal which he has all along vainly struggled to perfect, there comes, at least to the man of the average temperament, in this pause of review, this moment of rest before he completes his destiny, the thought of how much happier, and better and altogether pleasanter his life might have been had he avoided as he might easily have done, certain complications and conflicts which, at the time, seemed to him mightily important.

When they occurred, he was absolutely certain that the triumph of his opinion was a matter of tremendous consequence; it was essential that he should override the opposition and impress upon his opponent the pre-eminent truth and right of his position; and so he went at him, hard and strong, and in the heat of the controversy, which ripened into a feud and perhaps ended in the permanent estrangement of one who might once have been counted a friend, he said or did things which were hard and bitter, and better left unsaid or undone.

Perhaps he gained his point; beat down his antagonist and sent him, humbled and mortified, from the contest, to nurse his grievance ever after, and nourish to the end of his days a smouldering hate of the man who got the better of him; or worse, to cherish the feeling that he had been hardly used.

Strange it should be that, in his later years, the outcome does not seem to have been of very great consequence. What remains permanently is the memory of the incident, and a regret that it should have occurred.

Looking back, he realizes the exact moment when he might have refrained from pressing his man to the limit, have perhaps sufficiently satisfied his self-respect and vindicated the justness of his contention without sacrificing a possible friend. Probably it would puzzle him now to state exactly what it was all about then, this famous victory, but he remembers it was a great fight and he was in it and he is sorry.

Not sorry that he stood up stoutly in defense of his positive convictions; no man ever regrets that, but sorry that he should have esteemed it necessary to go to such lengths in pursuit of his ends that it put reconciliation and ultimate restoration of friendship beyond the bounds of the possible. He remembers these incidents with a vague discomfort. No matter which of the two was in the wrong, he holds himself responsible for the outcome.

Did he convince the other of his error? Scarcely. "He that complies against his will is of his own opinion still." Did the encounter seriously contribute to the upbuilding of his own character? Hardly, unless it was desirable to encourage in himself the love of fighting for the fight's sake. His later calm and deliberate conviction is that it was not worth while, and he grudges the vitality and energy he put into it, which might well have been conserved to later, more mature and far better use.

The thing the man remembers at this particular point in his life with the most satisfaction is not such a fruitless contest, but rather the time when, by conceding a point, by some exercise of forbearance in pressing an advantage, he made a friend of his opponent, although they differed irreconcilably. Touching these other encounters, which at the moment it seemed so necessary to win, but which in the end were so barren of real gain, he says, somewhat sorely, "Let them be forgotten and forgiven."

He recalls with secret gratification not his paltry and vainglorious victories, but his flabby and perhaps sentimental concessions: the small foolish, kindly things that he did, rare enough, he admits, but fruitful in pleasing memories. For, after all, we are men tarred with the same stick; more or less good, bad or indifferent, as the case may be, yet all capable of doing something kind for each other. He draws from his past the lesson of tolerance, for the future that is left to him, and resolves, perhaps vainly, but at least, for the moment, sincerely, that henceforth, while he may never falter in defense of a principle, he will try hard to so moderate his attacks upon the other man as to leave no sting past healing.

The assets he counts up with the most satisfaction are the friends he finds about him. What they may expect of him is the animus of his future. He will endeavor to be true to them and to his own convictions, but he will avoid the useless multiplication of enemies. This is his hope, as he takes stock of what lies before him.

Perhaps the writer could offer no suggestion to his readers, touching the form which good resolves, customary at this season of the year, should take, that would be better for ourselves and for the world we live in, than that we will lead kindlier lives; that we will be less sure and less harsh in our judgments; that we will refrain as far as in us lies from giving the other man "a piece of our minds;" that we will leave room for him to be convinced of his error, if he be wrong and we right, not through the might of our pounding, but rather through the gradual change in his own convictions; that we will finally try to, proceed on the way that we esteem the right and only one with less friction, believing that which is true and right will prevail anyhow, and the surer and swifter if it be not enforced by contention.

In a word, to resolve to make friends, not at the sacrifice of conviction or principle, but by conceding to others the simple right of learning the truth in their own time and in their own way, helped perhaps by our, of course, pre-eminently wise suggestion and example, if truly they be such, but at least not hindered by our overemphatic dictum.

"As the Lightning Cometh"

"For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." - Matt. 24:27.

THIS is a widely-discussed text. It is frequently used to support either of two considerably variant expectations regarding the manner of the Second Advent. That Advent, think some, is to be sudden and spectacular, as a flash of lightning. Not so, say others; lightning does not emerge out of the east and shine unto the west. Our Lord must have referred to the bright shining of the sun, and his coming of gradual perception to the minds of men, even as the dawn steals upon sleepers unawares, broadening gradually into full day.

Which view is correct?

Consider first the context. By way of warning to his disciples, Jesus told them that they were not to heed any assertion that he had come "in the desert" nor yet "in the secret chambers"; "For," said he, "AS the lightning . . . so shall also the *parousia* [presence] of the Son of man be." The meaning of this is clear; his presence, which we know will extend over a period of a thousand years, is to be universally known and perceived.

It is obvious that Jesus was likening his presence to something in nature with which they were already familiar, and had themselves witnessed a hundred times before. His use of the analogy would have been futile otherwise. We need then to determine the precise nature of the allusion.

It is sometimes suggested that the Greek word here used, "*astrape*," does not mean "lightning" but it does mean "bright shining," and in this text refers to the sun. Put like this, the suggestion is not altogether accurate. "*Astrape*" is the regular Greek term for lightning, as reference to any lexicon will show. But the dictionary definition of a word is not sufficient unless the usage of that word in the literature and language of the period in question is also taken into consideration. Only thus may the true meaning of recorded utterances be appreciated.

The English word "lightning" is restricted in its use to that flash of light which accompanies the electrical discharges associated with a thunderstorm. The term, however, is a derivation of "lightening," any dazzling or radiant display of light, and a trace of this older English usage appears in Luke 17:24. Just so did the Greek "*astrape*" refer, in the current usage of the time, to any bright or intense display of light, and the question as to whether lightning or other form was concerned has to be decided by the nature of the allusion, or by the context.

The word occurs quite often in the New Testament, in the Greek version of the Old Testament (the Septuagint) and in the Apocrypha, and since all these represent the language as it was spoken in the first century, their testimony can be admitted.

The following texts are quoted to show how "*astrape*," both as a noun and as a verb, has been translated in a number of instances and from these it is apparent that its general application is as suggested above.

From the New Testament.

Acts 9:3 - "There *shined round about* him a light from heaven."

Acts 22:6 - "*There shone* from heaven a great light round about me."

Luke 24:4 - "Two men stood by them in *shining* garments."

Luke 11:36 - "As when the *bright shining* of a candle doth give thee light. "

Luke 9:29 - "His raiment was white and *glistening*."

Luke 10:18 - "I beheld Satan as *lightning* fall from heaven."

Matt. 28:3 - "His countenance was like *lightning*."

From the Old Testament.

Deut. 32:41 - "If I whet *my glittering* sword."

Dan. 10:6 - "His face as the appearance of *lightning*."

Hab. 3:11 - "At the shining of thy *glittering* spear."

From the Apocrypha.

Wisd. 11:18 - "Wild beasts . . . shooting horrible *sparkles* out of their eyes."

4 Mace. 4:10 - "There appeared from heaven angels riding on horseback *all radiant* in armour. "

These examples go to show that "lightning" is not necessarily the meaning of the word in Matt. 24:27. Jesus apparently referred to a noteworthy radiance or shining of light that was known to emerge from the east and cover the sky to the west. The rising of the sun is, of course, immediately suggested, but, it is only when the nature of a Palestinian sunrise is appreciated that the force of the allusion can be perceived. The gradualness of an English sunrise would not meet the sense of the Greek "*astrape*." We dwellers in the temperate zone are familiar with the slow increase of daylight, occupying the space of an hour or more, which constitutes our dawn, but this is true only of our own latitude. The farther one proceeds towards the tropics the more rapid is the transition from total darkness to full daylight, until at the Equator the change is practically instantaneous. To appreciate the meaning of Jesus' words, therefore, we must visualize to ourselves a Palestinian dawn.

A few quotations from travelers who have actually witnessed such a sunrise will be of interest in this connection.

H. V. Morton, in his book "*In the steps of the Master*" says: "As I sat on the stone thinking of these things, a light began to fill the sky. The sun rises over Jerusalem from behind the Mount of

Olives. I turned my back on the city and, looking up over the Mount, saw a great fan of light pulsing up from the east. The fire filled the sky and turned the little clouds in its path to pink and gold, but the high ridge of the Mount, almost black against the palpitating light, hid the sun from view. . . . The sun topped the crest of the Mount of Olives, and looking again towards Jerusalem, I saw the highest buildings gilded with light though the wall was yet unlit. In a few seconds a flood of light fell over the city, ran down the wall and into the valley of the Kedron. It swept up the stony flanks of the opposite valley, and I felt my face and my hands warm in its light."

"How often must Jesus and the disciples have watched this splendid sight from the Mount of Olives. They must have seen the city ramparts light up with the first rays of the sun. They must have seen, just above the Garden of Gethsemane, the towering white and gold mass of the Temple. They must have seen a priest come out on a pinnacle, as he came every morning, to look towards the east and report, before the sacrifice of the day, 'The sun shineth already!' They might even have heard in the still air of dawn the daily cry from the assembled priests: 'Is the sky lit up as far as Hebron?', and the daily response of the watcher from the pinnacle: 'It is lit up as far as Hebron!'"

The same writer describes sunrise at Gaza, a little to the south of Jerusalem:

"And now, as we went onwards, I saw a gathering tumult in the east. A white, palpitating light was filling the sky. It was like something approaching at great speed, a mighty army with its chariots and its horsemen. Swords of light thrust their way upwards, catching stray clouds and turning them to banners of pink and gold. Then, like an orange flung into the air, the sun leapt up, fully armed, into the sky: it was warm, and the dead earth was instantly, vividly, and rather violently, alive."

Lord James Bryce, describing his ascent of Mount Ararat in 1876, thus describes sunrise as seen from his position halfway up the mountain; (*Transcaucasia and Ararat*):

"About 3 a.m. there suddenly sprang up, from behind the Median mountains, the morning star, shedding a light such as no star ever gives in these northern climes of ours, a light that almost outshone the moon. An hour later it began to pale in the first faint flush of yellowish light that spread over the eastern heaven, and first the rocky masses above us, then Little Ararat, throwing behind him a gigantic shadow, then the long lines of mountains beyond the Araxes, became revealed, while the wide Araxes plains still lay dim and shadowy below. One by one the stars died out as the yellow turned to a deeper glow that shot forth in long streamers, rosy fingers hovering above the snows on the mighty cone; till at last there came upon the topmost slope, six thousand feet above us, a sudden blush of pink. Swiftly it floated down the eastern face, and touched and kindled the rocks just above us. Then the sun flamed out, and in a moment the Araxes valley and all the hollows of the savage ridges we were crossing were flooded with overpowering light."

A more recent traveler, Leonard Pearson, in *"Through the Holy Land"* (1937) gives this picture of dawn at Baalbec, in the north of Palestine.

"To see the sun rise at Baalbec (three and a half thousand feet above the sea) is a sight indeed. For the view we climb on the flat roof of the hotel. What a picture with the crimson glow of the rising sun tinting the horizon! The snow-topped Lebanons are a blaze of pink, and yellow on the lower level. Now the rays of the sun flood-light the mighty ruins of the famous temples.... Look at the giant columns caressed by the warm sun's glow. Now the pink tinge has gone, yet it seems to remain in the valley."

Our own booklet "The Promise of His Presence" may be quoted here by way of concluding these descriptions of the "*astrape*."

"The sun comes up suddenly, and a few minutes suffices to transform the velvety blackness of tropical night into the full brilliance of the day. It is for this reason that very few inhabitants of the land actually witness the sun's rising, for their sleep is broken only by its dazzling beams as they encircle the earth. There is no long and gradual dawn as in more temperate countries. The first sign of approaching day is a grayness in the eastern sky, a grayness for which -- in Jerusalem at least -- both city watchmen and the priests in the Temple were waiting and watching; the watchmen, because it indicated the end of their period of service, and the priests, because as soon as light had flooded the land it was their duty to offer the morning sacrifice. Hence the constant Scriptural association of the coming day with the "watchers," and the meaning of that cryptic message, "Watchman, what of the night? . . . The morning cometh, BUT IT IS YET DARK" (Isa. 21. 11-12 French version). Within a few minutes the grayness is streaked with shafts of pink, and then, so rapidly as almost to bewilder the unaccustomed observer, a glorious effulgence of golden light spreads fan-wise from the east and moves visibly across the sky, turning the clouds in its path to pink and white and bathing the entire land in a wonderful rosy glow. It was at this time that the priest, stationed on a pinnacle of the Temple, cried out in a loud voice that the light was come and had overspread the land, and his companions below immediately commenced the ritual of the morning sacrifice. Within a few minutes more the full blaze of day is pouring down upon a people quickly arising from sleep and betaking themselves to their accustomed tasks.

"It is this emergence of light from the east, followed quickly by the sun itself, to which reference is made in Mal. 4:2, where the promise is that the 'Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings' -- the great fan of glory spreading over the sky as the sun rises being not inaptly likened to the pinions of some great celestial creature. Our Lord's own allusion to the '*astrape*' emerging from the east and sweeping the sky to the west is undoubtedly a reference to that same phenomenon which his disciples, early risers as they must have been and accustomed to remaining awake all night, were thoroughly accustomed to witness."

On the basis of the foregoing, then, it might be concluded that Jesus intended us to understand His *Parousia* as an event to be perceived first by the "watchers," those on the mountain tops, the walls of Jerusalem, pinnacles of the Temple. These would be in no uncertainty, they would know full well what the light in the sky portended, and straightway make proclamation "The Lord is come." Whilst that proclamation was still going forth, the full blaze of his presence would overspread the earth and become evident to all people. The two phases of the Second Advent are adequately included in this metaphor; the first phase, in which the Lord, coming into the space and time framework of our earthly habitation "as a thief," gathers his own whilst the world is as yet unaware of the fact, and the second phase in which his presence is so patently obvious to all men that no man can deny it. It is from this latter point that his reign over the earth commences and the Kingdom is to date. The assumption of power by Jesus must be a real assumption of power and this cannot be until the kingdoms of this world have actually and literally given place to his Kingdom. That *will* be after the glorification of the Church and therefore after the first phase of his Advent has been completed.

- A. O. Hudson.

Recently Deceased

Mildred Bell, Sharon, Pa.
Hattie Dolata, Milwaukee, Wisc.
Adela H. Draheim, Longwood, Wisc.
Peter J. Hogensen, Brooklyn, N.Y.
Thomas J. Hood, Wyckoff, N.J.
T. Benjamin Hunter, Lynchburg, Va.
Chester Kotowski, Pleasant Ridge, Mich.
Paul Lesney, Minneapolis, Minn.
Ethel Marland, Portland, Me.
Mary E. Moxley, St. Louis, Mo.
Lillie D. Painter, Reidsville, N.C.
Anna B. Plath, Rexford, N.Y.
Lodji Root, Climax, Mich.
Alta Spice, Benton Harbor, Mich.
Fanny Wagner, Dallas, Tex.
Artemus E. Witt, Muskogee, Okla.