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Jesus The Father's Faithful Workman

"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." - John 9:4.

THE brevity of human life, and the proper use of its brief span, is a subject of solemn importance to every sober-minded person. Since life is a gift from God and all are accountable to him for this gift, it is not surprising that we find the Scriptures constantly counseling its proper valuation. Again and again the righteous are reminded of the value of the fleeting days of stewardship soon to end in approval or disapproval, and the unrighteous are likewise warned of the issues involved in wasted time. The same Scriptures teach that within the limits of man's "threescore years and ten" lie possibilities that are eternal in their importance; for the present infinitesimal moment of time has been made by the great Creator the determining factor in deciding our portion or station in a boundless, eternal existence beyond the grave. God, who possesses all time, "from everlasting to everlasting," has chosen to give us but one day at a time out of his unlimited ages, to teach us the value of these fragments of his eternity.

"SO TEACH US TO NUMBER OUR DAYS"

The great characters of Scripture, such as Moses, David, and Solomon, recognizing the brevity of the present life, have furnished us with conclusions, admonitions, and prayers, that find a response in our own meditative considerations of life's stewardship responsibilities. Like them, we must acknowledge that life is "but a shadow" that quickly passes by. Therefore "whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." Then like Moses we pray, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Ps. 102:11; Eccl. 9:10; Ps. 90:12). Such considerations as these are intended by the Lord to impart a sober-minded understanding of the great purposes of God in bestowing upon us the gift of life, and entrusting us with the stewardship of so great a boon.

Thus we see that the prayer of Moses to God for wisdom to live faithfully the few days of earthly life is in every way a proper one for us. Obvious though it be to all, that the days of our stewardship are few, yet only God can permanently teach us this lesson. And by his diversified

means of correction, instruction, and grace, he does teach us, and leads us in wisdom's ways, always ready to assist us to become workmen needing not to be ashamed when the duties of life's little day have ended.

LOOKING UNTO JESUS, OUR EXAMPLE

In thus instructing us God would surely direct our attention to Jesus, the One in whom he was well pleased, admonishing us to observe his life of service, and his faithful application to the work for which he came into the world. With him it was always the "Father's business." "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." "The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." His aim in life is clearly stated: "I *must work* the works of him that sent me, *while it is day*; the night cometh when no man can work." Let us therefore observe the service that gained for our dear Redeemer the Father's approval, that we may likewise have the joy of eventually finding our brief day of service rewarded with his sweet "Well done."

First of all we note that Jesus recognized the shortness of his day. He takes the position of a day laborer whose day of service will be over with the coming of night. He speaks of his life as a mission, a task, which had to be fulfilled within the limits of the time assigned by his Father. He began his ministry with forty days of inquiry respecting the Father's will, learning from types and shadows and prophetic utterances the time allotted and the nature of the work to be done. When he ends his day of service, with the coming of night, he is able to say, "I have finished the work thou gavest me to do." There have been no omissions, no neglected duties, and there have been no departures from the clearly defined commands of his Father. Surely he was a servant worthy of God's approval, and to his Church, a perfect example that all should prayerfully seek to follow.

Although Jesus knew that his time on earth was short, and although he would have us remember that the same is true of our workday, yet he was in no feverish haste. With a calmness, and a steady, even deportment he went about his work. There was a time to work, and a time to pray; a time for the multitude, and a time for the disciples alone. He could not be hurried into any action by the solicitation of his friends, or the taunts of his enemies. When his brethren urged him to go up to the feast and make himself known, his reply was significant: "My time is not yet come; but your time is always ready." It was as though he had said, yours is the worldly mind—they who do their own work, who seek their own glory, are the masters and disposers of their own time, but my *time* is not yet.

"ABOUT MY FATHER'S BUSINESS"

What an example he is to us in all this! How he rebukes our impetuosity by his implicit obedience! How forcefully he teaches us that "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength" -- yes, and our safest, wisest course. To follow him thus "imparts to our present life an unspeakable solemnity; it endows it with an infinite preciousness and value. And while at first sight we may feel overpowered by the thought of the short space given us for our labor, and inclined to feverish haste and to impatient self-made work, a truer insight will teach us that as the approach of night is altogether beyond our calculation and control, so it behooves us, with calmest faith and implicit surrender of our own will, to look upon each day's work and each day's trial, as portioned out to us by divine wisdom and love. How much of false zeal, self-chosen work, and self-appointed times, is there in our own private and public Christian life. We run before we are sent; we choose the kind of usefulness and work for which we fancy we have inclination and adaptation; we select the time and method for accomplishing our task. We pursue with spurious zeal and self-sustained energy aims of our own choice; we hurry impatiently our own souls and those of others, and are satisfied with forced results, till experience teaches us, to

our deep humiliation, that grace also has its nature and law, and that in God's work 'it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God, that showeth mercy.'" Happy indeed will be our lot if we may say with Jesus at the end of our day of labor, "I have finished the work *Thou gayest me to do*," and there are no works of wood, hay, and stubble to be burned.

Next we note the emphasis that Jesus puts upon the necessity of working while it is called day. "*I must work* the works of him that sent me." This seems to have been a thought deeply impressed upon his mind early in life, and in all after years it is the keynote of his obedient service. At twelve years of age he said, "Wist ye not that *I must* be about my Father's business?" From Jordan to the cross this "I must work" was the motto of his life. "I must preach the Kingdom of God." He *must* go up to Jerusalem.

The Scriptures *must* be fulfilled.

WOE IS ME IF I PREACH NOT THIS GOSPEL

This view of his responsibility to God is of vital importance to us. It was because he recognized that his was the place of a servant commissioned with the responsibility of completing a task laid upon him, that he so humbly takes this place under a servant's "I must work." This lesson he also wove into many of his private and public discourses for us: the vineyard left in the care of servants; the steward put in charge of his master's goods; the one-, two-, and five-talented servants, were all illustrations of the lessons of this unavoidable "I must work," in our relationship to him as his servants. Again and again, would be followers are cautioned to consider carefully the requirements of discipleship before undertaking its obligations. But once the step has been voluntarily taken, then he would have all such remember that from henceforth they are bondslaves of his. Paul realized this to be so true, and his future so dependent upon it, that he declared, "Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is me, if I preach not the Gospel."

This "I must work" of Jesus' should therefore ring in our hearts with all its solemn significance. The talent preserved in a napkin, the neglect of duty while the lord of the household is absent, the forgotten privileges of *service*, will some day make necessary the Master's word - "Thou wicked and slothful servant, . . . thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury" (Matt. 25:26, 27). "Depart from me, I know you not" -you live in the midst of priceless opportunities, you were surrounded with the crying want of those who represented me in their need, and you served me not, but followed your own self-chosen way.

IMMANUEL-GOD WITH US

This brings us to the third striking feature of our Lord's day of service; namely, the fact that the work he did was wholly the Father's work through him, as he himself reiterated. By this he meant to teach that since he was solely the Father's representative, whatever works he performed, or whatever revelations he gave to men, were merely what the Father himself would have performed or given had he chosen to appear amongst them. True to the name he bore, Immanuel, he was "God with us," so much so that to his disciple he could say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. . . . The Father that dwelleth in me, *he doeth the works*." "Blessed Son of God! What sublime humility, self-abnegation, and love was thine! You came to reveal the Father, to teach us that to know God was eternal life, and now we learn that the humiliations of man's estate, the years of earthly life and absence from the heavenly courts, the poverty and homeless wanderings, the acts of compassion that brought healing to the sick and life to the dead, the patient submission to indignities and shame, were not *your own works*, but things the Father himself would have

done for us had it been possible. His love he has revealed through you. Oh *teach us*, that we too may be God's true witnesses in the earth, revealing his love and sympathy for the poor groaning creation; then no more will we ask for fire to destroy, but pray for more of the grace and love."

In this connection then let *us* take note of the circumstances under which Jesus made the statement contained in our text: A man born blind had appealed for aid, and apparently both Jesus and his disciples had been particularly interested in this case. The disciples, being familiar with the Law of Moses, naturally concluded that his affliction might be traceable to the sins of a previous generation. "Who did sin, this man or his parents that he should be born blind?" Jesus not only corrects their mistaken inference, but he also reveals his own attitude toward the affliction of this poor man, and toward all similar afflictions of mankind. While the disciples would be concerned to ask, Who is to blame? Jesus would ask, Who is to relieve and help? While they were thinking of guilt and punishment, Jesus was thinking of healing and restoring. The salvation works of God were his meat and drink. He came not to condemn the world, but to save it. He came not to judge the world, nor to analyze and tirade against sin, but "to preach good tidings unto the meek, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, to give the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

JESUS THE EXCELLENT REVELATION OF LOVE

Let us observe "the wonderful union in Jesus of love to God and love to man. There is only one love. Love to God and love to man are united in their origin and their nature. They form one river flowing out of the eternal love of God." "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar, for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (1 John 4:20). "Some of us find it easier to ascend to God with the wings of adoration and joyous contemplation, than to descend on the selfsame ladder to our neighbor in the spirit, and with the service, of forgiving, comforting, and helping love. But in Jesus there was only one, deep, pure, divine love. When he healed the sick, and opened the eyes of the blind, when he fed the multitude, when he cast out devils, when he taught the disciples, and blessed the little children, he was doing the works the Father had given him to do. . . . We forget that when we behold Jesus forgiving the sinner, and receiving him with most tender compassion, when we behold Jesus permitting the woman to kiss his feet, we see the Father in him." We also forget that though he may frequently display the Father's indignation against hypocrisy, and speak in no uncertain sound against wrong practices, that these are the exceptions in and not the burden of his message and ministry. Both of these omissions in our memory are serious; for if we forget that "God was in Christ" in the work of our redemption, and allow ourselves to think of Jesus as being more merciful than the Father, we dishonor both. If on the other hand we think chiefly of Jesus as an expositor and denouncer of the sinner, we do violence to his definition of God, for he said, "God so loved the world" as to send me, not to condemn it, but to save *it*.

JESUS THE GREAT PHYSICIAN

When John the Baptist became somewhat disturbed by his imprisonment, wondering no doubt why Jesus did not attempt his release, we find him sending his disciples to Jesus with the question, "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?" How peculiarly Jesus answered this earnest inquiry. He did not send the messengers back with a list of Scriptural citations from the prophecies, nor did he acquaint John with some program of a campaign against prevailing errors, but he sent them back with a message void of any suggestion of kingly prerogatives, or of triumph over opposing forces, but a message full of the joy of a successful, happy physician. "Tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the Gospel is preached. And blessed is

he, whosoever shall not be offended in me." Surely his servants of the present day will not overlook this lesson; for Jesus was a workman fully approved of God, and in all things, in all periods of the Age, an example to be faithfully and devoutly followed.

In conclusion, let us refer once more to our Lord's appreciation of the privilege of giving a full day's service. There was no thought of ceasing to labor until the night interrupted his work. His was a life of fullness - full of the spirit, full of compassion, full of loving service. "The thought of the approaching night sometimes exerts a paralyzing influence on man's energy and activity. It tempts us to anticipate our rest or to relax our effort. It often damps our enthusiasm. We are inclined to think that we have labored enough, and that we can add no more to our service, or to fear that our strength, our material, our opportunity, is exhausted. But Jesus was faithful to the end. As he approached the last sufferings in Jerusalem, his love and his zeal burned only with the greater intensity and brightness. To the very last in his warnings to Judas, in his final addresses to the Jews, in the good confession which he confessed before Pontius Pilate, in his words to the daughters of Jerusalem, in his patient and silent suffering, and in the seven words from the cross - he fulfilled his ministry; he was faithful -- the perfect servant of God."

HIS LOVE FOR THE DISCIPLES SEVERELY TESTED

"His love to his disciples was never more severely tested than during his last days. He never faltered. He never relaxed his faithful, anxious care of the men whom the Father had given him to keep. He prayed for the disciples, anticipating the hour of temptation. On that night in which he was betrayed, and in which all the disciples were offended because of him, Jesus manifested his love more fully than ever. He called them friends; he spoke to them of the love with which they were loved, of the vital union between the true vine and the branches; he instituted the Memorial of his dying love; he prayed for them to his heavenly Father. In that prayer Jesus clings with the same love to the Father and to the disciples; and by the wonderful words, 'I in them, and thou in me,' he places believers in a position of glory, to which we can scarcely lift the eyes of our heart." Why did he do all this? Because he in his love and faithfulness would have us know "that the Father who dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."

"As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world." "In this also we are called to follow Jesus. He is Lord and we are his servants, he is infinitely great, and we are but little. But to the least of us the exhortation is addressed, 'Be thou faithful unto death'; 'Occupy till I come'; work while as long as-it is day. And to each one of us some peculiar talent is entrusted. We can *be*, we can *do*, we can *suffer-something*, and in some way, in which no other person can take our place. . . . There is no measure that we can say, 'It is enough.' The only measure is the daily opportunity appealing to the heart, out of which are the issues of life. Only let our heart be loving, and it will be like the measure Jesus describes, 'Good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over.'

- J. J. Blackburn

Lights and Shadows in Christian Experience

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." -Romans 8:18.

As was noted in our last issue, Brother Alec L. Muir ended his earthly journey March 27, 1972. As a special tribute to his memory, we are publishing, in four installments, an article of his which previously appeared in this journal. The first installment was published in our last issue. Here we continue with the second. -*Directors and Editors*

IN THE previous issue, we began a devotional study of the conditions obtaining in the Bethany family and, pondering the distinctive characters of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, sought to apply to ourselves the lessons developed in the sacred narrative. After prayerfully reviewing the scene unfolded in Luke 10:40-42, we journeyed, in thought, to the special circumstances surrounding the awakening from the sleep of death of "Our Friend Lazarus." The story is told in the eleventh chapter of John.

At first the sickness of Lazarus came as a surprise to the two sisters. As they discussed the matter they could not understand it. But of one thing they were very sure -- if the Lord had been present, it would not have happened. And so, as they watched Lazarus slowly sinking, they decided to send a message to Jesus. Notice the message they sent; it is evidently reported in their own words: "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." Here is no complaint; no urging of immediate action; just a simple statement of the facts. No doubt the message veiled an unexpressed prayer. But they could trust him to read the unexpressed longing of their hearts. Even in their great sorrow, they could not press him to come, aware, as they were, of the dangers which awaited him in Judea. They merely informed him of the situation, leaving it to him to decide how he should act.

How is it with us? When we send messages to the Lord concerning our personal matters, are we not inclined, sometimes, to say: "Lord, he who loves you is *sick -come at once.*" The sisters knew the love that Jesus bore them and that if anything could be done for Lazarus, Jesus would do it. So too, we, knowing full well that Jesus loves us, should realize that when we cry unto him in the hour of need, it is enough that we remind him of our knowledge of his love, and assure him of our abiding confidence in him.

ASCERTAINING THE FATHER'S WILL

Jesus received the sisters' message, but made no immediate attempt to return to Bethany. Instead, he said: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God." (Our Lord's words here would seem to be as much for the benefit of the disciples present, as for the absent sisters.) He then remained two days longer in the wilderness of Perea, whither he had fled from the enmity of the Jews.

Perhaps we may never know just why Jesus delayed his departure these two days. We do know that the direct result of his miracle in awakening Lazarus from the sleep of death, was his own condemnation and death. No doubt he had a presentiment that such would be the outcome. In all probability, therefore, his delay was deliberate -- designed to afford him special opportunity of communing with the Father, to make certain that he fully understood his Father's will concerning him, and that grace sufficient would be supplied him for every step of the way.

Having gathered the meaning of the providential circumstances associated with Lazarus' sickness, Jesus promptly decided to return to Judea. But at the word "Judea" the disciples are ready to object, contending that it would mean suicide. "Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?" To this, however, Jesus replied in words of deep significance: "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not." These words, applied to his own case, very evidently mean: "If duty calls, I may fearlessly go. While the time allotted to me by my Father has not yet expired, no harm can come to me, in the path of duty. My twelve hours of work are not quite over. Mine hour is not yet come (John 2:4; 7:6). The duration of my earthly life is meted out and secured to me by my Father. The Jews will not be able to shorten, by a single moment, the time assigned to me for accomplishing my mission. During these twelve hours I am walking in daylight, and therefore will not stumble. However, if, as you seem to be proposing, I should arbitrarily endeavor to prolong my life, by refusing to go where duty calls me, I would be as one walking after daytime has ended -- in the nighttime. Real danger of stumbling would then reach me, for I would be without the light of my Father's countenance."

This saying of Jesus applies to all the members of the Church, in their measure, for "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Ps. 116:15). No harm can come to us, in the line of Christian duty, save in God's own time, and as he may permit. On the other hand, if, by failing to do our duty, we did succeed in prolonging our life -if, for example, we were to deny the faith in a time of religious persecution, our life, thus lengthened, would no longer be illuminated by the light of God's will. In such a condition, we would seek in vain for wisdom from above, to direct our course. In such darkness, we would "*stumble*"; *i.e.*, morally perish. Or again, in time of comparative peace, if, shrinking from trouble or unpleasantness, one seeks to prolong his life, and refusing what he realizes is God's will, turns into some softer and easier path, then indeed danger threatens. He may prolong his life, but his "day" is done.

"OUR FRIEND LAZARUS SLEEPETH"

Our Lord next proceeded to discuss the case of Lazarus further: "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep." These words did but serve the disciples as yet another reason why they should not go to Bethany. Surely, they reason, if Lazarus had been sick and is now resting in sleep, it would be wiser to wait for him to awaken in the normal way, at which time he would be recovered from his ailment. Then Jesus told them plainly: "Lazarus is dead."

From our Lord's procedure here, we may learn a lesson on how to present the truth. It should be adapted always to the hearer's ability to receive it; beginning with the simpler lessons, and only after these have been grasped, proceeding to the more difficult. Thus, instead of announcing two days earlier that Lazarus was dead, and thereby bringing a shock to the minds and hearts of his disciples, our Lord breaks the sad news gently, gradually leading up to it, preparing their minds to receive it.

This is still his method of dealing with his people. He prepares them for their hour of trial, and does not lay upon them more than they can bear. He considers their case-teaching them by slow and gradual discipline, leading on step by step.

Jesus next informs the disciples that, for their sakes, he was glad not to have been in Bethany at the time of the sickness and death of Lazarus. Had Jesus been in Bethany, it is more than likely that he would have been led to heal him. Because of his absence, Lazarus had been without the benefit of our Lord's presence and healing touch, and thus had been permitted to die. But in the overruling providence of the Father, this would prove advantageous, not only to Lazarus and his sisters, but also to the disciples; the faith of all being greatly strengthened, when they saw "the

glory of God" as, in the exercise of the Father's power, our Lord awakened Lazarus from the sleep of death.

IF THOU HADST BEEN HERE

In verse 19 we are told that many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary to comfort them concerning their brother. They needed all the sympathy they received, for all the past bright memories of Bethany seemed buried in desolation and sorrow. We may picture the scene: the stronger and more resolute spirit of Martha striving to stem the tide of overmuch sorrow; the more sensitive heart of Mary, bowed under a grief too deep for utterance, able only to indicate by her silent tears the unknown depths of her sadness.

Thus they are employed, when "Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him." It requires no small fortitude in the season of sore bereavement to face an altered world, but again we have illustrated the strong character of Martha, her quick apprehension and vigorous action. When Martha reached Jesus just outside the village, she stood before him and said: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

These words were not intended as a reproach on Martha's part, for she could not have been ignorant of the fact that her brother was dead before Jesus had received the news of his illness. Moreover, would she have allowed herself to complain of our Lord's course of action, just at the time when she is about to make the very greatest of requests? On the contrary, she merely expressed her regret that Jesus had not been there at the time of her brother's illness, and this regret only helped to prepare for the petition she was about to make: "But I know, that even now [although so late], *whatsoever thou* wilt ask of God, God will give it thee." On these words of Martha, the eminent scholar *Godet* comments: "The reticence of this indirect request is admirable." How wonderfully restrained is Martha, in this great sorrow. Of course she hoped that, included in her "whatsoever," would be the awakening of her brother. But she is too reticent to say it. The Master-her Lord will know best what to do.

THY BROTHER SHALL RISE AGAIN

Jesus responds to her faith with a word of promise: "Thy brother shall rise again." This assurance was capable of being interpreted either in a general sense as referring to the general resurrection (which all devout Israelites believed would take place at the inauguration of Messiah's reign) or in a particular sense (as having reference to the approaching awakening of Lazarus). It is more than likely that Martha sensed the reference to the approaching awakening of Lazarus, but not being sure, she applied our Lord's words to the general "last day" resurrection, which she did regard as certain. This gave Jesus the opportunity to explain his words further, and to declare expressly, what she had hardly dared to hope: "I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

Here Jesus speaks words that have echoed down the corridor of the Gospel Age, bringing hope and comfort to millions. In these few words we have the core of the Gospel, Jesus expressing the confidence of his final victory over sin and death, and the glorious work of the resurrection, first for the Church which is his body, gathered in the Gospel Age, and later for all mankind during the Millennial Kingdom, as it holds sway over all the earth. Freed from the confusions of the creeds of Christendom, we see clearly that all not now disciples of the Lord have, nevertheless, the hope of a share in the general resurrection in the Millennial Kingdom (whether they understand it now or not); whereas those living during the Gospel Age, who had been footstep followers of Jesus --

who have consecrated themselves to do the Father's will, even unto death-these have already, by faith, passed from death unto life. They have been made alive unto God as new creatures in Christ Jesus. To these the very crown of life -- immortality -- has been held out as their hope. They are to share in the throne of God and of the Lamb. These things, of course, were hidden until after Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was shed abroad in its begetting and anointing power, at which time it took the things of Jesus and made them known to the Apostles, and through them to the early Church, and to us.

(Continued in next issue)

Watchman, What Hour of the Night?

"The prophets . . . searching what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto . . . which things angels desire to look into." - Isa. 21:11; 1 Pet. 1:10-12, A.R.V.

IT WAS the duty of the watchman in an ancient city to call the hours. The question heard by Isaiah suggests that the watchman had been silent. Perhaps the city was in fear of an enemy -- of an attack at dawn. The night was dark -- the stars, by which the time might be told, were hidden in the clouds. A citizen, roused from sleep by he knows not what, calls to the watchman in the street or on the wall, literally: "Watchman, what from off the night?" *"Watchman, how far gone is the night?" - Rotherham.*

The Scriptures picture the symbolic earth, the social order, as being in darkness, and most of mankind lying in a heavy sleep (Isa. 60:2; Isa. 29:9-12; et al.). But some individuals have been wakeful; and from the prophets and servants of God, as well as from Seir and other godless sources, has often come the ancient question: *"What time is it?"*

Thus the Psalmist, David, asked: "O Jehovah, how long shall the wicked, *how long* shall the wicked triumph?" Again he inquires, saying: "Our own signs have we not seen -- there is no longer a prophet -- neither is there one with us who knoweth how long! How long, O God, shall the adversary reproach? Shall the enemy revile thy name perpetually?" In the prophecy of Daniel the repeated inquiry is found concerning the symbolic time-measures given him: *"How long* shall be the vision?" "What shall be the issue of these things?" The disciples asked of the Lord: "When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign ... ?" And after the resurrection: "Dost thou at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel?"

The demons also, having a deep personal interest in the matter, demanded of Jesus: "Art thou come hither to torment [restrain] *us before the time?*" (Psa. 94:3; Psa. 74:9, 10; Isa. 21:11; Dan. 8:13; Dan. 12:8; Matt. 24:3; Acts 1:6; Matt. 8:29).

The interest today, among the wakeful, is no less intense. The "Worldly Wisemen" are anxiously seeking to penetrate the future; and many modern Bible students are searching the Scriptures, as did the holy men of old, to discover if it may be, "What time or what manner of time" the prophecies signify. The *Herald* is constantly receiving, from earnest and zealous brethren, manuscripts, charts, pamphlets, and books on various features of "the chronology." These usually "correct" one or two alleged mistakes of past writers and often contain helpful suggestions, but as these correspondents are not in collaboration, their conclusions are not in harmony. Not *only* so, but related Scriptures are often overlooked or ignored, which would modify or contradict their findings.

The Bible chronology, as it has been constructed by many generations of investigators throughout the Gospel Age, is not readily corrected in detail; if it is to be changed, it must be revised with full regard for interrelated prophetic time periods, and with familiarity with the vast and invaluable researches of previous chronologers. From time to time the *Herald* has sought to aid in clarifying the subject by a restatement of some of its underlying principles and requirements, and a review of the conclusions and unanswered questions left to us by the ablest of modern investigators in this field, and thus help those continuing prophetic research to harmonize their findings.

It is evident that the question before us is essentially identical with the one that St. Peter declares was in the minds of the prophets themselves—yes, even in the minds of angels (1 Pet. 1:10-12; Dan. 8:13), viz., What time-periods, or what manner (kind) of time-periods, does the Spirit signify, in the prophecies of Scripture which obviously indicate a fixed and definite period of suffering for God's people, of both the Old and the New Dispensations, to be followed by an equally definite period of exaltation and glory in the "Age to come wherein dwelleth righteousness"?

St. Peter says it was revealed to the Prophets that they were not to understand the meaning of these prophecies, but that *this understanding was reserved for "us"*; and he exhorts us to "gird up the loins of your mind, and be sober, and [with the aid of these prophecies] hope completely [fully] for the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ..." (1 Pet. 1:12, 13). Accordingly we honor those brethren who are giving thought and time, labor and their means, in the endeavor to solve the ancient mystery.

Those to *whom* the Apostle refers as "us" are the ones to whom he addresses his Epistle: ". . . the elect . . . according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (verses 1-3). We therefore ask, Have all these been fully aware of the time-significance of the prophecies; of the dates of the beginnings and endings of the periods; of "what time and what manner of time" was meant? The answer of course is No, all have not been so aware; it would therefore appear that some other feature of the prophecies was intended for *all* the Church -- the "us" class.

It may well be argued that, though veritably of this class, we may never know the exact lengths or dates of the prophetic periods; but we may know of a surety that these prophecies have their fulfillment in Christ, and if we are joined to him we may with equal assurance make application of their promises of blessings to ourselves: for "If we suffer [with him] we shall also reign with him"; and "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory" (2 Tim. 2:12; Col. 3:4). Certainly it is far more important for us to know that we may participate in the prophesied blessings than to know just when those blessings are to come.

It is apparent that partial knowledge and even misunderstanding of the time prophecies has been stimulating to Christian living in all periods of the Age. Because the meaning of these prophecies has been hidden and obscure, yet their promises so attractive and their terms so urgent, each zealous investigator has been prompted to apply them to his own times. Constant expectation of impending dissolution of the present evil order has contributed in an important measure to holy living by the believer in every stage of the Church, as Peter seems to imply further along in this very passage: "Wherefore ... set your hope completely on the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ . . . like as he is holy . . . *be ye yourselves also holy.*" And the Apostle makes his thought still more clear in his second Epistle: "Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be *in all holy living and godliness,*

looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God ...?" (1 Pet. 1:13-16; 2 Pet. 3: 11-13).

However, the earnest Bible student can never be satisfied with an incomplete or inaccurate understanding of Scripture. He cannot admit that the Bible statements of time-periods should be considered impossible of complete interpretation and understanding. He refuses to relinquish hope of an ultimate solution; hence he never ceases his efforts to solve the puzzles connected with these time features, and is ever on the lookout for hints from any source that may prove helpful in his quest.

Figures are exact; "seventy sevens" are 490, not 491, or 489; "seven times" (if we understand the numerical system correctly) are 2520 years, not 2520 plus 40, or some other figure. The time periods of prophecy must have a definite ending, marked by some definite event, or their significance and authority are greatly weakened. The fact that previous interpreters obviously have erred in their conclusions should not have a deterrent or discouraging effect, but rather a stimulating influence, on the "searchers" and "examiners" of the Scriptures. There is the gold of further truth yet to be discovered, if we are willing to "search for it as for hid treasure." Through the Prophet Habbakuk the assurance is given: "The vision is yet for the appointed time . though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not delay" beyond the "appointed time" (Prov. 2:1-5; Hab. 2:3).

Daniel, who asked for an understanding of the time prophecies given him, was told: "Go thy way, Daniel; for the words are shut up and sealed till the time of the end ... none of the wicked shall understand, but they that are wise shall understand" (Dan. 12:9, 10). This expression, "time of the end," clearly indicates *a period* of time. The Prophet employs quite another word to indicate a *point* of time. The latter is found in Dan. 2:8, 9, 16 (see A.R.V. and Rotherham); Dan. 4:36; Dan. 7:22.

Similarly, Daniel distinguishes between a terminating period and a complete end, although the Authorized Version does not, translating both original words as "end." A final end is indicated in Dan. 1:5, 15, 18; Dan. 4:29, 34; and Dan. 9:24 (a still different word).

Daniel was told that "the vision belongeth to the time of the end" (Dan. 8:17, A.R.V.). Strong defines the word "vision" as "a view, the act of seeing." Again, the Prophet was told to "seal the book to the time of the end." Before that time, "some of them that are wise" -- Rotherham's footnote says "the instructors," and refers to Dan. 8:33, "they who make the people wise" -- "shall fall, to refine them, and to purify and to make them white, even to the time of the end; because it is yet for the time appointed." The American Revised Version also has footnotes giving the meaning of "instructors" to "the wise of chapters 11 and 12. Perhaps this (Dan. 11:35, quoted above) has particular reference to the many sincere but premature and erroneous interpretations of "the vision" by "the teachers of the people." It is encouraging to believe that even our honest errors may "refine, purify and make us white," by humbling and warning us (Dan. 11:33, 35).

"The words are shut up and sealed till the time of the end. . . . None of the wicked shall understand; but they that are wise shall understand" (Dan. 12:9, 10). Whether this promise means that during the end-period the "wise" shall come to a complete understanding of all of the time-prophecies, or to the particular one or ones given through Daniel, or merely that the "wise" shall know in a general way that it is the time of the end, and that the prophecies are being, or are about to be, fulfilled, is for each sincere and honest examiner of the sacred records to conclude for himself. The writer holds the former view. He believes that it would be more to the glory of God and the vindication of his Word for some, at least, of his "little ones" to arrive at "an exact

knowledge of the truth" in this respect as in others, during the due time -- the time-period of the end. Such an understanding would demonstrate not only God's foreknowledge, but his ability to forestall events in such a way as that, hidden until the "time-lock" is released, even poor human intelligence, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, may share the foreknowledge in all its exactness. "The path of the righteous is as the light of dawn, going on and brightening, unto meridian day" (Prov. 4:18, Rotherham).

As Bible students we therefore may say: "We know the solution of the mystery is there, hidden in his Word. We do not yet fully understand, but we shall understand in God's due time, or when we have worked hard enough on the problem to merit its unfolding to us. We will not be discouraged either by past mistakes and disappointments, or by the difficulties that lie before us. We will remember the intense interest and labors to understand on the part of the angels, of the prophets, and of our brethren of the Church who have preceded us; and calling to mind the promises of ultimate understanding given through Daniel, Habakkuk, and others of the Prophets and the Apostles, we will follow on in full expectation of eventually coming to "know even as we are known."

- H. E. Hollister

Among the Last Leaves of a Christian Diary

"With lovingkindness have I drawn thee." - Jeremiah 31:3.

Many of our readers will recall an article captioned "Leaves from a Christian Diary" which appeared in this journal in February 1958.

Recently we received a few more "leaves" from that same "diary," which we take pleasure in publishing below. We trust all our readers will find them as spiritually refreshing as we did ourselves. - Editorial Committee.

REMINISCENCE is considered the privilege, if not the symptom, of old age. Few have leisure to sit down and take stock, to look around, during their working years; most are so busy doing things or getting on, that they have little inclination to pause in their activities.

Christian maturity might be considered the youth of eternity. The years are rich with the fruits of experience and ripe with memories of loving-kindness. One may look back across retreating years with profit. Evidences of loving-kindness lie so thick about the way that a recollection of mercies here, of help there, of strength supplied and comfort given, renews vigor and deepens confidence in him who loves with an everlasting love.

A traveler to a foreign land watches the fading coastline of his native shore with that affection peculiar to familiar scenes. But as the journey proceeds new experiences begin to claim attention. When at last the journey nears its end there is a mounting excitement, a quickened interest in the new country, in the life to be lived there. All that imagination has long envisaged will soon become reality.

As the new land appears on the horizon, steadily getting closer, assuming the solid proportions of a new world and a new life, there is a dreamlike sense about the arrival. In an hour of pleasant wonder the mind will flash back to the day of leaving the old home to all that has befallen by the way, to bring the wayfarer at last to the foreseen destination, to find that realization surpasses anticipation.

Christian life is the greatest journey of all time. From the various analogies of an ocean voyage, an adventurous land journey, or a hazardous mountain ascent, the Christian pilgrim has drawn inspiration. No one travels alone. At times it may seem a lonely pathway. Thinking of personal ups and downs is often a solitary business. They who leave the world to climb' the heavenly steeps are always in good company, for as one of our finest pilgrims said out of the fullness of his own experience: "Those who delight in the Lord's way have blessed communion and fellowship with him. . . . They live on a higher plane, breathe a purer atmosphere and enjoy a holier, sweeter friendship than the world could ever offer." - Manna June 20th.

"O happy band of pilgrims,
If onward ye will tread,
With Jesus as your fellow,
With Jesus as your head."

During the long era set aside for the gathering together of God's family, they have all been on the road together. Circumstances have differed, time and miles have divided them, but in experience, in aim, in love, they have been one band, on the march to the City of God.

Now as the sun sets over the world hurrying to its destruction, as the days grow shorter and the evening star beckons the wayfarers up the last hard slope, it may be good to halt, to get as we say, our second wind, while we look back across the checkered experiences of the road, drawing new courage for the final mile that will lodge us safely in the Father's house. All that has passed has brought us to this very hour. None of it may be lived again. This present resting-place will soon become past. Time pushes us forward. We must go further on. Drawn by loving-kindness we will not go reluctantly nor with unseemly haste, but with firm and steady foot, watchful, meek and reverent as those commanded to appear before a royal presence.

How long ago it seems since first we lifted eyes towards the Father's home, yet memories fresh as yesterday, bittersweet with pain and joy, come crowding back, bright as shimmering dew drops and the eager, questioning eyes of youth.

Thumbing through the Christian diary, that logbook of the pilgrim way, how remarkable has been the journey. There are those early days, like basking in the summer meadows. In poem and picture lay the celestial mountain, distant, mysterious; strangely attractive with its wordless invitation so readily accepted. "Lord, lead me up that mountain path and teach my feet to climb, Till I forget the downward way, thy way forever mine.

By what strange power are hearts drawn and feet wooed to take that lengthy road where they may sit with Christ in heavenly places! "With lovingkindness have I drawn thee." It was not the rod of force or fear driving us where we would not go, but love, wondrous love, yearning, drawing, winning as a parent wins a child to take its first steps. "We love him because he first loved us" and realizing the power of his love at work in our mind and heart, we could not choose but go.

It is never easy to go, for the world raises its voice in protest, the ties of flesh stretch out restraining hands, and the skeptic tongue lets fall its acid words of doubt and thinly veiled contempt. To the worldly-wise it seems a fool's errand. The abandoning of the certain and the seen, for the ethereal uncertainties of the unseen, for a kingdom which cannot be entered upon by flesh and blood or without struggle of mind and sacrifice of self, appear to the natural mind an unreasonable throwing away of all that is best in life. But the Christian traveler intent upon abandoning the present evil world, is encouraged in the experiences of those who have gone before.

Abraham, the father of all faithful pilgrims, left the known and familiar, content to journey he knew not where, led, supported, and blessed by the loving-kindness which drew him from pagan Ur to the promised land. Rebekah readily left home and kindred, drawn by love to a new land and a wonderful destiny. Meditating upon that journey of his great ancestress, the Psalmist saw a greater bride, setting out upon a longer, more hazardous journey and left his vision in words for our inspiration: "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him" (Ps. 45:10, 11).

Then there is Pilgrim Paul, counting his all an easy loss, that he might win Christ, his real treasure; counting the perils and pains of the way a light affliction, not worthy to be compared with the journey's end and the crown of life.

Yes, we are in good company. The Lord of pilgrims himself left the heavenly glory, was made flesh and for our sakes became poor, leaving us an example that we should follow in his steps.

The experienced pilgrim poet will say: "It is a pathway hard to choose, a struggle rough to share" but the undaunted cry out to us to "stretch every nerve and press with vigor on." They exhort us,

"Look not at the things beside thee;
Those behind thee have no worth:
Let the glorious hope before thee
Fill thy heart with rapturous mirth."

So the journey began without misgivings, without backward look, though not without sorrow. "When love meets truth and truth must ride above," the heart knows a widening gulf which may never be crossed again. It meets its first heroic test "when love can leave love though the heart may bleed." The gulf was crossed, however, at that Jordan of baptismal waters and separation from all the old ways. Feet were firmly set upon the narrow, holy ground that leads to heavenly life. Confidence lent vigor to the energetic striding, to the heart eager to be active, to be off, to mount the paths of grace and knowledge, but consternation put many a damper on the ardent traveler, expecting to see round every bend the golden land of promise. With what comical dismay we read on each signpost -- a little further on -- and viewed the next hill with a lesser sense of conquest, realizing by now that beyond that lay another and yet another beyond that, a sort of pilgrim's staircase about which the angels sometimes flitted, but more often the shadows of self-doubt and self-deception dimmed the day's march, or the mists of self-pity drenched enthusiasm to a spluttering spark,

"For where we look for crowns to fall
We find the tug's to come, that's all."

Looking back we can but smile over those absurdities, those fond, foolish hopes, that the kingdom of heaven lay around every corner, that with brash certitude we could, in a few swift mountings, stand boldly before its gates, take it by storm as it were, the privileged, knowledgeable, favored few, for whom all heaven waited before there could begin a work of blessing the multitudes of men upon this little planet Earth. Only as the road lengthened, as Time took its toll of hasty conclusions, did we look from many a vantage point and see as God sees. Time is no mean element. It took time to frame the world and it takes time to make a saint. God is in no hurry.

With patience and certainty the Lord of Eternity works out his sovereign will, taking hold of the human material, drawn into his hands, shaping and molding it to his own heart's desire, and the *clay* cannot say to the Potter, "Why makest me thus? If it does, it must be slapped into shape for its presumption. Only as it grows in grace does it cease to question, to lie still in trust as David learned to be "dumb with silence."

It is one of the great and hard lessons of the pilgrim way. The great forerunner had to learn obedience, quiescence, by the things he suffered. The servant being lower than the master learns the same lessons in the same way, shares the same school and the same inevitable suffering. "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth!" It is more than a wordless acceptance of reproach, more than a silent resignation to the shaping hand of God. It is love in unquestioning repose.

"A love that asks no answer, that can live,
Moved by one burning, deathless force -- to give!"

Meditating on that last rise before the heavenly portals, we see that this is the real meaning and purpose of life. We know that factions, parties, creeds, and dogmas fade away into nothingness before the one abiding, eternal grace. The steps by which we have risen, the road on which we have traveled, the books by which we have learned, even the very conflicts in which we have engaged in what we took to be truth and error, right and wrong, fall away like autumn leaves before the certainty that nothing but Godlike, benevolent love will gain admittance to the glorious courts of the Most High.

The pilgrim must stand alone at the last step, stripped of all earthly trappings, deprived of all human support, freed from all natural pretensions.

"Nothing in my hand I bring;
Simply to thy cross I cling."

If the earthen vessel has at last become the container of the spikenard, refined and scaled of all its dross and roughness into the lustrous beauty of the spirit, then the labor and the journey have not been in vain.

"Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." Jesus said nothing about formulas, or factions, about letters or works; his beatitudes are about love, purity, and beauty.

At journey's end there will be nothing left but that. The old faraway beginning will be lost to sight; the flower strewn pastures far behind. All the hazards and storms of the journey will be over. Only the quiet resting-places will remain in memory to refresh the last lap of the road. Even the very road itself, zigzagging up and around the Mount of God will be lost in the mist of the years that are gone. Now the eye must be constant to the peak, the step firmly forward. With staff in hand and robe tightly girdled, the wayfarer must go as Moses went to meet his God, to put himself finally and forever into his keeping.

When a craftsman finishes a work of worth and beauty he holds his treasure lovingly. He sees his design translated into reality. He gives that treasure and beauty as a legacy to the ages to come.

David saw his Lord leaving the ivory palaces, his garments fragrant with healing essences as he passed among men. The Revelator saw the bride of Christ, the new Jerusalem, descending from heaven adorned in all the glory and beauty of life-giving power. And a great voice proclaimed the event, as the time for the wiping away of all human miseries, the drying of tears, and the water of life flowing freely to every thirsty soul. It is the grand culmination of the pilgrim way, the event for which heaven and earth have waited long. The light afflictions of earth will not begin to compare with that ponderous weight of glory, allotted to those who hold on in faith through thick and thin, through rough weather and awesome solitudes, to the very throne of God.

There at last the load, the cross and the trophies will all be laid down, replaced by the crown of life and victory, to the accompaniment of the heavenly choirs chanting their glory songs to the Most High.

So at last the pilgrim arrives home:

"Lost in wonder, love and praise."

- *F. A. Shuttleworth, Scot.*

"The Kingdom of God Is Not in Word but in Power."

1 Corinthians 4:20.

IN OUR English language we use the word "power" with much latitude as meaning authority, intensity, effectiveness, persuasiveness, that which is established, potent, etc. The word in 1 Corinthians 4:20 is translated from the Greek *dunamis*, which includes all these, but also has the implication of the miraculous. (See *Strong*, No. 1411.)

THE SPIRITUAL PHASE OF THE KINGDOM

In these last days our thoughts of a kingdom have been more or less turned to the Millennial reign and restitution, but it was not in this respect that the Apostle referred to the fact that "the kingdom of God is not in word but in power." A kingdom has two phases: (1) the ruling power and authority, and (2) the territory and peoples governed by that authority. It is in the first of these divisions that we are interested; that which we denominate the "spiritual phase" of the Kingdom! that which was commended by Jesus when he said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." And to the seventy who returned elated that the demons were subject to them through his name, Jesus said, "Rejoice not, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:17-20). Although the power to cast out demons, and in any way nullify the works of Satan, is certainly desirable, it is to be our work in Christ's Millennial reign, when made joint-heirs with him, rather than now. Let us not lose sight of this. "The *present* mission of the Church is the perfecting of the saints for *the future* work of service

We seek to emphasize the fact of the separateness. of the Church -- those whom God recognizes as his. It is the truth set forth in Ephesians 2:15, where the Church is denominated "one new man," separate and distinct from either Jew or Gentile. Also in 1 Corinthians 10:32: "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God." What a tremendous thing it is that "even when we were dead in sins, God, who is rich in mercy, quickened us together with Christ, and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenlies" (Eph. 2:4, 5). Yes, even now "we are the sons of God"; for "as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (1 John 3:2; Rom. 8:14). We have been "delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son" (Col. 1:13). Note carefully, though, that it is not the mere historicity of Jesus' death and resurrection that produces this transition, but the bringing to bear upon the conscience the necessity of this (death and resurrection) in order to a right relationship with Deity; and during this Gospel dispensation it is the portion of those who will accept Jesus' crucified life as their sin-offering, and his resurrected life as empowering them to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4-11; 2 Cor. 5:17-21).

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST -- POWER

But although the Apostle states that the Kingdom of God is not in word but in power, yet the Kingdom does come to us by means of words, but they are words attended with power. One of the prominent examples of this is in the conversion of Cornelius: he was "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house; which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always"; yet, exemplary character that he was, he was told to send to Joppa for Simon Peter, "who shall tell thee *words*, whereby thou and thy house shall be saved" (Acts 10:1; 11:13, 14). And it was while Peter was yet speaking "words" that "the holy spirit fell on all them which heard the word" (Acts 10:44).

But someone may ask, What message is it that has such attending power? It is the plain, unvarnished preaching of a crucified and risen Jesus. It is the message that was told in fragmentary and incomplete form in ages preceding the advent of Jesus and preached as a great salvation since then, first by Jesus himself, then by those commissioned and empowered by him to do so. How nicely this is declared in Hebrews 1:1-3: "God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spake in times past unto our fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by a Son"; not *his* Son, as in the *Authorized Version* (nor is *it through* his Son), but *by a* Son; for although Jesus is God's Son, yet the point of contrast is greatly lost by such a reading. The emphasis is on the contrast between the fragmentary, and piecemeal, messages of the Prophets, who were but messengers delivering messages, the full import of which they did not know, and a Son who spoke not things he did not understand, but himself was the embodiment of the message which he brought -- who was the final, full revelation of the Father, God; "the brightness of *glory*, and the express image of his person." He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:7-9).

TRANSFORMED BY THE SPIRIT

This message of reconciliation so affects those who receive it as to make them "epistles of Christ, known and read of all men" (2 Cor. 3:1-3). The Gospel of Christ has a transforming power. This was that which delighted the Apostle Paul, and which he disclaimed as being anything of himself. "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit, for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor. 3:5, 6; 4:5).

A cursory reading of this passage (2 Cor. 3:1-4:6) may result in our missing the whole point; especially if we mind the chapter division after verse 18 of chapter 3. Generally we stop there instead of continuing on to the 6th verse of chapter 4, where the idea is reaching its immediate termination. Paraphrasing 2 Corinthians 4:6: "God, who in creation caused light to shine out of darkness, has caused light to shine into the once darkness of our being [heart, mind], to give the vision of the glory of God as it is displayed in Jesus Christ."

A SURPASSING GLORY

Briefly reviewing the passage: the Apostle, after disclaiming any sufficiency of his own, assures his readers that it is no mere moral code that he preached, for history had proved that the Law could never commend; it only condemned. "It was a ministry of death." The glory of the Law was in this, that it served to reflect beforehand the glory of the Gospel ministration in somewhat the same manner as the moon reflects the brightness derived from the sun. And that which is being wrought in the saints of this Age is so glorious that it will never be superseded by anything more glorious; for (paraphrasing) the ministration of the Law was indeed glorious; it so far exceeded the darkness of heathenism with its mystic religions and groping philosophies concerning God and morality that it was an attraction to those who were looking for definiteness in these things. This, the Apostle says, was typified in the shining of Moses' face on his coming down from the presence of God in the Mount. Yet glorious as this Law dispensation was, it has no glory at all in view of the fact that it is now superseded and outshined by a more glorious ministry. For the ministry of the spirit is changing those who were enemies of God into the very likeness of God (2 Cor. 3:18). And nothing more glorious will ever succeed this. This is the persuasion of the Apostle. The "hope" expressed is not the conviction of being administrators of a new covenant in the Millennium, when God will pour out his spirit on all flesh, for great as that dispensation will be (and the calling back and awakening of the dead, the restoring of the race will surely be glorious), it will be but a small thing in comparison to the spirit's power being exercised now, that

power which is fitting us for "an inheritance undefiled, incorruptible, and which fadeth not away." It is spoken of as "the *exceeding greatness* of his [God's] power" (Eph. 1:19).

SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE

Brothers and sisters in Christ, our calling is no mean thing! God has raised us from the dust, yes, even from the dunghill, to set us among princes and to make us inherit a throne of glory (1 Sam. 2:8). Too long and too much, in our midst, we speak of "restitution." Our witnessing has been to a coming Millennial reign. Sometimes, it seems that when one speaks of our being "seated with Christ in the heavenlies," and of our eternal redemption in Christ, it is to many a strange sound. "If we have been risen with Christ, let us seek those things which are above where Christ sits at the right hand of God. Let us set our affections on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:1, 2).

Consider the mighty work that God is accomplishing through the ministration of his Word and spirit; for "we ourselves were sometimes [in time past] foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the holy spirit, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:3-7).

Note well these several points: (a) "we ourselves" were in times past deadly sinful; (b) "not works of righteousness which we have done" -- not even our "accepting the Truth," should such acceptance make truth mere philosophy, reasoning; (c) according to his mercy; (d) washing of regeneration; (e) renewing of the holy spirit; (f) through Jesus Christ; (g) heirs of God.

A HEAVENLY FAMILY

Heirs of God! The whole groaning creation waits for their unveiling (Rom. 8:19, marginal reading). The purpose of God in furnishing the ministry of this Gospel Age is definitely declared by Paul in the Ephesian letter: "for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." As is shown in Ephesians 4:4, the "body" is one. We are members one of another. The edifying, building up, erecting the Body is the *main purpose* of this present Gospel dispensation. The perfecting, the maturing of an individual saint, though great in itself (Luke 15:7), is not the end; even though each individual saint is an integral part of the Body; the Body, the Temple of God, is the end! In Ephesians 4:13, the Apostle does not say, "till we come to the unity of belief," or "till we come to an agreement on interpretation," for faith is not a synonym for belief or interpretation; faith is a spiritual quality, and it is only in faith that we shall all come "unto the full stature of a new man in Christ."

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God"; "our citizenship is in heaven." Let us not be of those "having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof" (2 Tim. 3:5). "Let us hold fast the beginning of our confidence" (Heb. 3:14). Let us not be content with present attainments but reach forward to the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, "knowing that he which hath begun a good work in us," is both able and willing to finish it (Phil. 1:6; 2:13). God "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Eph. 3:20).

"The Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power" (1 Cor. 4:20).

- F. A. Essler

The Messiah of Jewish Hopes

"The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." - Psalm 110:1.

IN THIS verse, David, writing under the influence of God's holy spirit, reports a revelation of Jehovah's intention in regard to Messiah. In vision he, David, heard Jehovah addressing one, who though David's son, was yet his superior. David heard Jehovah say to this great One: "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

Let us now examine the Scriptures in proof that this understanding is correct.

That the Psalm was written by David is a fact accepted by most scholars of repute. To begin with, it bears a superscription which reads: "A Psalm of David"; thus, on its very surface, it claims to have been written by him. Moreover, in the New Testament our Lord Jesus himself evidences his belief that David wrote it (Matt. 22:43; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42). Not only so, but Jesus declares also that when David wrote this Psalm he was "in spirit," that is to say, he was aided and guided by, or under the influence or control of, the holy spirit of God. Accepting this New Testament confirmation of the fact that David was the author of our Psalm, it follows that the expression, "my Lord," means David's Lord; that is to say, David's Master, his Superior, his "Adon."

However, the first occurrence of the word Lord refers not to David's Adon, but to Jehovah. This is signified by the fact that here the word "Lord" appears, in most Bibles, in small capital letters. The meaning may be seen more clearly by reference to the *Revised Version*, which reads:

"Jehovah saith unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

Just now we referred to Matthew 22:43. Let us read that verse, together with the four verses which form its context, and note the additional light they throw on this inspired statement of the Psalmist. Commencing with Matthew 22:41 and reading from the Revised Version:

"Now while the Pharisees were gathering together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, What think ye of the Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in the spirit call him Lord, saying,

"The Lord saith unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I put thine enemies underneath thy feet?

"If David calleth him Lord, how is he his son?"

Considering these verses carefully we note first, that in asking the Pharisees, "What think ye of the Christ?" our Lord was not asking them what they thought about himself. True, he was the Christ, but he was not, in this question, insisting on that title. Rather, he is drawing them out. It is as though he had asked: "What have your studies of the Old Testament led you to understand is to be true of the great Messiah, when he comes? Whose son, whose descendant is he to be?" There was, of course, only one reply for them to make: "The son of David." This was common knowledge. The Scriptures had established this fact beyond question. (See, for example, 2 Sam. 7:8-17; Ps. 89:3, 4; Ps. 132:11; Amos 9:11). Not only the Pharisees, but the masses of the people,

too, were well aware that Messiah was to be of David's line. (See Matt. 1:1; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30, 31; 21:9, 15; Luke 1:32).

Yes, all were agreed that according to the predictions of the Prophets, the Messiah was to be a son of David, and the heir of his throne. But now, having by this preliminary query prepared the way for his main question, our Lord puts it to them: "How then doth David in spirit call him Lord?" "How do you explain this remarkable language which David employs here, in Psalm 110, verse 1? What is the reason that justified -- nay, what is the reason that, under the influence of the holy spirit, impelled - David to call him Lord?"

It is easy for *us*, with the New Testament in our hands, to answer our Lord's question. David's son was David's Lord, in the prophetic vision unfolded to David which he records in this Psalm, because, at the time that vision would meet its fulfillment, this great son of his would have become his Lord. Following his birth as a babe, he would have pursued the path marked out for him by the Father to, and beyond, Calvary. Highly exalted as a reward for his faithfulness, he would now become the Everlasting Father of the human race. As such he would be David's Father -- David's Life-giver. (See Isa. 9:6; Rev. 22:16). By this question, then, our Lord intimates to the Pharisees that, understanding merely that Messiah was to be a son of David, and failing to understand this verse, which declared that Messiah was also to be David's Lord, they had but a poor, outside, view of the real nature, character, and work of the long-promised Messiah. It was not a mere monarch, somewhat like David, that was needed. It was one who was fit to be David's monarch, and the monarch of all monarchs, one who would have power with God, and whose throne might be established in the hearts of men.

This Psalm is quoted not only by our Lord in Matthew, Mark, and Luke's accounts, but also elsewhere in the New Testament. The first verse is quoted by Peter in his great sermon on the Day of Pentecost, a sermon which carried conviction to the minds of three thousand hearers (Acts 2:34, 35, 41).

In 1 Corinthians 15:25 we are told that Christ "must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet" -- language which is quite evidently borrowed from David.

Again, in the first chapter of Hebrews, verse 13 (Heb. 1:13), the inspired writer, in showing the supreme excellence of the Christian dispensation over the past, and the vast superiority of Christ over all the angelic order of beings, exclaims triumphantly in concluding his argument: "But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool," as God did say to Jesus the Messiah, as you will find recorded in the 110th Psalm of David. This is the culminating point of the writer's argument, and its force rests upon the universal acknowledgement of his hearers that this Psalm referred to the Messiah, and that there was only one being in all the universe so high, so exalted, so powerful, to whom its language could be applicable, and that that being was David's Son and David's Lord.

Nor are we left in doubt as to the occasion in the experience of our Lord when this prophetic utterance of David would meet fulfillment. Would it be when Jehovah brought him into existence as the mighty Logos? Did Jehovah *then* say to him: "Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool"? Was it when his life was transferred to earth as a babe at Bethlehem? Was it when he consecrated himself at Jordan? No! it was on none of these occasions. It was when, following his death and resurrection he ascended to heaven. Have we a Scripture to prove this? Yes, indeed. Hear the writer to the Hebrews, in Heb. 10:12-13:

"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool."

And again, in Ephesians 1:19-22, where the Apostle speaks of the mighty power of God:

"Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand . . . and put all things under his feet."

Peter, too, takes up a similar strain, when in 1 Peter 3:22, he speaks of the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

"Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him."

Concerning the Messiah of Jewish hopes we have found in the foregoing discussion at least two things taught in the Scriptures, and condensed in Psalm 110:1:

(1) He must be a descendant of David.

(2) He must also be David's superior.

Paul was a man highly educated in the Old Testament Scriptures. Note the following from his pen, which testify that Jesus possessed these two qualifications

"Remember [Timothy] that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my Gospel." (2 Tim. 2:8).

Yes -- whatever else Timothy forgot, he must remember this, and maintain it in his teaching.

Again, in Romans 1:3, 4, in what has been called the "Gospel according to Paul," he writes of that Gospel:

"Concerning his son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."

Just a word in closing: Jehovah is heard, by David, addressing Messiah: "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." How shall we understand these words?

According to an able commentator (Perowne) this expression "denotes that the person thus honored occupied the second place in the Kingdom, taking rank immediately after the King, and also sharing as viceroy in the government."

If such be the meaning, if the solemn address, "Sit thou at my right hand," is equivalent to saying, "Be thou associated with me in my kingly dignity, in my power and universal dominion," then the best comment on the passage is to be found in Daniel 7:13, 14, where one like the Son of Man comes with the clouds of heaven and is brought unto the Ancient of Days, and there is given him a kingdom and glory and a dominion, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. The two passages, the one from the Psalms and the other from Daniel, are in fact combined by our Lord himself, when, standing before the High Priest, he says: "Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matt. 26:63, 64; Mark 14:61, 62).

- P. L. Read

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