

THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

VOL. LIX March / April, 1976 No. 2

Things Coming to Pass

"For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." "And none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." "When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand." - Luke 21:35; Daniel 12:10; Luke 21:31.

FROM time to time, under this article heading, we have considered some aspect of current world events in its relation to that most important of all events, the establishment of God's Kingdom. The Biblical evidences for its proximity have been examined from many viewpoints, but there is still another "sign," and one often overlooked, which we now desire to consider, and that is the "sign" of *unawareness*. To emphasize this we have grouped the Scripture texts above, which, while removed from their context, are nevertheless in complete harmony in testifying to a paradox of paradoxes. For the world's ignorance of the "day of their visitation" is paradoxical, inasmuch as "these things are not being done in a corner." How is it possible for men witnessing the significant events of history's greatest crisis to be so astonishingly unaware of their true implication -- that the Kingdom of God is near, "even at the doors" (Matt. 24:33)? Have not millions of Bibles circulated the earth, witnessing clearly and explicitly to the signs of the times? What is the cause of the mental blindness which has come upon the present generation -- a blindness unperceived in the face of intellectual attainments that are the marvel of our day?

"DARKNESS COVERS THE EARTH: GROSS DARKNESS THE PEOPLE"

It is becoming evident to thinking men that the roots of the present world distress have their beginnings in deeper soil than is generally recognized. We are witnessing the breakdown of a civilization based on a materialistic liberalism that had its inception in the dissolution of the medieval culture of the feudal civilization which ushered in two great movements, the Renaissance and the Reformation. Both these movements, allied in some respects, and diametrically opposed in others, contributed jointly to the freedom and individualism of modern civilization. Both represented great advances; the one in social, political, and economic reforms which culminated eventually in the industrial revolution of the past century, and the other in a freedom from the fetters of religious authority and the corruptions of religious superstition. Both

begat great hopes and promises. Both brought great confidence that the "emancipated" mind would disclose the secrets of nature; penetrate into all the ultimate mysteries of life; exploit the buried treasures of the natural world and make them available for man; explore the complexities of human society and eliminate the social maladjustments that ignorance had perpetuated, and finally free man himself of the sorrows and pains, the frustrations and lusts by which he made himself and his fellows miserable. And in a measure this has come to pass.

But unfortunately in the process of realizing these great dreams, political and economic action was thoroughly secularized and authentic Christian social ideals were neglected. Human dignity, human personality, and human solidarity were forgotten. With the vast material progress there have arisen new problems, and the fabulous productivity of the modern machine has created crises rather than security and abundance. The dreams of economic harmony and of individual happiness have been cruelly disappointed. Far from attaining individual liberty, the "right" of democratic man, today in large sections of the world man has sunk to the position of a creature of the State, that new juggernaut. Humanity finds itself in the midst of an unparalleled worldwide conflict between opposing forces. The injustice, the unhappiness, the brutality so rife, oppress and darken men's minds and they see no way out. In Matthew Arnold's words:

"The world which seems
To lie before us, like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here, as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night."

Poor groaning creation! How accurately did our Master predict the mental state of men of our day. "Upon the earth distress of nations in *perplexity* at the roar of the sea and rolling waves, men ready to die through fear and expectation of what is coming on the habitable earth." - Luke 21:26, *Darby*.

Just what has caused society to move toward catastrophe rather than triumph? Why have not the enormous achievements of man during the past century resulted in a stable and beneficent order for his welfare? Why the present disillusionment and shattering of hopes?

"Individual profit, which in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries provided the motive force for the economic system, has failed us, and we have not yet discovered any moral substitute for it other than war. Nothing but war seems sufficiently worthwhile. The economic crisis is in essence a moral crisis. It cannot be explained-and much less solved in constitutional or even in economic terms. The fundamental issue is moral."

Thus wrote Professor Carr, in "Conditions of Peace." And here we have a partial answer to our question. Who cannot recognize a great decadence in moral and ethical values throughout the earth? What has become of the absolute distinction between right and wrong, good and evil, of the sanctity of agreements, of the sacredness of one's word? What promise can be trusted, what firm agreement can ever be made again, in a world where millions have been educated to believe that if it seems in their interest to violate it, no pact or pledge, however solemnly drawn up, need be regarded by "realistic" minds, or "cold statesmanship," as more than a "scrap of paper"? And what of the imperatives of conscience, that God within the breast? "Conscience," said Hitler, "is a Jewish invention."

**"CURSED BE THE MAN ...
WHOSE HEART DEPARTETH FROM THE LORD."**

Alas, in his emphasis on material prosperity, man has gradually lost those fundamental values which make for morality and true freedom, and which constitute the individual superior to his own creations. This central value of Christianity, the value of the individual, has been corrupted in modern political thought to demand a subordination of the individual to the State (or indeed to any organization or society of which he is a member), the implications of which tragic fallacy are but now being realized by thinking men. Thoreau uttered a profound truth when he said: There will never be a really free and enlightened State until the State comes to recognize the individual as a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority are derived." This has well been called the lost key to the whole problem of modern government. We are all witnesses to the enslavement of hundreds of millions under human tyranny. Never in history has the individual counted for so little, and never has human life been so cheap. To comprehend the sum total of human suffering leaves the mind numb with horror. Thank God for the assurance that under the beneficent rule of Christ's Kingdom man shall regain his original state, a creature in the likeness of his God. For God shall

"Give back the upward looking and the light,
Rebuild in it the music and the dream;
Make right the immemorial in families,
Perfidious wrong, immedicable woes."

Thus speaks the Lord:

"Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. *I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.*" - Isaiah 13:13, 11, 12.

What has happened to the world's spiritual guides? Are there not thousands of church edifices, with tens of thousands dedicated to preaching Him whom these buildings monumentalize? Are there not countless multitudes of church adherents and millions upon millions of Bibles? What is lacking?

Hear the words of Jawaharlal Nehru: "The old days were days of faith, blind unquestioning faith. The wonderful temples and mosques and cathedrals of past centuries could never have been built but for the overpowering faith of the architects and builders and people generally. The very stones that they reverently put one on top of the other, or carved into beautiful designs, tell us of this faith. The old temple spire, the mosque with its slender minarets, the Gothic cathedral -- all of them pointing upward with an amazing intensity of devotion, as if offering a prayer in stone or marble to the sky above -- thrill us even now, though we may be lacking in that faith of old of which they are the embodiments. But the days of that faith are gone, and gone with them is that magic touch in stone. Thousands of temples and mosques and cathedrals continue to be built, but they lack the spirit that made them live during the middle ages. There is little difference between them and the commercial offices which are so representative of our age. Our age is a different one; it is an age of disillusion, of doubt and uncertainty and questioning. We can no longer accept many of the ancient beliefs and customs; we have no more faith in them, in Asia, or in Europe, or

in America. So we search for new ways, new aspects of the truth more in harmony with our environment. And we question each other and debate and quarrel and evolve any number of 'isms' and philosophies. As in the days of Socrates, we live in an age of questioning, but that questioning is not confined to a city like Athens; it is worldwide."

In this candid statement we have the full explanation for the present unawareness of the implication of world events. The world has lost its sense of spiritual values -- has lost its faith in revealed religion. A spirit of irreligiousness has spread abroad. Men have become "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." We live in a generation which can refer contemptuously to the Bible as a "collection of Hebrew myths," and stigmatize religion as an "opiate for the inferior minded" -- a time when a prominent man of letters can write a friend that "Rabelais was nearer God than was Christ," and a famous writer can say that no man who regards Christ as an ideal is worth working with. This is the day of the cynic; of the pseudointellectual, of the spirit of shallow cynicism and of mockery which has destroyed in large measure the old simplicity and integrity based upon the great Christian principles of the Word of God. Yes, a generation which questions the existence of its God. One is reminded of Milton's lines so applicable to our day:

"Truth shall retire
Bestuck with slanderous darts, and works of Faith
Rarely be found. So shall the World go on,
To good malignant, to bad men benign,
Under her own weight groaning, till the day
Appear of respiration to the just
And vengeance to the wicked."

Yes, the world has reached a condition of disbelief that augurs ill for the immediate future, and though we still hear of "Christian principles," it is too often in circumstances which, as ex-President Hoover had said, make the very phrase sound like a "Gargantuan joke."

"A FAMINE ... NOT FOR BREAD, BUT FOR THE WORD OF THE LORD."

Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr has well written:

"Some of the most stubborn and sentimental illusions about the possibilities of a simple and easy peace between the competing elements in human society have been fostered by modern churches. In America they contributed more possibly than any other influence to political and moral illusions, for they aggravated false estimates of man and history by compounding them with classical and pious conceptions. The errors and illusions of our culture, which have made an estimate of the crisis of our civilization difficult if not impossible, are, almost without exception, various versions of a single error. *They are all expressions of too great an optimism about the goodness of human nature*; they all therefore underestimate the difficulties of relating life to life, will to will, interest to interest, in a harmonious social life. They regard the achievement of justice and social peace in human society as a comparatively easy task. It is, as a matter of fact, a very difficult task, which can be accomplished with tolerable success only if its difficulties are fully recognized."

This fact concerning the weakness of human nature is a fundamental teaching of the Bible, and is the basis for the Divine Plan of regeneration through the Kingdom of Christ. Other salvation there is none. The hope for man resides in the promised Millennial reign upon earth, "times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the

world began" (Acts 3:21). This is the message of God to all men. Why is it not proclaimed from every pulpit?

The answer to this question goes back to two great scientific theories. The first was the theory of Copernicus which destroyed the old comfortable assumption that the earth was the center of things, and dwarfed man by the mere size of the material universe. The other was the Darwinian theory, which subjected man's inner world to an even more disintegrating scrutiny, and filled mankind with doubts as to the values of human personality and the nature of its origin. The advancing flow of scientific thought, true or otherwise, plus the wave of Higher Criticism which originated in Germany and flowed out to all the ecclesiastical schools, resulted in the gradual breakdown of faith in the Scriptures as the inspired Word of God. The great foundation truths were slowly obscured, with the tragic result that people are now blind to the Bible's message revealing the stupendous significance of present momentous events. It is rare indeed today to find in some one a living faith in the Bible as God's revealed Word. True, there is still some regard for the moral precepts of the Scriptures, but the vital substance has been lost. Men do not seek from the Bible the answers to their questions. Men do not bring God into their counsels. And so, as of old, to our day the Word of the Lord speaks:

"Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." - Isaiah 29:13, 14.

The Church Nominal gropes blindly on, all unwitting that the hopes of Christians are soon to materialize. Though professing faith in the First Advent of Christ, the evidences for his Second Advent are disallowed, though there are ten times as many scriptures for the latter as there were for the former. The glorious words of the 96th, 97th, 98th and 99th Psalms evoke no responsive chords. There now stands One at the door and they know it not. Christ's own judgment is recorded in Revelation 3:15, 16: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." The Church Nominal now brings forth no message for the times from the Lord. The voice of the Bridegroom and Bride is heard no more in her. There remains but blindness and barrenness. "Her prophets also find no vision from the Lord." "Where there is no vision, the people perish." - Lam. 2:9; Prov. 29:18.

Yes, "as a snare" are these things coming on all mankind. Only the "wise understand" and rejoice in the evidence of the proximity of God's glorious Kingdom. The world, unheeding the sure Word of Prophecy, will continue on into ever-increasing darkness until that glad day soon when upon the wreck of man's institutions, the human race, illuminated by the spirit of God, shall rebuild an earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

"And while the earth with strife is riven,
And envious factions Truth do hide,
Lo! He, the Lord of earth and heaven,
Stands at the door and claims his Bride.
"He's come! Let all the earth adore him;
The path his human nature trod
Spreads to a royal realm before him,
The Life of Life, the Word of God!"

- W. J. Siekman

"The Cup Which My Father Hath Given Me"

"The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" - John 18:11.

AS THE disciples were leaving Gethsemane with Jesus, Simon Peter possessing a sword, drew it, and struck the High Priest's servant, Malchus, cutting off his right ear. Whereupon, Jesus said, "Put up thy word into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" thus indicating that the cup was an experience he as called upon to encounter. The cup, then, to which he referred was figurative. Quite a few Scriptures use it in this way; and to drink of this cup, signifies acceptance of, and willingness to endure certain experiences as Christians.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CUP

It is figuratively applied to nations and to the wicked. (Psa. 75:8.) "In the hand of the Lord there is a cup, . . . the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out and drink them." (Psalm 116:13.) Speaking prophetically of the Lord, the Psalmist said, "I will take the cup of salvation [redemption], I will offer the sacrifice of praise. (Matt. 20:22.) Jesus asks the sons of Zebedee, "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?" They reply, "We are able." Jesus says, "Ye shall indeed drink of my cup," that is, they should taste of inward affliction and desertions, and have their share of outward afflictions. During the Passover Supper, Jesus said: The cup is the New Covenant in my blood. At Christmastide we commemorate the Lord's birth. So also, in this pre-Memorial season, it is fitting for us to consider, to meditate to upon, those experiences Jesus encountered which constituted the cup he was invited to drink, culminating in his death on the cross. It is significant that the shadow of the cross had fallen upon Jesus as he sat with his little company around the table in the upper room.

As we read the account of some of those events leading up to this time, we can discern something of what Jesus endured. For instance, he had "stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem," and his brethren suggested that he go up openly and with them. His reply was "My time is not yet come. Your time is always ready." Then the public excitement of his entry, riding upon an ass, and the multitudes shouting Hosanna. Later the denial by Peter. The washing of the disciples' feet as a lesson for them and for *us*. His concern to clarify as much as possible that which he must suffer, and to prepare his disciples for the worst. One cannot help feeling something of the anguish of soul he bore, and sharing with him in that exceeding sorrow he expressed. - Matt. 26:38.

It was as he sat in the upper room with his disciples, that he symbolically gathered up the meaning of what he had been and would be doing for them, as taking a cup, he thanked God for it, and gave it to them. The wine thus representing or symbolizing what he was giving to them: participation in his experiences-his cup. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? - 1 Cor. 10:16.

LIFE OF THE VINE IN THE CUP

Now let us for a moment turn our thoughts to the vine. Into that cup which Jesus held in his hand had gone all the experiences of the vine in the past. We could say the soul or life of the vine was there in the cup, that is, the kind of soil upon which it grew, the prunings and the storms that beat over it, the sunshine, the rain, the crushing of the grapes in the winepress. All these had gone to make up the quality of the wine Jesus was giving to his disciples. Change that past, and you change the quality of wine. Everything of the past in the growth and development of the vine had gone into the cup.

Jesus was putting to their lips an invisible cup of which this material cup was a symbol into which the experiences of the whole of his past life were gathered. All Jesus had said and suffered and prayed and done and was, went into the chalice which he was putting to their lips. They drank of his life, they accepted the invitation to follow him, they identified themselves with him in its acceptance. How impressive must have been the words of Jesus shortly after, when they were walking together through the vine fields to Gethsemane

"I am the true vine, my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth *not* fruit, he taketh away: and every branch that *beareth* fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit. " - John 15:1, 2, 4, 5, 8.

ALL LIFE'S EXPERIENCES IN THE CUP

Now let us try to trace the experiences of Jesus that made up his cup. In those silent years at Nazareth, when Jesus, as a lad, lived in obscurity, working perhaps at a carpenter's bench, his hands rough with toil, dealing with the commonplace, maybe with the hardship of poverty, with the dull and narrow life of a country village, and with the responsibility of helping to support a family, after the father had died, with the vision all the time in his heart unuttered, he conquered the commonplace. So all these things, both the battle and the victory go into the cup.

When many of us, perhaps most of us, have to live out our lives in that same dull obscurity, battling with the business of making a living, toiling in mine or factory, field or office, dealing with the sordid and the scarring, while all the time there is a vision of something better and nobler held in the heart unexpressed, Jesus has put the chalice to our lips and we drink of his victory over the commonplace and pass along, realizing that this is only the beginning of our all upon the altar with him.

Jesus went straight to the synoguge at laid aside the carpenter's tools, and went out to proclaim his message, and to enter more deeply into the soul of the people. "Then cometh Jesus," we read, "from Galilee to Jordan unto John. " (Matt. 3:13.) He had been baptized into the world's toil. (Heb. 4:15.) Now he would be baptized into the world's sin. - Isa. 53:4, 5, 6.

Jesus went straight to the synagogue at Nazareth and announced his program. (Luke 4:16-21.) This is the Son of Man speaking. This announcement of his program brought surprise and delighted wonder from his townsmen until he went on and told them how wide his message was. It was as wide as the human race. God cares as much for the Gentile as for the Jew. (Luke 4:26, 27.) There were many lepers and widows in Israel, but the Prophets were sent outside Israel to Gentiles. When they heard this, matters changed. People are willing to listen to any amount of truth provided it does not cut across their class or race prejudices. They had no room for this young dreamer. They arose in anger and led him to the brow of the hill to cast him headlong, but he passing through the midst of them went his way. - Luke 4:29, 30.

All this also went into the cup, and when we too are called and commissioned, and the cold prejudices close in and try to quench our spirit, let us, brethren, drink of his calm and his courage, and pass through the midst of them to go our way to fulfill the heavenly vision at any cost. Let us, like the Apostle Paul, press toward the mark. - Phil. 3:14.

Then Jesus became immensely popular. The multitudes hung upon his words that fell like dew upon their thirsty souls. The healed went everywhere telling of the compassionate Prophet. The people found in him a new authority, the authority of reality, and when they found him breaking bread to the multitudes in the wilderness, they came and tried to make him a king by force. (John 6:15.) Jesus perceiving that they meant to make him a king, withdrew "alone" to the hills. He would hold to the high purpose of the Father's will for him, even though it meant crucifixion.

Think of Jesus on another occasion, when beholding the city before him, he paused on the side of the Mount of Olives and wept over the city. (Luke 19:41.) And then all the courage of that hour, when he bade them "take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise," and drove them forth. (John 2:16.) And then after the cleansing had taken place and the storm subsided, he was found seated in the Temple teaching and healing the blind and the lame and welcoming the children that came to him there. (Matt. 19:14.) All this went into the cup.

There have been those who have strongly objected to these storm sides of Jesus' nature, the woes pronounced upon the Pharisees, the doom announced to fall upon the city, the cleansing of the temple. It does not fit in with spiritual calm and poise, the marks of a perfect man. But no one can question that what he said about the Pharisees was true to fact. Consider the alternative: Suppose Jesus had passed by the blindness and ignorance without reproof and cleansing-cleansing-storms. Spiritual indignation for wrong is sometimes necessary to cleanse physical and spiritual atmospheres. But we, brethren, must see to it that it is done in meekness. The force Jesus used to cleanse the Temple was not physical force, but the force of authoritative personality-"My Father's." "Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise. " We see the same quality of mind in the Apostle Paul in his epistles. Paul found it necessary to reprove the Corinthians. He was astonished that the Church at Galatia had so soon fallen from faith; and he denounced strongly the Cretians. (Titus 1:12.) Yes, the true Christian needs the stout heart and gentility. We too may yet be called upon to strongly reprove evil and misrepresentation of God and of Christ. Let us drink of these qualities and be strong in the Lord. We need to be bold as a lion, meek as a lamb.

MAJESTY OF SOUL LINKED WITH LOWLY SERVICE

As Jesus sat with his disciples in the upper room, knowing the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came from God and was returning to God, riseth from supper, laid aside his outer garment, took a towel, girded himself and began to wash the disciples' feet. (John 13:4-15.) He was so conscious of greatness that he dared to be humble. Into this cup had gone not only majesty of soul, but it was linked with lowly service, and, dear brethren we who share the dignity and honor of sonship with him, have need to earn that kingliness really is the power to bend and serve. (1 John 3: 6.) Humble yourselves in the sight of God, and he will lift you up. (James 4:10.) It is in the cup.

Then came the hour of Gethsemane. All the pain and agony and the spiritual loneliness of that hour go into the cup. Was he afraid to die"? Hardly, for he came to die, to lay down his life for you and me. He came to save men from sin. On the next day he would arouse men to greater sin, for they would put him to death. The Redeemer, by his determination to go on, seemed to be loosing in men their worst. A little later he asked that if it be possible this cup might pass, nevertheless, *not my will but thine*. But there is no other way. This is the cup poured. The tragedy and the triumph is not in the agony, but in the result. Calm and collected, Jesus said (Matt. 26:46) -- "Arise, let us be going [to meet tomorrow and its Calvary]; behold, he is at hand that betrayeth me." It all went into the cup. Those of us who drink of that chalice into which the richness of that

hour had gone, we too can say, Arise my soul, let us be going to meet our cross, and having drunk, we meet it with calm and rest of faith, with confidence in our heavenly Father's grace.

Then they came to take him. Peter, the aroused disciple, rushes forth, and with his sword strikes off the ear of the servant of the High Priest. Jesus rebukes him saying, put up thy sword, and reaching forth his hand, touches the ear of Malchus, and says, "No more of that! and cured him." (Luke 22:51, *Moffatt.*) That beautiful act of healing an enemy who had come to put him to death goes into the cup. "Bless them that curse you, do good to those that hate you," said Jesus. (Matt. 5:44.) And then when his hands were no longer free to heal, for they were nailed to the cross, he would still say, "Father, forgive them, them, they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:24, *Moffatt.*) When we are tempted to be resentful towards spite and hate, and we drink of his triumph, the triumph of persisting love that would allow nothing to turn us aside, or quench our spirit of mercy, we shall be able like Jesus to say, "Father, forgive," and like Stephen, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

There stood Jesus before Pilate, arrayed in mock royalty. The Romans had heard that he was king of the Jews. Always contemptuous of the Jews, the soldiers felt this was a supreme opportunity to show their contempt for the race, so they plaited a crown of thorns and put it on his brow, thrust a stick into his hand as a sceptre, put a purple robe around him, and said, "Hail King of the Jews." They spat in his face. They had often wanted to do that to the Jews, and now they would do it to their king. The racial contempt directed towards them fell on Jesus, and he bore it on behalf of the men who were crying for his blood. All of that went into the cup.

There he stood before Pilate accused of many things. He heard his words twisted and tortured to other meanings. He said, "I will destroy this Temple that is made with hands and in three days I will build another made without hands." He was being crucified on misquotation, and he was not anxious to explain. He let it go. He could wait. He knew that every lie would break itself on the truth of things, and he answered not a word. The Governor marveled. Here was greatness that could wait for final verdict. All this also went into the cup, and those of us who have witnessed our work misquoted, our best actions misunderstood, our best motives misinterpreted, and have suffered, if we drink of this cup into which patient triumph has gone, and share with Jesus this poise of heart and resignation to our Father's will, we shall say, Am I not to drink of the cup my Father has handed me?

Now lies and hate have prevailed. He is nailed to a tree, his good name taken away. He is a malefactor. His disciples have fled. He is alone in his agony, beaten back into the dark until it seems that God too has gone, for from his lips comes the cry, "My God, My God, Why hast thou forsaken me?" Everything has gone. But not quite-two words remain. "My God." They could not snatch these from his lips and heart. In quiet confidence at the last, he says,

"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Nothing more bitter can go into the cup. Forsaken by God and man! The cup has everything in it, and when we have these moments of forsakenness, when it seems that everything has gone, we can drink of the chalice and find that nothing is gone while one thing remains-"My God." With that fact within our hearts, we can go back to everything, anything, recalling in our minds and hearts, "Though he were a son, yet learned [acquired] he obedience by the things which he suffered." - Heb. 5:8.

Now, Jesus having tasted death for every man, a tomb holds him, but not for long. The most glorious fact of human history was yet to go into the cup. Out of the tomb he arose, laid aside his grave clothes and came forth triumphant and resplendent. He is risen! If into that cup has gone everything that life can possibly meet-its commonplaces, its toils, its obscurity, its temptations, its

blind prejudices, its lonely determination, its bid for compromise, its Gethsemanes, its hours before unjust judgment seats, its mockeries and racial wrongs, its cross and its forsakenness, its death -- nevertheless, there has also gone into its most complete triumph that can possibly come, the glorious truth --

HE AROSE!

Nothing now matters, if God's last word is resurrection. Let life do its worst or best. This saving fact will be at the end for each one sharing with Jesus in this cup. The life of Jesus, and especially his cross, raises every question about life that can be raised, and raises them in the acutest form. The word "Why?" upon the lips of Jesus as he hangs upon the cross, epitomizes all the questions that ever tremble upon the lips of perplexed humanity. The Resurrection answers them all. God's last word is Resurrection, and it is in the cup. And when he had taken the cup, he *thanked* God for it. He took it all as from the Father's hand, *thanked* him for it, and lo, everything was transformed. All of us have to bear our cross. Let us do so thankfully, for only those who have learned triumphantly to *thank God* for it *all*, can turn life from a suffering one into a sacrament.

- *George A. Ford*, Eng.

The Light of the World

SINCE the Apostles "fell asleep" a number of Christian scholars, particularly those living during the 18th and 19th centuries, testified to their belief in a hope which extended beyond the grave --that probation for eternal life does not end for all mankind when this present earthly life ends. While such scholars, in other respects, were not fully aware of the truths in the Divine Plan which have been unfolded in the clearer light of our day they, nevertheless, did see and preached this hope.

Albert O. Hudson, editor of the Bible Study Monthly, well and favorably known to our readers, addresses himself to this subject in his new book *Future Probation in Christian Belief*. With his permission, we present below the second of a series of seven articles excerpted from that book.

- Editorial Committee

Belief in Jesus is necessary to eternal life. This is insisted upon by the New Testament and has been the conviction of the Church through the centuries. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" is a phrase that was coined within a few weeks of the death of Christ and it is still declared at street corners by open-air evangelists and in many a tract and book designed to catch the attention and interest of the unconverted. A few generations ago Salvation Army lasses used to lead the "drunks" out of the beerhouses into the local Citadel and to the penitent form and if these in their semi-maudlin state expressed belief in Jesus a shout of Hallelujahs went up; the man was "saved." In present days, attendants at revivalist rallies will answer the appeal to "come forward" and, perhaps somewhat more clearheadedly and intelligently, declare their conversion, and again the Lord is praised aloud for brands snatched from the burning and the counsellors get busy to establish the newfound faith of the converts. But always the emphasis is upon the impossibility of salvation without this definite profession of faith.

In modern times this attitude is being questioned, not only by "modernists" who claim, with truth, that "there is good in all religions," but also by some thinking Christians who realize that there have been, and are, some exceedingly good men who nevertheless are not Christians. One might cite the case of the Mahatma Gandhi, who, had he professed the Christian faith, would undoubtedly have been considered a saint. A character manifestly fit for Heaven, yet living and dying in the Hindu faith, is he to be denied entry on that account? It would be easy to quote similar examples and almost everybody could find such among their personal acquaintances in daily life.

Nevertheless the New Testament is adamant. There is a future, never-ending life but no one will attain it without deliberate and intelligent avowal of faith in, and acceptance of, and the linking of life with, the Lord Jesus Christ. "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved," insisted Peter in Acts. 4:12. "**Believe** in the name of Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," said Paul to the Philippian jailer (Acts 16:34). "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart ... thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10:9). There is no escape from this basic principle, so clearly enunciated so many times in Scripture; there is no possibility of eternal life for any man, however moral, noble and good, unless and until he has consciously and intelligently accepted Christ and begun to conform his life and his being to the will and purpose of God. It is not that God has established an arbitrary dictum which he will modify or dispense with in individual cases when he sees fit; this demand is fundamental to the nature of Divine creation and things cannot be otherwise than they are.

There is a reason for this. We do not understand all the secrets of life and Nature, although researchers have made a lot of progress in recent years, but we do know that God is the source and sustainer of all life and the origin of all power -- energy. Without access to that power and life man would cease to be. "If he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath, all flesh shall perish together and man shall turn again unto dust," said Elihu the philosopher (Job 34:14, 15). We do not understand in anything like fullness the relationship and unity which exist between the Father and the Son, but we do know that the Son is the manifestation of the Father to man and the channel through which life comes to man. Hence the insistence of Scripture in so many places; "My sheep hear my voice ... and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish" (John 10:27, 28). "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). "In him was life, and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4). Now what the Scriptures call eternal life has a quality which does not exist in the measure of animal, physical life which we possess at present. *This* is a life which must inevitably be terminated by death; *that is* a life which is infinitely continuous, never ending. *This* life is one which, resulting from the original implanting of life in our first parents at the beginning, has been cut off from its sustaining source in God by sin, and is thereby defective and cannot endure. *That is* life continuing in full union with God through Christ, and being thus continuously derived from the immortal source of life will never end. But an essential factor in this union with the source of life is belief in, and acceptance of, and union with, the channel through which it comes and that is why the New Testament writers were so adamant that conscious and deliberate acceptance of Christ as Lord and acknowledgment of belief in him as Saviour and medium of union with God is essential to salvation.

This is what is meant by being "born again," to use a very familiar expression, although a more accurate rendering of the Greek is "begotten again." The next step after conversion and acceptance of Christ as Lord is the unreserved and unconditional dedication of life, abilities and possessions to him for his service, and the conscious and deliberate resolve to live for him and in union with him for the remainder of life and for all time. The Apostle Paul says that one who has reached this point has become a "new creation," that old things have passed away and all things have become new (2 Cor. 5:17). This is the point at which the inner being is quickened by the power of the holy spirit in the beginning of a new and eternal life which comes to the believer through Christ; this is the baptism of the holy spirit. "God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:11). And this means something much more than mere mental belief in the reality and the saving power of Christ or an outward verbal profession of faith in him; it means a vital linking of life with Christ and willing association with him in all for which he stands, even unto death. "We are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Rom. 5:4, 5). There is purpose in all this, for those who thus give themselves in complete consecration to the end of life become thereby members of the Church which is his Body, associated with Christ in all that he does in all the coming ages of eternity. These are they who are said to "reign with him" when he comes to rule the world in the day of his power; these are they who are gathered to him at his promised Second Coming when the "dead in Christ" are raised to life and the "living that remain" "changed" to spiritual life to see him as he is and to be like him - Rev. 20:4; 1 Thess. 4:15-17; 1 Cor. 15:50-53; 1 John 3:2.

This, then, is the path to the eternal state for all who, in this present Age, hear the invitation of God in Christ, and hearing, heed, and convert, and accept, and follow in the footsteps of the Redeemer, trusting in the efficacy and the power of his death on their behalf; until at the end of earthly life they find themselves at the beginning of a new and more abundant life in a sphere

where sin and evil, frustration and imperfection, disease and death are no more, and where Christ is All in All. From then on, life is without flaw, one of continuing progress and development and achievement in the ever present radiance of the glory of God.

But what of those who have never heard, or whose capacity for hearing is so impaired that they cannot respond to the Divine invitation, and so, unwittingly and through no fault of their own, live life through and pass into death without even hearing, or at least without having ability to understand, the significance of the only Name given under heaven whereby men can be saved. What has God provided for them?

That it is the intention of God to ensure that every man and woman of the human race attains that state of knowledge and has that power and opportunity which enable him or her intelligently to accept or reject Christ with full appreciation of the consequences is implicit in Scripture. The gift of God is eternal life and God calls all who will to receive of his gift and attain the destiny he purposes. But it ought to be clear that no intelligent creature can hope to find place in this exalted fellowship without having first pledged loyalty and allegiance to the One who is the Head and Center of all creation, and equally clear too that such loyalty and allegiance must be based upon prior knowledge and be the result of a positive choice in the light of that knowledge. "I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil ... therefore choose life" were the words of the Lord to Israel (Deut. 30:15-20) when he entered into covenant relationship with them. That was only a figurative arrangement intended to illustrate the principles of his purpose with man, but, because it did illustrate those principles, it must be taken as a sure guide. In the outworking of his Plan God will be seen eventually to have set before every man these alternative ways. It is laid down in the Gospels that Jesus Christ is the "true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9). Unless every man who comes into, the world is at some time brought face to face with the radiance of Christ that text has no meaning.

Our Glorious Hope!

"As touching the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." - Acts 23:6.

THE DETERMINATION of the basis of Christian orthodoxy, that is, the true faith or teaching, has been the earnest desire and effort of fifty or sixty generations of Bible students and theologians, over a period of eighteen hundred years. Today, each of the many sects of Christendom sincerely believes that its creed only is truly orthodox. But the uncreed fettered, free Bible student holds that the Bible teaching alone is the basis of orthodoxy.

There are several Bible criteria, or tests, or measures of orthodoxy. The basic test is belief *in a* benignant God: "He that cometh unto God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." (Heb. 11:6.) The next is acceptance of Jesus Christ as the exclusive Agent of God for man's salvation. Jesus said: "All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father: and no one knoweth . . . the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him." - Matt. 11:27.

There are numerous other measures of the reality, sincerity, and propriety of Christian faith, including self-sacrifice; activity and zeal in service; purification of life ("even as He is pure"); and joyful anticipation of a future life with the Lord (a crown reserved for "all those who love His appearing"). Not disregarding these but building upon them, the further supreme and searching test of true faith is belief and reliance upon the teaching of Christ regarding the *resurrection of the dead*. This touchstone differentiates not only between accurate and inaccurate Christian faith, but also between -- Christianity and all false religions. It was the question the Apostle Paul raised, that provoked such an uproar in the Jewish Sanhedrin when they were examining him, that the Roman chiliarch who had him in charge thought they would tear him in pieces, as related in Acts 23:1-10. And it is the question that brings into sharp conflict the statements concerning man's nature, made by God, through His Son, His Prophets, and His Apostles, with the falsehood told by Satan to Mother Eve in the Garden of Eden. For this falsehood Satan was denounced by our Lord, declared to be "a murderer from the beginning," and to have "no truth in him." "He is a liar, and the father thereof." (John 8:44.) Strangely enough, it seems much easier for the human mind to grasp and believe the Satanic lie, than the truth as stated by man's Creator, who certainly should know how he is constituted.

It is not the purpose of this article to present an exhaustive discussion of the mortal nature of man, of death as the penalty of disobedience imposed upon the race in the person of Adam, its progenitor. and of the Way opened for man's possible recovery therefrom through the Gospel of Jesus Christ -- including both the living and the dead, those that have "done good" and those that have "done, evil." Nor need we remind you that there is a "second death" reserved for those who, thus called forth from the tomb to a life and an enlightenment not obscured by Satan's lies and unhindered by Satan's rule, refuse to accept God's amnesty and restoration to His family and Fatherhood. Such, we know, as will not then obey "That Prophet" shall be "destroyed from among the people. (Acts 21:22-24.) All this ground is fully covered by publications of this Institute, which are free for the asking, or at nominal cost in book form.

It is enough here to remind our readers that God placed Father Adam under a test of obedience, which involved his refraining from partaking of the fruit of a certain tree in his Garden home. Satan, in the beginning of his contact with the human family (as referred to by Jesus in John 8:44) assured Mother Eve that if she and her mate should eat of "the tree that is in the midst of the Garden," forbidden to them by their Creator, instead of dying as He had said, they should

"become as gods, knowing both good and evil" and incidentally immortal. The outcome of the primitive experiment in disobeying God must thus inevitably prove either God or Satan a deceiver. The evidence as to which told the truth has been presented to mankind and the universe for nearly six thousand years. The inevitable termination of the life of every human being in death is a continuing and should be a convincing proof to every thinking being that *God* is true, and His Adversary a liar, as Jesus said. The Devil has tried, with considerable success, to vitiate this conclusion by inculcating through various agencies, the doctrine of the immortality of the human soul, so that to those who accept this theory, death becomes merely a change of scene. But the complete extinction of life and consciousness in death is everywhere taught in the Bible. "Put not your trust in princes," says the Psalmist, "nor in the son of Adam, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; *in that very day his thoughts perish.*" Solomon, with divinely given wisdom, thus engrossed the truth: "The living know that they shall die, *but the dead know not anything* . for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in Sheol [Hebrew for the grave] whither thou goest." - Psa. 146:3, 4; Eccl. 9:5, 10.

Surely these statements (of many to the same end) are sufficiently explicit! Nor is the New Testament less positive. Jesus' promise of restoration from death was to "the dead all who are in the tombs." (John 5:25-29.) He knew they were not in heaven, or a hell of torment, or purgatory, or any other state of consciousness. And the basis of that nominal "Christian" theology, which in reality is Platonic, Egyptian, and Satanic, is shattered by the Apostolic statement that it is the supreme Potentate, "King of kings and Lord of lords; who *only* hath immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable; whom no man hath seen nor can see." God alone had inherent immortality, as explained by the Lord Jesus; but He has power to impart such life, and *has* done so to the Son; and the Son extends it to those becoming members of His Bride, His Church. The Prophet Isaiah foretold these things, embracing fundamental truths and transactions of tremendous import in both heaven and earth. In a passage hailing a special Servant of Jehovah who "shall be exalted and be lifted up, and shall be very high," and who was to become the Sin-Bearer for all mankind, making "His soul an offering for sin, the Prophet, speaking in-the name of Jehovah, says: "I will divide Him a portion [of immortality] with *The Great [i.e. Myself]*, and He shall divide the spoil [of His victory over death and the grave -- immortality] with the strong" -- those strong enough in their determination to participate in His victory, to "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. (Those of our readers desiring to verify these statements from the Scriptures, and to note' their-marvelous harmony and cohesion, are referred to: 1 Tim. 6:15, 16; Eph. 5:13; John 5:19-29; Isa. 52:13-15; 53:1-12; Rev. 3:21; 14:4.)

Confronted with these facts in millions of books and hundreds of millions of tracts distributed , throughout Christendom during the past fifty years, it would seem that the prevalent erroneous conception of the human soul as immortal should have been generally if not unanimously replaced by an acceptance of the Scriptural doctrine of the resurrection, as the basis of the Christian's hope of a future life. Not so, however; the acceptance of Satan's falsehood that, because we have eaten of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and of evil, we have become as gods and cannot die, is so flattering to man's vanity, and it is *so* impressed *on* his thinking from infancy, and is so entrenched in the popular Church creeds, that it will require the fiat of the returning Christ, "Behold, I make all things new," to destroy the "covering" and rend the "veil" from mankind's eyes, so that they may accept His proffer of "the water [symbolizing Truth] of life freely" -- on *His* terms, not theirs. - Rev. 21:5-8; Isa. 25:7.

Demonstrating the power of God to resurrect a dead man, Jesus stood before the tomb of Lazarus and assured Martha, "Thy brother shall live again." Martha, being only a Hebrew woman, instructed in that nation's ancient Scriptures but not infected with Greek or Egyptian philosophy, nor with modern "systematic theology," replied: "I know he shall live again in the resurrection at

the last day." Jesus associated Himself with that Day and its promise by declaring: "I am the resurrection and the life; believe, and thou shalt see *the glory of God.*" Then He commanded: "Lazarus, come forth!" -- and Lazarus came forth from the tomb. Jesus said "Loose him [from all grave clothes] and let him go." This was a sample and type of a universal Reviving, and Loosing "at that Day." - John 11:1-44.

The glory of God particularly associated *with* the resurrection of the dead, is again referred to by the Apostle in Romans 6:4: "Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father." And the great Day of which Martha spoke, in which is to be revealed this particular and peculiar glory of God, was foretold by the Prophet Isaiah among others, declaring the universality of its application: "The glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, and *all flesh shall see it together*, for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it." -Isa. 40:3-8.

Space forbids a discussion here of the differences in the resurrection; of the best or "first resurrection" of the Church, and the, "better resurrection" of the holy men of the old dispensation, both to be *prior* to the general resurrection. Nor can we more than refer to the secret imparted by the Apostle, that in the end of the Age there would come a time when "we all shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed." For further details and particulars, we again refer the interested reader to the exhaustive publications supplied by the Institute. - Rev. 20:4-6; Heb. 11:35; 1 Cor. 15:51, 52.

Those who in simple faith have accepted the Scriptural doctrine of the resurrection, have *not* sorrowed as do those who have no such hope. When their loved ones died they have known that in effect they have only "fallen asleep," because they would surely awake, refreshed, in the Morning. Such separations are ever hard to bear, but how consoling to *know* that they are, only temporary! They have never been for so very long, for (at longest) the sorrowing ones soon have joined their loved ones in sleep, or now, as we believe, are "changed in a moment" to be with the Lord, and to join in preparations for the General Resurrection -- for "their works do follow with them." "Sorrows may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the Morning." - Rev. 14:13; Psa. 30:5.

It will, be the Resurrection Morning, heralding The Day. The glory of God, revealed, shall not only cause the dead to awake, but the earth also to "bud and blossom as the rose. "The tabernacle of God" -- the "Mighty God" of Isaiah 9:6, "the great God and our Savior" referred to in Paul's Epistle to Timothy (2 Tim. 2:13) -- shall then be with men, "and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away.

"He that testifieth these things saith, Yea; I come quickly. Amen: come, Lord Jesus." - Rev. 21:22.

- *Horace E. Hollister.*

Millennial Kingdom Prospects

"And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful." - Rev. 21:1-5.

JUST as Scripture distinguishes between the saved and the lost, and between different classes of the one and of the other, so it also distinguishes between the future portion of the Church of Christ, that of the Jewish people, and that of the nations of the earth. Too many in their thoughts of the future leave out this last; the destiny of the Church of this dispensation figures so largely in their anticipations, that they seem almost to forget that "the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the *world*," and to lose sight of the blessed prospect that, not only is the present Church to be saved out of the ruined world, to become the Eve of the second Adam, but that the ruined earth itself is yet to be renewed, and to become the happy home of saved nations, who participate in the results of redemption.

The narrowness which sees nothing but the salvation of the Church of this dispensation is born of human selfishness, and not of Divine love; it is founded not on the teaching of Scripture, but on tradition and prejudice. The Bible in this [the Book of Revelation], its last revelation on the subject, plainly teaches that while the peculiar glories of the Church are hers, and hers alone, that while the special privileges of the natural seed of Abraham belong to Israel, and to Israel only, that there is yet a blessed future awaiting mankind also under the gracious government of Immanuel; that one of the effects of the completed work of Christ will be to place the saved nations of the eternal Kingdom in a restored paradise, completely delivered from the tempter, and so established in righteousness that the Holy One can take up his abode among them for ever. "He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death; neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

The salvation of the Church of this dispensation is not the whole result of the death of Christ. There is to be in addition the establishment for ever of a kingdom of God, in which his will shall be as fully done by men on earth as it is now done by angels in heaven. The consummation, for which we daily pray, is destined to come at last; and holy and happy service, without a flaw and without an interruption, is yet to be rendered to God, not merely by the glorified saints of the new Jerusalem, but by redeemed nations on the earth, who walk for ever in the light of the celestial city.

Such is the sublime vista of the future of our race, and of our earth in the eternal ages, with which Scripture closes.

- H. Grattan Guinness

It is this portion that God has elected to give to the human race. And what a glorious portion! Close your eyes for a moment to the scenes of misery and woe, degradation and sorrow that yet prevail on account of sin, and picture before your mental vision the glory of the perfect earth. Not a stain of sin mars the harmony and peace of a perfect society; not a bitter thought, not an unkind look or word; love, welling up from every heart, meets a kindred response in every other heart, and benevolence marks every act. There sickness shall be no more; not an ache nor a pain, nor

any evidence of decay not even the fear of such things. Think of all the pictures of comparative health and beauty of human form and feature that you have ever seen, and know that perfect humanity will be of still surpassing loveliness. The inward purity and mental and moral perfection will stamp and glorify every radiant countenance. Such will earth's society be; and weeping bereaved ones will have their tears all wiped away, when thus they realize the resurrection work complete. - Revelation 21:4.

And this is the change in human society only. We call to mind also that the earth, which was "made to be inhabited" by such a race of beings, is to be a fit and pleasing abode for them, as represented in the Edenic paradise, in which the representative man was at first placed. Paradise shall be restored. The earth shall no more bring forth thorns and briers, and require the sweat of man's face to yield his bread, but "the earth shall [easily and naturally] yield her increase." "The desert shall blossom as the rose"; the lower animal creation will be perfect, willing, and obedient servants; nature with all its pleasing variety will call to man from every direction to seek and know the glory and power and love of God; and mind and heart will rejoice in him. The restless desire for something new, that now prevails, is not a natural but an abnormal condition, due to our imperfection, and to our present unsatisfactory surroundings. It is not Godlike restlessly to crave something new. Most things are old to God; and he rejoices most in those things which are old and perfect. So will it be with man when restored to the image of God. The perfect man will not know or appreciate fully, and hence will not prefer, the glory of spiritual being, because of a different nature, just as fishes and birds, for the same reason, prefer and enjoy each their own nature and element most. Man will be so absorbed and enraptured with the glory that surrounds him on the human plane that he will have no aspiration to, nor preference for, another nature or other conditions than those possessed. A glance at the present experience of the Church will illustrate this. "How hardly," with what difficulty, shall those who are rich in this world's goods enter into the Kingdom of God. The few good things possessed, even under the present reign of evil and death, so captivate the human nature that we need special help from God to keep our eye and purpose fixed on the spiritual promises.

That the Christian Church, the Body of Christ, is an exception to God's general plan for mankind, is evident from the statement that its selection was determined in the divine plan before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4, 5), at which time God not only foresaw the fall of the race into sin, but also predetermined the justification, the sanctification and the glorification of this class, which, during the Gospel Age, he has been calling out of the world to be conformed to the image of his Son, to be partakers of the divine nature and to be fellow-heirs with Christ Jesus of the Millennial Kingdom for the establishment of universal righteousness and peace. - Romans 8:28-31.

- *Charles T. Russell*

Oh scenes surpassing fable, and yet true,
Scenes of accomplish'd bliss! which who can see,
Though but in distant prospect, and not feel
His soul refresh'd with foretaste of the joy?
Rivers of gladness water all the earth,
And clothe all climes with beauty; the reproach
Of barrenness is past. The fruitful field
Laughs with abundance, and the land once lean,
Or fertile only in its own disgrace,

Exults to see its thistly curse repeal'd.
The various seasons woven into one,
And that one season an eternal spring,
The garden fears no blight, and needs no fence,
For there is none to covet, all are full.
The lion and the leopard and the bear
Graze with the fearless flocks. All bask at noon
Together, or all gambol in the shade
Of the same grove, and drink one common stream
Antipathies are none. No foe to man
Lurks in the serpent now. The mother sees,
And smiles to see, her infant's playful hand
Stretch'd forth to dally with the crested worm
To stroke his azure neck, or to receive

The lambent homage of his arrowy tongue.
All creatures worship man, and all mankind
One Lord, one Father. Error has no place;
That creeping pestilence is driven away,
The breath of heav'n has chased it. In the heart
No passion touches a discordant string,
But all is harmony and love. Disease
Is not. The pure and uncontaminate blood
Holds its due course, nor fears the frost of age.
One song employs all nations; and all cry,
"Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us!"
The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks
Shout to each other, and the mountain tops
From distant mountains catch the flying joy,
Till nation after nation taught the strain,
Each rolls the rapturous Hosanna round.
Behold the measure of the promise fill'd,
See Salem built, the labour of a God!
Bright as a sun the sacred city shines;
All kingdoms and all princes of the earth
Flock to that light; the glory of all lands
Flows into her, unbounded is her joy
And endless her increase.

- *W. Cowper*

The Question Box

Matthew 25:1-13

Question:

Why is the Bride not mentioned in the Parable of the Ten Virgins? - Matthew 25:1-13.

Answer:

There are some who believe that the Bride is mentioned. According to one noted expositor the scene of the parable does not refer to the coming of the Bridegroom to receive his Bride, but to his return to his home with his Bride. Others similarly hold. Indeed some of the later translations supplement the text "to meet the Bridegroom and the Bride." In Cranmer's Bible the translation is "to mete the brydgrome (and the bryde)." The supplement, however, is wanting in the oldest manuscripts, and is rejected by the great body of authorities. It was doubtless an early note in explanation (based on what we think was a misconception) of the scene. Had the Bride been mentioned, considerable interest would have been shown in her; the parable would have required modification in a number of important respects. The virgins would have gone to meet her and the lesson of the parable would have been a different one. Looking beyond the parable to the great reality represented, we have little difficulty in understanding it to picture Christ's return to the earth for his Bride, and the condition of the five wise virgins -- to teach the proper heart attitude of the prospective members of the Bride class, as they make haste to welcome him.

In the conviction then that the Bride is not mentioned, we return to the question: "Why is she not mentioned in this parable?" Two reasons suggest themselves:

1. At the time our Lord spake his parables the truth that the Gospel-Age Church was to be related to him as a bride to a husband had not been revealed.
2. Even if the relationship of the Church to Christ as Bride to Husband had been taught and had become well understood, it would have detracted from the Master's main lesson in the Parable of the Ten Virgins to have mentioned her there.

Without doubt the Bridegroom of this parable represents our Lord. He is also the King's Son for whom, in the parable of the Marriage Feast (Matt. 22:2), the King (Jehovah himself) has prepared a nuptial feast at his house. But neither in that parable nor in this one is the Bride mentioned -- apparently for identical reasons.

As a matter of fact, nowhere in the Synoptic Gospels, that is to say, in the Gospels by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, is the Bride of Christ mentioned. And even in the Gospel by John, the Bride mentioned by the Baptist in John 3:28, 29 was the Jewish Church or nation, not the Gospel-Age Church. The figure of the Bridegroom had been used in the Old Testament of Jehovah and his relationship to Israel. When Christ came, he came as the Father's representative, to claim this Jewish Church for his own. "And his own," we read, "received him not." - John 1:11.

This, indeed, was the first significance of our Lord's parable of the bridechamber, although doubtless there was a deeper meaning in it (a reference to the Gospel-Age Church) which neither the disciples of the Pharisees nor the disciples of the Baptist could grasp (Matt. 9:14, 15). But in the days of our Lord's flesh there was no spirit-begotten Church to whom he could be betrothed. Not until after he had given his life for her sake; not until he had been raised from the dead by the

Father's power; not until he had ascended on high, there, at the Father's right hand, to appear in his presence on her behalf; not until the waiting followers of Jesus received the holy spirit on the day of Pentecost was there even the nucleus of a Church to whom, as a spirit-being, he could be betrothed. Then indeed, it was on the day of Pentecost when the holy spirit was given that our heavenly Bridegroom betrothed the Gospel Church to himself in love.

To the question as to why the Bride is not mentioned in the Parable of the Ten Virgins, our first answer, then, must be that it would have anticipated a truth not expounded until after our Lord's ascension. That it *was* taught afterwards, of course, there is abundant testimony. - Eph. 5:25, 27; Rev. 19:7; 21:2; 22:17.

We come now to our second reason as to why no mention is made of the Bride. The outstanding lesson of the parable would have been obscured. What is that outstanding lesson? Surely it is the lesson of readiness; of being always in a condition of training; of thoroughness in the preparation of our hearts and lives. If we are not ready now, we should lose no time in getting ready; if we are now ready, we must so order our lives as to remain in a constant state of readiness. This is the condition which did characterize the five wise virgins and which is to characterize the prospective members of Christ's Bride.

One other point is worthy of notice: While the lesson of readiness was of value to the disciples who heard this parable fall from the Master's lips, and while it has doubtless served to strengthen others of the household of faith during the centuries which have since unrolled, it comes with special force and has its full significance to those of the consecrated who are looking for the Bridegroom when, in the Father's Plan, the time for that glorious event becomes due. For it is "then" (Matt. 25:1)-in the time of our Lord's Parousia, in the great decisive day when the Lord reckons with his servants (Matt. 24:45-51), that this parable has its *prophetic* application. "Then" the "Kingdom of heaven" *is not merely to be compared with* the conduct of the ten virgins, but *it shall become like* those virgins. See also Matt. 6:8; Matt. 7:26; Matt. 13:24; Matt. 18:23 and Matt. 22:2.

In *Scripture Studies, Vol. III*, pages C91, C94, Brother Russell suggests a possible relationship which this parable may have to the Miller movement, a suggestion which, apparently, he took from Brother Paton. (See *Reprints, Vol. I*, pages R38-R41.) So far as we are aware, he held these views to the end of his life. However, he did not do so dogmatically. With him they were only his and others' "conclusions," which might or might not prove true. Speaking of those who shared these views with him, he wrote: "Whether all of their conclusions may be accepted or not, they are at least worthy of consideration, inasmuch as they furnish a new interpretation of some Scriptures not previously understood. *Whether they have the times and seasons properly divided is another matter, upon which each individual Christian should use his own judgment.*" - *Reprints, Vol. 6*, page R5523.

- P. L Read

Notice of Postponement of Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Pastoral Bible Institute, due to be scheduled for Saturday, June 5, is being postponed for some months, possibly until next year.

We are making this early announcement so that Institute members, who might wish to participate in conventions now being planned by Associated Bible Students in various parts of the country to be held during the summer months, will know that they need not reserve the June date for the Institute's Annual Meeting.

Further particulars will be announced later.

Entered Into Rest

Robert Braun, Kings Park, N. Y.
Filomena Cardellicho, Groton, Conn.
Charles E. Carpenter, Marathon, N. Y.
Costas Contopoulos, Athens, Greece
William O. Diverts, Montreal, Que.
Alphons Dostal, Franklin, Wis.
George Elliason, Tampa, Fla.
Ella M. Emerson, Robbinsdale, Minn.
Carrie L. Freeman, San Luis Obispo, Cal
George E. C. Hill, Milwaukee, Wis.
Hertha L. Hogrebe, St. Louis, Mo.
Martha L. Hughes, Atlanta, Ga.
M. LaRue McNaught, Seattle, Wash.
Harry W. Orrock, Richmond, Va.
Avis Radio, Barrington, R. I.
Margaret Reeves, Calgary, Alta.
Elsie P. Smith, Richmond, Va. -
Lillian F. Thain, Somerville, Mass.
Mary Ujvary, Miami, Fla.