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A New Year Meditation on Psalm 45 **A Song Celebrating Our King's Marriage**

THIS Psalm was undoubtedly composed to celebrate the marriage of a Jewish king with a royal bride, the bride being apparently of foreign birth. This was evidently its primary purpose and application. However, as we read and study it, we shall see that the Psalm is Messianic in character and that much of the language employed transcends the circumstances of any earthly monarch's marriage.

Verse one reads: "My heart is inditing a good matter; I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer."

Whoever it was that wrote this Psalm feels very strongly that his subject is great. He says his heart is "inditing" a good matter; the margin reads "bubbleth"; other translations read "boils," "overfloweth." Such is the condition of his heart. The word occurs only here according to the scholars.

SURPASSING EXCELLENCE OF THE KING

Next he addresses the king about whose marriage the Psalm or poem is written. Verse two: "Thou art fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into thy lips; therefore God hath blessed thee for ever."

First the King's beauty is mentioned; then his persuasive eloquence. An able commentator has remarked that it is more kingly for kings to win their subjects' hearts by gracious words than to rule them by brute force. Concerning Messiah, the true King, we read that men wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth (Luke 4:22) for never man spake like this man (John 7:46). Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ (John 1:17). To him Jehovah gave the tongue of the learned that he might know how to speak a word in season -that he might know how to sustain with words them that are weary (Isa. 50:4).

The Psalmist continues, Psa. 45:3-7:

"Gird thy sword upon thy thigh,
O most mighty,
With thy glory and thy majesty.
And in thy majesty ride prosperously
Because of truth and meekness and righteousness;
And thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.
Thine arrows are sharp
In the heart of the King's enemies;
Whereby the people fall under thee.
Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever;
The sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.
Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness;
Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee
With the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

Yes -- King Messiah is not only fair to look at, and gracious of speech, but he is mighty in battle. However, he does not engage in war for the purposes usually underlying warfare -- to acquire more territory, or commercial supremacy, or personal aggrandizement, or glittering renown, but in behalf of truth and meekness and righteousness. Truth and meekness and righteousness have been humiliated in his kingdom and for *this* cause he takes his sword.

"LOVED RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HATED INIQUITY"

In connection with verses 6 and 7 we note the passage in Hebrews 1:8, 9:

"But unto the Son he saith, 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy Kingdom. Thou has loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.'"

These words of the inspired New Testament writer settle forever the fact that this Psalm is Messianic in character, for he quotes these verses as distinctly referring to the Son (our Lord Jesus). He is endeavoring to show the superiority of Christ to the angels, both in nature and in office. In proof of that superiority he quotes from a number of old Testament passages, among them being this very Psalm, as an evidence, which the Hebrews to whom he wrote would not dispute, of Christ's supremacy, and the righteous and endless character of his reign.

Turning again to the Psalm, verses 8 and 9, we see our King pictured once more, not now clad in armor but in marriage robes:

"All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia. Out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.

"Kings' daughters were among thy honorable women; upon thy right hand did stand the Queen in gold of Ophir. "

"A KING SHALL REIGN IN RIGHTEOUSNESS"

It is difficult to read this description of the King in this Psalm, as one possessing more than human grace and beauty, as a victorious warrior, as a righteous sovereign, as a bridegroom arrayed for his approaching marriage and surrounded by the praises of an exultant people, without

recalling the vision recorded in the Book of Revelation, chapter 19, of one who is declared to be the King of kings and Lord of lords, who is all, King and Warrior and Bridegroom. We quote Rev. 19:11, 15, 16:

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

"And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

"And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, *King of kings, and Lord of lords.*"

Also Rev. 19:1, 6-7:

"And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God;

"And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."

THE BRIDE "ALL GLORIOUS"

Returning now to the Psalm, we find the poet turns from the King to address the Bride. Let us read the 10th, 11th and 12th verses (Psa. 45:10-12):

"Hearken, O daughter, and consid.r, 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. And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favor."

For so kingly a bridegroom, as Messiah has been described in Psa. 45:2-8, where shall a fitting bride be found? Surely she, too, must be of exalted character and great spiritual loveliness, queenly in rank -- that is to say, the daughter of a king - and queenly in the purity and excellency of her spirit.

Such is her description here, and the language employed by the Psalmist can be truly applicable only to the Church in glory.

He says her appearance is "all glorious," her clothing of "wrought gold" and that she is to be brought to the King "in raiment of needlework." In the Book of Revelation 19:8, we read:

"And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

Note also, in this connection, the words of Eph. 5:25-27:

"Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it . . . that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

In the *Diaglott*, the rendering of Eph. 5:27 is: "That he might place the Congregation [the Church] by his side, glorious." In other words, when Christ (the King) who is our Life, shall appear, then we also shall appear, with him in glory (Col. 3:4).

After addressing the Queen in the words of Psa. 45:10, 11-12, the Psalmist apparently waits while all eyes turn in her direction. According to *Rotherham*, Psa. 45:13, 14, 15 may be understood as being exclamations of admiration on her splendid appearance. She is seen within the palace, at her King-Bridegroom's right hand, his Queen. And the first wondering exclamation on beholding her is "All-glorious!" Then, as the Divine Fatherhood of the Ecclesia is discovered, a second acclaim is heard: "Daughter of a king!" We quote these three verses from *Rotherham's* translation:

"All glorious! daughter of a king!
"Pearls in chequer work of gold her clothing!

"On tapestry of divers colors is she conducted to the King; virgins in her train her companions are brought to her, with gladness and exulting are they conducted to her, brought into the King's palace to her."

Once more the Psalmist is the speaker, and ere the King finally disappears in his palace and the Queen is conducted to him, followed by her companions, the Psalmist addresses both King and Queen, congratulating them and expressing hopes as to the issue of the marriage. These words appear in the last two verses of the Psalm, 16 and 17 (Psa. 45:16-17), and read as follows:

"Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.

"I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations; therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.

These last two verses have perplexed scholars for centuries. Many of them, not seeing the special salvation of the Church as distinct from that of the world, offer only confusing comments.

Some get a little nearer the truth, suggesting that the words appear to Israel only, 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."

These and other writers, then, saw clearly that Christ and his Church, the Second Adam and his Bride, were to be blessed with "children," some of whom they may make "princes in all the earth." But how are these children to be "instead of thy fathers"? Only in the writings of our late beloved pastor, Brother Russell, have we found any satisfactory answer to this riddle of the centuries. "The fathers," as he observes in his luminous exposition of this passage, *Scripture Studies Vol. V*, pages E142, E143, was the honored title applied to the patriarchs, prophets, and founders of the nation, and it was a title that would be especially applicable to such as were in the kingly line from which Messiah was to come. But these "fathers" of the nation had *no life* in the true sense of that word; they were all members of the death-condemned race. "And when Jesus took hold upon our humanity, and became identified with the seed of Abraham and of David, and accomplished the work of redemption, it applied not only to the world in general," (as Guinness has so ably presented in the previous paragraph) "but as well to these, his progenitors according to the flesh.... Hence, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David

and all the Prophets, and all the remainder of the world, must receive future and everlasting life from Christ, or not at all." He will be the "Everlasting Father" and together with his glorified Church will accomplish the world's regeneration, the regeneration of "the fathers" included. These "fathers" will thus become the "children." With what intense delight will Christ and his Church establish them as "princes in all the earth"!

Behold the Bridegroom

"Our lamps are trimmed and burning,
Our robes are white and clean.
We've tarried for the Bridegroom,
And now we'll enter in.
We know we've nothing worthy
That we can call our own --
The light, the oil, the robes we wear,
Are all from him alone.

"We see the marriage splendor,
Within the open door,
We know that those who enter
Are blest forevermore;
We see our King more lovely
Than all the sons of men;
We haste because that door, once shut,
Will never ope again.

"Behold, behold, the Bridegroom,
And all may enter in,
Whose lamps are trimmed and burning,
Whose robes are white and clean."

- P. L. Read

Let Us Go Forth (Hebrews 13:13)

Silent, like men in solemn haste,
Girded wayfarers of the waste,
We pass out at the world's wide gate,
Turning our back on all its state;
We press along the narrow road
That leads to life, to bliss, to God.

We cannot and we would not stay;
We dread the snares that throng the way
We flip aside the weight and sin,
Resolve the victory to win;
We know the peril, but our eyes
Rest on the splendour of the prize.

What though with weariness oppressed?
'Tis but a little and we rest.
This throbbing heart and burning brain
Will soon be calm and cool again
Night is far spent and morn is near --
Morn of the cloudless and the clear.

No sorrow for the loss of fame,
No dread of scandal on our name;
No terror for the world's sharp scorn,
No wish that taunting to return;
No hatred can to hatred move
The soul that's filled with pitying love.

No sigh for laughter left behind,
Or pleasures scattered to the wind;
No looking back on Sodom's plains,
No listening still to Babel's strains;
No tears for Egypt's song and smile,
No thirsting for its flowing Nile.

'Tis but a little and we come
To our reward, our crown, our home!
Another year, or more, or less,
And we have crossed the wilderness;
Finished the toil, the rest begun,
The battle fought, the triumph won!

- *Horatius Bonar*

Ten Visions of Christ Triumphant

Vision 8. The Lamb goes forth to war

"After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, and the earth- was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen" (Rev. 18:1-2).

One of the most significant events in the checkered history of Israel was the collapse of the Babylonian world power when Cyrus the Persian captured Babylon, and restored the people of Israel to their own land. In a very real sense the fall of the ancient city of Babylon marked the end of a world order. The Babylonians were the last surviving remnants of the people who populated the "plain of Shinar" after the Flood, built the notorious Tower of Babel, and instituted a system of world dominance allied with false religion which profoundly affected and molded human thought and development for twenty-five centuries. Writing, mathematics, the sciences, law, together with religious doctrine and ceremonial, all has its source in Babylon. As a center of population it goes back nearly five thousand years; as a political power dominant over the then known world more than four thousand. Our units of time and distance, our weights and measures -- until the considerably inferior metric system was adopted -- all are derived from Babylon. The ceremonials, the trappings, the buildings, even to some extent the doctrines of institutional Christianity in the world today include much that is derived from Babylon. And the dominant characteristic of Babylon was that it supported a politico-religious system based upon the worship of false gods which themselves were but reflections of the imaginations and standards and vices of men. Abraham was called to separate himself from the land of which Babylon was the chief city and to come into a land which God would show him and which therefore became in due time the land peculiarly sacred to God. The two cities, Jerusalem and Babylon, became respectively the cities of the ways of God and the ways of man. To the God-fearing Jew who looked upon Jerusalem as the city of righteousness, Babylon was the city of evil.

It is for this reason that the eventual fall of Babylon and the end of that order of things is alluded to so often in the Scriptures to picture the end of the very imperfect and largely godless rule of man upon earth at the time when the Lord Christ takes up his power and commences his Messianic reign. In the symbolism of Revelation, the fall of symbolic Babylon occurs at the time of the Second Advent. Just as Cyrus the Persian with his armies put an end to the empire of Babylon and assumed the regal power, so does the Lord Christ with his Church from heaven put an end to the present world order and initiate a new one, "wherein dwelleth righteousness" as Peter puts it (2 Pet. 3:13). This is the theme of this 18th chapter.

VISION NO. 8

The angel coming down from heaven in power and great glory of verse 1 is our Lord Jesus Christ in one of the many aspects of his Second Advent. This is not merely an angelic messenger commissioned to come to earth with a message. The description is too exalted for that. There is a definite correspondence between Revelation 18:1 and the vision of the Almighty described by Ezekiel in Ezekiel 43:2-4 and Ezekiel chapters 1-5: The same expression is used of the coming of the Most High in Ezekiel's vision "the earth shined with his glory" and the theme was the same, the Lord coming to execute judgment upon an evil order of things that approached its deserved end. But just as the vision was vouchsafed only to Ezekiel and it was his responsibility to make its implications known to Israel, so now the glory of the revealed Lord at this moment is perceptible only to the people of the Lord, 'the

Church in the flesh at the time of the event, and the Church is to make the message known. The remainder of chapter 18 makes it plain that the destruction of Babylon, although expressed in the past tense, is a future, albeit imminent, event --what is known in prophetic parlance as "proleptic," i.e., a future event described as though it has already taken place.

This aspect of the Advent is that in which the returned Lord, already moving in the affairs of the world to bring about the introduction of his kingdom, as yet unperceived by mankind in general, is revealing to his own followers the nature of the judgment which is about to befall the world order. In the first place (Rev. 18:2) He declares that Babylon has become the haunt of demons and unclean spirits. It is tempting to associate this statement with the tremendous increase in dealings with the occult and supernatural which is so marked a feature of contemporary society, and it may yet be demonstrated that in sober fact the hidden spiritual powers of evil are attaining a sphere of influence in the affairs of the world to-day similar to that obtaining in the days before the Flood. It was that malevolent interference in the affairs of earth by those demonic powers of evil which more than anything else "filled the earth with violence" (Gen. 6) and brought about the end of that world. Maybe history will repeat itself.

Rev. 18:3 pictures all nations as intoxicated by their allegiance to the ruling principles of Babylon, the ruling powers united in purpose and action, and the commercial interests drawing their wealth and position from their connection with the system. The picture is that of the entire world making common cause in supporting a world order which enshrines much that is immoral and unjust, but men cling to it partly because it serves their self interest and partly because they know no other. But to those who are Christ's, whose lives are dedicated to him and who look for a vastly better order of things when He takes his great power and assumes control of this world, there comes his call to stand separate from this corrupt and doomed system. *"Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."* That injunction is not to withdraw from the world as such and adopt a hermit-like, separatist and exclusive existence, eschewing even the good things and the beautiful things and all that is upright and just and moral in the world; there is much of that even though the evil things appear to be in the ascendancy. The command is to withdraw from cooperation with, and support of, the evil elements which are driving the world to destruction. Christians are to stand as lights in the world, *"having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reproving them"* (Eph. 5:11).

The reaction omen to this collapse of the world system is vividly portrayed in the remainder of this chapter, all depicted as part of the message declared by the present Lord at the relevant time. The position is markedly similar to that obtaining at the time of the Flood. Jesus likened his own Advent to that time. "As it was in the days of Noah," He said, "so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man." The world of that day went on its way, completely heedless of the prophet in its midst who warned of the cataclysm that was imminent and would put an end to that world and all the evil that was in it (2 Pet. 2:5). (The details of Noah's preaching and witness to the coming destruction are not elaborated in Genesis but are related in fuller degree in the "Book of Enoch." So it *will* be now. The message will be given; in fact has been given, consistently and persistently, by Christian groups large and small, warning those who would listen of the inevitable consequence of the world's present course. As in the days of Noah, the warning has been ignored, and will be, until the end comes. Here in this chapter three distinct classes of society are mentioned, each lamenting the disaster which has come upon them. The kings of the earth, the rulers of men, the political powers and organizations, (Rev. 18:9-10) will, more or less unavailingly in all probability, hurriedly try to dissociate themselves from the system which is crashing into ruins in their midst, and bewail the end of all that in which for so long they have put their trust. And be it remembered that the end of organized political rule in the earth invites anarchy and no man can foresee what form it will take. Hence the commercial interests of the earth (Rev. 18:11-16) join in the general apprehension as they see their own particular interests threatened and their commercial empires vanish overnight. *"No man buyeth their merchandise any more"* is the eloquent comment in vs. 11. The commercial men have relied upon the political powers to keep the

world safe for their activities and the political powers have failed them. Finally the trading systems of the world, pictured here in Rev. 18:17-19 as ship owners (not "shipmaster" as in the A.V.) and all who have to do with trade by sea, join in the general outcry, like the others chiefly concerned over the effect upon their own interests, *"whereby were made rich all that had ships in the sea"* (Rev. 18:19).

The suddenness of the catastrophe is clearly marked. *"In one hour u thy judgment come"* (Rev. 18:10) say the kings and rulers of the earth. *"In one hour so great riches as come to nought"* (Rev. 18:17) echo the commercial men, the merchants. *"In one hour is she made desolate"* (Rev. 18:17) cry the trading tycoons. The implication is that when the crash does come, it will be swift and decisive. This old world has been a long time dying; it was not really until the twentieth century that it has become more or less a single unit with each nation or area interdependent upon all the others. But almost at once the rot began and for most of the century the forces of disintegration have been active and gathering strength. So many observers have said that the year 1914 was the beginning of the end and nothing has gone right since. The structure of modern society -- political, commercial, social -- is such to-day that it only wants one king-pin to be knocked out of place for the entire edifice to come down with a crash. That aspect of the matter is vividly forthshown by the sequel to this vision. John listened to the message to its end and then he beheld while *"a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all"* (Rev. 18:21). That which John thus witnessed was a repetition of a similar incident in the story of literal Babylon. A few years prior to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians at the time of the Captivity, when Babylon was at the height of its power and magnificence under its famous king Nebuchadnezzar II, Jeremiah the prophet sent an emissary to Babylon with a book -- probably a parchment or leather scroll -- in which he had written a complete prophecy of the eventual doom and destruction of Babylon, then more than half a century distant. That denunciation is recorded for modern readers in the 50th and 51st chapters of Jeremiah (Jer. 50 - Jer. 51). Arrived at Babylon, Seraiah was to read the entire message in public and then, tying the parchment to a stone, throw it into the midst of Euphrates, which ran through the center of the city. He probably stood in the center of the stone bridge which spanned the river near the celebrated Tower of Babel to do so -- as public a place as Westminster Bridge in London; the Euphrates at Babylon was as wide as is the Thames at Westminster. And as he thus cast the book into the water, he was to say *"thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her"* (Jer. 51:64).

So, suddenly but not without warning, the existing worn-out world order crumbles to dust and vanishes away. *"That which decayeth and waxeth old"* said the writer to the Hebrews *"is ready to vanish away"* (Heb. 8:13). It will be a drastic and a terrible end to a world order which has been built up during thousands of years and has served the needs of humanity tolerably well for much of that time, but because injustice and inequity, to say nothing of downright evil, has been built into its structure there is only one possible end. Whatever is of evil contains within itself the seeds of its own destruction. And there is a better world to succeed it. Babylon falls, as fall it must, but by the grace and mercy of God its fall is timed to occur at just that period when the kingdom of Christ on earth is ready to take its place. The transition will give rise to violence, for after Babylon's fall the powers of earth make one final attempt to resist the incoming kingdom, but the influences of Heaven will be victorious, and humanity will enter upon the Millennium, the thousand years of peace, with Christ in full and effective control.

(To be continued.)

- A. O. Hudson

Use It or Lose It

"Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath the ten talents. For unto every one that bath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." - Matthew 25:28, 29.

THE Parable of the Talents was given by our Lord to his disciples from Mount Olivet ... if Matthew's account of chapters 24-26 is in consecutive order. Accordingly, the story was related on the Tuesday preceding our Lord's crucifixion (Matt. 26:1, 2).

This parable is designed for all of the Lord's "servants," his disciples of the Gospel Age. It admonishes even those who have but one "talent" to use it to the best advantage. It logically follows and supplements the Parable of the Virgins. For, just as that Parable represented Christ's servants *as waiting* for him, this pictures them as *working* for him. And, whereas, the emphasis in the former was placed upon their inward spiritual life, the latter lays stress on the outward activities in which the spiritual life shows itself.

DIVERSITY OF INSTRUCTION

Jesus was not limited in his teachings. When He taught the value of a particular quality, he was always careful to protect his listeners from thinking that it alone was necessary. When he prompted them to activity, he supplemented this with something which reminded them of the importance of devotion. And when he told of the necessity of cultivating inward character, he combined with that a strong appeal to outward exertion.

Jesus did not mean that we should alternate alertness with activity, but rather that the two should go hand-in-hand, as in the case of the wall-builders in Nehemiah's time. Concerning whom, it is written: "For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded. And he that sounded the trumpet was by me" (Neh. 4:18). The Lord seemingly wanted his people to understand that watchfulness for his return was not to degenerate into idleness. Rather, while watching, they were also to work, each in his own way, with whatever means the Master put at his disposal.

This lesson has been overlooked more than once during the interval between our Lord's time and the present. One notable example was the Thessalonians who misunderstood Paul's references to the Second Advent so much as to believe that it was just at hand. They gave up their occupations, which resulted in considerable disorder, reducing themselves to dependence on the charity of others for their daily sustenance.

And, of course, we have had similar situations in more recent times among Adventists and others. Therefore, we see the wisdom in the prophetic foresight of the Lord, in that, when he himself referred to his Second Coming, he bid his followers not only watch in readiness for it, but labor in earnestness toward it.

ENTRUSTED POSSESSIONS

Our Lord likened himself to a man who traveled into a far country -- Heaven itself. Just before departing, this man distributed his goods to his servants. They were to use these in his service during his absence. Even if a formal agreement was lacking, there was at least an understanding

that the servants would be held responsible and would have to render an account upon the master's return. If faithful, rewards would be given. If unfaithful, punishment would result.

The Apostle Paul instructed the Church concerning judgment. He wrote: "we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ . . ." (2 Cor. 5:10, N. A. S.). And, speaking of himself, he later said: "I have maintained the GOOD CONTEST. I have finished the RACE. I have guarded the FAITH; it remains that there is laid up for me the CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS which the LORD, the RIGHTEOUS Judge, will give me in That Day, and not only to me, but also to All those who have LOVED his APPEARANCE" (2 Tim. 4:8, 9, Wilson's Diaglott). Many other scriptures could be cited to illustrate the fact that the Lord's followers of this dispensation will be judged as to their faithfulness. And as shown by this parable, the final judgment is to be at the Lord's return, not any sooner. The parable also shows that only the Church is on trial presently. Mankind's judgment day is not now. That is to come during the next age when "the saints shall judge the world" (1 Cor. 6:2).

According to Strong's Concordance, the Greek word translated "goods" signifies "things extant or in hand, i.e., property or possessions. That which one has. Substance."

What do these "goods" represent? What is it that the Lord gave his disciples just before leaving to sit down "on the right hand of the Majesty on high?" Various ideas have been suggested.

One thought is that this pictures the Truth, God's Word. The Apostle Paul tells us that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and *he has committed to us the word of reconciliation*" (2 Cor. 5:19).

Another suggestion concerns faith. Again, Paul states: "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as *God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith*" (Rom. 12:3). "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1).

While it cannot be argued that the Lord's people are given both the Word of God and a measure of faith, one wonders if this is the intent of the parable in question. According to the New American Standard Version, Matthew 25:14 indicates that the "goods" were given as Jesus was "about to go on his journey." It would seem, therefore, that the time element is significant here.

In light of the above, it is suggested that the promise of the holy spirit inhere pictured. John 14:25, 26 states: "These things I have spoken to you, while abiding with you. But the Helper, the holy spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you (N. A. S.). In the first chapter of Acts, after his resurrection and immediately before his departure, Jesus said: "but you shall receive power when the holy spirit has come upon you; and you shall be *my witnesses* both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Sarnaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 1:8, N.A.S.). Thus were the Lord's servants promised this most unique and precious gift. It was designed to give enlightenment and power to heir witness for Him. The Thessalonians were later told: "Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thess. 5:19).

"WHATSOEVER YE DO"

Regardless of our own views as to what the "goods" represent, can we not agree that the message of this parable is to use whatever the Lord has put at our disposal to the best of our ability? The

principle illustrated is that each of Jesus' disciples in this Age is away with opportunities of some kind whereby he may make his calling and election sure.

No one has more opportunities than he can avail himself of to the full, and every man has just as many as he can use with advantage. We are not to think of him who had received the one or two talents as incompletely furnished, in comparison with him that had received five, any more than we would declare a small circle incomplete when placed next to a larger one.

Each portion is filled. Hence, there should be no place for jealousy between different individuals, or for dissatisfaction with our own peculiar opportunities. Each is endowed up to the measure of ability to use that which he has received. The man with the one talent may not be able to fill so wide a realm as he who has five. But he can fill his own sphere, and that is all that will be required of him. We are not responsible for that which we do not have.

It is a law of the natural, as well as of the spiritual world, that the disuse of a faculty finally leads to its complete loss. Proper exercise leads to its development and increase. Similarly, our spiritual life, like money, ought to be made productive. Like seed, it is to be sown, not hoarded.

A poet has said: "Four things come not back: The spoken word; The sped arrow; Time past and The neglected opportunity."

Brethren, the Gospel Age, which is rapidly coming to a conclusion, is THE ONLY time in which anyone will be given the opportunity to become a member of the little flock, the body of Christ. We must work at it now, knowing that the night is coming when man can work out his heavenly salvation no more.

May we receive encouragement from the words of Paul who wrote: "Whatsoever ye may be doing, from the soul be working at it, as unto the Lord and not unto men, knowing that from the Lord ye shall duly receive the recompense of the inheritance. Unto the Lord Christ are ye in service" (Col. 3:23, 24, Rotherham).

"Be sober, then, be vigilant; forbear
To seek or covet aught beyond thy *sphere*:
Only be strong to labor, and allow
Thy Master's will to appoint the where and how.
Serve God; and winter's cold or summer's heat,
The breezy mountain or the dusty street,
Scene, season, circumstance, alike shall be
His welcome messengers of joy to thee;
Rise, and prove a present earnest of the bliss above."

- T. M. Thomassen

"Even at the Doors"

What will be the sign of thy presence, and of the consummation of the age?" - Matthew 24:3 (Diaglott).
"When ye shall see all these things, know that he is near." - Matthew 24:33 (margin).

IN recent issues of this journal, writing under this caption, we have expressed the following convictions:

1. The object of Messiah's Second Advent is a glorious one - not the destruction or enslavement of our race, but the salvation of both the Church and the remainder of mankind (John 14:2, 3; 1 Chron. 16:31-34).
2. Since the Millennial Age is to be a time of restoration, and since the retention of Jesus in heaven is to be only until that time, it follows that his Second Advent must take place before, not after, the Millennium (Acts 3:21; Rev. 20:4).
3. Antichrist must first come -- and has; the predictions concerning him having been abundantly fulfilled in the Papal system (Dan. 7:26; 2 Thess. 2:1-12).
4. Christ's Second Advent is to synchronize with the end of the Age; any sign, therefore, which denotes the end of the Age must also constitute evidence of his presence (Matt. 24:3; Mark 13:4; Luke 21:7).
5. Our Lord is no longer a man but a great spirit being, partaker, indeed, of the divine nature; the express image of the Father's person, invisible to human eyes (Phil. 2:9; Heb. 1:3).

If our Lord were a human being, it could be said of the Church: "Since we are to be like our Lord, and since he is a human being, it doth even now appear what we shall be." St. John, however, in 1 John 3:2 writes otherwise. There, in harmony with the thought of his brother Apostles, he tells us: "It doth not yet appear what we shall be."

6. The word *parousia* is correctly translated "presence"; it does not have the thought of "being on the way" nor does it refer to a "moment" of arrival. Its meaning is established in Philippians 2:12 where the period of the Apostle's absence is contrasted with the period of his presence.

Before leaving our consideration of the word *parousia*, there are two other points worthy of special attention. One of these is the importance of distinguishing the respective shades of meaning which New Testament words have, when referring to one idea common to them all. For example, the words *parousia*, *epiphaneia* and *apokalupsis*, while frequently employed in reference to the one subject (the Second Advent of Christ) are not synonymous terms, but have individual shades of meaning. An illustration of this point was given in our last issue, taken from the writings of J. A. Seiss, in reference to 2 Thessalonians 2:8, in which verse both *epiphaneia* and *parousia* are used together "in reference to the final overthrow or annihilation of the great anti-Christian confederation, which is said to be by the *epiphaneia* of his *parousia*; that is, by the appearing of his presence; which involves the implication that the presence ... is not manifested or discernible until then, thus showing that the Advent involves different phases, stages and times."

Again, on this same point, we referred in our last issue to St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians by George Milligan. This writer, who with James Hope Moulton produced for the world of Greek scholarship the monumental lexicon, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, is reputed to have

been one of the world's greatest Greek scholars. In his Thessalonians (a volume of nearly 200 pages, he devotes a whole chapter to the three words, parousia, epiphaneia, and apokalupsis, "in order to determine as exactly as possible the different shades of meaning between them." At the close of the chapter he summarizes his conclusions as follows:

"If we have been correct in the foregoing distinctions between the three words, it will be seen that, while all may be used to describe the return of the now exalted and glorified Lord, they do so from three distinct points of view."

The other point (this one derived from Vine's Expository Dictionary) is, that while the word parousia always has the significance of "presence," its context in some passages emphasizes the beginning of the period (the course of the period, and its conclusion, being implied). In other passages, the context emphasizes the course of the period; while in yet other passages, the context emphasizes its conclusion.

To assist the reader in tracing these points of emphasis, the twenty-four places in which parousia occurs in the New Testament, are arranged in tabular form on page 79 of this issue.

The suggestion has been made that differences of viewpoint, as to the meaning of parousia, might be reconciled, if care be taken to place the emphasis where the inspired writers intended.

7. At our Lord's First Advent many failed to learn from the signs which attested him that Messiah was in their midst. Even the disciples had been slow to recognize him and had needed a revelation from the Father to enable them to do so (Matt. 16:16, 17). The possibility that at his Second Advent they might experience a similar difficulty was probably back of their question: "What will be the sign of thy presence?" If the indications of his presence were to be so plain that none could fail to recognize him, there would seem to be no point to their question; no sign or signs would be necessary. On the other hand, if there was a possibility of his being present unrecognized, as had proved to be the case at his first advent, then a sign which would reveal his presence to them would be most desirable. "What, Lord, will that sign be?"

8. Our Lord's reply is seen to be divided into two main sections: (a) a description of the long interval which must elapse before the end of the Age and the period of his presence would be reached, and (b) a description of the end of the Age and period of his presence.

9. The long interval between the First and Second Advents known as the Gospel Age, was to be a time of tribulation. In the world it would be marked by wars, famines, pestilence, and earthquakes. The world would hate his true disciples, and in many cases they would undergo martyrdom. In the Church a great falling away would take place. False teachers would arise, deceiving many; and because iniquity (opposition to God's laws of truth, righteousness, justice, and love) would everywhere prevail, the love of many (*the many, the great majority*) of Christ's professed followers would wax cold. Notwithstanding all this God's good news would be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations (Matt. 24:3-14).

After thus describing the conditions which would obtain in both Church and world throughout the Gospel Age, and after warning them against false Christs, our Lord, in verse 27 (Matt. 24) comes to the heart of their question as to how they shall learn of his presence, and declares: "As the bright shining cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto; the west, so shall the presence of the Son of Man be."

In verses 37-39 he adds a further word: "As in the days of Noah, so shall also the presence of the Son of Man be." The point of comparison, as the context clearly shows, is not the arrival of Noah and the arrival of our Lord. It is not even the coming of the flood and the coming of our Lord. The comparison is between the days of Noah before the flood and the days of the presence of our Lord before the time of trouble with which this Gospel Age ends (Luke 17:26).

Moreover, the comparison is not between the respective degree of wickedness of the people living in the days of Noah and that of those living in the days of the second presence of our Lord. The point of comparison is the ignorance of the people. In both periods the people were in ignorance of the coming storms. In the case of Noah, except for his immediate family, no one heeded Noah's warnings; in the days of our Lord's second presence, similarly, the existing order of society will not know.

WATCH, THEREFORE

The first thing, then, to be remembered, from our Lord's own words, is that there will be no sign at all for the worldly. With this agrees the word of the Apostle Paul: "The day of the Lord cometh as a thief" (1 Thess. 5:1-3).

Not only will the people of the world be in ignorance of the presence of the Son of Man, our Lord warns, but unless they are alert, his disciples will be in danger of being in darkness as to his return. Is it asked: "Where does he thus warn?" We answer: In verse 42 and those which follow. There he brings this danger to their attention: "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. . . . if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh."

In other words, in reply to their question our Lord cautions them to remain alert, to be on the watch, and the implication is that when he did arrive, the watchers would be made aware of it; all others would be taken unawares.

With this word of our Lord the counsel of the Apostle Paul is found once more in harmony. In 1 Thessalonians 5:4, 5 he says: "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake *you as* a thief." Or to quote from another inspired writer, Daniel the Beloved: "None of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand" (Dan. 12:10).

In the foregoing paragraphs, and in the recent issues referred to in our opening paragraph earnest effort has been made to present our convictions in a Christian spirit, with due consideration of others who may view matters differently. We have made it clear, we trust, that so far as we are concerned, differences in viewpoint on the various phases and features of our Lord's Second Advent have not been, nor, please God, will they be, permitted to mar the sweet fellowship in Christ which should always obtain between the members of the one Body -- the Church.

Furthermore, we hope it has been made clear that we stand ready at all times to reconsider our views on this, as on all other matters of faith, and we shall most certainly abandon our present views should others come to our attention which, on examination, appear to us to be better supported by the Scriptures and by sound judgment. Grateful as we are for the light now shining, we nevertheless recognize with the Apostle that we see but dimly, as through an opaque glass, compared with the vision which will be ours ere long (1 Cor. 13:12); that if we imagine we already possess any true knowledge on this as on any other subject, we have as yet attained to no knowledge of the kind to which we ought to have attained (1 Cor. 8:2, Weymouth and Moffatt);

and that at present, at the very most, we are but learning bit by bit, whereas then-in only a very little while ("how short! how short!" - Hebrews 10:37, *Rotherham*), we shall understand as all along we have been understood by him (1 Cor. 13:12, *Moffatt*).

In our own studies we have found it helpful to group the "signs and groanings promised to precede a second birth," under five main captions, which may first be stated and then discussed, as follows:

1. Gentile Times
2. Ecclesiastical Heavens
3. Israel
4. General Social Conditions
5. Chronology

1. GENTILE TIMES

No one that is at all acquainted with the pages of history, and with the Book of Daniel, will question the statement that the broad outline of Gentile history, twice forecast by Daniel twenty-five hundred years ago (ch. 2 and 7), has had a remarkable fulfillment in the succession, order, and events of the four great empires, Babylon, MedoPersia, Greece, and Rome. Nor will such question the statement that the last of these four has been the greatest of them, as Daniel foretold.

Rome, however, at the time Daniel wrote, was, according to the historian, "a mere cluster of huts." Its existence was unnoticed and unknown beyond the limited regions of its neighbors in Italy. Yet Daniel, writing under the inspiration of God, of the One who calls things which be not as though they were (Rom. 4:17), sees this cluster of huts made over into a mighty empire, the mightiest of them all -- and tells us what he sees.

Now if this were the only "sign" we had, if no other line of evidence were available, if this grand outline of fulfilled prophecy were all -- if Scripture contained nothing else to guide us but this one broad outline of Gentile Times, would we not even then have real grounds for strong convictions that we are living in the very end of the Age?

Plainly -- so plainly that he who runs may read (Hab. 2:2) -- it was forecast in these Daniel prophecies that during the long centuries intervening, until he should come whose right it is (Ezek. 21:27), four great empires would hold sway in the affairs of men, four empires governed by Gentile rulers, and that the fourth should, in its final stage, give place to the Kingdom of God. Do we not find ourselves living at the close of the fourth world empire? Surely so, and not only at its close, but at the close of its last form, the Papacy, unless we greatly err. What then, are we to look for next? What indeed, but the Kingdom for which so long we have prayed.

However, let us not forget, what we have more than once noted in these pages, that the great time prophecies of the Bible are not to be measured from any one particular year to another, but from one era to another. This is so, because the rise and fall of nations must, in the very nature of the case, cover more or less extended eras. The fall of Israel and Judah covered a period of 160 years, culminating in the overthrow of their last king, Zedekiah. It should not surprise us then, if we find their restoration extending over a number of years, or decades, or even longer periods. What we should be on the lookout for is not a thunderbolt from the skies, but a *noticeable change* in the

trend of events. We should be watching and intelligently reading the signs of the times, and noting how they are fitting in with the prophetic forecasts.

(Continued in next issue)

- P. L. Read

Parousia

Arranged From Vine's Expository Dictionary, Vol. I, page 209

Second Advent Period

	Beginning	Course	Conclusion	Other
Applications				
Matthew				
1 Matt. 24:3		X		
2 Matt. 24:27			X	
3 Matt. 24:37		X		
4 Matt. 24:39		X		
5 1 Corinthians 15:23	X			
6 1 Corinthians 16:17				X
7 2 Corinthians 7:6				X
8 2 Corinthians 7:7				X
9 2 Corinthians 10:10				X
10 Philippians 1:26				X
11 Philippians 2:12				X
12 1 Thessalonians 2:19		X		
13 1 Thessalonians 3:13		X		
14 1 Thessalonians 4:15	X			
15 1 Thessalonians 5:23	X			
16 2 Thessalonians 2:1	X			
17 2 Thessalonians 2:8			X	
18 2 Thessalonians 2:9				X
19 James 5:7	X			
20 James 5:8	X			
21 2 Peter 1:16				X
22 2 Peter 3:4	X			
23 2 Peter 3:12				X
24 1 John 2:28	—	$\frac{X}{6}$	$\frac{=}{2}$	$\frac{=}{9}$
	7			

The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard

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

IN our first installment we endeavored to view this parable in proper relationship with its context. In our second installment we considered two applications -one to the young ruler and the other to the Jews and Gentiles. Here, in our third (and last) installment we consider the most important application.

"Yes" it may be said, "in the light of the foregoing explanation the meaning of the parable is plain; we see that God is just in putting first last and last first." But we have yet one more application of this parable to suggest, brethren-an application that we trust will be of even more value to us than either of the two already considered. And in this we shall no more seek to make every little detail fit than we have in the first two applications. That would be to waste your time and ours. But is there not one special lesson in this parable which we may apply to ourselves, a lesson which each of us may remember long after every other word in these two articles has faded from our minds? We think you will agree with us that there is, and that it has been very aptly stated by the Apostle Paul in three short. words found in Gal. 5:13, "By love serve."

Yes, it is not the **amount** of service we accomplish in our Lord's vineyard that matters in His sight, but the **spirit** in which that service is performed, the **motive** that underlies our activities in His cause. Here, then, we come on a thought which solves many of the difficulties of the parable. To 'be called into the vineyard is to be called into the service of God. What is the main purpose of that service? It is that we learn to trust in the love of God, to respond to it, and from love to God to show love to man. Now we may have given ourselves early in life to the religious duties and tasks in which this love for God and man is commonly expressed. We may have been diligent, steadfast, faithful, in discharging them. Moreover when the light of "Present Truth" came our way we may have eagerly embraced it, and, rejoicing in the special message of the "Harvest Time," been very active in its various ministries. Not only so, but when our dear Brother Russell was taken from us, and another apostasy began to set in, we, like the Church in Ephesus of old, may have tried those who called themselves Apostles, and were not, and have found them false, and we may have been amongst the very earliest to do so, and our voices raised the loudest in protest. But while giving good heed to our tasks and duties we may have failed to cultivate the spirit of loving dependence on God, and of fervent love towards our brethren. Like Peter, we may have thought too much of our contract, and have discharged our duty mainly with an eye to reward. And like him, besides being very ready to ask "What shall we have therefore?" we may be both hasty and harsh in our judgment of others who perhaps have had more difficulties to encounter than we, had to meet, and perhaps a great deal more to sacrifice. Like the first-called laborers of the parable we may agree with the Master for so much for the day; and when pay-time comes, we may be very forward to complain, although the contract on which we used to lay such stress has been very faithfully kept, that some of our brethren have received a great deal more than **we** think they have earned. And if we **are** of this spirit, mark what it is that we have done. We have discharged, perhaps, every duty that we know; we may not have shirked our tasks even in the heat of the day; nevertheless, we have failed in our main work. For all these tasks and duties were appointed to us mainly that we might grow in love to God and man; and we love God so little that we complain of His dealings with us; we love men so little that we grudge them what God gives them.

As a matter of fact our very best labors in God's vineyard must appear but child's play to His abler servants, and these, in their turn, having done their all, confess themselves with true humility to be but unprofitable servants. Instead of receiving a wage for working in His vineyard, we ought, like the apprentices of old, to be paying a substantial premium to the Master who has so graciously taken us into His employ. Ah! dear reader, if, as we trust, our hearts are really in tune with Him, if we have entered sympathetically into His plans and purposes, it will not be difficult for us to make the truest and best application of this parable.

God's Service is Its Own Reward

Is not the service of God its own reward, that we should be unduly concerned about how we are to be paid for it? or that we should spend any time comparing our wage with our brother's, or grudge that he should have as much as or more than we? If we recall the greatest happiness we have ever known, the purest and deepest, do we not find that it came in connection with our very labors for God? that it sprang from denying ourselves that we might do His will and minister to the wants of others? What is the main purpose of God in permitting us to labor in His vineyard at all? Surely not for any gain **He** may derive from our labors. From His standpoint our labors, could be readily dispensed with. Who that has spent any time at all in the service of the Master but does not realize this? We look back today upon our earlier labors, and blush to recall their futility, and awkwardness. Indeed we have a strong suspicion that He found it necessary to send some of His expert gardeners after us to repair the damage we did in our childish attempts at service. And while, we trust, our present efforts are not quite so immature as formerly, we doubt not but that, if we are privileged to continue our labors, a few more years, we shall look back on those of today, and wonder that so much imperfection still characterized them. It is possible that by some miraculous working of His power others may profit from our labors, just as we ourselves have had our own faith strengthened, our hope renewed, our love made deeper and broader, through the ministry of others; indeed we are all conscious of the mutual advantages which have been ours as the result of each other's labor of love; but it is nevertheless a solemn truth that the one who derives the chief gain from any service rendered is the one who labors, the one who performs the service. The laborer in the vineyard loses some of his awkwardness in handling his spade and other gardening tools; his puny muscles grow strong; he fills his lungs with the fresh, invigorating, sweet, wholesome, air of the vineyard; and thus, as a result of his labor, he promotes, retains, and enjoys good health.

But if the work be itself a reward, if it be our highest good and blessedness, if it would still be the best thing we could have even though there were no payment coming-would it not be both absurd and mean of us if we were to lay much stress on our wage? Ah! the parable should not puzzle us. It **could not** puzzle us if our minds were habitually illuminated by the truths we most surely believe. The first-called laborers had the longest spell of work; that was their true dignity, and blessedness, and reward, had they but known it; and that they should complain because those who had less work got an equal wage only proves that they were selfish, and greedy, and unspiritual. And if we are not unspiritual, we shall be able to say, when the problem of the parable is put before us: "Why, the work, of course, was a wage in itself; and it was but fair that those who had least of the work should have most of the pay." We shall be able to say: "Instead of grumbling that the late-called were put on equal terms with them, those who had spent the whole day of life in the Divine service, if they had known their true blessedness, would have made request on behalf of their fellow-laborers who came in later, 'Lord, as these have had less of Thy service, let them have more of Thy favor, and a larger reward than we who have already enjoyed so much of Thy favor and fellowship. For ourselves we desire no other reward save to serve Thee still and better.'"

Love never Faileth

If, then, the main teaching of the parable is clear; and if, while recognizing that it has many applications, we realize that its best and most practical application is to our own present-day labors for our Lord, let us beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, of the spirit which inspired Peter's demand: "We have followed Thee, what shall we have therefore?" of the selfishness and envy which moved the laborers in the vineyard to complain of the "goodman's" grace to those who had waited so long for work in vain. Whether we be early called or late called, so soon as we begin to boast of our superior privileges or our superior fidelity, even though the boasting be not aloud, but merely in our thoughts, so long as we are not content with rendering any service to God or man unless it be seen and approved both of men and of God; so long as our service is mainly animated by the hope of reward, or we grudge any reward or distinction vouchsafed to our brethren, we are like the Jews who objected to favor being extended to the Gentiles, we are like Peter in his worst mood instead of his best; we are in danger of being among the very last in the household and ministry of faith. So soon as we begin to look with suspicion on and to depreciate, to criticize and condemn our fellow-servants; so soon as we fail in the love that thinketh no evil, but which hopeth all things, and especially the very best things, of them, although we may be among the servants of Christ, we lack the Spirit of Christ; and although among the first in the Church on earth, we are putting ourselves last in the Kingdom of heaven. The true lesson of the parable is not a new one; it is the lesson which we have met many times before in the school of Christ;-the old lesson of faith and hope and **love**. By love, therefore, let us serve both God and man. Instead of being conscious of any service we have rendered, instead of boasting how much we have done, and dwelling in our thoughts on the recognition and reward we ought to receive for it, let us trust that, whatever man may do, God will do "whatsoever is right" by us, and rejoice that whatever our wage may be hereafter, here and now we have had the honor and reward of being called into His service. Let us love all men, especially the household of faith, and by sympathy in their joy become partakers of their reward.

"One more day's work for Jesus!
How glorious is my King!
'Tis joy, not duty,
'To show His beauty;
My soul mounts on the wing
At the mere thought
How Christ my life has bought.

"O blessed work for Jesus!
O rest at Jesus' feet!
There toil seems pleasure,
My wants are treasure,
And pain for Him is sweet.
Lord, if I may,
I'll serve another day!"

-- P. L. READ

Notes on Chronology

The question is asked: How old was Terah when his son Abraham was born? We reply: 130 years old. This figure is computed as follows: Age of Terah at time of his death.

Gen. 11:32	205
Age of Abraham at that time	

Gen. 12:4; Acts 7:4	75
Therefore, age of Terah at time of Abraham's birth must have been	<u>130</u>

This resulting figure would not be disputed but for a statement appearing in Genesis 11:26, where we read: "Terah lived 70 years [70 not 130] and begat Abram, Nahor and Haran." How is this apparently conflicting statement explained?

The answer is that, though mentioned first in Genesis 11:26, Abram was not the eldest son of Terah, and was not born until 60 years after his father was 70 years old, as above computed.

A parallel case may be seen in that of Noah and his three sons. If it be asked: How old was Noah when his son Shem was born? We would reply: 502 years old, computed as follows:

Age of Noah at time of flood	
Genesis 7:6	600
Add	2
Age of Noah two years after flood	<u>602</u>
At that time Shem was 100 years old	
Genesis 11:10	100
Therefore, at Shem's birth, Noah must have been	<u>502</u>

However, in Genesis 5:32, we read: "Noah was 500 years old [500 not 502] and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth." The explanation of the apparent discrepancy is that Shem, though mentioned first, in Genesis 5:32, was not the eldest son of Noah.

In studying points in Bible Chronology such as the foregoing, it must not be overlooked, as more than one writer has observed, that whenever a case of dignity or preeminence is to be marked, even the youngest son is listed before the others, though this is contrary to the general sequence followed in the Scriptures in other cases. Hence Shem, the youngest son of Noah, is mentioned before his elder brothers, Japheth and Ham; Moses, before his elder brother Aaron; and Abram, before his elder brothers Nahor and Haran. Similarly, Isaac is mentioned before Ishmael in 1 Chronicles 1:28, although Isaac was the younger of the two.

- P. L. Read

Dearer to Me

Hark, 'tis the voice of love
Calling to thee;
Spirit disconsolate,
Come unto Me;
Come, though with sorrow's dart
Bleedeth thy loyal heart,
Dearer to Me thou art;
Dearer to Me.

Bravely, the path of pain
Thy feet have trod,
Farther from earthly joy,
Nearer to God.
Child, I have heard thy plea;
Yearneth My heart to thee;
Dearer art thou to Me;
Dearer to Me.

Comforts' have fled from thee;
Let them depart.
I will, with sweeter joy,
Solace thy heart.
Loss thou hast borne for Me,
Loss shall be gain to thee.
Dearer art thou to Me;
Dearer to Me.

I have enough for thee;
All things are Mine.
Yea, I have kept for thee
Treasure divine.
Ask: thou shalt sharer be;
Seek: thou shalt nearer be;
Trust: thou shalt dearer be;
Dearer to Me.

Rise on the wings of love;
Soar into light;
Though earth grow dim to thee,
Heav'n shall grow bright.
Thou shalt the purer be;
Holier, dearer be;
Transformed to be like Me;
Dearer to Me.

- *Charles C. Tracy.*

Entered Into Rest

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