

THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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Remembering Christ

"This do in remembrance of me." - Luke 22:19.

WITH solemn joy, in smaller and larger groups (perhaps alone) we shall gather on the evening of Sunday, March 30, to observe -- in obedience to Him who did institute and command it -- the Lord's Supper. The days of the years of our pilgrimage have been many and hard, but again we draw nigh to the hallowed place in our Christian experience, once again to keep the Feast. "This is my body which is broken for you; eat ye all, of it. 'This is my blood which is shed for you; drink ye all, of it.'" How precious the familiar words. Heaven's treasury was exhausted that this table might be set; blessed is he that partaketh thereof. The sufficient emblems a crumb of bread-- a sip of wine: and oh! how we sing!

"This is the hour of banquet and of song;
From this, Thy table, let each shadow flee;
Here let me feast, and feasting still prolong
The brief bright hour of fellowship with Thee."

As regards the Memorial proper, its institution, significance, and its cluster of associated events, both typical and antitypical, we shall not enter into them particularly now. Concerning these glorious truths we have all been well informed. Our meditation will be devotional rather than expository. We would linger instead upon the words of our text:

"This Do in Remembrance of Me."

In remembrance of Thee? O Savior, we will indeed commemorate thy costly redemptive sacrifice. Yea, Lord, we will further remember all thy benefits toward us. For we remember the riches of thy prehuman existence, the glory which was thine with the Father before the world was. Thou, the firstborn of all creation, the beginning of the creation of God, wast by him as one brought up with him, daily his delight, rejoicing always before him. For he possessed thee in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. Thou wast set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. All things were made by thee, and without thee was not anything made that was made. When the foundations of the earth were laid, thou didst hear the morning stars sing together and all the sons of God shout for joy.

Yea, Lord, we do remember that in the fulness of time, thou, in -obedience to thy Father, didst lay aside thy glory, and wast born of a woman -- wast made flesh. Thou, so rich -- becamest poor *for* our sakes! We remember the circumstances of thy birth -- that thou wast laid in a manger because there was no room for thee in the inn! Thou earnest into the world made by thee, but the world knew thee not. Thou didst make thyself of no reputation and didst take upon, thee the form of a servant. Did they not call thee the Carpenter's son -- thou, the architect of the universe? Yea, the foxes had dens, and the birds, nests, but thou hadst no place to lay thy head! Thou camest to thine own, but thine own received thee not. Despised, rejected, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief! Of the people there was none with thee. How oft wouldst thou, in thy great love, have gathered them as a hen doth her chicks, but they would not! For thou hadst compassion on the multitude, for they were like sleep without a shepherd. O Savior, we do remember all this and more.

We remember how thou wentest about doing good, and manifesting thy glory. The blind received their sight, the lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, the deaf heard, the dead were raised, the multitudes were fed, and to the poor the Gospel was preached. Bartimeus, Jairus, the widow of Nain, Martha, Mary, Lazarus and many others--all did partake of thy wonderful grace. Did ever man speak as thou, didst speak? Did not all bear, witness and wonder at the gracious words which proceeded forth out of thy mouth? Words of spirit and life, words which the Father did give unto thee, wonderful words of life!

We remember Lord, as the last hour drew near, how thou didst steadfastly set thy face to go to Jerusalem. The cup, which the Father had given thee, thou wouldst' drink to the full!

"O holy Lamb of God!
Must Thou to slaughter go?
And on Thy sinless shoulders bear
Our heritage of woe?
Must Thou endure our grief
Our stripes be laid on Thee?
The sins of many must Thou take,
And thus our ransom be?"

The shadows lengthened. With desire thou didst desire to eat the last Passover with them, thy little ones, before thy suffering. Thou, when thy soul was full of sublime purpose, in pained silence didst hear their words of selfish strife, wounding thy spirit. (O Master! forgive us for all the many times since then that we have wounded thee.) Sublime was thy example of humble servitude, as kneeling before each one thou didst wash their feet. Unmindful of thyself, thy solicitude was all for them, whom thou wouldst not leave as orphans. Having loved thine own, thou didst love them to the end. For them, thou didst pray to the Father, and O blessed thought! not only for them but for us also who have believed on thee through their word!

We remember, dear Lord, as the awful hour of thy deepest humiliation arrived, that thou in agony of spirit didst seek the garden spot. O that we could have watched with thee one hour!

"Draw near, my heart, and gaze anew,
Where Jesus on that night withdrew,
To bear the load for thee;
Come read the love that in him wrought,
Come linger long in tender thought,
In lone Gethsemane."

Dear Lord, we must follow thee in our meditation for we remember thy betrayal. We remember the traitorous kiss, the armed band, the fleeing disciples. To face the powers of darkness thou wast left alone, and yet not alone, for the Father was with thee. But from this hour he did not save thee, for, for this cause camest thou unto this hour. Thou wast bound as a criminal and led before men of evil. Do we remember what followed? O Savior! can we forget thy burden, of suffering and the scenes of indignity and horror? How men smote thee -- mocked thee -- spat *upon* thee -- scourged thee and then -- O shameful ignominy -- condemned thee to be crucified!

"I see my Lord, the pure, the meek, the lowly,
Along the mournful way in sadness tread;
The thorns are on His brow, and He, the holy,
Bearing His cross, to Calvary is led,

"'Tis death's dark hour; yet calm Himself resigning,
E'en as a lamb that goeth to be slain,
The wine-press lone He treadeth, unrepining,
And falling blood-drops all His raiment stain."

We remember, precious Lord, though we little understand, the night thou didst pass through when by the grace of God thou didst taste death for every man. Thou hast once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that thou mightest bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them. We remember, dear Lord, that we Gentiles in time past were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. But now in thee, we who were far off are made nigh by thy blood, and through thee we have access by one spirit unto the Father. We are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, thou thyself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord, an habitation of God through the spirit.

We remember that through thy poverty, we who were dead in trespasses and sins, have been made rich. We have received forgiveness of sins, peace, life, sonship, joy, love, the hope of immortality. Thou hast become unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and deliverance. We are heirs of God and joint-heirs with thee; if so be that we suffer with thee, that we may be also glorified together -- to be kings and priests for a thousand years, to bless all the families of earth.

Dear Lord, our cup runneth over; our hearts *o'erflow* with gratitude! Our souls do magnify the Lord, and our spirits rejoice in God our Savior. Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Gladly, dear Master, do we gather about thy table to commemorate thee; to bless the *cup*, and to break the bread, the communion of thy blood and thy body. And so will we keep the Feast until that rapturous day when we shall drink the new *cup* with thee in the Kingdom of God.

- *W. J. Siekman*

"Many Infallible Proofs"

"The Lord is risen indeed." - Luke 24:34.

THE STORY of our Lord's resurrection is one of exquisite pathos and beauty. His crucifixion had created despair-had smitten the Shepherd and scattered the sheep. In loving secrecy and weeping silence the faithful few had removed the body from the cross and laid it in the new tomb of Joseph. The great feast came, and while Jerusalem kept holy-day, the disciples had to bear, as best they might, their !bitter shame and ruined hopes. But the women could not forget the marred visage, now rigid in death, but once so expressive of holy and beautiful life, and with characteristic devotion, waited to seize the earliest moment to look upon it once more before the effacing fingers of decay had swept the lines of its lingering beauty, and in the little ministrations of tender regretful affection at once express and relieve the sorrow that !burdened their hearts. So, in the dim dawn of the morning after the sabbath, they stole to the tomb, only to find in it no buried Lord. **The thought of a resurrection did not occur to them;** they thought only that the grave had been rifled. One of them, Mary of Magdala, fled, in an anguished woman's way, blind to everything but her awful loss, crying: "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." But the angels within the tomb, and the Lord without, made the tear-blinded women awake to the strange glad truth: "He is risen, as He said."

Begotten Again unto a Hope of Life by His Resurrection

Before this truth was brought home to them they were in despair. Their hopes were buried in His grave. They had trusted in Jesus, and had entertained high hopes, but now, since Jesus had died, they were sad, their hopes having withered. How different with them when the fact of His resurrection was made known to them! What joy displaced their dejection! It became true of them then, as it has of us who have believed since-they were, and we have been, begotten again unto a hope of life, by His resurrection. Because He lives we have grounds for hoping that we shall live also. In His resurrection lies our assurance.

It is an interesting study to trace in the Gospel narratives and in the Epistles, the harmony which obtains in the various references to the appearances of our Lord. Matthew, Mark and Luke, Peter, John and Paul all make mention of His resurrection. Each account is different, depending upon the point of view of the writer, but they are unanimous in affirming the fundamental fact that Jesus did indeed rise from the dead. Moreover it is not difficult to combine all these various appearances now distributed amongst the Gospel writers and in the Epistles, and arrange them into one complete and connected picture.. By so doing we perceive that our Lord's first work was that of consoling and encouraging. To Mary Magdalene and the other women He first appeared, turning their sorrow into joy. This was early in the morning on the very day He arose. That same day, in the afternoon, those two downcast disciples who were on their way to Emmaus found their hearts burning within them as a Stranger talked with them and finally revealed Himself as their Lord. Unable to contain themselves, although the hour was late, they hastened back to Jerusalem to tell the good news. But the Lord was traveling faster than they knew. Before they got there He had appeared to another; doubtless before He had appeared to themselves, even. There was one of His disciples whose heart was breaking-one who in an evil moment had denied His Lord. What passed 'between our Lord and Peter we do not know; however, we who are in any measure acquainted with Jesus and know something of His grace can well understand the peace and comfort which possessed Peter after that meeting. At all events, Peter had not been slow to tell the good news, for when the Emmaus disciples came breathlessly with their story they were told: "The

Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon." Then, once again, in the late evening of that wonderful resurrection day, while they were rehearsing their own experiences to the Apostles, and how Jesus had been known of them by the old familiar habit of His, of first blessing and then breaking the bread, He once more appeared in their midst, saying, "Peace be unto you."

That Glad Resurrection Day

On the very day of His resurrection, then, first to the women, then to Peter, next to the Emmaus disciples, lastly to the Eleven -- four times in all -- Jesus appeared, each time bringing a sense of peace and comfort, hope and joy. What a day to be remembered for all time!

A week later He appeared to the disciples again, this time for the special benefit of Thomas, who had been absent on the previous occasion, and who had doubted.

Some time later, just when we may not know precisely, Jesus appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, no doubt taking His last leave of the collective Church then. His next appearance seems to have been to James, His "brother," or "kinsman," as the word more exactly means. This appearance is mentioned by St. Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians, although it is not mentioned elsewhere in the Scriptures. St. Paul, we know, had become personally acquainted with James at Jerusalem, and no doubt learned about this appearance of Jesus from James himself.

Still another appearance to His disciples is recounted 'by the Apostle John, in the last chapter of his Gospel. Seven of the disciples had gone fishing. Perhaps they had grown weary with waiting for the Lord to manifest Himself again. We do not know. At all events they had toiled all night and caught nothing. And, it will be remembered, Jesus revealed Himself to them by telling them where to cast their net to secure a big catch of fish. Finally He took His last leave of them, just before His ascension, leading them out as far as Bethany, appointing them to be His witnesses -- witnesses not only of all the wondrous things He had done and taught in their midst during His ministry; witnesses not only of the fact that He had been crucified and buried; but witnesses especially of His resurrection.

Have I Not Seen Jesus Christ Our Lord?

And yet once more, in order that he, too, might qualify as a witness, Paul was given a glimpse of the resurrected Lord in that never-to-be-forgotten journey on the Damascus road.

St. Paul never forgot this commission. In all his Epistles he speaks of the resurrection of Christ. And when, at the close of his life, the Apostle writes to his son in the faith, Timothy, he reiterates the matter in these words: "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead, according to my Gospel. But while he mentions the resurrection in all his Epistles, there is one Epistle in which he undertakes to expound the matter in great detail. It is his first letter to the Corinthians. There, in the fifteenth chapter, he unfolds the subject at length, affirming his faith, first, in the resurrection of Jesus; second, in that of the world of mankind as a whole; and third (third in point of mention, though second in order of accomplishment), in that of the Church. Most of the discussion we hope to present in the remainder of this series of meditations will be drawn from this heaven-sent exposition by "our beloved brother" Paul. However, for this meditation let us content ourselves with reviewing the ground already covered.

How Firm a Foundation is Laid for Our Faith!

The doctrine of the resurrection is so fundamental to our faith that all Christians should be thoroughly established therein -- "able to give a reason" for their own hope, and their hopes on behalf of others. Junior students of the Scriptures, especially, and all newly consecrated ones, are urged to become very familiar with all the Bible has to say on this most important subject; while those who have been long in the way will, if they join us in these meditations, experience once again the comfort to be derived from a consideration of "these words." (1 Thess. 4:18.) For example, in the previous paragraphs we have listed all the recorded appearances of our Lord. Let each ask himself the question: Do I know how many there were? To whom they were vouchsafed? In what order they occurred? Where they took place? What the total period of time was during which they all happened? -- all, that is to say, except that to Paul. To get the most out of this first meditation the reader will do well to trace in his own Bible the ten appearances mentioned, and to prayerfully ponder the related contexts of each. Those who do so for the first time will be astonished to find how firm a foundation is laid for their faith; that to the Apostles our Lord showed Himself alive after His passion by "many infallible proofs, being seen of them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God." - Acts 1:3.

Our Lord Showed Himself Alive

To assist the student to accomplish, with the minimum effort, the searching of the Scriptures suggested in the previous paragraph we submit the following brief summary:

Appearance No. 1.

To whom-Mary Magdalene and the other women.
Place-At the sepulcher, Jerusalem.
Time-Resurrection Day, early morning.
Scripture-Matt. 28:9; Mark 16:9; John 20:1-18.

Appearance No. 2.

To whom-Peter.
Place-Secret meeting.
Time-Resurrection Day, during daytime.
Scripture-Luke 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5.

Appearance No. 3.

To whom-Cleopas and another.
Place-On road to Emmaus.
Time-Resurrection Day, towards evening.
Scripture-Mark 16:12; Luke 24:13-35.

Appearance No. 4.

To whom-Ten Apostles and others (Thomas absent).
Place-Jerusalem.
Time-Resurrection Day, evening.
Scripture-Mark 16:14; Luke 24:36; John 20:19; 1 Cor. 15:5.

Appearance No. 5.

To whom-Thomas and the rest.

Place-Jerusalem (most probably the same place and circumstances as in appearance No. 4).

Time-The first day of the next week.

Scripture-John 20:26-29.

Appearance No. 6.

To whom-The seven.

Place-By the Sea of Tiberias.

Time-Uncertain (This was the third appearance to the "disciples"-the previous two being appearances Nos. 4 and 5).

Scripture-John 21:14.

Appearance No. 7.

To whom-The Eleven in the midst of five hundred brethren.

Note: Matthew mentions only those who were receiving the apostolic commission.

Place-Galilee.

Time-Uncertain.

Scripture-Matt. 28:16; Mark 16:7; 1 Cor. 15:6.

Appearance No. 8.

To whom-James.

Place-Uncertain (Paul probably learned about this appearance from James himself).

Time-Uncertain.

Scripture-1 Cor. 15:7.

Appearance No. 9.

To whom-The Eleven.

Place-Bethany.

Time-Ascension Day (at the close of forty days).

Scripture-Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:6-9; 1 Cor. 15:7.

Appearance No. 10.

To whom-Saul (afterwards called Paul).

Place-On the Damascus road.

Time-Some time after the Ascension.

Scripture-Acts 9:5; 1 Cor. 15:8.

"This Jesus Hath God Raised Up"

It is strengthening, too, to faith and consecration, to trace in the Acts of the Apostles how our Lord's chosen "witnesses," -- witnesses of His resurrection -- (John 15:27; Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8, 22) -- proceeded to carry out their commission. Our Lord had said: "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." But first they were to receive "power." "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem," was His word, "until ye be endued with power from on High." (Luke 24:49.) Accordingly we find them waiting at Jerusalem in prayer and supplication (Acts 1:14), until they had received the promise of the Father. Then commenced the work of witnessing, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:4.) One cannot but be impressed with the prominence given to the "resurrection of Jesus" in this, their first witness given under the guidance and in the power of the Holy Spirit:

"Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth . . . by wicked hands have crucified .and slain; **whom God raised up**, having loosed the pains ["grip," Fenton] of death; because it was not possible that He should be holden of it." - Acts 2:22-24.

"This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses." - Acts 2:32.

"They taught the people, and **preached through** Jesus the resurrection from the dead." - Acts 4:2.

"Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, **whom God raised from the dead**, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole." - Acts 4:10.

"The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew." - Acts 5:30.

Thus it was that at Jerusalem "with great power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all." - Acts 4:33.

"I know that my Redeemer lives;
What joy the blest assurance gives!
He lives, He lives, who once was dead;
He lives, my everlasting Head!

"He lives, to bless me with His love;
He lives, who bought me with His blood;
He lives, my hungry soul to feed;
He lives, my help in time of need.

"He lives, and grants me daily strength;
Through Him I soon shall conquer death;
Then all His glories I'll declare,
That all the world His life may share."

- P. L. Read

Ten Visions of Christ Triumphant

Vision 9. The Last Conflict. Vision 10. The Thousand Years.

IT IS the last conflict which is the subject of vision 9. The story is found in the nineteenth chapter of Revelation. Following an important sequence in which the Revelator hears the announcement of the "marriage supper of the Lamb," indicating that at this point the completed Church of this present Age as been fully gathered to eternal association in the heavens with the Lord Christ, there comes an aspect of the Advent in which that resurrected and glorified company directly participates from the celestial realm. This is the point of history at which the reality of the Advent is forced home upon the peoples of earth. In some unmistakable manner no one will be able to deny the fact; it will be true that in some very definite manner all peoples of earth shall "*see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, " as Jesus predicted in Matthew 24:30.*

VISION NO. 9

The vision as it is unfolded in chapter Rev. 19:11-21 opens with the spectacle of a majestic figure upon a white horse descending from the heavens. He is a martial figure, armed for combat, crowned to denote that he is also a king -in fact his name is given as "*King of kings and Lord of lords.* " He is also designated "*The Word [Logos] of God.* " Both titles identify the Rider as the Lord Jesus Christ. He comes as a warrior; "*in righteousness he doth judge and make war*" (Rev. 19:11). He is followed by "*the armies which were in heaven*" all upon white horses and clothed in fine linen (Rev. 19:14). This is a symbol of the resurrected Church, for "*to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints*" (Rev. 19:8). This then is the revelation of Christ and his Church to the world

at the extreme end of the Age when Heaven actively intervenes in earth's affairs to quell all opposition and initiate the Millennial or Messianic era. Thus Rev. 19:15 comes in naturally at this point: "*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.* " This is an allusion from the Old Testament. The "rod of iron" is the *shebet*, which is the word used for both a king's scepter and a shepherd's crook. In this case, where "rule" is *poimaino*, meaning to shepherd a flock, the true meaning of the phrase is that Christ will shepherd the nations with his shepherding crook, by no means so oppressive a process as might be surmised from the mistranslation "rule them with a rod of iron." The "sharp sword," be it noted, comes from his mouth; it is the piercing and penetrating power of his message and his teaching which will "smite" the nations, a clear and incisive ax position of right and wrong which will vindicate the righteously inclined and condemn the unrighteous. Isaiah had the same idea in mind when he said, referring to this precise same event in history "*he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked*" (Isa. 11:4). So our Lord is revealed to the world as their Deliverer, to put down all forces of evil and injustice and establish an era of peace and security in which all men will be able to develop their full potential for useful and happy living.

At this point battle is joined "*I saw the wild beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army*" (Rev. 19:19).

The "wild beast" is a symbolic figure appearing at various points in the Book of Revelation to picture, in general terms, the whole conglomeration of religious-cum-political power which, arising from the ruins of the Roman empire in the early centuries of the Christian era, progressively extended its scope and influence until a thousand or more years later it had attained worldwide dimensions. Upon the well known principle that `all power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely" the "wild-beast" justified its Biblical name by using its power to the oppression of men in general. Now here there is pictured a complete alliance between what is left of this system in the Last Days, and the kings and rulers of all the earth, of whatever ideology or political complexion, to resist the threat to their interests from above. In what way they are able to sense the nature of this celestial invasion, and with what kind of weapons they propose to achieve their object, is by no means clear in the Revelation passage. It is evident, however, that this vision in Revelation is a highly symbolized representation of the same event in history that is foreseen by the prophets Ezekiel and Zechariah (Ezek. 38-39; Zech. 14). They saw the last conflict of this Age in terms of a united onslaught by the nations from the four quarters of the earth upon the earthly people of God, purified Israel, dwelling at peace in its own land, and the intervention of Heaven to save Israel, defeat the attackers, and immediately establish the Millennial kingdom. Be the details what they may, the vision here in Revelation pictures a final conflict at the end of this Age between the incoming beneficent powers of Heaven and the united powers of evil of the earth, determined to resist and prevent the introduction of a completely just and beneficent rulership over mankind. As might be expected, Heaven is the victor and the opponents are dispersed. As Isaiah (Isa. 11 & Isa. 32), says of this stupendous event and the era of peace and blessing that will follow, *"Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment... the spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the reverence of the Lord.... and my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places . . . they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy kingdom, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea . . . and the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. "*

VISION NO. 10

The culmination of the whole Bible story, its history, prophecy and theology, is reached in the 20th chapter of Revelation where John sees the triumphant Lord, having vanquished all enemies, seizing and rendering impotent the arch-enemy of God and man, the Devil, and then ascending the throne of the earth, in company with his Church, and reigning over the nations for the predicted thousand years, the Millennium. The result of this reign is the conversion of all who, an be persuaded of those who formerly had been alien from God, the passing out of life of any who reject the opportunity, and the entry of mankind into the eternal state in a condition of complete unity with God and Christ. Unrighteousness and death will no longer exist; the whole creation in which man is concerned will have attained the position towards which God has been working from the start, and his human creatures will inherit everlasting life in complete peace and contentment.

Here in the vision John first saw a mighty angel descending from heaven with a great chain in his hand (Rev. 20:1), proceeding to lay hold on *"the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan"* and bind him for the thousand years. Having thus bound him, he *"cast him into the abyss, and shut him up, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be fulfilled. "* This, obviously, is an essential preliminary to the resurrection of the dead and their induction, with the then living, into the new order of things in which the outward practice of evil is completely restrained, which is characteristic of the Millennial reign of Christ. Nothing shall hurt nor destroy, says Isaiah, speaking of that blessed time (Isa. 11:9) and again *"the work of*

righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever" (Isa. 32:17). Such condition of society can only obtain when the powers of evil have themselves been eliminated or restrained by a superior power for good. The 19th chapter of Revelation pictures the annihilation of all man-made systems of evil at the end of this Age; there remains only the Devil himself to be dealt with and then the evangelical work of the next Age, the Millennium, will be able to proceed without let or hindrance.

That there is such a malevolent spiritual intelligence actively moving in the affairs of men is plainly inferred in the Scriptures and that this intelligence, the spirit of evil, irrevocably antagonistic to God and to every element of right doing, is to be annihilated at the end, is indicated. The story of man's creation and the Garden of Eden, with which Bible history opens, is founded upon the principle that man was created perfect, upright, sinless and undying, that an evil and hostile intelligence from beyond man's world persuaded our first progenitors into sin, and that death came upon men as a logical consequence. The reason why God has permitted the coexistence of sin and evil with right-doing and good throughout human history until the present is one for thought and discussion but the Bible is clear that this permission is for a wise purpose and will not endure forever. A time is to come in the progress of the Divine Plan, and before that Plan has come to its consummation so far as man is concerned, when the Prince of all evil, and all his works, will perish together.

This final judgment is not pictured here in these first three verses of Revelation 20. The chapter goes on to cover the whole duration of the Millennium and it is only at its close that the restraints on the Prince of evil are relaxed. He is shown then to be still unrepentant and rebellious, and so comes to his final end. When it is remembered that the thousand-year Millennial Age is appointed by God as the final period and opportunity for conversion and acceptance of the way of life for all mankind--and incidentally for the rebellious angels of Genesis 6 also -- (see Acts 17:31; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3) it would seem logical that even the one who was responsible for the introduction of evil into the world and has fostered it ever since should have the same opportunity. It is always and gloriously true that our God is *"not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"* (1 Pet. 3:9). It was to Ezekiel that the Lord uttered the immortal words *"Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, saith the Lord God, and not that he should return from his ways, and live?"* (Ezek. 18:23). But there is a definite inference in the Old Testament that the Most High, in the exercise of his supreme foreknowledge, does know that this particular creation of his own hands will at the end prove impervious to his persuasion and his goodness and will go deliberately into the darkness rather than acknowledge and practice that which is good and right. The two well-known passages in Isaiah and Ezekiel which are taken to be allusions to his career and destiny (Isa. 14:4-20; Ezek. 28:12-29), *"thou shalt be brought down to Sheol, to the sides of the pit," "I will bring thee to ashes up on the earth ... and never shalt thou be any more"* have a terrible finality about them which can hardly bear any other interpretation.

So at the beginning of the Millennium the Devil is cast into the abyss. In Jewish lore the abyss was a place, or condition, below and remote from Hades, the abode of the dead, in which contact or communication with the world of the living was impossible. Peter describes the rebellious angels of Genesis 6 as being confined, after their sin, in Tartarus (*"God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell"* -- *tartarus*, the only occurrence of this word in the N.T. - 2 Pet. 2:4). Tartarus in Greek mythology was a place as far below Hades as Hades was below Earth, the eternal prison of the Titans, the demi-gods who rebelled against the chief gods--clearly derived from the original Biblical episode of the rebellious angels, -- and so the Greek Tartarus is analogous to the Hebrew abyss. (An allusion to this is found in Luke 8:31 where the demons expelled from the demented man besought Jesus *"that he would not command them to go out into the deep"* where *"deep"* is, in the Greek, *abyss*.) For the entire period of the thousand years, then,

the Devil is impotent, unable to influence the world of men in any way, and perhaps able only to observe the beneficent results of the Messianic administration and the life-giving results which stem from the reign of Christ.

This "binding of Satan" represents a vital turning-point in the work of the Second Advent. Several of the preceding visions of Christ triumphant in the Book of Revelation picture different aspects of what may be termed the preliminary events of the "days of the Son of Man" and all of these have their place during the closing days of this present Age. The King coming upon a white cloud to reap the harvest of the earth pictures our Lord's Advent for the gathering of his Church; the angel proclaiming the fall of great Babylon his oversight of the forces which disrupt the present corrupt world order and bring it to ruin; the Rider on the White Horse leading the armies of Heaven into battle against the kings of the earth the final conflict which elsewhere is called Armageddon. But after Armageddon the kingship of this earth passes into the hands of our Lord Jesus Christ and thereafter the world enters an era of peace. It seems logical to expect that this "binding of Satan" is the next event on the program and perhaps almost immediately following the victorious conflict of Revelation 19. Next in order would come the resurrection of the dead and this is where the succeeding verses of Revelation 20 have their place.

"I saw thrones" says John (Rev. 20:4) "and they that sat upon them . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

The "marriage of the Lamb" *will* have already taken place-that event, which takes place in the celestial sphere and is not perceptible on earth, is alluded to in chapter 19. Following that climax to the earthly course of the Church comes the descent from Heaven with the Lord himself and the conflict of Revelation 19, which leaves Heaven in full control of Earth and Christ the undisputed ruler. It is significant though that nothing is said in that chapter about the Church reigning with Christ; this appears for the first time in chapter 20. It is almost as if the *de facto* reign of Christ, with his Church, does not commence until the last enemy, the Devil, is rendered powerless. From that point, it may be said, the real work of the Millennium proceeds. And all the Scripture doctrine as well as prophecy concurs in saying that the Church of Christ, the complete company of his faithful disciples and followers throughout this present Age, are to be actively associated with him in the work of that Age.

What that work involves is more clearly detailed in chapters 21 and 22. The remainder of chapter 20 is taken up with a brief summary of the Millennium, leading up to the final judgment at its end. Then John goes back and at greater leisure sketches in the detail of that world which is to be. There is a new world, for the old world has passed away, and God now is going to dwell with men in the persons of his Son Jesus Christ and the members of his Church. There will be no more death, no tears, sorrow nor crying; no more pain. All the former things have passed away and the universal Father in Heaven will make all things new.

In the ecstasy of that revelation John lifted up his eyes to heaven and beheld the resplendent vision of the New Jerusalem descending to earth. Much of the inspiration for that vision must have come from Ezekiel. He too saw the city of God with its central Temple, established in the earth at the time of man's deliverance from evil. Prophet and Apostle alike experienced the same preview, in symbol, of the then far future Millennial world. A glorious city, to be the home of redeemed mankind, surrounding a magnificent Throne from which would flow the life-giving waters of eternal life, a Throne on which were seated the Lord God Almighty, Father and Creator of all men, the Lord Jesus Christ, Saviour and King, and the Church his Bride, all ready for the final phase in the process of human salvation. And John saw what Ezekiel had seen so many centuries before him, a stream, a river, of water of life, issuing forth from the Throne and

reaching out into all the world, with trees on its banks, trees of life, whose fruit should be for food and leaves for healing, for the food and healing of the nations, of all mankind.

So this final aspect of the Second Advent, enduring the full thousand years of the Millennium, will abolish sin and death and all unhappiness, introducing in their stead right and life and eternal felicity. *"The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."* The purpose for which Christ came to earth, suffered and died, will have been fully and gloriously accomplished, and Christ will be triumphant over all. The closing words of the final vision in the last book of God's revelation to man come from our victorious Lord and his exalted Church, his Bride. *"The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. "*

- A. O. Hudson

"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 our January-February issue we grouped the "signs and groanings promised to precede a second birth" under five main captions, and briefly considered the first of these, namely, Gentile Times. Here we discuss the second, or signs in the ecclesiastical heavens.

2. ECCLESIASTICAL HEAVENS

One of the signs for which the disciples were to be on the watch, as indicating the nearness of his return, is stated by our Lord in Luke 21:26, as follows: "The powers of heaven shall be shaken." What do these words mean and, furthermore, has this sign been seen yet?

We answer: In our view the main reference is to the symbolic heavens - the ecclesiastical heavens -- the powers of spiritual control, to which also St. Peter referred (2 Pet. 3:12, 13).* Has the shaking taken place? We think so -- we think the shaking has been in progress for years and will continue *until* only those things which cannot be shaken remain (Heb. 12:26-29). Let us compare Scripture with Scripture and prophecy with history and see if these things be so.

*For an interesting discussion of a possible literal fulfillment see *Scripture Studies, Vol. IV*, pages D583-D590.

We turn first to the Book of Revelation, that wonderful prophecy sent and signified (told in signs and symbols) by our risen Lord, some sixty years after his ascension. Its theme, as we understand it, while largely future from the date John received the vision, was not a revelation of remote events in which the Church, from the days of the Apostles until now, has had no practical interest, but of events which, nineteen hundred years ago, were, as to the *commencement* of their fulfillment, near at hand. It was of "things which must shortly come to pass." The *commencement* of their fulfillment was *then*, in the first century of the Gospel Age. The time was then "at hand" (Rev. 1:1; Rev. 1:3; Rev. 22:6).

In this Book two of the Bible's seven key prophecies are given. One of the two is that of the Seven Candlesticks (ch. 1). The other is given in chapter 17, and is the interpretation of the Woman, Babylon the Great, and of the seven-headed, ten-horned Beast that carried her.

The Candlesticks are interpreted by our Lord himself and declared to be the seven Churches (Rev. 1:20). Doubtless the vision was intended to show the wise and loving watch-care which he himself would exercise over the one true Church throughout the seven successive periods of its history, from the days of the Apostles until now.

Contrasted with the history of the true Church is the history of the false. In the seventeenth and following chapters both are doubly symbolized, as women and as cities. The Harlot City is arrayed in purple and scarlet color, decked with gold and precious stones and pearls; while the Bride, the New Jerusalem, is arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of the saints, and has the glory of God. The one is the associate of the Beast, the other of the Lamb. The one is drunken with the blood of saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; the other consists of saints and includes many of the martyrs. The one is punished with temporal and eternal judgments; the other is rewarded with everlasting honor and felicity.

THE POWER OF ANTICHRIST SHAKEN

Daniel, centuries before, in his vision of Gentile dominion symbolized by four wild beasts, had drawn attention to a little horn on the head of the fourth beast -- a horn before whom three of the previous ten horns were plucked up by the roots; a horn, moreover, which had eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth speaking great things (Dan. 7:8); a power, apparently, which should arise from within the very Church itself and, while retaining the name of Christ, become a mighty anti-Christian system and, succeeding the Pagan Caesars, rule over all the nations of the world. This apostate church system, which from the Book of Revelation we note is destined to be destroyed at the end of the Age (Rev. 18:8), when the marriage of the true Church is consummated (Rev. 19:7), is shown by Daniel also to meet its destruction then (Dan. 7:11, 26). St. Paul likewise joins in this prediction (2 Thess. 2:9, 10).

Turning to the pages of history, what do we find? The very thing predicted *has occurred*. Gross corruption, worldly ambition, and carnal strife did rapidly develop in the Church after Christianity was embraced by Constantine. A ruling ecclesiastical system did arise at Rome on the fall of the old Roman Empire in the fifth and sixth centuries. This system, the great Papal dynasty, corrupted the Gospel, opposed the truth, and wore out the saints, as had been predicted (Dan. 7:25). At long last came the Reformation, liberating many members of the true Church. (Incidentally, millions of others, including great numbers of the irreligious element of mankind, at that time began to throw off the Roman yoke.) This departure from Rome has" continued since then, and in recent times has been accelerated. How little *power and* influence does this system possess in Europe today, compared with its former might!

And what of the United States? Here, too, within the Roman Catholic Church, rebellion is fierce, with priests abandoning their calling, nuns fleeing their convents, and bewildered laymen forming free-lance religious movements. The power of this part of the Ecclesiastical Heavens has been shaken indeed.

As we ponder these things, the question must naturally arise: What next? If the great apostasy has thus arisen, as was predicted, and if, after reaching the zenith of its power, it has been on the decline since the Reformation, what is the next thing in order? According to our understanding of the matter there is but one more thing to occur. The apostasy of this false religious system has run its course. Its complete destruction is due. According to the prediction in Daniel, "They shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it *unto the end*." From St. Paul we learn that the Lord Jesus will paralyze the Lawless one "with the forthshining of his presence" (2 Thess. 2:9, 10, *Rotherham*). Effects are produced only by causes. They do not "just happen." We can see the paralyzing effect. Our conviction is strong that the cause which produced it was none other than the one predicted -- the forthshining of our Lord's presence. What other cause would have been adequate? Could anything less than the "spirit of his mouth" and the "forthshining of his presence" have done it?

MOTHER OF HARLOTS

Moreover, if we turn from Papacy, the Antichrist, to the Church over which Antichrist ruled so long, we reach the same conclusions. That Church, to our understanding, is represented in the Book of Revelation as a Woman riding the Beast (Rev. 17); that is to say, an ecclesiastical system is identified with the state power of Rome, influencing and guiding the tenfold commonwealth of nations on the one hand and, from another point of view, being upheld by it (Rev. 17:12-14, 17).

But in "the time of the end" the ten kingdoms rebel against their would-be guide, throw off her yoke, hate her, spoil her, and consume her (Rev. 17:16).

Again we turn to history to learn from its pages what, if any part, of this prediction has been fulfilled. Here we find that the kingdoms of Europe that arose on the fall of the old Roman Empire, voluntarily lent their support and gave their allegiance to the Church of Rome for about a thousand years - a false millennium, if you please. But history also records how, as the result of her gross corruptions these self-same kingdoms came to loathe, despise, and reject her teachings, her government, and her guidance; how, for the past more than four hundred years they have thrown off her control, denied her claims for support, and forsaken her company. Reviewing carefully the history of Roman Catholicism, as foretold by inspired writers, we inquire: "What next?" The answer comes again, as clearly as before -- only her final fall under divine judgment; that final fall of Babylon which immediately precedes the marriage of the Lamb (Rev. 18:8; 19:7).

DAUGHTERS OF THE MOTHER

In the foregoing we have identified the "Mother of Harlots" as the Roman Catholic Church in its various aspects. Most Protestant commentators do likewise. However, they fail to see, what to us is all too apparent, that this symbol includes also the Protestant Church systems *and all who partake of the sectarian spirit*. In this connection the following comment from the pen of Pastor Russell is most instructive:

"Names were formerly given as expressions of character or work.... The name Babylon, applied by the Spirit to the Church of Rome expresses her character, for Babylon means mixture -- confusion. This union of the Woman (church) with the Beast (empire) constitutes the spiritual harlotry of which she is guilty.

"But the name (Babylon) applies to her entire family; her daughters inherit both her nature and name, for she is a 'mother of harlots' and her works they do."

Elsewhere he wrote: "All fallen sects, from which the inward spirit of vital religion has departed (or is departing) bear upon their foreheads the likeness or semblance of the 'Mother of Harlots' and of all abominations."

Perhaps as good a word as any to describe the critical unease pervading the Protestant Churches in America today is the word "rebellion." This is particularly true of youth. Part of this rebellion is against church bureaucracy expressed through endless committees, commissions, and councils which appear to youth to have little to do with the Christian faith they would like to see practiced.

Another reason for their rebellion is Vietnam. Among young adults the tragedy of the futile war has been heightened by the seeming identification of Christian churches with the "establishment" that maintains it.

Other reasons that youth gives for its rebellion against the inherited church traditions include their conviction that the church is outdated, and that it is not relevant in today's world.

Again in the colleges and universities the "God is dead" controversy has shaken the theological student world.

Not the least disturbing element in American churches today has been the advent of Black Power with its demands for the Christian Churches of America to make reparations of \$500 million due to the role of the Christian and Jewish religions in exploiting the black people in this country.

Have the powers of the Protestant part of the ecclesiastical heavens been shaken? To us it seems so. In the Reformation days the central theme was the Gospel -faith in the redemption accomplished by our Lord. With little or no understanding of the philosophy underlying it, the faithful few nevertheless trusted for salvation in the ransom sacrifice of Christ-they realized their need of a Savior, of one who would save them from sin and death, not merely their need of a teacher or noble example. However, in our time, the day of Protestantism's decline, not only has the Gospel sunlight become largely darkened, and the moon (the Mosaic foreshadowings of the Gospel) become turned into blood (the typical sacrifices of Israel being considered a form of barbarism), not only have the true stars (the Apostles) withdrawn their shining (their teachings being no longer held as authoritative), but the man-ordained luminaries of the present ecclesiastical heavens have been shaken from the spiritual leadership formerly claimed, to the level of earthly moralists (Matt. 24:29; Isa. 13:1-10; Joel 2:10). They have not repudiated the blasphemous doctrines of "hell," "non-elect infants," etc., but they are no longer able to preach them if they would, for their congregations today are, for the most part, too enlightened to listen to such monstrous absurdities. The necessity is thus laid upon them to find another Gospel (?). However, they are without knowledge of God's true Plan for the future of our race. Consequently they turn to the Gospel (?) of "good works," "moral uplift," anti-slum endeavors, Christian-citizenship movements, etc. We have no quarrel with such attempts to ameliorate the condition of our race. Quite to the contrary. We have every sympathy with them and, in compliance with the Apostolic admonition to do good unto all men as we have opportunity (Gal. 6:10), are pleased to cooperate with them in all reasonable ways, as we are able. But such Gospels (?) have hope for this life only. They are poor substitutes for the "everlasting Gospel" of "life everlasting" to be enjoyed by the faithful in "the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ" (Rev. 14:6; 1 Tim. 1:16; 2 Pet. 1:11). Indeed, if offered as "substitutes," they are harmful; *thus* offered they are anti-Christian. By descending thus to this lower level of teaching, do not these Protestant luminaries themselves furnish the evidence that they have been shaken from their former exalted position as "stars" in the ecclesiastical heaven? And if so, are we not right in recognizing this as one of the signs predicted?

WHAT SHOULD BE OUR ATTITUDE?

Before closing this, the sixth installment in the series, there is a most important observation we should not fail to make. While, in the foregoing paragraphs, we have interpreted the "Mother of Harlots" symbol as finding its fulfillment in the Catholic and Protestant Ecclesiastical systems, we are not to be understood as speaking anything whatever against godly Christians within these systems, now or throughout their history. Even at this late date there are doubtless still some consecrated children of God in their midst. Our remarks have to do solely with the church systems themselves, not with the individuals of which they are composed. In all the various church associations of Christendom today there are doubtless some dear people whose hearts are very much in advance of their heads, and who, up to the light they possess, are seeking to do the will of God. Some have raised the question: Is it possible that any of the "little flock" could today make their "calling and election" sure, while continuing their membership in the various church systems, such as Catholic, Baptist, Lutheran, etc.? Our reply has been that this is a question which it is not for us to answer. It is a matter for the individual's own conscience. As the Apostle exhorts: "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind" (Rom. 14:5). It would be a violation of our own conscience for us to hold membership in any of the church systems, but we would not presume to judge others. To his own Master each must stand or fall. In due time the Lord will

render a decision in every case and his judgment will be unerring. He would have us, we think, very lenient in our attitude towards any with whom we may come in touch, who, though continuing membership in a church system, manifest a Christian spirit, and who are disposed to fellowship with us to any extent. As systems, all denominations have been cast off, we think; the individuals within the systems, however, are considered apart from the denomination concerned, and only the Lord can read the heart. A great deal will depend, in each case, upon the degree of light possessed. We, ourselves, have been highly favored; *it is for us to be on guard lest the spirit of sectarianism creep upon us unawares*. We counsel all to stand free, not only from, church systems, but from all parties, sects, and creeds of men -- from all "confessions of faith," as Pastor Russell once put it. As for others, if in the Lord's providence it seems best to him to permit some to complete their calling and election without leaving Babylon, or without entirely abandoning all creeds of men or confessions of faith, that would be our will for *them*. Generally, however, we would expect, at this late hour in the Gospel Age, that not many who, failing to perceive Babylon's true condition or for other reasons, remain in her will be amongst those who one day will hear the Master's "Well done."

(Continued in next issue)

- P. L. Read

My Song

So long have I dreamed of the beautiful goal,
That a touch of its sunshine has lit up my soul;
Its chords are all thrilling, with music divine,
And its song is forever, "Dear Jesus is mine!"

The bird, when the tempest is raging with power,
Flies in haste to her snug little nest in the bower;
Thus safe 'neath his wing I can sweetly recline,
And sing on forever, "Dear Jesus is mine!"

When beautiful Eden awakes from the fires,
And the conflict of ages of sorrow expires,
In the great restitution, and glory divine,
I'll still sing in Paradise, "Jesus is mine!"

A Pilgrim's Reverie

"So he bringeth them unto their desired haven." - Psalm 107:30.

WHAT would life be without its bridges and its fords, its resting spots where we recline beneath the blossoming boughs and beside the still waters of quietness? What would it be without its royal summits where we gather to our hearts visions of the Home Land that lies beyond the tiresome journey, its halls of friendship where hand grips hand with the earnestness of true love, and heart becomes knit to heart in confidence and trust? And last, but not least, how important its starting places, where having taken a retrospective glance along the years and braced our hearts with new determination, we once more turn our feet toward the road, buoyed up with an optimism which whispers to us that bigger, better, nobler days lie ahead of us, and that some day we shall reach the Palace of Blessedness, the place of life's consummation, which lies beyond the arduous country of endeavor. How often the mind travels back - away back - to air castles built in sunny childhood and buoyant youth, for "The thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts." Old scenes and memories, how they throng upon us and will not be lightly thrust aside. And through the varying way how well we know that a great hand has been guiding our steps, leading us into the light of an unfading and wondrous hope.

"So long Thy power hath blessed me, sure it still
Will lead me on
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone."

Ah, yes, for there shall be no night there, and the end shall pay us a thousand fold for all the toil and struggle of the way. Thus we cogitate, and in these meditations which, effulgent in silvery light, brighten the night like stars, we find the quiescence and the joy of faith, affording comfort through every day and keeping alive that hope which is as an "anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil. What a forepicture of the Ages of Glory when the cold blasts of selfishness and pride shall be shut out from human hearts, and the purest goodwill and love shall glow and fill the world with the light of God.

And as the years have passed, the advance of time has meant much to some of us. We are richer in experience because of the days and hours God has spread before us. We think our love has a farther range, a fuller sweep, a stronger and truer grip on "Love divine all loves excelling." Our sympathies have broadened, our faith has deepened, our hope bears iridescent hues of a brighter glow. Our craving for righteousness is more intense. We have moved farther up the stream of truth; we are less from its source than we were years ago. Nor have we forgotten to ask, What is truth? If formerly we held up a gem and said, "This is truth," we have learned to qualify the statement. No more we affirm, "The gem that I hold is all the truth, but the gem that you hold is not truth." Rather we now say, "My gem has truth." So the tree has water, but is not water, and the earth has gold, but is not gold, and the diamond has beauty, but is not beauty. Even so my pearl has truth, but truth has not stopped with my pearl. There are other pearls, rare and wondrous pearls. Some day we'll know more about them, for now "we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."

And so we have no desire to be severe with the other finders of gems, for the ocean of truth is great, and God is not severe with us. He is glad we have our gem, because when we gaze upon its

liquid-like fairness, we catch glimpses of his face, and he smiles upon us from out the gem and we are glad because of the smile.

And as we think of these things, our hearts warm more to the journey before us, more to our fellow-travelers, more to the possibility of complete victory, more to the goal. Love has taken his royal seat. We see him crowned. He is there to stay, yea, to subdue all things unto himself. His accents are very gentle as he speaks to us, and his countenance is lit with "the light that never was on sea or land." He stretches out his arms and blessing drops from his hands upon the world of men.

Welcome, love. Your kingship of our minds is monarchy exalted and sublime. Ever wield your scepter o'er us. In every moment of the day we need you, we need your power, your peace, your assuagement of life's woes.

- W. Sargent

Mary

Beside the empty sepulcher she lingered
With tear-dimmed eyes, and heart with sorrow worn,
Nor heeded One whose presence in that garden
A radiance shed, surpassing that of morn.

He stood beside her, though her eyes were holden,
Then spoke her name, in accents low and sweet;
And at that long loved voice she turned in rapture,
Beheld her Lord, and worshipped at his feet.

So speak to us, dear Lord, amid earth's shadows,
When doubts and fears oppress the human heart;
And at Thy voice shall break the light of morning,
Revealing Thee, all glorious as Thou art!

The Question Box

Question:

Please explain Matthew 24:28, which reads: "For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together."

Answer:

I shall never forget, at the age of seventeen, asking this selfsame question of a dear sister then in her eighties. Nor shall I ever forget her reply. While to most of my queries she had a ready response, this one puzzled her. She did not permit this lack of knowledge, however, to disturb her poise. With quiet dignity, humbly, and with her customary charm and serenity, she replied simply: "My boy, I really do not know what that scripture means."

Many years have rolled away since then. She, I doubt not, has long known the answer to this puzzling passage. For myself, I am not too certain. Perhaps I have it also. That, however, must be for the reader to decide.

Before inquiring as to the meaning of the expression, let us first secure a better translation.

To begin with, the first word of the verse, the particle "for" should be eliminated. It *has* been eliminated in the *Revised Standard Version*, the *Diaglott*, and other more accurate translations. Scholars tell us that an earlier translator foisted this word "for" into the text because he imagined, erroneously, that the statement in verse 28 was intended to corroborate the statement in verse 27, where our Lord had likened his second advent to lightning emerging from the east and shining to the west.

Again, the word translated "eagles" includes all birds of rapine, and since *eagles do not feed on carrion*, the word vultures should be used here. A preferred translation is given by *Moffatt*: "Wherever the carcase lies, there will the vultures gather."

Now that we have this preferred translation before us, let us examine it. No less than five possible interpretations have come to my attention.

One interpretation is that the Jewish nation is represented by the carcase, while the eagles are the Roman armies, whose ensign is the eagle. Many able scholars have adopted this view, among them being Lightfoot, John Wesley, and Adam Clark. But this interpretation proceeds on the assumption that verse 27 refers to our Lord's return to destroy Jerusalem through the agency of the Romans in A.D. 70 -- an assumption which is not confirmed by historical facts, and which introduces confusion into the interpretation of the rest of the chapter.

A second interpretation, one adopted by Chrysostom and others of the early Christian Fathers, is that the carcase represents Christ himself, and the eagles represent the members of the Church, gathering to him by faith throughout the Gospel Age

A third interpretation is somewhat similar to the second one, except that the gathering together of the eagles is understood to mean the meeting with the Lord in the air, mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

A fourth interpretation is the one put forth by Brother Russell. His view was approximately the same as that held by Chrysostom, except that he supplemented the thought (that the carcass represented Christ) by the additional thought that it also represented the truth concerning Christ and especially the food of "present truth," provided by our Lord during the period of his second presence.

In support of this view, Brother Russell pointed out that, in the parallel passage in Luke (Luke 17:37), these words of our Lord are in reply to a question put to him by the disciples, namely, "Where, Lord?" This question Brother Russell understood as meaning "Where will these [the two on the bed in Luke 17:34 and the two grinding at the mill in Luke 17:53] -- where will these be taken?" - S. S., *Vol. IV*, page D610.

However, their question, "Where, Lord?" may be understood in another way, in line with a further interpretation, which appeals to me as being, probably, the true one. In this, the fifth interpretation noted, the carcass represents *corruption*, and the vultures *judgment*. Let us consider this interpretation, and note how well it fits the context.

Our Lord had just been pointing out a coming time of *judgment*. It would, he "had said, be a time of trouble such as had not been previously in mankind's history. Elaborating his theme, he had reminded them that, except for the few who entered the ark with Noah, the flood had destroyed, not merely a few, but *all* of them. Again, he had observed that when Lot fled from Sodom *all others were destroyed*; even Lot's wife had perished when she looked back. And he had likened these events to the conditions which would obtain during the period of his second advent (Matt. 24:21, 37-39; Luke 17:28-30). It was to all of this that the disciples had responded: "Where, Lord?" (Where will these judgments take place?)

Such a question indicated that, as yet, they understood very little of the ways of God. In their imperfect, immature point of view, God, being almighty, could do anything he chose. They failed to realize that there are some things which even God cannot do. He cannot violate his own principles. He cannot deny himself (2 Tim. 2: 13). This they had yet to learn. In their minds, Christ, did he but choose, could restore the kingdom to Israel "at this time" (Acts 1:6), or five hundred years hence, or five thousand. These judgments of which he had just been forewarning them, could take place in Jerusalem, if God so chose, or in Japan. They had yet to learn that God never has and never will act arbitrarily. *He cannot do so.*

To their question, "Where, Lord?" -- where shall these judgments take place? -our Lord replied *in a way they would understand*. He replied with a well-known Oriental proverb, based on a passage in the Book of Job (Job 39:30). "Where the slain are, *there is she*" (the eagle, or vulture -- Job 39:27). "Wheresoever the carcass is, *there will* the vultures be gathered together." (Wheresoever corruption abounds, *there* God's judgments will be sent to clean up the putrid mess.)

This has been the unvarying procedure on the part of Almighty God throughout the centuries. It is plainly to be seen in the case of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome, *and will never be more true than in the judgment day of the nations in the end of the Gospel Age.*

And when will that be? And where? I reply: To my understanding it has been in process for years, and will continue to its completion. It is not localized to one or a few nations, but includes, or yet will include, all nations. Its purpose is benevolent, as may be noted in the following lines from an unknown poet:

"The wrath of God is Love's severity
In curing sin-the zeal of righteousness
In overcoming wrong -the remedy
Of Justice for the world's redress.

"The wrath of God is punishment for sin,
In measure unto all transgression due,
Discriminating well and just between
Presumptuous sins and sins of lighter hue.

"The wrath of God inflicts no needless pain
Merely vindictive, of himself to please;
But aims the ends of mercy to attain,
Uproot the evil and the good increase.

"The wrath of God is a consuming fire,
That burns while there is evil to destroy
Or good to purify; nor can expire
Till all things are relieved from sin's alloy.

"The wrath of God is Love's parental rod,
The disobedient to chastise, subdue,
And bend submissive to the will of God,
That Love may reign when all things are made new.

"The wrath of God shall never strike in vain,
Nor cease to strike till sin shall be: no more;
Till God his gracious purpose shall attain,
And earth to righteousness and peace restore."

What to do? Let the Prophet answer: "Seek righteousness, seek meekness: it *may be* ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger.- (Zeph. 2: 3).

- P. L. Read

Notice of Annual Meeting

All should be aware of the fact that the affairs of our Institute are in the hands of seven brethren who are elected from its membership to serve for a period of one year or until their successors are elected.

Our Annual Meeting this year is scheduled to be held (D.V.) Saturday, June 7, 1980, at 11:00 a.m. in West Suffield, Connecticut, 145 N. Grand Street.

Membership in the Pastoral Bible Institute is, and always has been, open to any consecrated brother or sister who "is in full harmony with the purpose, spirit, and policy of the Institute," and who intends to support it "in all reasonable ways as he or she shall deem to be the Lord's will."

As stated in its charter, the purpose for which the Institute was formed is "the dissemination of Bible truths in various languages by means of the publication of tracts, pamphlets, papers, and other religious documents, and by the use of all other lawful means which its Board of Directors, duly constituted, shall deem expedient for the furtherance of the purposes stated."

The membership fee is five dollars (\$5.00) which should accompany the application. If an applicant lacks the membership fee, but is otherwise acceptable, the fee will be aid out of a special fund provided for that purpose.

In order to participate in the election of directors at the next annual meeting, anyone not already a member, who desires to apply for membership, should do so promptly as, accord in g to our bylaws, "the registration of such membership must be made twenty days prior to the election."

Members of the Pastoral Bible Institute are hereby reminded of the privilege which is theirs of nominating in the pages of this journal the brethren they wish to elect as directors for the fiscal year 1980-81.

The brethren whose terms of service will expire are: J. L. Buss, F. A. Essler, A. Gonczewski, L. Petran, P. L. Read, W. J. Siekman, and J. B. Webster.

The brethren here named are pleased to report that a spirit of Christian love and harmony exists in their midst; and they have every reason to believe that the Lord has seen fit to bless their association in this ministry. They realize however, that those carrying on any work may fail to see opportunities for improvement and expansion apparent to others not charged with such responsibilities, and that for this reason changes in office sometimes have beneficial effects. They therefore urge upon all members of our Institute that they make this a special occasion for prayer, that our Father's will may be expressed in the vote of the members. If, after prayerful meditation, any are led of the Lord to nominate brethren, and will forward the names and addresses of such brethren so as to reach this office on or before April 10, 1980, such names will be published in the May June issue of the *Herald*, that all members may have an opportunity of voting for them.

Entered Into Rest

Ruth Cinnamon, Laramie, Wyo.

Elizabeth Conard, Miami, Fla.

Earl V. Fellenbaum, York, Pa.

Will F. Fox, England

Sophie Gowgiel, Argo, Ill.

Katie Hubacz, N. Brookfield, Mass.

Lena Little, Boise, Idaho

Albert Rusin, South Haven, Mich.

W. E. Smith, England

Carl S. Stocker. Detroit, Mich.