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A New Year of the Lord's Planning

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- P. E. Thomson.

How Great Thou Art!

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

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

THE NEW YEAR

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

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

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

DIVINE BALANCE IN PROVIDENCE

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

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

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

DIVINE BALANCE IN OUR LIVES

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

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

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

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

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

GOD'S LOVE OVERFLOWS IN REDEMPTION

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

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

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

A GREATER GOD

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

- A. A. Hart

Grace Unveiled

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

* Greek, parousia, presence.

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

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

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

- P. L. Read.

The Bridal Song

"Thy name is as ointment poured forth." - Canticles 1:3.

"Therefore do the virgins love thee." - Canticles 1:3.

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

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

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

- James Neil

Thus Saith The Lord

"Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool ... and I will make the place of my feet glorious." - Isaiah 66: 1; 60:13.

The groans of nature in this nether world,
Which Heav'n has heard for ages, have an end.
Foretold by prophets and by poets sung,
Whose fire was kindled at the prophets' lamp,
The time of rest, the promis'd sabbath, comes.
Six thousand years of sorrow have well-nigh
Fulfill'd their tardy and disastrous course
Over a sinful world; and what remains
Of this tempestuous state of human things,
Is merely as the working of a sea
Before a calm, that rocks itself to rest.
For He, whose car the winds are, and the clouds
The dust that waits upon his sultry march,
When sin hath moved him, and his wrath is hot,
Shall visit earth in mercy; shall descend
Propitious, in his chariot paved with love,
And what his storms have blasted and defaced
For man's revolt, shall with a smile repair.

Sweet is the harp of prophecy; too sweet
Not to be wrong'd by a mere mortal touch;
Nor can the wonders it records be sung
To meaner music and not suffer loss.
But when a poet, or when one like me,
Happy to rove among poetic flow'rs,
Though poor in skill to rear them, lights at last
On some fair theme, some theme divinely fair,
Such is the impulse and the spur he feels
To give it praise proportion'd to its worth,
That not t' attempt it, arduous as he deems
The labour, were a task more arduous still.

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

Laughs with abundance, and the land once lean,
Or fertile only in its own disgrace,
Exalts to see its thistly curse repeal'd.
The various seasons woven into one.
And that one season an eternal spring,
The garden fears no blight, and needs no fence,
For there is none to covet, all are full.
The lion and the leopard and the bear
Graze with the fearless flocks.
All bask at noon Together, or all gambol in the shade
Of the same grove, and drink one common stream.
Antipathies are none. No foe to man
Lurks in the serpent now. The mother sees,
And smiles to see, her infant's playful hand
Stretch'd forth to dally with the crested worm
To stroke his azure neck, or to receive
The lambent homage of his arrowy tongue.
All creatures worship man, and all mankind
One Lord, one Father. Error has no place;
That creeping pestilence is driven away,
The breath of heav'n has chased it. In the heart
No passion touches a discordant string,
But all is harmony and love. Disease
Is not. The pure and uncontaminate blood
Holds its due course, nor fears the frost of age.
One song employs all nations; and all cry,
"Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us!"
The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks
Shout to each other, and the mountain tops
From distant mountains catch the flying joy,
Till nation after nation taught the strain,
Each rolls the rapturous Hosanna round.
Behold the' measure of the promise fill'd,
See Salem built, the labour of a God!
Bright as a sun the sacred city shines;
All kingdoms and all princes of the earth
Flock to that light; the glory of all lands
Flows into her, unbounded is her joy
And endless her increase.

- *William Cowper, 1731-1800*

The Plan of God -- In Brief

STUDY 1 -- The Bible Viewed in the Light of Reason

The Bible is the torch of civilization and liberty. Its influence for good in society has been recognized by the greatest statesmen, even though they for the most part have looked at it through the various glasses of conflicting creeds, which, while upholding the Bible, grievously misrepresent its teachings. The grand old book is unintentionally but woefully misrepresented by its friends, many of whom would lay down life on its behalf; and yet they do it more vital injury than its foes, by claiming its support to their long-revered misconceptions of its truth, received through the traditions of their fathers. Would that such would awake, re-examine their oracle, and put to confusion its enemies by disarming them of their weapons!

The Bible is the oldest book in existence; it has outlived the storms of thirty centuries. Men have endeavored by every means possible to banish it from the face of the earth: they have hidden it, buried it, made it a crime punishable with death to have it in possession, and the most bitter and relentless persecutions have been waged against those who had faith in it; but still the book lives.

The fact that it has survived so many centuries, notwithstanding such unparalleled efforts to banish and destroy it, is at least strong circumstantial evidence that the great Being whom it claims as its Author has also been its Preserver.

This book throughout constantly points and refers to one prominent character, Jesus of Nazareth, who it claims, was the Son of God. From beginning to end His name, and office, and work, are made prominent.

That a man called Jesus of Nazareth lived, and was somewhat noted, about the time indicated by the writers of the Bible, is a fact of history outside the Bible, and it is variously and fully corroborated. That this Jesus was crucified because He had rendered Himself offensive to the Jews and their priesthood is a further fact established by history outside the evidence furnished by the New Testament writers. The writers of the New Testament (except Paul and Luke) were the personal acquaintances and disciples of Jesus of Nazareth, whose doctrines their writings set forth.

One plan, spirit, aim and purpose pervades the entire book. Its opening pages record the creation and fall of man; its closing pages tell of man's recovery from that fall; and its intervening pages show the successive steps of the plan of God for the accomplishment of this purpose. The harmony, yet contrast, of the first three and the last three chapters of the Bible is striking. The one describes the first creation, the other the renewed or restored creation, with sin and its penal-curse removed; the one shows Satan and evil entering into the world to deceive and destroy, the other shows his work undone, the destroyed ones restored, evil extinguished and Satan destroyed; the one shows the dominion lost by Adam, the other shows it restored and forever established by Christ, and God's will done in earth as in heaven; the one shows sin the producing cause of degradation, shame and death, the other shows the reward of righteousness to be glory, honor and life.

Though written by many pens, at various times, under different circumstances, the Bible is not merely a collection of moral precepts, wise maxims and words of comfort. It is more: it is a reasonable, philosophical and harmonious statement of the causes of present evil in the world, its only remedy and the final results as seen by divine wisdom, which saw the end of the plan from

before its beginning, marking as well the pathway of God's people, and upholding and strengthening them with exceeding great and precious promises to be realized in due time.

The teaching of Genesis, that man was tried in a state of original perfection in one representative, that he failed, and that the present imperfection, sickness and death are the results, but that God has not forsaken him, and will ultimately recover him through a redeemer, born of a woman (Genesis 3:15), is kept up and elaborated all the way through. The necessity of the death of a redeemer as a sacrifice for sins, and of his righteousness as a covering for our sin, is pointed out in the clothing of skins for Adam and Eve; in the acceptance of Abel's offerings; in Isaac on the altar; in the death of the various sacrifices by which the patriarchs had access to God, and of those instituted under the law and perpetuated throughout the Jewish age. The prophets, though credited with understanding but slightly the significance of some of their utterances (1 Peter 1:12), mention the laying of the sins upon a person instead of a dumb animal, and in prophetic vision they see Him who is to redeem and to deliver the race led "as a lamb to the slaughter," that "the chastisement of our peace was upon Him," and that "by His stripes we are healed."

They pictured Him as "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," and declared that "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:3-6). They told where this deliverer would be born (Micah 5:2), and when He should die, assuring us that it would be "not for Himself." (Daniel 9:26). They mention various peculiarities concerning Him -- that He would be "righteous," and free from "deceit," "violence," or any just cause of death (Isaiah 53:8, 9, 11); that He would be betrayed for thirty pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12); that He would be numbered among transgressors in His death (Isa. 53:12); that not a bone of Him should be broken (Psalm 34:20; John 19:36); and that though He should die and be buried, His flesh would not corrupt, neither would He remain in the grave. -- Psalm 16:10, Acts 2:31.

The New Testament writers clearly and forcibly, yet simply, record the fulfillment of all these predictions in Jesus of Nazareth, and by logical reasonings show that such a ransom price as He gave was needful, as already predicted in the Law and the Prophets, before the sins of the world could be blotted out. (Isaiah 1:18). They trace the entire plan in a most logical and forcible manner, appealing neither to the prejudices nor to the passions of their hearers, but to their enlightened reason alone, furnishing some of the most remarkably close and cogent reasoning to be found anywhere on any subject. See Romans 5:17-19, and onward to the 12th chapter.

Moses, in the Law, pointed not alone to a sacrifice, but also to a blotting out of sin and a blessing of the people under this great deliverer, whose power and authority he declares shall vastly exceed his own, though it should be "like unto" it. Deuteronomy 18:15, 19). The promised deliverer is to bless not only Israel, but through Israel "all the families of the earth." (Genesis 12:3, 18:18; 22:18; 26:4).

These writers point out the harmony of this view with what is written in the Law and the Prophets; and the grandeur and breadth of the plan they present more than meets the most exalted conception of what it purports to be -- "Good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people."

The thought of Messiah as a ruler of not only Israel, but also of the world, suggested in the books of Moses, is the theme of all the prophets. The thought of the kingdom was uppermost also in the teaching of the apostles; and Jesus taught that we should pray, "Your Kingdom come," and promised those a share in it who would first suffer for the truth, and prove themselves worthy.

This hope of the coming glorious kingdom gave all the faithful ones courage to endure persecution and to suffer reproach, deprivation and loss, even unto death. And in the grand

allegorical prophecy which closes the New Testament, the worth "Lamb that was slain" (Revelation 5:12), the worthy "overcomers" whom He will make kings and priests in His Kingdom, and the trials and obstacles which they must overcome to be worthy to share that kingdom, are all faithfully portrayed. Then are introduced symbolic representations of the blessings to accrue to the world under that Millennial reign, when Satan shall be bound and Adamic death and sorrow wiped out, and when all the nations of earth shall walk in the light of the heavenly kingdom -- the new Jerusalem.

The Bible, from first to last, holds out a doctrine found nowhere else, and in opposition to the theories of all the heathen religions -- that a future life for the dead will come through a RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.

STUDY 2 -- The Development of the Divine Plan

Since God tells us that He has a definitely fixed purpose, and that all His purposes shall be accomplished, it behooves us, as His children, to inquire diligently what those plans are, that we may be found in harmony with them. Notice how emphatically Jehovah affirms the fixedness of His purpose: "Jehovah of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it be." "The Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it?" "I am God and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me...My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.... Yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it." (Isaiah 14:24-27; 46:9-11). However haphazard or mysterious God's dealings with men may appear, those who believe this testimony of His Word must acknowledge that His original and unalterable plan has been, and still is, progressing systematically to completion.

Therefore, as interested sons of God, and heirs of a promised inheritance, we apply to our Father's Word, that we may understand His purposes from the plans and specifications therein given. There we learn that the plan of God, with reference to man, spans three great periods of time, beginning with man's creation and reaching into the illimitable future. Peter and Paul designate these periods "three worlds."

These three great epochs represent three distinct manifestations of Divine Providence. The first, from creation to the flood, was under the ministration of angels, and is called by Peter "THE WORLD THAT WAS." 2 Peter 3:6.

The second great epoch, from the flood to the establishment of the kingdom of God, is under the limited control of Satan, "the prince of this world," and is therefore called "THIS PRESENT EVIL WORLD." Galatians 1:4; 2 Peter 3:7.

The third is to be a "world without end" (Isaiah 45:17) under divine administration, the kingdom of God, and is called "THE WORLD TO COME -- wherein dwells righteousness." -- Hebrews 2:5; 2 Peter 3:13.

The first of these periods, or "worlds" under the ministration of angels, was a failure; the second, under the rule of Satan, the usurper, has been indeed an "evil world"; but the third will be an era of righteousness and of blessing to all the families of the earth.

The last two of these "worlds" are most particularly mentioned, and the statements relative to them are in strong contrast. The present, or second period, is called "the present evil world," not because there is nothing good in it, but because in it evil is permitted to predominate. "Now we

call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered." (Malachi 3:15). The third world or epoch is mentioned as "THE WORLD TO COME -- wherein dwells righteousness," not because there will be no evil in it, but because evil will not predominate. The blotting out of evil will be gradual, requiring all of the first thousand years. Evil will not rule then; it will not prosper; it will no longer be the wicked that will flourish; but "the righteous shall flourish" (Psalm 72:7), the "obedient shall eat the good of the land" (Isaiah 1:19), and "the evil doer shall be cut off." -- Psalm 37:9.

So we see, the next dispensation is to be so dissimilar as to be the very reverse of the present one in almost every particular. Our Lord's words show why there is to be a difference between the present and the future dispensations. It is because He will be the Prince or Ruler of the world to come, that in it righteousness and truth will prosper; while, because Satan is the prince (ruler) of the present evil world, evil prospers and the wicked flourish. It is because, as Jesus said, the prince of this world "hath nothing in Me" -- and consequently no interest in His followers except to oppose, tempt, annoy and buffet them (John 14:30; 2 Corinthians 12:7) -- that in this present evil world or epoch, whosoever will live godly shall suffer persecution, while the wicked flourish like a green bay tree. -- 2 Timothy 3:12; Psalm 37:35.

Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world," and until the era or "world to come" does come, Christ's kingdom will not control the earth. And for this we are taught to hope and pray. "Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth." Satan is the "ruler of the darkness of this world," and therefore "darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people." He now rules and works in the hearts of the children of disobedience. -- Ephesians 2:2; 6:12.

There must be some very important part of the great Architect's plan for man's salvation not yet fully developed -- else the new Prince and the new dispensation would have been long ago introduced. Why it was postponed for an appointed time, and also the manner of the change from the present dominion of evil under Satan to that of righteousness under Christ, are points of interest which will be more fully shown hereafter. Suffice it now to say, that the kingdoms of this world, now subject to Satan, are at the proper time to become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. (Revelation 11:15). The context shows that the transfer will be accomplished by a general time of trouble. In reference to it Jesus said, "No man can enter into a strong man's house and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man, and then he will spoil his house." (Mark 3:22-27). We are taught that Satan must first be bound, restrained and deposed, before Christ's reign of righteousness and peace can be established. This binding of Satan is accordingly shown to be the first work of the new dispensation. -- Revelation 20:2.

It should be remembered that this earth is the basis of all these "worlds" and dispensations, and that though ages pass and dispensations change, still the earth continues -- "The earth abides forever." (Ecclesiastes 1:4). Carrying out the same figure, Peter calls each of these periods a separate heavens and earth. Here the word heavens symbolizes the higher or spiritual controlling powers, and earth symbolizes human government and social arrangements. So the first heavens and earth, or the order and arrangement of things then existing, having served their purpose, ended at the flood. But the physical heavens (sky and atmosphere), and the physical earth, did not pass away: they remained. So likewise the present world (heavens and earth) will pass away with a great noise, fire and melting -- confusion, trouble and dissolution. The strong man (Satan), being bound, will struggle to regain his power. The present order or arrangement of government and society, not that of the physical sky and earth, will pass away. The present heavens (powers of spiritual control) must give place to the "new heavens" -- Christ's spiritual control. The present earth (human society as now organized under Satan's control) must (symbolically) melt and be dissolved, in the beginning of the "Day of the Lord," which "shall burn as an oven" (Malachi 4:1).

It will be succeeded by "a new earth," i.e., society reorganized in harmony with earth's new Prince -- Christ. Righteousness, peace and love will rule among men when present arrangements have given place to the new and better kingdom, the basis of which will be the strictest justice.

Paul was given a glimpse of the next dispensation, or, as he calls it, "the world to come." He says he was "caught away" (physically or mentally, or both, he could not tell, things were so real to his view) down the stream of time to the new condition of things, the "new heaven," hence the "third heaven." He saw things as they will be under the spiritual control of Christ, things which he might not disclose. (2 Corinthians 12:2-4). Doubtless these were the same things which John afterward saw, and was permitted to express to the Church in symbols, which may only be understood as they become due. John, in the revelation given to him by our Lord on the Isle of Patmos, was in vision carried down through this Christian Age and its changing scenes of church and state, to the end of the present evil world, or epoch, and there in prophetic visions he saw Satan bound, Christ reigning, and the new heaven and the new earth established; for the former heaven and earth were passed away. -- Revelation 21:1.

A statement of the Word which belongs to one epoch, or dispensation, should not be applied to another, as things stated of one age are not always true of another. For instance, it would be an untruth to say of the present time that the knowledge of the Lord fills the whole earth, or that there is no need to say to your neighbor, Know the Lord. (Isaiah 11:9; 31:34). This is not true in this age, and it cannot be true until the Lord, having come again, has established His kingdom; for throughout this age there have been many seducing deceptions, and we are told that even in the very end of the age -- "In the last days...evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." (2 Timothy 3:1, 13). It will be as the result of Messiah's reign during the Millennial age that knowledge and righteousness shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

A similar mistake, and a very common one, is to suppose that God's kingdom is now established and ruling over the earth, and that His will is now done among the nations. This is manifestly far from the truth, for the kingdoms of this world are supported and enriched through oppression, injustice and deceit, to as great an extent as the increasing intelligence of the people will permit. Satan, the present "prince of this world," must yet be displaced, and these kingdoms, now under his control, must become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Anointed, when He shall take unto Himself His great power, and reign.

By the light now due to the household of faith we discern that system and order which mark the stately stepplings of our God through the ages past.

- C. T. Russell

(to be continued)

Mirrors

*"We thy people, and sheep of thy pasture, will give thee thanks forever:
we will show forth thy praise to all generations." - Psalm 79:13.*

WE ALL know what mirrors are, for we use them every day to reflect our image. But how many of us realize to what extent we ourselves are mirrors, receiving and reflecting either God's glory or the negative of that glory.

The Psalm from which the above verse is quoted is mostly a lament over the condition of natural Israel in subjection to her foes, and a prayer of supplication by its author that God would glorify his own name in bringing about a deliverance, and punishment upon those who defied him in their treatment of Israel. If this prayer is answered, the promise is given that they, the people of God, will render due thanks and show forth God's praise forever. This Psalm had its direct application to natural Israel, but antitypically no doubt to spiritual Israel. "We will *show forth* Thy praise to all generations," or in other words, the Psalmist here declares that God's people will mirror his glory.

THE MAJESTY ON HIGH

Apparently there was a time when God was alone. Such a state is beyond our comprehension, but we must come to this conclusion if we accept the Bible statement that Jesus in his prehuman state was "the beginning of the creation of God."

If there was a beginning to creation, and if Jesus was that beginning, instead of being a third part of a Trinity as some say, then God must have been alone-nothing but God -- no opportunity or possibility for the exercise of his attributes of wisdom, justice, love, and power -- nothing but himself -- nothing to reflect his glory. How wholly inadequate our minds are to grasp or fathom God and eternity!

Certain philosophers claim that what we call time came into existence with the creation of the material universe, and that the past, present, and future are all in the present with God. All that has occurred in the past and all that will occur in the future is before him now. The findings of science and certain Scriptures seem to support this view. For example, Acts 15:18 declares that "known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." In Romans 4:17 it is written: "*I have made* thee [Abraham] a father of many nations, like unto him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and *calleth those things which be not as though they were.*" At the time this statement was made to Abraham, as we view things, he was not the father of many nations, but in God's sight the thing was accomplished.

An illustration that has been given to show how things past and future to us, are in the present with God, is that of two men, one walking along a country road, and the other flying high overhead. To the man walking along the road the farmhouse a mile back and the stream and footbridge just beyond the next hill are things of the past and future in his sight and experience, but to the man high overhead they are open to view and are in the present. This is a crude illustration, but gives some idea of how things or events which are in the past and future, so far as our experience goes, may stand revealed in the sight of God.

THE AORIST TENSE

In this connection it is of interest to note the use of the aorist tense in the New Testament Greek. Scholars tell us that this tense has no equivalent in the English language, for it seems to combine past, present, future, and perfect.

The translator of the *Interlinear New Testament* says: "This tense [aorist] of the Greek verb has been at all times the most difficult to deal with, being translated in the *Authorized Version* (and by others) sometimes by the present, sometimes by the past, sometimes by the future, and sometimes by the perfect. Grammarians say that in the main, 'it is the indefinite past.' For example: to say, 'He has cleansed me,' is more than saying, 'He cleansed me,' because the first expression implies a continuance of the act or its effect to the present time; whereas the latter expression speaks of an act at some time in the past, without anything being implied as to its continuance."

In 2 Timothy 2:19 we read (*Authorized Version*): "The Lord knoweth them that are his." The verb "knoweth" is from the Greek aorist. In this case the English tense is a fairly good rendition. The Lord knoweth those that are his, whether in the past, present, or future.

The verbs in John 3:16 are also in the aorist tense. Our common version reads: "God so loved [past tense] the world that he gave [past tense] his only begotten Son." The *Newberry* and *Concordant Versions* translate the text: "God so loves the world that he gives his only begotten Son." It is hard to give the correct thought in English, for the aorist tense in which the original Greek is couched includes past, present, and future.

It is somewhat like the name God gave to Moses in answer to his inquiry as to what he should tell the children of Israel when they asked who said they were to do certain things. God said to Moses: "I am that I am." The name suggests eternity.

GOD'S GLORY REFLECTED IN CREATION

Isaiah 43:7 tells us that all things were created for God's own glory. All things were intended to mirror the glory of God in some way pleasing to God. Think what that glory must be that requires all of creation to reflect it! Think of the wisdom and power revealed in creation-no two things exactly alike-each grain of sand, each atom and ion in that grain, reflecting in some degree and some special sense all its own, the glory of God! As the Psalmist declares, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard."

"HE THAT HATH SEEN ME HATH SEEN THE FATHER"

The first creation to manifest God's glory was the Logos. John's Gospel, first verse, says: "In a beginning was the Logos [Word] and the Logos was with the God, and a God was the Logos. The same was in a beginning with the God." This translation harmonizes with the statement of Rev. 3:14 which calls Jesus the "Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God."

John 1:3 continues by saying: "All things were made by him [the Logos] and without him was not anything made that was made." This agrees with the statement of Paul who said "All things are of the Father, but by [or through] the Son."

The Son of God, called the Logos in his pre-human state, manifests God more fully than any other creation. To begin with, he was the only direct creation of the Father; all the rest were of the Father but by him. In Proverbs, eighth chapter, he is described as the personification of wisdom. He is recorded as saying: "Jehovah formed me in the beginning of his way, before [or the first of] his works of old. Then was I by him as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him."

The Son was always God's right-hand and honored agent; and after his resurrection and exaltation to the divine nature he is described as being the express or exact image of the Father's person-the most complete mirror of God's glory.

EXCEEDING JOY TO BE OURS WHEN WE REFLECT PERFECTLY

Jesus was a perfect manifestation of God in the flesh, and if we bear fruit, as is intended of us, then we manifest God also-at the present time, it is true, through imperfect, tarnished reflectors, but in the resurrection the medium of reflection will be perfect.

Paul makes this plain in 1 Cor. 13:12, where he says: "For now we see through a glass dimly." A footnote in the *Diaglott* states that in olden times they did not have clear glass, but had to use substances such as horn, oiled parchment, etc., in their windows. These admitted the light, but revealed objects very dimly. We are like that. This earthly body through which we receive and reflect is very tarnished, so we see and know but in part, and so reflect imperfectly. But then, when we are resurrected with perfect spirit bodies, we will see and know face to face. Our medium for reflecting will not only be perfect, but will be of super-spirit quality, the Divine nature.

What a delight, what a joy it will be, when we can glorify God perfectly! At the present time our efforts are a mixture of joy and chagrin because we reflect so imperfectly. It is human nature to enjoy most those things we do well, and to neglect the things we find difficult. All creatures are happy in doing the things they are fitted to do. Fortunately our new minds dwell on a plane that delights to do the will of God, and so we find pleasure in reflecting his glory, even though our mirrors are tarnished. It makes us happy when we realize that we have in some small way conducted ourselves in a manner pleasing unto God; and if this makes us happy, what will be our reaction when we can perfectly reflect that glory? That will be exceeding joy, the Apostle tells us.

In nearly every place where this phrase "exceeding joy" is used, it is connected with the completed work of transformation in our mirrors or characters. Jude says, verse 24, "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you *faultless* before the presence of his glory with *exceeding joy*, to the only wise God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever." In being made faultless (no tarnish or flaw in our mirror), we must pass through trials and testings; and if we could not by faith look ahead to the finished work, we might become discouraged and quit. But Peter says: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with *exceeding joy*" (1 Pet. 4:12, 13). Here again, we see the "exceeding joy" linked with the completed work of transformation. Paul, also, links the two in 2 Cor. 4:14-18 - "He who raised up the Lord Jesus shall also raise us up by Jesus, and shall present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not. But though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light

affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things that are seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

"IF ANY MAN DRAW BACK"

If any man draw back from this process of being made meet for the inheritance in glory, God's Word tells us that he will have no pleasure in that man, but will cut him off from life; for nothing will be permitted to exist that does not in its own station perfectly fulfill its Creator's will.

James says, "If any one be a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he resembles a man viewing his natural face in a mirror; for he viewed himself and went away, and immediately forgot what kind of person he was. But he who looks intently into that which is the perfect law of freedom and continues in it, not becoming a forgetful hearer, but a doer of its work, this man will be blessed in his deed." (James 1:23-25.) His contemplation of the perfect character reflected in the perfect law of freedom has a transforming effect upon his own character.

The Scriptures indicate that God has had the new creation in mind from the beginning of his work; he did not, however, see fit to create it outright as he did the various orders of angels and mankind, but has proceeded in the strange and mysterious manner of taking imperfect human beings, the lowest order of beings formed in his image, and is making them over into the image of his Son. The Son, we are told, is the express image of God, having life in himself, even as the Father bath life in himself. This whole matter has been a mystery all down through the ages, and is still a mystery to all except the little flock, the ones who are being transformed.

THE CREATION OF THE NEW CREATION

No other creation has known anything about its own creation before it began to function as a completed being, reflecting in some degree God's glory. But the new creation, including its Head, is made fully aware of what is happening unto it; and what is still more strange, is invited, yea, even expected, to cooperate to the extent of its ability in bringing about its own perfection, and any who will not cooperate are cast aside as unfit.

Nothing like this has ever occurred before, nor, as far 'as we know, will ever occur again. God has followed this course, we understand, because of the very exalted position this class will occupy when completed. These are free moral agents; it is left to their own volition as to whether they will be made to reflect God's glory or not. God will not need to test this new creation after it has been perfected, as he has tested all other free moral agents; because this class has been fully tested in the process of making it meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, where it will be crowned with immortality.

"IF I IN THY LIKENESS, O LORD, MAY AWAKE"

It is believed by many that once God has given any one the divine nature, even he himself could not destroy that one. Whether this be true or not, the course God has followed in his development of this class has obviated such a contingency, because the ones that are given the divine nature will have proved beyond all possibility of doubt that they will forever remain loyal to God and his will.

We now have the opportunity of demonstrating our loyalty to God and the principles of righteousness, and should rejoice in any test he sees fit to permit. "Count it all joy," says the Apostle (James 1:2-4), "when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience; but let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

It rests with us whether we will let God work in us both to will and to do his good pleasure. "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:2). It rests with us whether we will "humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God in order that he may exalt us in due time."

In the 43rd chapter of Isaiah we read: "Behold I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth, shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.... I give waters in the wilderness and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen. This people have I formed for myself; they shall *show forth* my praise." They shall mirror or reflect *my glory*.

"Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? Who can show forth [mirror] all his praise?" "We thy people, and sheep of thy pasture, will give thee thanks forever; we will show forth [mirror] thy praise to all generations."

- J. T. Read

"As the Lightning Cometh"

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

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

Which view is correct?

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

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

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

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

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

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

From the New Testament.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

From the Old Testament.

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

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

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

From the Apocrypha.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- A. O. Hudson.

Entered Into Rest

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