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THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

"This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me " (1 Cor. 11: 24).

He has been remembered ever since. Considering that Jesus of Nazareth was born in an obscure village in a remote eastern province of the Roman Empire two thousand years ago, never traveled more than a hundred miles from his birthplace, never wrote a book, and was in the public eye only three and a half years before an ignominious death, it might be thought a remarkable thing that He has ever been remembered at all. Other men of his day are remembered; Nero the bloodthirsty emperor, Vespasian the successful soldier, Cicero the impassioned orator, Tacitus the sober historian, Strabo the meticulous geographer. But these men are remembered for what they have done or what they have written; Jesus is remembered for what He was - and is! The power and influence of each of these men ceased with his death; that of Jesus in a very real sense began with his. The empire of Rome has long since given place to other empires built by other men: history has outrun Tacitus: the geography of Strabo is sadly out of date.

But all that Jesus said lives on, in the hearts and minds of men in this generation as it has done in every generation since He lived. And the power that He promised to send from above to vitalize the hearts and hands of all who give themselves to him and his service has been manifested in the many and varied fruits of Christianity in the world of men. Whether it is the knowledge of God's plan for humankind imparting a clear and heartening vision of the world to come, or the energy and determination which leads to service and self-sacrifice and caring for the suffering, the deprived and the hopeless, all are evidences that He is remembered and what has been done is in remembrance of him.

There is a deeper aspect of this remembrance. It is to be as oft as ye drink it. Those few men gathered around that table in the upper room had just shared with their Lord in the drinking from a common cup. In that action they pledged themselves to eternal association with their Lord in whatever He stood for and whatever He did. In a figurative sense they were to be crucified with him and rise again from the dead with him to a new life. In sober truth every one, of whatever generation or time, who yields self in dedication of life to Christ has become God's man, consecrated to his eternal purpose, for all time. The day has yet to come when the active expression of that

purpose so far as the human race is concerned is to come into operation; the Second Coming of Christ will signal the commencement of a work of God in the world which will abolish evil and institute everlasting peace. Every true follower of Christ is to be associated with him in the execution of that work. In the meantime those followers must needs remember all this, continue figuratively to drink that Cup with him and constantly affirm their intent of faithful association with him. At this time of year it is more than usually appropriate to think of these things, and, perhaps, to meet together in the significant ritual of sharing the cup, reminding each participant of the transcendent truth which lies behind the action. In partaking of the broken bread, and drinking from the communal cup, there is being manifested not only the depth and sincerity of personal dedication to Christ, but also a witness to the veracity of his own promise: "I will come again"

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WHEN YE COME TOGETHER

A. Spain

The coming together for fellowship of the Corinthian Church was frequently the occasion for the most disorderly conduct and unseemly behavior. Even so, when the worst has been said that can be said, they were perhaps but little worse than many others of the congregations scattered up and down the land. Only, in their case, we are treated to an eyewitness point of view of their sad condition by one who had their best interests so much at heart. One commentator has called this Corinthian church the Church with the lid off. Because of Paul's letter to this Church its congregation stands stripped of all personal pretensions only their repulsive realities remain. Sectarian divisions separated them, each with its own intense preference and hatred; undisguised sin had raised its head, sin such as was not to be found

among the heathen at their door. Personal disputes, which found their way before the heathen magistrates, had arisen in their midst, making the sad scene within the Church most pitiable. Moreover, when the hour of fellowship had come, and they had come together to the appointed place, undisciplined individuals, possessing the gift of tongues, would turn the hour appointed for prayer and praise into a babel of confusing sights and sounds, several being engaged in speech simultaneously, babbling in unknown tongues, throwing the session into hopeless confusion, and laying the assembly open in the eyes of the unlearned to be accounted mad (1 Cor. 14:23).

Again, in the Agape the Love-feast with which some of these sessions closed scenes of gluttony and intoxication were sometimes seen scenes in which the poor and indigent were put to shame by brethren who had wealth (1 Cor. 11:22). These indictments present to our view an unsatisfactory picture of a Christian Church; were it not that some true saints were hidden among so much that was corrupt it would be difficult to characterize it as a Church of Christ in any sense

The Church in Apostolic days has sometimes been styled the Church of the first Love a Church kept pure and unspotted by Apostolic care and oversight. But such a description scarcely tallies with the facts. Censure and reproof is found in every Apostolic writing not even excepting the letters to Ephesus and Philippi a sure token that the human material within the Church was still rough and raw and still had much of the way of life brought over from heathen days or from Jewish insularity incorporated in it. Jewish aloofness and touchiness, Grecian licentiousness and pride, and barbarian brutishness and callousness made a motley mixture of perversity, which to all human appearance was impossible of amalgamation or unity.

Ostensibly, this patchwork of humanity came together for the purpose of presenting worship to God, of reminding themselves what they owed to his Son, who had redeemed them, and for whose return from heaven they had been taught to long and wait. "Ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven"

Paul told the Thessalonians, and what was true of them was true of their neighbors in the Corinthian metropolis. To some degree the God of heaven had superseded their former gods of gold and stone, but unfortunately, the old things had been so deeply impressed that complete change was most difficult. Their worship at the idol shrine had

been sensuous and visible sights and sounds presented to eye and ear that made strong and deep appeal. Worship in an upper room, or in some school (Acts 19:9) was shorn of all that sensuous appeal which the wild music of the chant, the gorgeous drapery of the priest and the stately pile of masonry could produce in them. Lacking thus the awe-and-passion-provoking influences which these visible ceremonial things produced. these companies of called saints found it difficult to enter into the spirit of the Spiritual and unseen. Inability to visualize the Presence of the Invisible led to unbecoming levity and laxity, seeing the atmosphere of the gathering on a purely human plane. Their association was mainly after the flesh that is. in the common things of this earth-life. Paul spoke of it as carnal -.-.- not of necessity vile or voluptuous, but of a flesh-life lived on the level of a man; eating. drinking, working, thinking within the range of the five senses common to man.

Then, further, though they were professing followers and disciples of Christ, they seemed to think of him as a man who once trod this earth, and started this selective organization into which they had been invited this Church fellowship -- and had then gone away, but who, at some future time. was expected to return to take it to himself but, for the time now present was away in the far distance of heaven, a place far remote from this earth. That He was now possessed of such super-human Personality that, though seated at God's

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right hand, He could be present in their midst unseen, was a thought they seemed too earth-bound to grasp. Even those among them possessed of some spiritual gift seemed to have accounted it to be for phenomenal display, and not as a means to deepen reverence, or intensify adoration. The spirit of true devotion is a state of heart and mind difficult to apprehend at all times, among any people, and we need not wonder that the brethren at Corinth, that most carnal and commercial city of ancient Greece, failed so grievously to attain thereunto. Even in our own times, among Bible-respecting peoples, and after nineteen centuries of Christian influence, it is a frame of heart and mind most difficult to apprehend. When little companies "come together" in the appointed place there are very many factors that may block the way of approach to the holiest things. If one coming thereunto has the "artistic gift", heightened at times with a sense of the lofty and sublime, yet finds in his coming that he is ushered into a bare room, unadorned, and without softened lights, the chord of true reverence may, for him, be hard to strike. Or if another, of cultured refinement himself, hears ill-chosen words spoken in rough husky tones, it may be a thing impossible for him to respond becomingly in reverential praise. Who of us in these Christian lands knows not the power of some stately Church to subdue the soul, or the throb of some deep-toned harmonies to hush the senses, and make one step more lightly to some quiet seat and there lay ones inner self prostrate before the Lofty and the Divine? Church authorities have traded on this fact in human responsiveness, and have built their stately piles accordingly. But in a cold bare room, or in some public hall, devoted, at other times, to many sects, it is not an easy thing to respond from the depths.

The sense of worship has suffered, perhaps, too often from these things, while the attitude towards such occasions may have become merely casual - just a case of being "there": just a matter of being one of a company possessing mutual views, and for whom there is some degree of pleasure in hearing or exchanging those views. Or it could be that the subject for consideration has become well-trodden ground and one feels so well footed therein, that it fails to arouse enthusiastic gratitude to God and no sense of loss had one not been present at the gathering.

It needs here no emphasis to say, both first and last, that our "coming together in the church" should be to worship God. Never should it be to while an hour away, nor to be entertained by lofty phrase or cultured utterance. Nor should it be a time exclusively set apart for intensive study, or analytical research. Nor an occasion given over to harmonic or melodic song. It is no sin to tell the story of Love Divine in words of rare charm or satisfying beauty, nor to find "heart's delight" in the cultured voice as it sets forth the loftier things. Neither is it a crime to analyze the subject with minute care, or make our definitions with exactitude. Indeed, it should be to our mutual pleasure, not less than to our common profit, so to do. The story of Divine Love is worthy, at all times, of our best endeavor. But these things, at their best, are matters of but secondary import - a noble means to a worthier end, and should ever be seen in that secondary light.

An Unseen Presence is in attendance wheresoever God's consecrated saints have come together in the church. That Unseen Presence alters everything. We do not need to ask how Divinity can project "Itself into all the assemblies

here and everywhere. Spiritual sensibility and experience activated by a living faith assures repeatedly that the "Unseen Presence" is there "in the midst". To the spiritually sensitive the "Presence" brings and sets the atmosphere for the holy hour. It casts a sense of sacred calm over the gathering, and in the quiet hush the keen susceptibility can feel "It" there. To such, "It" seems to lift the hanging folds of a veil, beneath which comes, from the other side, a sanctifying influence, or, from another point of view, it thins the curtain which divides this sensuous world from the ever-brightening realities of that beyond. It makes the place of meeting the very vestibule of heaven itself, the anteroom of the very Presence-chamber of God in spite of the bare coldness of the room. To the alert and hungry heart this over-powering sense of the Unseen can mean so much more so extremely and incomparably much more - than lofty dome or intoned chant, or cultured voice or ornate vestments; it can subdue that heart to rest, and hush it down in reverence more than all other things beside. And, standing thus, invisibly revealed in the midst "It" stands there waiting for the upward reaching of the soul, for the heavenward glancing of the inner eye: and, within the quiet of that hallowed atmosphere, though words be few, or unspoken altogether, communion becomes complete. The yearning spirit, rising from this world of sense meets and unites with that hallowed Spirit descending from that purer sphere and in the sanctifying mingling of desire-- He with us; we with Him--we feel ourselves encouraged, enriched, and enlarged. We take from Him new strength and satisfaction for our needs; He takes from us our sacrifice of praise and presents it enriched with His own righteousness to Him who dwells in Light unapproachable.

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How easy it is to fall short of this "other-worldly" contact in such seasons of "coming together ". How easy to fail to sense the atmosphere which that Presence brings. How lightly gravitate to earthly things, and mar the hallowed influence proceeding from the "Sanctifier " Himself. It needs but little more than the thrust and parry of the keen debate, the too keen intensity of question and reply, then as passions rise and the intellect takes control, a canopy of earthborn things spreads itself above the scene, and the link between is snapped. And communion with Him is at an end. Thenceforth the study may proceed, but the worship is at an end; the discussion may be prolonged, but communion has ceased. We may to our best understanding, have defended our abstract truth, but our very exuberance may have dammed the flow of Living Truth. We may have stood defensively for "It", but have overlooked our need for "HIM"! We may have called upon our memories in defending or defining long established doctrine, and have forgotten that our needs can be supplied by Him alone

In the study atmosphere one may, by long experience, become established. In the atmosphere of communion the memories are of the heart, and may often be quite outside the range of tabulated doctrine. In the realm of living experience wherein the Great Dispenser makes provision for the daily needs of every moment of the day----of all who live their lives warmly unto Him; and from which, of his own accord, no child of God can afford to absent himself when opportunity presents.

What more can be said? Surely it will be admitted on every hand that every time we come together in the Church it should be an occasion for the most devout worship of God. An occasion when the veil between earth and heaven becomes thin and the Light from the other side filters through into the soul. Ought we not to be more ready to come together, if we were more surely blessed with the eye that can see and sense the Blessed Presence in the midst. And if we had a keener hunger of the soul which none but He can satisfy? Could we ever come to think that we were so well-established in the Truth that we could live without this Spirit-knit communion with our Father and our Lord, and that our need for the coming together was not so great or urgent now? Or, if our eye and heart has learned to see Him ever present could we ever meet our brethren just to become engaged in the thrust and parry of debate, and then depart thinking we had experienced all there was to have?

If on the other hand, we have learned the secret of finding Him behind and above every gathering, then we shall find that lovely thoughts and well chosen words will add fragrance to the atmosphere, and bring enchantment to the inner man, and make the occasion sweet as an oasis on a desert road. Lacking the secret of finding Him, even beautiful words and lovely thoughts can diffuse only an odor of the flesh, mere intellectuality, or gleanings from philosophy

This ability to see and sense the Blessed One at all such times is part and parcel of a larger thing. It is only when this sensitivity is part of the whole life that it becomes easy and natural when in the Church. To those who cultivate and practice the Presence of the Lord everywhere all the time, this is the obvious thing when the hour of fellowship

arrives. It is not for them an experience that needs to be conjured up, by effort of the will but is one that rises spontaneously out of a life of unbroken companionship, by day and night, with the dearest object of the desire. If we seek for Him behind doctrine, behind experience, behind Providence, behind everything, then we shall find rest to our souls, and salve for every sore. The highest truth is "Him". To know this is to know the secret of the Lord in the art and act of fellowship.

We must try to find out, not just what the Bible means in general, but what it means for us. If we are to do this, there is one thing which, perhaps above all we must try to avoid. We must try to avoid going to the Bible in order to find in it material to support ideas and theories which are in fact our own. When we study the Bible we must sit down in humility before it and listen, not to our voices extracting our own meaning from the Bible, but to the voice of God as it speaks to us in His book. It will be an exercise in humility, but it will also be a path to truth.

William Barclay

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Daniel in Babylon:

The story of a great man's faith

A. O. Hudson

14. The Seventy Weeks

The Persian conquest of Babylon made very little difference to the normal life of the city. The comparative ease with which the capital had fallen, with little destruction or loss of life, meant that the citizens merely exchanged a Babylonian ruler for a Persian. Cyrus. The commercial life of the city went on as usual; merchant vessels from Africa and India still came up the river to the quays of Babylon; caravans of goods still traversed the high roads from Syria and Egypt. The government was in the hands of the Persians, but the life of the nation went on much as before. It was not at the capture of Babylon by Cyrus that the vivid prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah relating to the doom of the wicked city had their fulfillment, but twenty years later, when Darius Hystaspes the Persian king laid siege again to the city and demolished its walls. In the meantime Daniel was faced with the situation that the power of Babylon was broken, apparently for ever: Cyrus the Persian was quite evidently the coming man, and Cyrus was the name of the man in

Isaiah's prophecy who should let the captives go and restore the worship of God at Jerusalem. Small wonder that Daniel went to the sacred books to discern what he could of the purposes of God.

"In the first year of his reign (Darius) I Daniel understood by books the number of the years whereby the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolation of Jerusalem." (ch.9 vs.2).

An old man of ninety sat reading, as he had read hundreds of times before, words that were penned when he was a lad of sixteen or so. His whole life had been lived in expectation of an event which, even as a boy, he knew could not come until he himself was ninety years of age; whatever may have been the hopes and beliefs of his fellows as to their deliverance. Daniel himself had known all along that he was destined to spend the rest of his life in Babylon. That Return from Exile which he so ardently desired for his people would not come until he himself would be too old to share in it.

Nearly seventy years previously, in the third year of Jehoiakim King of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar had besieged Jerusalem, made Jehoiakim tributary, taken the sacred vessels from the Temple and carried them, with Daniel and

his fellows, into Babylon. In the following year the Babylonian king broke the power of Egypt at Carchemish and thenceforth was the undisputed master of Western Asia. In that year Jeremiah uttered the message against Judah recorded in his twenty-fifth chapter, and it is that message to which Daniel referred. The Divine sentence had gone forth against the guilty people; from that third year of Jehoiakim when they became tributary to Babylon and their Temple treasures went into an idol sanctuary, they were to serve the king of Babylon seventy years (Jer. 25:11). At the end of the seventy years the power of Babylon was to be broken. Until then all nations were to serve Nebuchadnezzar, and his son, and his grandson. until the very time of his land come (Jer. 27:7) a prophecy which was fulfilled in a most remarkable way, for his son Evil-Merodach (Jer. 52:31) and his grandson Belshazzar both reigned and then the kingdom came to an end. Daniel, after the death of Belshazzar and the transfer of sovereignty to the Persians, realized that the time had expired.

What were his thoughts as his eyes scanned the familiar words and his mind went back to those days of long ago? Was there a measure of sadness that so few of his own generation remained to share his realization of hopes fulfilled? Daniel must have been getting a rather lonely man. His old friend and mentor, Jeremiah, was of course long since gone to his rest, buried somewhere in Egypt. Of his three companions in exile, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, nothing is known since the incident of the fiery furnace, nearly forty-five years in the past. Quite likely they too were dead. Ezekiel the prophet and Jehoiachin the captive king were almost certainly at rest with their fathers. The up-and-coming young men who were marked out as leaders of the nation when the Return to Jerusalem could be effected were two generations later than his own. But there was no jealousy and no repining. Daniel knew he could have no part in the stirring days of the Return himself, but he knew that prayer was vitally necessary before that Return could become a reality and so he betook himself to earnest and urgent prayer on behalf of his beloved people. And the consequence of that prayer was the revelation of a time prophecy so obviously and accurately fulfilled that it set the seal upon Daniel's book and stamped the study of time prophecy with Divine approval.

It is impossible to read Daniel's ninth chapter without realizing just how the saintly old man poured out his heart's longings to God. Here are the hopes and dreams of a lifetime, the faith that knows God is faithful, the insight that perceives the only obstacle to be unbelief, the conviction that God will surely hear, He is God, and God cannot lie. What He has promised, that He will surely perform. Every acknowledgement of God's constancy -

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and faithfulness is made, and with that a full and frank admission of Israel's guilt. There is no evasion of the issue; Israel reaped what she had sown: deserved what she had got. But because God is good, and because, with all their faults, Jerusalem and her people are called by God's name, Daniel besought his liege Lord to return, and relent, and execute his great purpose in delivering Jerusalem. We do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies. Could any of us in these favored days of spiritual understanding come more closely to the nature of Divine forgiveness? Could any one of us come any nearer to the heart of the Father? It was to that last heartfelt appeal the Father responded. Once more a heavenly being of high rank and greatly honored in the courts of heaven was charged with a mission to earth. We know very little about conditions beyond the Veil, the every day life of the celestial world, but that it is a place and condition of ceaseless activity is evident. Gabriel was no

stranger to the world of man and he had visited Daniel before. If one asks the question whether there truly does exist an angelic personality bearing the name Gabriel, entrusted at times with Divine commissions to men, the answer can only be that the Bible gives us no ground for disputing the fact. This seventy weeks prophecy could only have been revealed from heaven; Daniel asserts that it was told him by a visitor he knew from former experience to be Gabriel, the messenger of God. Five hundred years later the same personality appeared to Mary the mother of Jesus, again with a message of great import, this time to announce the fulfillment of that which he had predicted to Daniel. Although Gabriel is not mentioned by name anywhere else in Bible history, it is very possible that he is the one concerned in other appearances of an angelic being to men to the Apostle Peter in prison. perhaps, or to Paul when he was told he would be brought before Caesar.

"Whiles I was speaking in prayer", Gabriel came. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment went forth, and I am come to show thee is the assurance of the heavenly visitor. So quickly may prayer be answered; so

near to us is that celestial world where God's will is done as one day it will be done on earth. Before they call, I will answer: while they are yet speaking, I will hear says the lord through Isaiah. Sin is a separating influence which puts God far away from us; prayer is a magnetism which brings us at once very' near to God.

So the story of the seventy weeks was unfolded. 'Weeks' is, as is usually well known, a mistranslation. The proper rendering is seventy sevens where seven is hepdomad, a unit, especially a unit of time. There is not much doubt that Daniel was to have his understanding of Jeremiah's seven years linked up with a greater seventy, seventy sevens, in fact ----- leading up to the greater development of God's Plan, which would, eventually, bring to fruition all Daniel's hopes.

The seventy years of Jeremiah were literally fulfilled, several times over. The primary' decree was that not only Judah, but the nations round about, were to serve the king of Babylon seventy years and then the power of Babylon would be broken. (Jer. 25:11-12). During that period the penalty for resistance to the Divine decree of subjection was conquest, destruction, desolation. True to the promise from the third year of Jehoiakim, when Judah passed under Babylonian domination, to the Decree of Cyrus was seventy years. Likewise the period from the destruction of the Temple in the eleventh year of Zedekiah to the completion of Zerubbabel's Temple in the sixth year of Darius Hystapes was seventy years. Small wonder that Daniel, having lived through the First-named period, looked now for the restoration of Judah, and hence for Divine enlightenment as to the next development in the outworking of the Divine Plan.

"Seventy sevens are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city "(Dan. 9:24) to accomplish seven different aspects of our Lord's work at his First Advent. Gabriel recited them in order: While he recited. Daniel must have listened in growing awe as he realized that greater and still unplumbed depths of the Divine purposes were being revealed.

To finish the transgression. Our Lord's Advent was timed to come when Israel had filled up the measure of their fathers. (Matt. 23:32). The period between Daniel and Jesus brought Israel's guilt up to the brim and abundantly demonstrated their unworthiness of the promise.

To make an end of sins. Jesus did that by yielding his own life as an offering for sin, a Ransom for All, to be testified in due time. (Isa. 53:10; 1 Tim. 2:5-6).

To make reconciliation for iniquity. This is the atonement which Christ made, pictured in the Tabernacle ceremonies by the offering of the blood of the sin offering on the mercy seat or propitiatory in the inner sanctuary, a covering for human sin.

To bring in everlasting righteousness. The Apostle Paul explained this when he spoke of justification by faith, the gift of God to all who accept Jesus as Savior and trust in him alone for salvation and reconciliation with God.

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To seal up the vision and prophecy. The more correct rendering is vision and prophet and the sealing is in the sense of ratifying. The Father himself ratified both the vision and the prophet who brought the vision, when He declared from Heaven at the time of Jesus baptism This is my beloved Son hear ye him.

To anoint the Most Holy. This refers to the consecrated things of the temple, especially the altar of burnt offerings, and can well apply to the final work of the First Advent when Jesus, glorified, anointed his disciples with the Holy Spirit of Power, sending them forth after Pentecost to commence their great work of witness.

Gabriel told Daniel (9:25-27) that this great period of seventy sevens was to be divided into three sections of seven sevens, sixty-two sevens and one final seven. In that last seven great happenings were to transpire. Most momentous of all, Messiah would be cut off but not for himself No, He died for others, for men, that they might live. In the middle of that seven Messiah would bring to an end the sacrifice and oblation, those literal offerings and sacrifices demanded by the Law to give Israel a ritualistic righteousness. He made an end of that Law, nailing it to his cross. Never again could those offerings have any validity in God's sight, for the reality had come. Then Messiah was also

to confirm the covenant with many for one seven. True to that word, the covenant of favor to Israel which precluded Gentiles from entering the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus was continued throughout three and a half years more until it came to an end with the acceptance of Cornelius, the first Gentile fellow-heir.

Because of the overspreading of abominations, he shall make it desolate even as Jesus declared, weeping over the city but declaring nevertheless your house is left unto you desolate. Then, finally, the people of the prince that should come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary and that word was fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

Here is a clear outline of the light and shade, the glory and the tragedy, of the First Advent. Daniel must have perceived that all this meant great distress for his people even though it also included the fulfillment at last of the Divine promise. Naturally enough, therefore, the question must have come to his lips as it did to the disciples of Jesus half a millennium later, How long? ; When shall these things be?

Daniel realized at once that the seventy sevens were sevens of years. He was already aware of Jeremiah's period of seventy years, now fulfilled, but this was a greater period, seventy sevens. Four hundred and ninety years; that was the vista which now appeared before the prophet's wondering mind.

The starting point is given in terms of an easily recognizable political event. From the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince(Dan 9:23) were the angel's words. Daniel did not live to see that event. He did come to know of the decree issued by Cyrus king of Persia in the first year of his reign authorizing whosoever would of the Jews in Babylon to return to Judea and rebuild the ruined Temple. Some forty-nine thousand returned under Zerubbabel but their initial enthusiasm soon waned and the work languished. The royal edict was reiterated sixteen years later in the second year of Darius Hystaspes, third successor of Cyrus. In consequence of the missionary zeal of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah at that time the work was resumed and in another four years the Temple was completed and dedicated. But the city around it was still desolate, its walls broken down and its gates just as they were left when Nebuchadnezzar's soldiers burned them with fire nearly a century previously. No authority or permission had as yet been given to restore and build Jerusalem. Next came the reign of Xerxes, and then his son and successor Artaxerxes I, who in the seventh year of his reign, some seventy years after the decree of Cyrus, sent Ezra the priest to take offerings and treasure for the rebuilt temple and to govern the little Jewish colony, but even then no word or command or intimation regarding the rebuilding of the city and its walls.

Thirteen years later, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes. a royal commission was awarded Nehemiah the Jewish patriot to proceed to Jerusalem for the express purpose of rebuilding the city, its houses, walls and gates. At this time Jerusalem was still in ruins; the impulse of Nehemiah to go there sprang from a report on its condition brought to him in this same year. Its walls were still broken down, its gates burned with fire, and the houses not built. Here, it would seem, is the starting point of the prophetic period. Sixty-nine sevens from this point, four hundred and eighty-three years, to the appearance of Messiah, and one more seven for the completion of all that his Advent was to mean to Israel; this was the gist of Gabriel's intimation and Daniel knew then that the consummation of Israel's hopes was still very far away.

Looking back in history, we ought to perceive very clearly the fulfillment of this time prophecy, for Messiah has come and we know when He came It was in the autumn of AD. 29 that Jesus of Nazareth stood by the waters Jordan to be baptized by John as a prelude to his ministry on earth. There, at that time, He became

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the Messiah the Prince. Three and a half years later in the midst of the seven the last seven. He caused the sacrifice and the oblation to cease by his death on the cross. By the end of that seven the special standing before God, which Israel had enjoyed since Sinai, was abrogated. and the Gospel was extended to all nations. The seventy weeks had ended.

Unfortunately the starting-point cannot be located in history so precisely. The Persians did not produce any reliable

historians of their own: the Greek historians of the time are confused and contradictory when it comes to Persian happenings. In consequence there is dispute as to the precise date of the twentieth year of Artaxerxes with a possible variation of sixteen years. 454-438 BC. Herodotus, Ctesias, Thucydides, Ptolemy and Josephus between them have set later historians, chronologists, and commentators alike a problem which has occupied the thoughts and pens of many a writer during the latter part of the Age. But for the present purpose accuracy to a year is quite unnecessary. The important thing is that this seventy weeks back from the ministry of Jesus must in any case have commenced within ten years or so of whatever date eventually turns out to be that of Artaxerxes twentieth year. Ten years in five hundred is a quite close margin of error and as we look back upon this fulfilled prophecy, we can only marvel at its exactitude. Small wonder that modern critics decry the whole thing and endeavor to suggest other and earlier starting points for the prophecy so as to bring its termination in the days of the Maccabean revolt, assigning all these eloquent phrases to the petty doings of a lot of apostate High Priests and princes in Israel. We can only say "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes"

The division, in Daniel 9:25, of the sixty-nine sevens into two periods of seven and sixty-two is not further elaborated on by the revealing angel. Seven sevens, forty-nine years, from the twentieth year of Artaxerxes must end at some time between 406-390 BC. This point of time is notable for a number of events momentous to Israel.

Darius II, son of Artaxerxes, died 405 BC. With his death the favor shown by successive Persian kings to Israel since the days of Cyrus came to an end. Upon the accession of Darius' successor, Judea lost its status as a province and was added to the province of Syria: thus commenced the Syrian oppression of Israel which became so terrible an affliction a century or so later.

Nehemiah, the last governor of Judea, died probably between 413 and 405 BC, Ezra a little earlier. Malachi, the Hebrew prophet, flourished during the last seven years of Nehemiah and died, it is estimated, very soon after the patriot's death.

The canon of the Old Testament was completed.

Thus, at the end of the first seven sevens, the period of the Restoration, all the favor shown by the Persians to the Jews, all the rebuilding and re-establishment of the nation, all the fervency of the latter prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi and the reforming zeal of Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah, all that had been accomplished during that stirring time, came to an end, and the nation entered upon a new and bitter experience which progressively worsened, with only occasional periods of intermission, until the conquest of Judea by Titus in AD. 70. and the greater Dispersion among all nations began. Even that was foreseen by the heavenly visitant; the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary he said (Dan 9:26.) That prediction was fulfilled to the letter. Daniel must have had much to think about when his visitor had gone. The city of his fathers and the Temple, the glory of the city, were to be rebuilt only to be destroyed again. Would the Lord never fulfil his promise to plant Israel and not pluck them up again? Long and earnestly must the aged prophet have cogitated over the problem; the ways of God are often dark and mysterious, and men comprehend them not. But for Daniel there was more to come; he was yet to be given the final vision, which assured him that despite all these disasters all would be well at the last.

(To be continued)

WOMEN WHO WATCHED

D.Nadal

Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation (Matt. 26:41). These are the words of Jesus to his closest disciples while in the garden of Gethsemane where he went to pray on the night he was betrayed. It was not the first

time that he had warned them to be on their guard. But what is the reason for this being alert? During his lifetime various people had watched Jesus. From birth his mother had observed and remembered many things. Religious Jews had watched him that they might discover a way by which to accuse him. The soldiers who crucified Jesus sat down to watch and guard him. Others stood sentry duty at the tomb as a 'watch'. The Master had exhorted his disciples to watch for his return. Why should a follower of Jesus watch? Certainly it was not for the same reason that the soldiers and the Pharisees watched. Was it just to stuff their brains with facts?

The women who 'watched' Jesus were in an attitude of learning. When Jesus went to the home at Bethany one of the sisters sat close to Jesus, attentive to what he was saying. As Jesus moved about Galilee several women who had become his disciples watched over him for his personal welfare and comfort. Their response to Jesus' loving concern for others was to serve and provide for him. Luke wrote that the twelve were with him, and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means (8:1-3). Later, in his account of the crucifixion, Luke tells us that among those gathering around the cross were all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee.....(Luke 23:49).

Who were these ladies who attended Jesus so faithfully as he traveled the roads of Israel and who remained at the last with him even when most of the men folk had fled? To stand by in support of a man hanging on a cross was dangerous and there is no wonder that some ran for their lives but where there is perfect love there is no room for fear(1 John 4:18). Of Susanna we know nothing. We have a little more information about Joanna. We know that she was the wife of an official at Herod's court. However, the gospel writers paint for us a picture of 'this woman of influence and wealth mixing freely with ordinary folk. The magnetism of Jesus' personality had brought together people of very different backgrounds and temperaments. We catch sight of her once more on resurrection morning when the women went to the tomb only to find it empty (Luke 24:10).

Along with this lady of the court was a carpenter's wife. Mary of Nazareth had many memories stored up from the last thirty-four years. They had begun with the appearance of an angel, drama of a manger and the attention of some shepherds. Then she had gone with Joseph to the Temple in Jerusalem to present her first-born son, according to the Law. The old prophet Simeon had said to Mary.....This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be spoken against so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed And a sword will pierce your own soul too. Did that memory return as she watched her son dying like a common criminal? The Gospels give the impression that Mary and her other sons, did not accept the challenge of Christ till after his resurrection (Matt. 12:46-50).

Whatever her feelings about the claims of her son before this, Mary stood by Calvary in the company of the ladies who had worked with Jesus during his ministry. Of the 'twelve' only John was present at the cross and to him the Master committed his mother. Whatever Jesus' family thought about their unusual son and brother, he did not shirk his duty to his mother as her eldest son hanging on a cross. It was a poignant moment in their watch at the cross and in the life of Mary and John. The beloved disciple' evidently had connections in Jerusalem (John 18:15) and was able to take the Lord's mother away from this dreadful scene until she later joined the disciples' meetings just before Pentecost (Acts 1:14). What an emotional drama this must have been for such a spiritually sensitive person as Mary! With what foreboding had she watched her son through those days and weeks, which led up to, the crucifixion and which reached a climax of grief when he died! With what ecstasy did she receive the news that he was alive again! We are not told whether in the days, which followed the resurrection, she ever again came face to face with the one whom she bore. There is a strong tradition that Jesus visited his own natural brother James. We just catch a glimpse of this wonderful woman, with the disciples before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Then the veil is drawn so that in seclusion she lives out her life in the quiet joy and radiant faith in which she had begun her life's work in rearing and caring for Jesus. Sadly, the historical press has not observed her privacy.

The lady who seems to have excited most interest among that little party of women at the crucifixion and resurrection was another Mary. She came from the little port of Magdala on the west coast of Lake Galilee. She had

come to Jesus because he had exorcised seven demons' from her. Demon possession was never linked with immoral behavior and there is not a shred of evidence that she is the woman who anointed Jesus while he sat at table in Simon the Pharisee's house. The story of forgiveness in Luke 7:36-50 is a very lovely account of devotion which Jesus' love and forgiveness can inspire. The healing of Mary Magdalene is mentioned to identify her as one of the women who attended the Master. Records of early church history gives no support to the idea that the woman of Luke 7 is the same as that mentioned in Luke 8:2. It was medieval superstition that suggested that the lady from Magdala was of outstanding beauty and a prostitute. The myth lives on.

As the little group gathered, perhaps somewhat apart from the rowdy crowd of religious and political onlookers, Mary Magdalene appears to have taken something of a leading place among them. She would have been among the women who watched to see where Joseph of Arimathea had laid him so that they might come later and embalm the body. At the dawning of the resurrection day she was out standing among all the followers of Jesus. It was dark when she set out and the first rays of dawn were coming up over the city wall by the time she arrived at the tomb. But how were these women to move the stone? Their devotion was rewarded by an open and empty tomb and a vision of angels. They immediately obeyed the heavenly messenger and ran to tell the 'disciples'. But they were greeted by disbelief. These were only women, how could they know about such things? But John and Peter ran to the tomb to find the truth of the story and Mary Magdalene returned with them to discover what had happened to Jesus' body: and she did. In the agony of her mind, she turned to see one whom she does not recognize but addresses as the 'gardener'. For the second time that morning she seeks to do something beyond her natural strength. At first she had wanted to roll away the stone; now she wants to carry the body of her dead Master. She was motivated by strong genuine love. And then comes the moment of ecstatic joy as she hears her own name spoken by the one for whom she has been searching. Gone now are fears of yesterday. Gone are the tears of grief and pain. Now all that she wants to do is to prevent her Master from ever going away again. She clings to him, perhaps in an effort to stop him disappearing again. Gently he shows her that he must depart but he gives her the most wonderful task in the world. Go, tell my brothers and so she is the first to go with the gospel message the Lord has risen and that he is soon to ascend to the Father. We best remember Mary of Magdala by no other way than that the Lord committed to her the glorious resurrection message.

In John's record of the crucifixion, one of the ladies standing with Jesus' mother is her sister. By a little deduction with reference to Mark's gospel we see that this is Salome. Taking the detective work a little further into Matthew's gospel we discover that this same person is the mother of the sons of Zebedee. One of them referred to her as the sister of Mary, Jesus' mother. These clues enable us to see that John and James, sons of Zebedee, were cousins of the Lord and John, so often referred to as the beloved disciple, was the best person to take care of his much-loved aunt. Salome was the one who went to Jesus not many weeks before this and asked that her two sons, James and John might sit, one each side of him, in his kingdom (Matt. 20:20-28). To have made this request was rather presumptuous even by an aunt and it was not a little annoying to the other disciples. Yet the nature of the relationship between Jesus and Salome is shown by the fact that she is still among the women from Galilee by the time of Jesus' death. It speaks well of Jesus' handling of a tricky situation and of Salome, that she could receive a gentle rebuke and not be offended. Finally, as with the others of her little band, she goes to the tomb on the resurrection morning. The faithful love, so marked among these women, was in Salome too. Whether she later returned to her husband, Zebedee, still plying his trade in the casting of nets into the lake, we know not, or whether she stayed on in Jerusalem with the young church as it grew. Soon one of her sons was to die for the cause, a witness to the resurrection of Jesus, for James was martyred at the hands of Herod the King, the grandson of Herod the Great and Mariamne (Acts 12:2). Her other son, John, must have outlived his mother by many years and tradition has it that her sister Mary spent some of those later years with him at Ephesus.

Finally, of those named in the gospels who ministered to the needs of Jesus, there is one other, Mary the mother of James (the younger or the less) and Joseph (or Joses). In John 19:25, this Mary is stated to be the wife of Clopas. Some have thought that this was Cleopas, one of the two who walked with the risen Lord on the Emmaus road and have even gone so far as to suggest that the second member of the party on that occasion was this Mary. But scholarship and tradition tend to link Clopas with Alphaeus, father of

James, one of the twelve (Matt. 10:3) in which case this last of the Marys would be the mother of an apostle.

They were a remarkable band of women who played an important part in the establishment of the early Church. They must have been wonderful mothers. Their loving faithfulness out-distanced the strong intellects and verbal expressions of their men folk. Not for them the hasty declaration of loyalty which was to result in a denial of the Lord. Not for them the protest on behalf of the poor which was to end in betrayal of the Son of God. Not for themselves did they aspire to be the most important people in God's Kingdom, only to run away when the risks became too great. They kept their eyes focussed on him and learnt what he was like. The things of earth grew dim as they watched. Their reward was to watch while the Lamb of God was slain to take away the sin of the whole world. Their reward was to be first in carrying the news of his resurrection to disbelieving men. Their reward was that the Master never rebuked any of them but must have found wonderful consolation in their fellowship. They leave us an example of what true believers should be like; daughters of the Most High God and sisters to the Savior of the world. Christian women who have come after them should be much comforted and inspired.

A word of caution....

We must not betray the reputation of the good v News by puerile mistakes we ought never to make, or by palpable errors which a little reading would prevent Even when he scorned enticing words of man's wisdom in his preaching as he did at Corinth, Paul's hearers knew that they were listening to an intelligent, educated man. That impression undoubtedly prepared a way for the message. The same thing is at least desirable, if not increasingly essential in those who seek to sow and cherish the seed of the Word in the intellectual climate of our times.

The foregoing quotation, origin unknown, makes good sense. In matters of scientific or general knowledge Christians must accept the findings of the current generation whilst realizing that all knowledge is progressive, and the next generation will render much of today's knowledge obsolete. The Christian tendency to be out-of-date on such things is apparently an old trouble, as witness the writings of St. Augustine on the subject in the Fifth Century. He said:

It very often happens that there is some question as to the earth or the sky or the other elements of this world, respecting which one who is not a Christian has knowledge derived from most certain reasoning or observation, and it is very disgraceful and mischievous, and of all things to be carefully avoided that a Christian speaking on such matters as being according to the Christian Scriptures should be heard by an unbeliever talking such nonsense that the unbeliever, perceiving him to be as wide from the mark as east from west, can hardly restrain himself from laughing.

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I KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER LIVETH

An Easter Message

B. J. Drinkwater

Something like sixty years ago there was a report in a British newspaper concerning an incident that had. During the course of the Soviet anti-religious campaign the presiding minister of one of the largest Orthodox (Catholic) churches in Moscow was told that he must allow an official spokesman to put the case for atheism to his congregation and he could afterwards disprove the arguments in his sermon, if he could. At the appointed time the advocate for atheism entered the pulpit and began his lecture. He said that religion had developed out of the unreasoning fears of primitive men faced with the vagaries of Nature thunder, lightning, earthquakes, typhoons, and so on, and they concluded there must be some mighty unseen power causing these disasters and tried to propitiate that power by offerings and sacrifices. From that, he said, came the idea of a God who could send either evil or good to mankind and would reward those who pleased him and punish those who did

not. Jesus of Nazareth, he went on, was a young man like any other man but a revolutionary at heart, burning with desire to overthrow the imperialistic Romans and the capitalistic Pharisees, and bring freedom to the oppressed common people. As Jesus' life continued he came to believe that he had been sent by God, that he was inspired by God, and finally that he was the Son of God, but it was all a delusion and when at last his enemies encompassed his death that was the end of him as it is of all men. There never was a Resurrection and the faith that had been built upon that belief was all a myth. He finished his lecture and sat down complacently to see what arguments the minister would bring forward to disprove what he had said.

The old man climbed slowly into the pulpit and stood for a moment surveying his flock. When he began to speak, he uttered just five words. My brethren he said. Christ is risen! In a moment the whole congregation was on its feet and every one joined in a response that swelled up to the roof of the building; He is risen indeed! There was no more said, for there was nothing more to say. The newspaper report commented that the effect was as if a noted scientist had spent an hour proving to a distinguished audience that human flight through the air is impossible and will never be achieved and just as he finished an aeroplane passed overhead. All the arguments and alleged proofs in the world are valueless against positive knowledge, and those Russian believers had that positive knowledge. They knew within themselves that Christ was risen; their lives' Christian experiences told them that Christ was risen; the illumination of the Holy Spirit in their hearts was proof to them that Christ was risen, and that knowledge was an infallible bulwark against doubt and unbelief.

All have heard the saying Knowledge is power. Our knowledge of Christ's Resurrection, our belief in his Resurrection, is the power of our faith. This is the driving force which gives us the strength to continue in the Christian way. Solomon declared in Prov. 24:5 that knowledge increaseth strength. and again in Prov. 11:9 through knowledge shall the just be delivered When at the beginning of his reign the Lord asked him what He should give him, what gifts did he desire, Solomon asked not for riches, wealth, honor or power, but for wisdom and knowledge, that he might be a good king. And in consequence he received all things. Said the Lord to him, because he had asked thus, wisdom and knowledge is parted unto thee: and I will give thee riches, and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings have had that were before thee, neither shalt any after thee have the like (2 Chron. 1:7-12). In choosing the better thing Solomon became heir to all things. But on the opposite side of the coin God said regarding Israel. My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge (Hos. 4:6) and Jesus, talking to the Sadducees who by their question regarding the Resurrection betrayed their utter ignorance, said Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God (Mall. 22:29). Had they sought after the true knowledge of God instead of the traditions and inventions of men they would have known better than to ask the question they did. The importance of positive knowledge is stressed for us in John's Epistle (1 John 5:20) We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true'. The stress is always laid upon conviction of truth, knowledge of the basis of our faith. If we would be faithful to the end of life, unshaken by doubts or denials, we must know that upon which we have based our life and calling.

This was the inward power which sustained Peter and John at their trial before the Sanhedrin shortly after Pentecost. The story is recorded in Acts 4. They were commanded not to speak or teach again in the name of Jesus Christ. But they were quite unperturbed. Their judges, they told them, could decide for themselves whether it was right in the sight of God to hearken unto them rather than unto God, but, as for us, they said,

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we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. How was it they were so supremely confident in the face of their accusers and judges? Because they knew! They had seen Jesus after his resurrection. They had heard his voice and received his instruction as to their future life's work. Their eyes beheld his form ascending to the Father while his promise that at the Last Day He would return to them was sounding in their ears. Nothing and no one could shake their faith in these things thereafter because they had seen and heard them with their own eyes and ears and they knew the truth of all that they had been saying. When their judges saw this boldness in the two disciples. we are told, they marveled. And they were afraid to do anything about it. They admitted the miracle but did not know what it portended. They accepted the un-shakeable determination of the disciples but did not know what was the power that had given birth to that determination. They found themselves quite unable to resolve the

situation and they did not know how to silence the testimony of these two to the Resurrection and living power of Jesus Christ. So weakly. all they could do was threaten them and let them go; whence Peter and John, filled with the Holy Spirit, went back to their mission and with great power gave.....witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all (Acts. 4:33). Three things always go together; knowledge. power, grace; the imparting of these three is the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart, and by the possession of these three the Christian warrior is enabled to wage that good warfare which ensures steadfastness through life and victory at the end.

Many years later, Peter, writing his second epistle, went back over his life's experiences and recalled some of the wonderful things he had seen and heard. to the establishment of that faith and confidence which never wavered afterwards. We have not followed cunningly devised fables he declared triumphantly but were eyewitnesses of his majesty The R.S.V. renders that allusion cleverly devised myths, a translation that is very apt. A great many contemporary scholars----some of them, unhappily, in the Christian ministry airily dismiss the historical narratives of the Old Testament as mythical stories and ancient folklore having little or no basis in fact, and the prophetic delineations of the coming Messiah, his office and work, the unassisted product of fertile enthusiastic minds obsessed with the idea of the future greatness of Israel and the triumph of good over evil, owing nothing to Divine inspiration or the illumination of the mind by the Holy Spirit. Peter dismisses all such ideas without hesitation; the truth of what he believed was guaranteed by the evidence of his own senses. this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount (2 Peter 1:16-19).

There, on the Mount of Transfiguration, he saw his Lord arrayed in heavenly splendor; he saw the two great champions of Israel, Moses and Elijah. conversing with him. and he heard the voice of God from heaven, acknowledging His Son. Jesus told him that what he had seen was a vision, but the wonder of the sight, and the reality of the voice, remained with him forever: he knew that what he had seen and heard was a manifestation of Divine power, and that to him was sterling proof. We saw; we heard; therefore we know! Thirty-five years later his faith was still unshaken, and remained so to the end, even though that end was martyrdom. And Peter had another source of strength which is given to all his brethren also, We have also a more sure word of prophecy whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts. The expression more sure means trusty, reliable, more than ever confirmed. NEB. has it All this only confirms for us the message of the prophets; that is, what we have seen and heard is confirmed by the prophets. Remember that Peter only had the Old Testament as the sure word of prophecy. There was no New Testament in his day. When he found Christ in all the Scriptures it was only in the Old Testament that he found him. But that finding gave him the confidence of knowledge. To that confirmation you do well to take heed, he says, as to a light that shines in a dark place until the day dawns and the day star arises in your hearts. What is this day star that is thus to arise? It is the knowledge of Christ gained by dedication of life to him and Christian experiences through life, the inward illumination which is the result of the indwelling Holy Spirit of God at work in the consecrated heart! An intellectual knowledge of the prophetic and Messianic themes of the Old Testament is one thing; the heart's appreciation of Jesus and his message in the New Testament is quite another, but only this will keep us unharmed by the enemies of the Christian way. To know about Jesus is a good thing and a necessary thing, but to know Jesus is a greater.

Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the experience of Job. I know that my Redeemer liveth. and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth (Job. 19.25-27). A marvelous passage! Here is a man who knows God and knows what is God's purpose for him and for all men and rejoices in that he knows. For a moment the burden of misery and torment is lifted from him and he shouts to the heavens the glory of that knowledge which is his. Though this body be destroyed yet in my flesh shall I see God. Here is faith that

transcends the mystery of death and the finality of the grave, and sees beyond both a re-union with God, whom he has always served, who will not let him go even in death. At the time he uttered these words Job's own skin was marred and ulcerated from the terrible disease with which he was afflicted. From the natural point of view he had no hope of remedy and only death awaited him. Now he cried aloud his conviction that notwithstanding this apparently inevitable fate the day would yet come when in the possession of a whole body in a whole skin he would see God. Whence did he have this knowledge and this conviction? There was no Old Testament in his time and we know of

no written record of Divine revelation that Job could have had. It can only be concluded that his knowledge of God's purposes had been handed down from father to son through the ages, preserved by godly men who retained something of the primitive faith, which the earliest men must have passed on from the time of the flood or even earlier. It is very possible even---probable that Job was descended from Uz the son of Nahor, Abraham's brother, and we know that Nahor venerated God. But in addition to any knowledge that Job received from Nahor or others, there is no doubt that he also acquired much of his understanding by virtue of direct communion with God. He must have been a man particularly receptive to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and he was certainly able to learn of God and the things of God in the wonders of creation. By whatever means he acquired it, he did have an understanding of the coming Redeemer who would effect such a wonderful recovery to life and restoration of his flesh and he understood that the scene of his restoration was to be here upon this earth. It was to be a personal restoration of his own identity. In my flesh shall I see God . . . whom I shall see for myself, and not another to see him for me . . . though this body of mine be now destroyed. Here is the first avowal of belief in the preservation of identity in the resurrection I, who must go down into the grave and be totally destroyed so that of my body nothing is left, even I shall live again. Scholars say that the doctrine of the resurrection is not to be found in the Book of Job! One of the finest expositions of the doctrine is here and the more remarkable because it appears in all its fullness long before God began to reveal his purposes to Moses and all Israel.

We in our day have more in common with Job than we have with Peter and John in that, like Job, we have not seen and heard Jesus in the flesh as did Peter and John. On the other hand we are in one direction even more favored than Peter and John in that we have the benefit of two thousand years' Christian progress in the knowledge of the faith in the light of the complete New Testament. Have we ever thought what a bulwark to faith that is? Men have believed and pondered and advanced in understanding in every generation and nation during all that two thousand years and died for their faith, and we have inherited their knowledge and been encouraged by their example. Other men labored and we have entered into their labors. And all because they believed in the resurrection of Christ and all that springs from it.

This same knowledge is our strength and our incentive to preach the Gospel. Solomon said, Have I not written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge, that I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou mightest answer the words of truth. . . to them that enquire of thee? (Prov. 22:20-21). Here is the source of Christian confidence and Christian evangelism. To know the certainty of the words of truth: this is the essential preliminary to effective Gospel witness. Without knowledge we are at best inefficient workers. If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? The pity of it is that so many evangelically-minded Christians do not know; they can talk only of the simple principle of salvation in Christ but know nothing of the consequent work which must be done in the hearts of men to fit them for eternity or of the Divine purpose working in history to bring all things into one, in Christ. And so they cannot answer questions.

But at this point we must take care not to pin our faith to intellectual knowledge, to the accumulation of facts, the memorizing of data out of a book, the ability to participate in debates upon fine points of theological principles. The true knowledge is that which is an inner enlightenment consequent on the power of God operating in the life, the indwelling influence of the Holy Spirit. Paul knew about this when he spoke (Phil. 3:8-10) of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord when he declared his desire that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection. A significant expression, that! There is a power in the resurrection of Christ which is influential towards the Church. Not just the effect of belief in the Resurrection, leading to stimulation of effort and maintenance of confidence. Because Christ rose again, and lives again, there is a power, an energy, flowing from Him to his followers which instills into them new life. Someone once said a dead Christ could save nothing and nobody. How true that is! Even though Christ's death on the Cross was a Ransom for All and provided an opportunity for life to whosoever will upon their awakening from the dead in the resurrection, it is still true that life eternal to the reconciled can only come through and

from Christ, and by union with Christ, a living Christ. A dead Christ can not give life. In His resurrection resides the power that eventually gives life to both the Church and the world. That word power in the Greek is *dunamis* and it means energy. In the world of nature it is energy that changes things. Sunlight that has traveled the ninety-three

million miles from the sun in eight minutes falls upon a living plant and in combination with water and air is changed into plant structure. and builds up the plant. It was invisible energy which reached the plant from the sun but it reappears as leaves. flowers and fruit which can become the food of man. As food it goes into the body processes and reappears as energy which gives heat to the body and powers the muscles for action and the brain for thought. All this is life and its all the product of what is, in the beginning, divine power. So it is with the Resurrection. Divine energy loosed the bonds of death because it was not possible that Christ should be holden of it says Peter in Acts. 2:24,

alluding to Psa. 13. That word not possible means literally no power to hold . There is no energy in death but there is great energy in life. So death is unable to resist the superabundant energy of Divine power and so soon as God takes action the grave cannot hold its dead. Hence the triumphant word of Christ to John the Revelator, "I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore." And here is the connection between the Resurrection of Christ and the call of the Church, dependent upon that Resurrection. Give heed to the majestic words of Paul in Eph. 1:19-20 (Diaglott). when he dwells upon this theme the surpassing greatness of his power towards us who believe, according to the energy of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ, having raised him from the dead and having seated him at his own right hand in the heavens. Behold what intimate relation there is here between the power by which Christ was raised and the power of God in His resurrection operating in us. God's power is surpassingly great; that same power which raised Christ from the dead and set him in the highest heaven supreme over all created things is operative in just the same way to Christ's church, first giving life and resurrection and then exaltation to those same heavens in eternal association with Christ Jesus the Lord.

This then is our confidence. The certainty of our own resurrection is based on the fact of His resurrection. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ," says Paul, "we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and in that rising has become the first fruits of all that sleep." Because he rose again, we shall rise again. Happy are we if, when the shadows begin to close around us, as they must to each of us in turn, we can say with Paul, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. I have fought a good fight I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge. shall give me at that day; and not to me only but unto all them also that love His appearing."

Blood is thicker than water. says our familiar adage. Surely grace should be stronger than nature and should lead us to love our brethren in Christ. not in word or in tongue but in deed and in truth.

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EVENTIDE

So he bringeth them unto their desired haven

T. Holmes

It is impossible for us to realize the depth of disappointment that swept through the Master's heart as he wept over a callous Jerusalem and resigned himself to its fate. How repeatedly, but unsuccessfully, He had tried to gather it beneath his wings, and protect it from its own perverted self as well as from its enemies! Oh! the bitterness of that sad lament

I would... but ye would not Had his coming and presentation to the nation not been the theme of psalm and prophecy over many preceding centuries the situation could not have been so tense, nor fraught with such tragic disappointment when, at last, He came to them. Had Scripture forecast not touched his life at so many points, the nation might have been able to tender some excuse for rejecting him, notwithstanding his miracles! Everything that could be done to prepare his way before him had been done. . and yet when He, the subject of every type, psalm and prophecy, came to his own, his own received him not'.

The waves of time stand not still on the broad bosom of history. Mis-spent years. with their unembraced

opportunities return no more. Their intended blessings pass away unrepaid, but more than that, the crucial moments, passing un-improved, turn the drift and set of circumstance into an ebbing tide, thenceforth to bear away towards the deep the unresponsive and heedless dreamer in the boat. So had it been with Jerusalem. Her hour had come C the hour for which the city and the nation had waited long, and with his coming a tide of opportunity had presented itself to people and priesthood alike, and He. as Heaven's messenger, as Pilot and Ship-master too, had presented himself to guide the ship into port, to bring this hitherto supremely favored nation into the haven of its centuries-old desire. But they would not let him take them to his head, nor would they take him to theirs. The crucial eventful moment passes, and the opportunity, ungrasped, was gone I would, ye would not henceforth bitter sequence indeed!

But there was another side to that story. There are some better things to relate. It was not true to say of all but ye would not. There had been a few who had heard, as it were, the tender call and found shelter beneath his protecting wings.

So he bringeth them unto their desired haven

As a brooding hen He had gathered them and drawn them close to himself, and when at last the long-threatening storm broke destructively upon the nation, these cherished objects of his care were kept safely nestling close to his loving heart! The hour of opportunity, rightly taken by this few, had brought them to rest beneath the out-spread wings of heavenly love and care, so fitly represented by the golden cherubim above the sprinkled Mercy Seat!

Again, another hour of opportunity is with us today. A fuller, deeper call to consecration has come to us. Of many churches and peoples in many lands the Master will yet have to say . . . I would... but ye would not ! Again, a spirit of indifference, and of little faith prevails among those whom He expected to hear his call. The opportunity will pass, has almost passed, and few indeed have heard the invitation to rest under his wings and find comfort and shelter here.

Do you know the warmth and shelter of his loving heart? It is open to you to be as one of his chicks, by day and night, safe kept by love Divine amid the gathering storm-clouds of this momentous day! One tiny word makes all the difference to the comfort and protection of your life it is either, ye would not or, ye would, that is all! Of himself our loving Master can still truly say I would what can He say of you.. . and of me? Let our prayerful resolve henceforth be to remain Under his Wings.

Under his wings I am safely abiding.

Though the night deepens and tempests are wild.

I know I can trust him, I know He will keep me, He has redeemed me, and I am his child

Under his wings; what a refuge in sorrow

How the heart yearningly turns to his rest,

Often when earth has no balm for my healing,

There I find comfort and there I am blest.

Under His wings, O, what precious enjoyment,

Here will I hide till life's trials are oer,

Shelterd, protected, no evil can harm me,

Resting in Jesus, Im safe evermore

ONE BREAD, ONE BODY

A doctrinal question

T.W. Watson

For we, being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.(1 Cor. 10:17).

In these words, fraught with deep spiritual meaning, the faithful Apostle strengthens his appeal to the Corinthian Christians and through them to us. We, like them, are so prone to idolatry, so easily led into ways which cannot be reconciled with the fellowship that is ours in Christ. Wherefore, my dearly beloved Paul pleads flee from idolatry (vs. 14). That was a very real danger in those days, and to those early Corinthian believers, living in the most notoriously depraved and paganised city of the then known world, it was a very necessary exhortation. But it was not merely that Paul would wean them from the worship and service of false deities. "gods and lords many. He knew that such service and such worship involved, not only fellowship with pagan men and women, but also common-union, joint participation, with demoniac intelligences behind the veil, He understood only too well the corrupting influence of those debased and debasing ceremonies and sacrifices; that they had nothing in common with the things of Christ; and with all his heart he strove to turn his brethren away from them and toward the infinitely purer and nobler faith of which he was himself a minister.

The whole burden of Paul's message in this chapter is comparison between the pagan's fellowship with idols and demons and the Christian's fellowship with Christ. Just as the believers' union in worship and offering was not merely an association together for the mutual acknowledgment of God's supremacy, but in deed and in truth a fellowship and communion with the risen Christ beyond the Veil, and the experiencing of an indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God. so was the worship and sacrificing of the pagans an actual fellowship with demons, spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenlies. The things which the Gentiles sacrifice he warned them earnestly they sacrifice to demons, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with demons . This danger of being associated with the enemies of Christ was a very real one in the Apostle's mind. Doubtless he saw in mental vision the last great conflict at the end of this Age when these same evil powers are arrayed, with all their human dupes, to give battle against the rider on the white horse, coming forth from heaven in righteousness to judge and make war (Rev. 19:11).

He knew that the saints must not be hesitant in the slightest degree about their allegiance. They may in no wise have any interest in common with these powers of evil which with all their followers will be overthrown and deprived of all power before the Millennial Kingdom is set up, and so in all earnestness he reminds them Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of demons: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table. and the table of demons

With what emphasis does this call to separation to the fellowship and communion of Christ come to us at this season! Now, more than at any other time during the year, we are mindful of our Master's willing, steadfast consecration to his Father's Will. even unto death. For him there was no compromise and no hesitancy. Just previously He had set his face to go to Jerusalem. knowing that death awaited him there. The people had flattered him, had received him as king; the disciples had pleaded with him to set up his Kingdom there and then and give the world the blessings it so sadly needed. To all their suggestions He had turned a deaf ear, walking resolutely along that path which, even although it led to suffering and death and the apparent failure of all his work, He knew to be the only one that could end in the consummation for which He had come into the world.

This same consciousness of a mission and this same inexplicable resolution in carrying out the terms of that mission is what Paul seeks to impress upon his readers, and now that the season for more than usually earnest thought about these things is upon us we do well to take from his exhortation all that it can give us of inspiration and encouragement.

Behold Israel after the flesh he commands, and his command carries a question. Are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? (vs. 18). Participators with the altar; that is Paul's thought. The priests upon whom fell the obligation to eat of the sacrifices were holy unto the Lord and could never be the same as ordinary men again. In partaking of the sacrifices of the altar they had become holy like the altar and were in a very real sense in fellowship or communion with the altar. and through that with God. And so are we. Because we have eaten of the offering, made it a part of ourselves, we have become identified with the Altar which is Christ, and have become joint-participators with him, not only in the power of future blessing for which the altar stands C for more than anything else in the typical Tabernacle the Brazen Altar stood for justification by faith, and only through justification by faith in Christ will man receive blessing in the next Age---